The Italian Renaissance

Part I

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Much of Professor Bartlett's career has been devoted to bringing Renaissance culture into the undergraduate and graduate classroom. He has taught regularly in the University of Toronto Program in Siena, Italy, as well as in the Oxford Program. In 2002, he was appointed the first director of the Office of Teaching Advancement for the University of Toronto. He has been the recipient of the Victoria University Excellence in Teaching Award, the Students Administrative Council and Association of Part-Time University Students Teaching Award, and the Faculty of Arts and Science Teaching Excellence Award. In 2005 he was awarded a prestigious national 3M Teaching Fellowship.

Dr. Bartlett is the author of *The English in Italy, 1525–1558: A Study in Culture and Politics* (1991); *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance* (1992); and *Humanism and the Northern Renaissance* (with M. McGlynn, 2000). He was co-editor or translator of four other books and the author of more than 35 articles and chapters on Renaissance history and culture. In 2003, Dr. Bartlett was co-curator of the exhibition *Gods, Saints and Heroes: Italian Renaissance Maiolica from the Metropolitan Museum of Art* at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art. In addition, he has been the academic consultant on the Illuminated Filmworks videos on the Vatican Library, *The Halls of Virtuous Learning*, *The Galleries of Sixtus V*, *and Pages of Light*, as well as for the international exhibitions *Raphael and His Circle: Drawings from the Royal Collection at Windsor* and *Angels from the Vatican* at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

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The Italian Renaissance

Scope:

This course on the Italian Renaissance will attempt to answer the question: Why was there such an explosion of creative culture, human ingenuity, economic development, and social experimentation in Italy beginning in the 14th century? It will also address the question of why the Renaissance ended in the middle years of the 16th century.

In order to investigate the phenomenon of the Renaissance in Italy, it is necessary to look at every facet of human endeavor. Thus, this series will not be a discussion of major political, military, or economic events, although these will appear, as appropriate. Rather, the course will follow the model of writing Renaissance history designed by its first great practitioner, Jacob Burckhardt, whose 1860 book-length "essay," *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, initiated the model of cultural history, that is, looking at a period in the past from several perspectives simultaneously to produce a sophisticated, multidimensional image. Just as each tessera in a mosaic contributes to the whole, so each element in social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, and religious history contributes to the composite picture of life in Italy in the years between the birth of Petrarch in 1304 and the terrible events of the 1520s–1540s that extinguished the flame that the poet first lit.

Several elements must first be assessed before the question of cultural development can be answered. We must investigate why the Italian peninsula was so different from the rest of Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries. How did the city-states of Italy manage to develop such sophisticated societies based on various forms of government, with social mobility and secular education, and amass such enormous wealth, when most of the rest of the continent still lived under feudal regimes, largely local economies, and clerically dominated culture? To what extent was the very lack of unity in the peninsula an advantage? And why did such states as Florence choose to invest so much of their surplus capital in art and learning? What was Humanism and why was it a peculiarly Italian phenomenon in the 14th century? And why do we begin our study of the culture of the Renaissance with Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374), or Petrarch, a poet and thinker who believed he had the misfortune to have been born outside his age? These are complex parts of a complex story, but one worth telling because the Renaissance gave us so many of the tools by which we still interpret our lives and the world around us.

In discussing these aspects of the culture of the Renaissance, we will see that many of the fundamental perspectives of the modern world were formed at that time. It has been argued that Petrarch invented the contemporary concept of the individual, writing in his *Secret Book*, the first psychological autobiography since Augustine's *Confessions*. Such artists as Donatello and Brunelleschi developed the principles of linear perspective, which permitted the creation of a three-dimensional image on a two-dimensional plane. In so doing, not only did they open the way for Naturalism in art—reproducing what the eye sees—but they set the intellectual stage for modern cartography and, hence, the voyages of discovery, because objects could be put in correctly calibrated relative space and distances could be precisely mapped. The desire of Renaissance thinkers to know themselves and others drove artists to perfect the reproduction of correct anatomy in painting and sculpture, with Donatello's *David* the first freestanding male nude figure since antiquity. Portraiture allowed viewers to identify their fellow citizens or famous men and women through their appearances and, soon after, through the skill of the painter, acquire an insight into their characters. All of this was the product of the Italian Renaissance mind.

In addition, Renaissance writers, in their desire to know the world around them and make correct observations about that world and the variety of its inhabitants, extended the importance of individual experience and privileged it. In other words, life became less a vale of tears on the part of faithful servants of God acting out a role he had determined for them with little sense of personal agency. Rather, individuals, acting either alone or in concert with their fellow citizens, could assume some responsibility for creating art, ideas, and even social experiments that benefited our lives on Earth. Secular knowledge, practical skills, political involvement, marriage, family, and even the paying of taxes became instruments for human fulfillment and the means of constructing a more pleasant and meaningful life. The human perspective changed from the theocentric world of the Middle Ages to the anthropocentric world of the Renaissance. This shift emphasized the ideal of the creation of an individual life as a work of art and the building of cities that were equally things of beauty and commodity. It celebrated human achievement, including social mobility and social responsibility. This is not to say that the Renaissance was pagan or any less Christian—it was not—but it shifted the balance in the role of human free will and unleashed the creative spirit of thousands of individuals. Fame and history became important to Italians, who saw themselves as part of the human continuum; the ancient pagan classics could be applied to contemporary situations in art, learning,

and even ethics, because it could be shown that the ancient Greeks and Romans were good men with good advice concerning the human condition. Salvation remained a matter of faith and religious communion, but the complexity of human experience on Earth had been recognized and validated.

The Renaissance manifested itself differently in different places in Italy. The great republics, such as Florence and Venice, enjoyed a form of government that permitted a different kind of social and economic organization. These, especially Florence, have often been identified as the primary theaters of Renaissance culture. However, this is both unfair and incorrect. As we will see, small, petty principalities, such as 15th-century Urbino, contributed greatly to the Renaissance ideal, as did the enormously complex but equally influential city of Rome. Rome was at once the center of Western Christianity, with its bishop the head of the Church, and the city, the head of the Roman Empire, the living memory of a time when Italy ruled the known world and created so many of its fundamental institutions and ideas. Humanism, Renaissance culture, and the desire for fame and personal power infected the Church just as much as it did the republican magistracies in Florence or the courtly societies of monarchical regimes. We will need to look severally at the major centers of Renaissance culture to trace the flexibility of its dominant ideals and see how competition and patronage in different environments added to the rich growth of Italian culture.

Many of the principles of Renaissance Italian Humanism and ideals remain with us today, and not just the appreciation for Naturalism in art and the validity of individual experience, without which we could not have experimental science, for example. The principles of Renaissance education, based on knowledge of the Greek and Roman classics, remained the foundation for elite education well into the 20th century. Philosophical ideas, such as the dignity of man (a precursor of the principle of basic human rights) and the belief in ideal worlds, still inform our discourse. Italian commercial inventions still drive the engines of any capitalist society, and acceptance of the unique responsibility of the individual to construct himself or herself into the best model of achievement and civic engagement continues to go straight to the heart of a free society. These principles might have developed in the seemingly distant world of Renaissance Italy, but their attraction to the essence of human nature and the multiplicity of human experience make them as valid now as they were then.

Finally, we will discuss why these heroic ideals and institutions collapsed. Here, too, there might be lessons to learn for our own world. I will suggest that the conditions that gave rise to such noble practices and principles were crushed by the terror of war, occasioned by the French invasions of Italy in 1494, which turned the peninsula into the battleground of Europe for almost 60 years. I will argue that unspeakable events, such as the 1527 sack of Rome, made it difficult to sustain such ideals as the dignity of man. And the repressive reaction of the Church and many Italian states to the challenge of the Reformation introduced mechanisms that crushed the imagination, freedom of speech, and freedom of action. The introduction of the Roman Inquisition in the 1540s, the Index of Prohibited Books in the 1550s and 1560s, and the growing authoritarianism in the monarchies that ruled Italy snuffed out the light that Petrarch and those of his generation had lit. Of course, there were external forces, such as the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 and the consequent shift of the European economy to the Atlantic seaboard from the Mediterranean (the *Media Terra*, the center of the world since the beginning of recorded European history). But challenges had been met previously; now they appeared insurmountable. There was a failure of will, imagination, and belief. For example, Italians were still among the greatest of seafarers, but they sailed for Spain, England, and France; Italians remained great shipbuilders, but they continued to construct shallow-draft, wide-beamed galleys that were suited to the Mediterranean—where trade was being strangled by the Turkish advance—and completely useless on the open ocean, where new opportunities lay.

In many ways, the Renaissance was an attitude and a quality of mind, a belief that “Man is the measure of all things,” that “Man can do anything that he but wills.” It was a failure of will and a loss of belief in the capacity and creativity of the human mind that ended the Renaissance, because it put an end to the principles that had driven its creation and expansion.

Lecture One

The Study of the Italian Renaissance

Scope: There are many ways of approaching the study of the Italian Renaissance. My method in this course is to provide a wide perspective based on a fusion of many disciplines. This form of interdisciplinary analysis is generally described as *cultural history*, following the method employed by Jacob Burckhardt in his pioneering *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). This approach is similar to the creation of a mosaic, in which each separate tessera contributes to the wider image, providing for a complex and subtle understanding of a historical epoch. I have also imposed a rough chronological structure to ensure that the information progresses logically. However, given that the engagement with Renaissance values took place at different times in different places in Italy, each major center requires its own context. You will find, then, that lectures on specific city-states are interspersed with those on general currents in philosophy, education, and other cultural elements that can be seen to apply broadly to the peninsula as a whole. The aim of this series is to provide you with a multifaceted and complex image of Renaissance Italy that explains why that period remains fundamental to modern Western culture.

We begin our study of the Renaissance with Petrarch, although it is important to put his career and work into context. Consequently, we will review the general condition of Italy during the late Middle Ages and discuss why Dante (who died when Petrarch was 17) can be seen as essentially a medieval thinker. It is more difficult to identify a clear moment at which the Renaissance ends, even in Italy. I will argue that the Renaissance was, in essence, a set of attitudes and beliefs, founded on the application of ancient literature to the needs of Italians from the late 14th to the 16th centuries. For this reason, I suggest that it was the loss of confidence in those beliefs that eroded the Italians' dedication to such principles as the dignity of man and the ability of the individual and community to determine their own history. After the French invasions and the peninsular wars, after the sack of Rome and the collapse of the Florentine Republic, and especially after the suppression of freedom of ideas occasioned by the Roman Inquisition and the Index of Prohibited Books following the Council of Trent (1545–1563), it was impossible to sustain the ideas and attitudes that had given rise to the Renaissance and allowed it to thrive.

Outline

I. The Renaissance is an element of cultural history that is defined by a set of ideas rather than purely temporal or geographical restrictions. It occurred at different times in different places, although it can be recognized first in Italy by the mid-14th century in the work of Petrarch.

- **A.** From the time of Jacob Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), interdisciplinary cultural history has served as the means of interpreting the Italian Renaissance.
  - **1.** Cultural history functions by bringing together several disciplines to create a multifaceted perspective on the past.
  - **2.** Jacob Burckhardt and his great book provided a platform on which interpretations of the Renaissance have been built.
  - **3.** His various chapters, covering everything from the idea of the state as a work of art to festivals, investigated the Renaissance as a complex cultural phenomenon.
  - **4.** Burckhardt was not really a historian but an art critic and aesthete, and he called his book an "essay" rather than a "history."
  - **5.** In cultural history—especially of the Renaissance—it is important see the production of art and ideas as reflective of political, social, and economic change, and it is that interaction that we will explore in this course.
- **B.** To begin, we must examine the various disciplinary contributions to Renaissance cultural history.
  - **1.** We will discuss the nature of social history, both in general and in its application to the various states of the Italian peninsula, to provide a background to the changing society of Italy in the late Middle Ages.

        2. We will also cover economic history to elucidate the conditions that produced sufficient surplus capital to patronize art and learning.
        3. Further, we will reflect on the complex intellectual and cultural traditions of Europe and Italy as a context for the development of Renaissance values, beginning with the career of Petrarch and, subsequently, taking these ideas into the various states of Italy, starting with Florence.
    - **C.** Overall, the approach to the material in this course reflects my own continued appreciation of the Burckhardtian tradition.
        1. The structure of the course is essentially chronological, inasmuch as it can be, given the complexity of events on the peninsula.
        2. However, the demands of an interdisciplinary approach also require an interweaving of lectures, moving back and forth from purely historical explanations of events, to discussions of abstract ideals, to treatments of key figures in the period.

- **II.** In order to understand the Renaissance, it is important to understand something of the nature of the Italian crucible from which it first arose.
    - **A.** The very geography and geographical position of Italy help explain its economic dominance in Europe over such a long period, its geography paradoxically protecting it from Europe while also allowing it to dominate the continent.
    - **B.** Beginning with an overview of the fragmented political states of Italy in the late Middle Ages—before and during the time of Dante—we will see how the disunity of Italy provided certain advantages and encouraged competition.
    - **C.** Other elements of Italian life, including the heritage of antiquity, will round out the general introduction to the course.

- **III.** We must first establish the mindset of the Renaissance, the set of values and approaches that define the period.
    - **A.** Petrarch is the figure with whom the Renaissance mentality can be said to have begun, particularly his relationship with classical antiquity; his invention of the modern ideal of the autonomous individual, curious about himself in all areas of human experience; and his celebration of his emotional life through his poetry.
    - **B.** As we will see, Humanism, in its classical and civic manifestation, was almost the ideology of Renaissance Italy, particularly in the Republic of Florence.

- **IV.** We then move on to discuss a number of independent city-states whose history both defined and was shaped by the Renaissance.
    - **A.** We start with Florence, long acknowledged as the cradle of the Renaissance, under the regime of the Medici, the family that in 1434 took indirect control of the city.
    - **B.** Other Renaissance centers, such as the Republic of Venice, papal Rome, despotic Milan and Urbino, will also be discussed in terms of their unique experiences of, and contributions to, the Italian Renaissance.

- **V.** From this point on, the course will cover a number of topics, shifting perspectives to reflect different historical analyses.
    - **A.** We will devote time to analysis of the structures and patterns of thought, from educational ideas to Renaissance Neoplatonism.
    - **B.** The experience of women and the family in Renaissance Italy—areas of recent historiographical emphasis—will also be included.
    - **C.** Major events shaping the Renaissance require their own focus; thus, we look at the French invasions, the Italian wars, and the sack of Rome and assess how such events precipitated the decline of Italy.
    - **D.** We also examine intellectual changes occasioned by the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic response through the Council of Trent, as measures such as the establishment of the Roman Inquisition and the Index of Prohibited Books contributed to the suppression of freedom of thought.

- **E.** Finally, important individuals who made substantial contributions both to the Italian Renaissance and European—indeed, Western—civilization will also be introduced.
    - **1.** Thus, in addition to the popes and princes, magistrates, and painters, we will devote specific lectures to Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and Castiglione.
    - **2.** These writers of the late Italian Renaissance of the 16th century can be seen to focus much of what went before into principles that could then be applied elsewhere, based on their work.
    - **3.** Political advice, history, *belles lettres*, and manuals of courtly behavior produced by these geniuses at the end of the period can be seen as distillations of much of what had occurred previously.
    - **4.** They also ensured that the rich culture of the Renaissance was preserved for all times, despite the lack of Italian political freedom.

VI. The series of lectures that follows investigates the Renaissance in all its complexity, from its emergence in the mid-14th century with Petrarch until its decline two centuries later.

- **A.** First, we will discuss how the idea of the Renaissance itself developed and how previous scholars saw the period.
- **B.** Then, we will look at the condition of Italy in the time before Petrarch.
- **C.** In so doing, we will lay a foundation for more detailed material that will find resonance in your own appreciation of history and culture and reflect why it is that the Renaissance continues to enjoy such wide cultural appeal up to the present.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, “Introduction,” pp. 1–7, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Secondary Sources:

Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Vol. I: *The State as a Work of Art*, *The Development of the Individual*, *The Revival of Antiquity*.

———, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Vol. II: *The Discovery of the World and of Man*, *Society and Festivals*, *Morality and Religion*.

Supplementary Reading:

Margaret Aston, ed., *The Panorama of the Renaissance: The Renaissance in the Perspective of History*.

C. F. Black, et al., *Cultural Atlas of the Renaissance*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What elements do you think need to be taken into account in identifying and defining a period of history?
2. We all approach the past with the baggage of our personal experience. What has been your experience of the Renaissance?

Lecture Two

The Renaissance—Changing Interpretations

Scope: The Renaissance cannot be easily defined either geographically or chronologically. Because the Renaissance represented a set of ideas and attitudes, it became visible at different times in different places, depending upon the social, economic, political, and cultural context of each region. Furthermore, the Renaissance was the first self-conscious period of European history. It was articulated by the Italian Humanist writer Giovanni Boccaccio (d. 1375), who recognized that a new world was being created, a world based partly on the experience of new groups with new aspirations and partly on the recovery of ancient models. Hence, we have come to know it as the period of rebirth, or in French, the period of the *Renaissance*. This lecture will define the phenomenon of the Renaissance and investigate its historiography from the 14th century to the present.

Outline

I. Like any historical period, the Renaissance is a constructed moment, an abstract idea, a collection of specific events filtered through the imaginations of many different historians, scholars, and movements.

- **A.** The Renaissance has the advantage of being self-defined.
- **B.** It has also served as a period that helped others deal with their own political, social, and artistic goals.
- **C.** To talk about the period, it is important to understand the intellectual baggage that it carries.

II. The Renaissance was a self-conscious age in which Italian writers as early as the 14th century defined themselves as different.

- **A.** Giovanni Boccaccio (d. 1375) recognized that his world was different from the period that went just before and that Italy was different from northern Europe as a result of the recovery of ancient learning and art.
- **B.** In the next century, Leonardo Bruni (d. 1444), in his historical writings, identified the gap between his own time and the ancient world as a *Medium Aevum*, or the "Middle Ages."
  - **1.** This broke the sense of the historical continuum that had animated medieval historical thought.
  - **2.** Medieval art and architecture were described as "gothic," a pejorative term that referred to the Goths, barbarians who had destroyed ancient Roman culture.
- **C.** The Florentine Matteo Palmieri, writing around 1440, talked of a new age or the rebirth of all the ancient arts and ancient learning.
- **D.** In the 16th century, Giorgio Vasari in his *Lives of the Artists* (1550) established a principle of periodization of art, beginning with "the First Lights" and culminating in Michelangelo. He, too, explicitly discussed a "rebirth" of ancient knowledge and practice.
- **E.** The importance of this self-definition has been reinforced by modern historians, such as Federico Chabod, who identified what he terms "the energizing myth" of the Italian Renaissance: Italians came to believe so completely in their special destiny and talents that Humanist tags, such as "Man can do anything if he but wills," were accepted as truth and, thus, gave Italians, Chabod argues, the necessary self-confidence to experiment with new forms of government, culture, and society.

III. Historians writing after the period of the Renaissance discussed its events and ideas in ways that reflected their contemporary environment rather more than the integrity of the period itself.

- **A.** In some national histories, the Renaissance was interpreted and celebrated as an advance on the dark and ignorant Middle Ages and mourned as a victim of the events of the Reformation, including the establishment of the Roman Inquisition and the Index of Prohibited Books.
  - **1.** Voltaire (1694–1778) introduced the Renaissance almost as a prefiguration of the Enlightenment of the 18th century.
  - **2.** He stressed the rationalist elements of thought and anticlericalism he could find in certain writers.

    3. Jules Michelet (1798–1874) in his monumental *History of France* (1867) introduced the French word *Renaissance* to international scholarship in the volumes dedicated to that period.
    4. Like Voltaire, Michelet was committed to anticlericalism and was a fervent republican; therefore, he found validation in the principles he identified in Renaissance Europe.
  - **B.** The revival of interest in the Middle Ages gave rise to a backlash against the Renaissance being portrayed as a movement of greater human freedom.
    1. The Romantic movement of the 19th century celebrated medieval Europe, its art and architecture, and its faith.
    2. The religiosity of the Victorians turned them against what they saw as the "paganism" of Renaissance Italy, extolling instead the piety of the medieval Age of Faith.
    3. As with historical writing, a reaction on the part of artists, artisans, and architects returned to the models and styles of the Middle Ages, reflected in the Arts and Crafts Movements and the Gothic revival.

- **IV.** These interpretations of the Renaissance were always the subject of debate, as was the very existence of the Renaissance itself.
  - **A.** In the 19th century in particular, historical discussion of the Renaissance was almost a metaphor for contemporary historical debates: republicanism as opposed to monarchy, reason or science versus religious faith, and individualism in opposition to mass movements.
  - **B.** In fact, the varying perspectives on the Renaissance generated what is known as the *Renaissance debate*, in which arguments for or against the very existence of the Renaissance were articulated by scholars.
  - **C.** The debate was complicated by popular culture, which adopted the Renaissance in various guises.
    1. For some, it was an exotic locale of dramatic personalities, as exemplified by George Eliot's novel *Romola* about Florence in the 15th century.
    2. Others viewed the Renaissance as a boundless source of widely produced images of decorative art; Renaissance revival styles and the mass production of certain Renaissance paintings and sculptures both popularized and vulgarized the period.
  - **D.** At the end of the 19th century, a growing academic study of art and culture impelled scholars to look at the contexts in which art and culture are produced, such as the economic environment, patterns of patronage, and the organization of workshops. The study of the Renaissance grew much more sophisticated.

- **V.** The historiographical tradition in the 20th century also reflects contemporary events.
  - **A.** The events of the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe had a profound influence on the study of the Renaissance.
    1. The educational emphasis on high culture was challenged by thinkers on the left who saw the Renaissance as elitist; they encouraged the study of economic and social history instead of cultural and intellectual history.
    2. Historians and politicians on the right sought justification for fascist ideology in the Renaissance; Mussolini claimed to sleep with Machiavelli's *Prince* under his pillow.
    3. A huge debate was raised about the value of cultural history—or even culture itself—in the face of the unspeakable barbarism of the fascist and communist regimes between the wars: Why study a cultural movement when clearly cultured nations, such as Russia, Germany, Italy, and Spain, could commit the atrocities witnessed in the 1930s?
  - **B.** The scholarly diaspora of Jewish intellectuals from continental Europe to the United States and Great Britain stimulated Renaissance scholarship.
    1. In the United States, Erwin Panofsky influenced Renaissance art history. In his great book *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (1960), he addresses the issue of the form and spirit of art.
    2. In all his scholarship, Paul Oskar Kristeller recast the writing of Renaissance history, arguing that Humanism was a form of education and curriculum based on control of ancient texts and rhetorical principles.

    3. Hans Baron's *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (1955) proposes the idea of Civic Humanism, in which knowledge of ancient texts and rhetoric was applied to the Florentine Republic after 1402 by Leonardo Bruni to establish an ideology of liberty.
    4. In Great Britain, Nicolai Rubinstein studied how the Medici hegemony actually functioned in Florence, turning to the study of politics to investigate the roots of control in *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434 to 1494).*

VI. During the latter half of the 20th century, new disciplines and historical methods altered the way in which the Renaissance was studied.

- **A.** The primary focus on archival research over literary knowledge made social and economic history more important.
    1. Scholars began to scour the archives to find new sources of documentation, resulting in more "microhistories" of groups within society or of smaller centers.
    2. A growing interest in Italian towns and cities outside of Florence, Venice, and Rome made clear the complex diversity of Renaissance culture, politics, and society.
    3. Women's history and the study of marginalized groups in society, such as the poor, slaves, rural peasants, and criminals, grew increasingly popular.
    4. Economic and social historians questioned whether culture can legitimately be investigated outside the context of social organization, class, and the means of generating wealth.
    5. Contemporary attitudes toward the study of the past stress continuity over quick, dramatic change, as well as comparative studies of groups more widely dispersed. Can we learn more about the 15th-century woolen industry from studying just Florence or that city together with the Low Counties over a longer period to investigate a Europe-wide industry?
- **B.** These new disciplines and historical methods altered forever the old Burckhardtian model of cultural history, the model on which this course is developed.
    1. Rather than being eclipsed by these new disciplines and historical methods, the 19th-century Burckhardtian tradition on which this course is based has been immeasurably enriched: The very fragmentation of approach that is at the heart of the Burckhardtian model allows for the absorption of new disciplines rather than replacement or overshadowing by them.
    2. For example, the use of anthropology to elucidate ritual behavior and extended-kin duties has immeasurably helped in our understanding of Renaissance political and religious practice, as well as family and economic life.
    3. The study of women in the Renaissance has provided an important perspective on Renaissance culture, previously so completely directed by men.
    4. The growing interest in rural studies has shifted some attention away from urban centers toward less studied agricultural areas.
    5. The Renaissance remains, then, a dynamic, growing area of study, influenced by the latest trends in contemporary scholarship while still enjoying a powerful link to its traditional roots in the 19th century.

Secondary Sources:

Benjamin G. Kohl and Alison Andrews Smith, eds., *Major Problems in the History of the Italian Renaissance*.

Supplementary Reading:

Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance*.

Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation*.

Denys Hay, ed., *The Renaissance Debate.*

Questions to Consider:

1. Is history a matter of interpretation or is it a collection facts about the past?

2. There are literally thousands of books published on the Renaissance. Why do historians continually reinterpret the past?

Lecture Three

Italy—The Cradle of the Renaissance

Scope: The Renaissance first developed in Italy early in the 14th century because of the unique circumstances of the Italian peninsula. Unlike in northern Europe, long-distance trade in the Mediterranean had continued after the collapse of the Roman Empire, and urban life had remained strong in Italy. Because townsmen and merchants required secular learning, rather than clerical education, a powerful lay tradition of study and secular values had been sustained. In addition, the memories of the Roman Empire were everywhere to be seen. The inhabitants of the peninsula identified much more with the memories of ancient Rome or the sophisticated cities of the Byzantine Empire than with the rural, feudal culture of the north. A rich secular burgher class arose, and the division of the peninsula into a mosaic of small states allowed each to experiment with different social and political models and encouraged creative competition.

Outline

I. The geography of Italy has had an inescapable impact on its development.

- **A.** The internal geography allowed for a patchwork of independent states.
  - **1.** As a peninsula projecting into the Mediterranean Sea, Italy is protected by water on three sides and the mountain range of the Alps on its northern frontier.
  - **2.** This provided some measure of independence and security during some of the more fragmented periods of European history after the collapse of the Roman imperial system.
  - **3.** It also allowed for a large number of natural seaports close to local and, eventually, distant markets and sources of raw material.
  - **4.** The peninsula is divided up the center by the mountain range of the Apennines, permitting the foundation of defensible independent states aided by topography.
- **B.** Two prominent states in the peninsula reflected political models of neighboring Europe.
  - **1.** In the north-central part of the peninsula, the fertile Lombard plain, dominated by the city of Milan and watered by the river Po, the largest river in Italy, constituted a natural territory comparable to the states of the north, such as France and Spain.
  - **2.** In the south, the Kingdom of Naples (which usually, but not always, included the island of Sicily) was also a monarchy modeled on the feudal dynastic states of northern Europe, a consequence of its capture by the Normans under Robert Guiscard (d. 1085).
- **C.** Italy, then, was a patchwork of independent states with very different traditions and structures, enriching the experience of Italians, who could experiment with different forms of social and political organization.

II. Geography also protected Italy from the worst effects of the collapse of the Roman Empire.

- **A.** While the European economy was devastated by the collapse of the Roman imperial system, Italy suffered the least because of its position extending into the Mediterranean.
  - **1.** Italy was a natural point of contact between Europe and the Byzantine Empire.
  - **2.** The Crusades (beginning just before 1100) poured much wealth into Italy, as northern knights embarked from Italian ports, often in Italian ships.
  - **3.** This carrying trade provided huge profits to such maritime states as Venice and Pisa.
  - **4.** Links were formed with eastern merchants and cities that were later exploited as the Italians developed a virtual monopoly on the trade in luxury goods stimulated by the experience of northern princes and nobles in the east.
- **B.** A collateral development of this mercantile culture was the growth of cities and towns.
  - **1.** International trade takes place in cities, and these cities were able to capitalize on the infusions of wealth and commerce.

        2. The law follows trade; thus, cities required trained notaries and lawyers to write contracts and establish the regulations that governed this capital-intensive activity.
        3. Trade also generated the need for reliable coinage, and by the 13th century, the cities of Venice and Florence had produced the ducat and the florin, which became the international instruments of exchange throughout Europe.
        4. Equally, merchants needed training in basic accounting and other financial skills, and knowledge of foreign languages would also prove useful.
        5. The result was the maintenance and expansion of secular education, because the clerical training in theology had little value for these men destined for mercantile careers.
    C. This expansion of urban life created a class of educated, wealthy, cosmopolitan laymen, equipped to rule their cities in their own interests.

III. At the same time, Italy also benefited economically from the papacy, the head of the Roman Church, being located in Rome.

- **A.** Even during the most difficult periods of insecurity in northern Europe, prelates and pilgrims traveled to Rome, thus enriching the local economy and further stimulating the need for reliable coinage and means of communication along the routes to Rome.
    1. Pilgrims by the tens of thousands—hundreds of thousands during jubilee years—traveled to Rome to visit the holy sites, such as the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul, the patriarchal basilicas, and the other wonders of that capital of Christendom.
    2. Cases in canon law could be appealed to Rome, causing many petitioners, lawyers, and their attendants to plead their cases, often over long periods of time in an expensive process.
    3. A complex infrastructure developed to serve traveling clerics, pilgrims, and petitioners, especially in Rome but in cities along the way as well, thus depositing much money in Italy.
- **B.** As well as generating wealth passively, the Church worked actively to bring money into Italy.
    1. As early as the 12th century, there was instituted a system of papal taxation on the Church, forcing all from high ecclesiastics to parish priests to contribute to the central office.
    2. This taxation not only transferred large sums of money to Rome but also created an important category of official able to deal with fiscal matters.
    3. Rome and other Italian states consequently had a great need for highly skilled lawyers and accountants for their sophisticated economies, and this helped drive the desire and delivery of secular education in law and commerce.

IV. These developments had enormous implications for the conduct of Italian history.

- **A.** Tensions would naturally develop between the established ruling elite of feudal, landowning nobles or bishops and the newly rising merchant classes.
    1. Mercantile urban societies are socially mobile, while rural, feudal societies are static and dependent upon fixed signs of status, such as birth.
    2. Merchants had particular needs, such as stable coinage, standard weights and measures, and improved means of communication, that mattered little to rural magnates or churchmen.
    3. The newly influential merchants would necessarily challenge the worldview of the old landed families, and the merchants would demand some influence in their cities or states as result of both their payment of taxes and their influence in bringing wealth to the community.
- **B.** The division of the Italian peninsula into a great many independent political jurisdictions was, in many ways, an advantage.
    1. Each city-state could react to and confront these opportunities in different ways.
    2. The division reinforced the sense of competition among the city-states, resulting in many imaginative solutions to complex problems.
    3. It permitted constitutional experimentation best suited to a local economy and social structure.
    4. It provided the context for the division between competing sources of sovereignty, represented by the Germanic Holy Roman Emperors (the Ghibellines) and the papacy (the Guelfs).

V. Although fractious and often at war, the states of Italy did share a great many elements that permitted varying degrees of cooperation and the sharing of ideas.

  A. Italians mostly spoke dialects of the same language, allowing communication to take place.

    1. Although these dialects varied widely in mutual comprehensibility, generally, educated Italians could make themselves understood.

    2. This facilitated internal trade and diplomacy.

  B. Latin culture and the Roman Church were strong bonds.

    1. All Italians saw themselves as the natural heirs of the Roman Empire.

    2. Equally, they were all members of the Roman Church, which was very much an Italian institution, given its headquarters at Rome.

    3. Ancient monuments, such as extant and still used Roman buildings and roads, ruins, coins, and legal codes, as well as the Church, reinforced a sense of shared history in Italy, even during periods of greatest strife.

  C. By the later 14th century, there was growing a common culture of vernacular literature, with Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch read almost universally, and a growing recognition of Latin Humanist culture, which would reach its maturity in the 15th century.

  D. Thus, although Italy was nothing like a united nation, Petrarch, Machiavelli, and others could speak of an Italian people, and writers such as Castiglione could praise an Italian court culture.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, “The Classical Heritage,” pp. 7–15, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Secondary Sources:

Armando Sapori, *The Italian Merchant in the Middle Ages*.

Supplementary Reading:

Aziz S. Atiya, *Crusade, Commerce and Culture*.

Robert S. Lopez and Irving W. Raymond, trans., *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Geography determines history. Is this true generally or just in the case of Italy?

2. Why was the continuation of urban life and secular education so important to the development of the Renaissance?

Lecture Four

The Age of Dante—Guelfs and Ghibellines

Scope: The Florentine poet Dante (1265–1321) defined the transition from a medieval to a Renaissance perspective. He was educated in medieval Scholasticism, the prevailing theological and educational view that defended Christian faith as a body of certainties, truths that could be analyzed and interpreted through a rigid application of logic. Dante was equally born into a period of factional dispute between those who supported the authority of the papacy—the Guelfs—and the adherents of the Holy Roman Emperor—the Ghibellines. This division was more than one of ideology; it reflected the growing tensions between the newly enriched merchant classes, usually Guelf, and the aristocratic, established magnate families of the Ghibellines. The Guelf victory in Florence provided the preconditions for the creation of the burgher republic in 1293 and, with it, the circumstances necessary for the institutionalization of Renaissance values. Dante's great poem *The Divine Comedy* reflected the Scholastic structure of the medieval world, but he looked forward when he created individual characters seeking self-knowledge in a complex world. His own life, too, was one of engagement; an educated layman, husband, and father, his political activities led to his exile in 1301.

Outline

I. The shift from a medieval to a Renaissance perspective in Italy is reflected in the life and career of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321)

  A. He suffered from the medieval struggles between the Roman papacy and the empire.

  B. His works reflected his intellectual training in medieval Scholasticism.

  C. But his life experiences and his poetry prefigure a number of central Renaissance elements we will discuss in the course of these lectures.

II. The conflict between the Roman Church and the Germanic Holy Roman Empire resulted from the confusion of authority between church and state during the Middle Ages.

  A. Christian Roman emperors and Byzantine emperors enjoyed a great deal of authority over the Church.

    1. Constantine, for example, had called the early councils of the Church, such as Nicea in 325.

    2. The collapse of the Roman imperial system left a vacuum in sovereignty that the bishops of Rome sought to fill.

    3. They claimed to be the heirs of both the emperor and of St. Peter, whose charge by Jesus Christ seemed to indicate temporal as well as spiritual power, as represented in the two keys.

  B. The formation of a new Germanic empire in the late 8th century by Charlemagne challenged this power.

    1. Charlemagne traveled to Rome and was crowned as emperor by the pope on Christmas Day, 800.

    2. This begins the tradition of the Holy Roman Empire in which Germanic kings were identified with the successors of Caesar.

    3. A document began to circulate at about that time purporting to signal the gift of the rule of the western part of the Roman Empire to Pope Sylvester by Constantine when he moved the capital to Constantinople (Byzantium).

    4. This so-called "Donation of Constantine" was accepted as legitimate until Lorenzo Valla, a 15th-century Humanist, proved it to be a forgery using the new tools of historical philology.

III. The divided state of the Italian peninsula caused some additional complications.

  A. It gave rise to the struggles between the Guelfs (supporters of the Roman pope) and the Ghibellines (loyal to the Holy Roman Emperor).

    1. With the collapse of the Roman imperial system, some cities in Italy were ruled by their bishops and others, by lay lords. The former claimed their authority through the pope; the latter, through Roman law that gave the emperor authority over cities.

        2. The expansion of long-distance trade in the 12th century had resulted in the growth of a rich mercantile class in many cities, often with conflicting ambitions to the old landed nobility.
        3. As a rule, the nobility with landed estates tended to favor the Ghibelline, or imperial, allegiance, and the newly rich merchants, the Guelf, or papal obligation.
    - **B.** Thus, the conflict between emperor and pope took on class and economic elements in Italy and introduced a degree of tension into local, as well as peninsular, politics.
        1. However, the emperors seldom spent much time in Italy, because their power base was usually north of the Alps, thus leaving Italian Ghibelline states free to function autonomously.
        2. Equally, popes were almost always elected as old men and were priests; thus, very few tried to impose any kind of control over their Guelf cities, again permitting independent action.
        3. Such autonomous states were bound to engender political instability.

- **IV.** Dante illustrates well the new social groups struggling for control in an unstable environment.
    - **A.** As a citizen of Florence born into a patrician family, Dante was profoundly affected by the struggles between Guelf and Ghibelline and within the Guelf party itself.
        1. Dante sought an excellent education but chose a secular rather than religious life. He was engaged in both commerce and politics, serving the communal government in several capacities.
        2. The Florentine Guelfs, after a series of factional struggles, were finally victorious over the Ghibellines in 1267, when the brother of the king of France, Louis of Toulouse, was appointed head of the army and Florence joined the Guelf League.
        3. This victory did not, however, end factional struggles, only deflecting the political tension in Florence to disputes between different groups of Guelf supporters.
        4. Dante supported the White Guelfs, who represented the powerful urban merchant class who wanted the 1293 Ordinances of Justice to be enforced but did not want the pope to interfere too deeply in Florentine affairs.
        5. The White Guelfs were opposed by the Black Guelfs, who were in general an aristocratic group supported by the artisans.
        6. Dante's political activity resulted in his being exiled in 1301 when the Black Guelfs defeated the White.
    - **B.** Dante's exile was a source of enormous grief for him.
        1. Some years earlier, Dante had married and had several children, but after his exile, he never again saw his wife.
        2. He traveled around Italy and perhaps even went to Paris with his sons and one daughter (who was, significantly, named Beatrice and who, equally significantly, later became a nun).
        3. Like many other exiled White Guelfs, Dante sought support from the Ghibellines as a means of returning to Florence.
        4. He consequently welcomed the emperor, Henry VII, into Italy in 1310 and wrote an important book in praise of the imperial cause (*De Monarchia*, 1309).
        5. Henry's death in Italy in 1313 led to the collapse of the exiles and, by extension, Dante's cause.
        6. Dante traveled again in northern Italy, staying some time in Lucca before moving to Ravenna as the guest of its lord.
        7. It was in Ravenna that Dante completed his most famous work—*The Commedia*—and it was there he died in 1321, his body remaining in that city to this day.

- **V.** Dante's work is equally emblematic of the medieval struggles that gave way to the efflorescence of the Renaissance.
    - **A.** His writing is imbued with the Scholastic structures and ideals espoused by his intellectual inspiration, Thomas Aquinas.
        1. *Vita Nuova*, his first collection of lyric poems and prose passages, completed about 1294, is dedicated to his pure love (unsullied with desires of the flesh) for Beatrice, a woman whom Dante had first seen when he was eight.

    2. These poems are almost mystical in their tone and content and illustrate a Scholastic structure and inspiration, with the influence of Thomas Aquinas readily visible and the format of medieval Scholastic commentary readily apparent.
    3. About 1306, Dante began his *Convivio*, or *Banquet*, a collection of prose meditations on poems he had written about his circumstances of exile, duty, honor, and fortune; it, too, is a Scholastic exercise in many ways.
  - **B.** But Dante is most famous for his extraordinary poem *The Divine Comedy*, a work whose theme is Dante's own journey in life.
    1. This long poem is divided into three sections (Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise), in which Hell is dominated by the seven deadly sins; the plateaus of Purgatory, by repentance; and Paradise, by knowledge of God.
    2. The ancient pagan poet Virgil guides Dante through Hell and Purgatory, where Dante meets real characters from his life and times whose experiences are carefully drawn and universalized for both didactic and dramatic purposes.
    3. The poet is guided by Beatrice, his pure love, through Paradise, where he meets Scholastic theologians, including St. Bernard, who ultimately lead him to God.
  - **C.** Aspects of *The Divine Comedy* look forward to the Renaissance.
    1. This comes in part because Dante's work resulted in his own dialect of Tuscan becoming the literary language of Italy.
    2. Yet while the rejection of Latin and embrace of contemporary dialects is often cited as a defining feature of the Renaissance, Dante himself specifically rejected his own tongue, writing an unfinished work, in Latin, *De vulgari eloquentia* (1304), on the need for a new single dialect of the Italian vernacular to carry the content of material then written in Latin.
    3. And although Dante does exemplify elements that we will see as emblematic of the Renaissance, such as well-defined and believable characters in a world of real events, the inspiration and reference of the poem remain resolutely medieval, with Scholastic theology determining the structure.
    4. The value system of the poem resoundingly reflects the teachings of the medieval Church, and in particular, Dante's portrayal of Beatrice animates not the medieval model of courtly love but the Scholastic notion of pure affection, which is a reflection of the soul's desire for God.

- **VI.** Dante, overall, signifies the last moments of the Middle Ages.
  - **A.** He certainly prefigures a number of central Renaissance elements we will discuss in the course of these lectures.
    1. He is a layman, married with children and active in politics and commerce.
    2. He is interested in his own growth and in the events of his time.
    3. He writes as a means of exploring his inner feelings, both for Beatrice and his spiritual yearnings.
    4. He writes in the vernacular.
  - **B.** But Dante's world is structured by Scholastic theology and the unquestioned teaching of the Church.
    1. He divides the world into Guelfs and Ghibellines and rewards or punishes them accordingly.
    2. His quest is not so much for self-knowledge as for salvation.
    3. These things will separate him from Petrarch, with whom we properly begin our discussion of the Italian Renaissance.

Secondary Sources:

George Holmes, *Dante*.

Supplementary Reading:

Marvin B. Becker, *Medieval Italy: Constraints and Creativity*.

John Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch, 1216–1380*.

Giovanni Tabacco, *The Struggle for Power in Medieval Italy: Structures of Political Rule*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was the division between Guelf and Ghibelline so central to medieval Italy?
2. What elements of Dante's life and writings reflect a medieval perspective?

Lecture Five

Petrarch and the Foundations of Humanism

Scope: Humanism was the new perspective of the Renaissance, both as an ideology and as a method of education. It was founded on the twin beliefs that recognition of the content and style of ancient literature could improve the human condition and that the experience of life on Earth could be valuable in itself. The conscious creation of the individual personality and the acquisition of the means to define one's experience for the benefit of others were natural consequences of this perspective.

Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch, 1304–1374) can justly be described as the father of Humanism. Petrarch was born of an exiled Florentine who sought employment at the papal court in Avignon. He studied law at the universities of Montpellier and Bologna, using as texts the precepts of Roman civil law compiled at the time of Justinian. Also, he read the Latin classics, especially Cicero, to develop rhetorical skill and knowledge of the past. Ultimately, Petrarch discovered his real vocation was poetry. His love of the Latin classics and of early Christian thinkers, such as Augustine, drove him to investigate his own motivations, feelings, and desires. His love poetry, the *canzoniere*, helped define modern romantic love, and his desire to know himself recovered the genre of autobiography.

Outline

I. Francesco Petrarca, (1304–1374), or Petrarch, represented a new perspective on the part of Italians, one in which he suggested that the ancient Roman past could be seen as instructive for his contemporaries.

- **A.** Petrarch's biography helped shape his new attitudes to learning and his self-image.
    - **1.** Petrarch was born to a Florentine notary and exiled in 1301 during the same proscriptions that banished Dante.
    - **2.** He grew up near Avignon, where his father had taken a position at the papal court during the period known as the Babylonian Captivity (discussed in detail in Lecture Twenty-Two).
    - **3.** He consequently did not share a native city or supportive community in Italy; he had to determine who he was himself and construct his own identity.
    - **4.** Many of the influences on his early life came from the troubadour and courtly love traditions of southern France; this informed his vision of romantic love, as well.
    - **5.** His formal education was in the law, that is, Roman civil law, the code of the empire at the time of Justinian.
    - **6.** He read the forensic orations of Cicero, and he knew the cultural context of his studies.
- **B.** The ancient world appealed more to Petrarch than his own time.
    - **1.** Petrarch found in his ancient texts a guide for life more relevant than those from the Middle Ages.
    - **2.** He was concerned with who he was and how he related to the worldly experience of himself and others. This he could not get from medieval theology or philosophy; thus, he sought answers in ancient literature.
    - **3.** He also found that the style of ancient Latin was more pleasing and clearer than medieval Latin.
    - **4.** He came to believe that language was the key to understanding and, indeed, to the soul.
    - **5.** He reinforced the Christian connection between the word and the soul by noting that only humans enjoy the gifts of reason and speech and a soul; thus, there must be some connection between the quality of one's words and the internal qualities of the spirit.

II. The personal discoveries of Petrarch shaped a new attitude to the past and a new means of consciously constructing the individual self.

- **A.** Previous attitudes to the ancients had been derogatory.
    - **1.** The Church had viewed ancient literature as pagan, a threat to a Christian's soul.
    - **2.** Faith required men to be preoccupied, not with this world, but with the next life. It was only through faith that men could achieve an ethical human existence.

- **B.** Petrarch revised the traditional relationship between the present and the ancient past by seeing it as a model eligible to apply to his own times.
  - **1.** Rather than a trap for the soul, ancient pagan literature could have a didactic and even uplifting message.
  - **2.** Equally, Petrarch discerned an indissoluble link between good letters, good thoughts, and good men.
  - **3.** According to Petrarch, clear, persuasive language is a virtue in itself, because it provides a guide to correct information and convinces the audience to follow the right path.
  - **4.** Ancient literature, even if pagan, was not, therefore, a threat to a Christian's soul but a useful tool in constructing a good and virtuous life on Earth.
  - **5.** Faith was still important to Petrarch, but he saw human conduct as best directed by human models of behavior.
- **C.** In some ways, then, Petrarch answered the question put so emotionally by St. Jerome, the early church father who had translated the Bible into Latin: "What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?"

III. Petrarch's intellectual contribution was not limited to thought and education; he also advanced revolutionary ideas in the personal experience of love.

- **A.** Although based on earlier troubadour and courtly love models, Petrarch's ideal of love, as expressed in his love poetry, the *canzoniere*, was profoundly different.
  - **1.** Petrarch wrote that he fell perfectly in love with Laura, a woman whom he did not know and who was married to someone else.
  - **2.** Like Dante's Beatrice, she died—in Laura's case, of the plague in 1348—ensuring that the love would forever be pure.
  - **3.** But, unlike Beatrice, Laura took on a more concrete reality in Petrarch's writings.
  - **4.** And, most important, Petrarch's investigation of his feelings for Laura constitutes a minute dissection of his personal and emotional life; he is attempting to know himself and his motivations through his love.
- **B.** Moving beyond his love poetry, Petrarch began a general assessment and construction of his own character.
  - **1.** He wrote the first psychological autobiography since St Augustine's *Confessions*, his *Secretum*, or *Secret Book*.
  - **2.** In this text, he divides his self into two interlocutors, the Earthly Petrarch and the devout St. Augustine, who questions Petrarch about his love, his vanity, and his desire for fame.
  - **3.** Petrarch also wrote long, detailed letters to friends in which he described elements of his own experience; he kept copies of these letters, edited and revised them, and made them available for others.
  - **4.** Petrarch, then, was a self-conscious, constructed personality, based on his life as a model for others and as an instrument for self-awareness, illuminated through the reading of ancient literature.

IV. It was a natural progression from student to poet and writer.

- **A.** By the late 1320s, Petrarch had determined to abandon the study of law and focus, instead, on writing.
  - **1.** Before he could live on his success as a writer, he needed patronage, which he sought in the Church.
  - **2.** A law school friend recommended him to his brother, Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, one of the most influential members of the Sacred College.
  - **3.** In Avignon, Petrarch received preferment from the pope as well, support that required him to take minor orders in the Church, although he did not become a priest.
  - **4.** Despite vows of chastity and obedience, Petrarch had at least two illegitimate children, a son and a daughter, and led his own life with few restraints.
- **B.** The deaths of Laura and Cardinal Colonna during the Black Death of 1348 simultaneously broke his ties with the papal court at Avignon and sharpened his focus on his Italian roots.

    1. **1.** He had traveled previously to northern Europe (in 1333 and 1337) and come back believing that the northerners were barbarians and civilization still resided in Italy and Italian culture.
    2. **2.** Part of this was his rejection of Scholasticism, but part was a sense of his general adherence to the idea of Italy, despite the fact that the peninsula had not known unity for almost 1,000 years.
    3. **3.** One of his poems, "My Italy" (*Italia mia*), was a call for a kind of recognition of an Italian people, one that Machiavelli later adopted in the final chapter of *The Prince*.
- **C.** In 1341, Petrarch was invited to Rome to be crowned as poet laureate on Easter Sunday on the capitol, an honor not seen for a millennium.
    1. **1.** He wrote that he had competing offers from Paris (the center of Scholasticism) and Rome, but he chose Rome (in an event he very well might have arranged for himself).
    2. **2.** Although he never did return to his ancestral Florence, Petrarch traveled throughout Italy, settling for eight years at the Visconti court of Milan and serving other princes.
    3. **3.** He lived for a time in Venice with his natural daughter and presented the republic with his library.
    4. **4.** Petrarch was hopeful that the papacy would return to Rome from Avignon, so he began a journey to the eternal city in hopes of patronage.
    5. **5.** But he took ill not far from Padua and was taken to a villa he owned nearby at Arquà, now Arquà Petrarca.
    6. **6.** There on 19 July 1374, Petrarch died, his head resting on his copy of Caesar's *Commentaries*.

V. What, then, is the significance of Petrarch?

- **A.** In his desire to know himself, Petrarch brought back the genre of psychological autobiography, and he helped define the modern ideal of romantic love in his poetry.
- **B.** He invented the sonnet sequence, and he recognized the validity of human experience in all its variety.
- **C.** He also took as his guide and inspiration ancient literature and, in so doing, gave great impetus to the recovery of ancient texts and knowledge, as we shall see in the next lecture.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, "Petrarch," pp. 17–32, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Francesco Petrarch, *The Secret.*

———, *Selected Sonnets, Odes and Letters*.

Secondary Sources:

John Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch, 1216–1380*.

Ernest Hatch Wilkins, *Life of Petrarch*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How did Petrarch's obsession with Laura help him to develop his own character and poetry?
2. Petrarch and Dante were both exiles. To what extent do you think the experience of exile was a formative influence on the development of these poets?

Lecture Six

The Recovery of Antiquity

Scope: For Italians, the world of ancient Rome was their national history, one whose monuments, both physical and cultural, were everywhere to be seen. This rich tradition was increasingly regarded as an intellectual heritage to be mined for contemporary use, especially by lay rhetoricians and notaries who practiced the art of letter writing known as the *ars dictaminis*. The clear and elegant Latin of the ancients could be recovered to replace the corrupted medieval Latin then in use; the ideals of classical thought in politics and philosophy could inform the city-states of the peninsula; and the principles of art and architecture could create a more humane environment in which citizens might prosper. As a result, there was a desire to know the past and recover as much of the ancient world as possible. Libraries were searched for lost ancient authors, and the discoveries were copied and edited for modern readers. The glory of the ancient past was, then, a model to be emulated and a golden age to be recovered so that its wisdom could be applied to the circumstances of Italy in the second half of the 14th century.

Outline

I. Petrarch's example and advice solidified the recognition that classical antiquity had much to offer Italians of the 14th century.

   A. This was particularly felt in the practice of contemporary law.

      1. Petrarch himself had been trained in Roman law and had read Cicero's forensic orations.

      2. Roman law provided a continuum with the ancient past and, thereby, illustrated how classical learning and knowledge could be applied.

      3. Although monks and ecclesiastics were often literate in Latin, they did not have the kind of training in secular matters needed by townsmen.

      4. Thus arose a class of notaries, officials who wrote and copied legal documents and letters, to service the growing urban, lay mercantile community.

   B. Although they had some legal training, many notaries arose from the traditions of the Italian *ars dictaminis*, or the practice of professional letter writing in official Latin.

      1. These professional letter writers attracted business by proving that they had the best—and, hence, the most effective—epistolary style.

      2. To learn new phrases and vocabulary, they would often scour ancient Latin writers.

      3. As a result, they began the interest in little-known classical texts and helped institutionalize a standard, classical Latin style and vocabulary.

      4. Petrarch had identified the prose style of Cicero (Marcus Tullius Cicero 106–43 B.C.) as the most elegant and effective.

      5. Cicero and his contemporaries, known as the Golden Age Latin authors, became the model to follow.

II. The importance of writing in elegant and effective Latin transcended the individual transactions conducted through the notaries' letters.

   A. The remains of ancient Rome were everywhere to be seen in Italy, and the history of Rome was considered the national history of the Italian people.

      1. The surviving ruins, roads, and still-functioning buildings, such as the Pantheon, stood as witness to the greatness and magnificence of ancient Rome.

      2. These reflected the urban, mercantile, and sophisticated character of the ancient world and attracted writers and thinkers who were looking for models of behavior not found in the Middle Ages.

      3. The more letter writers and notaries searched ancient literature, the more they felt the importance of these physical survivals.

      4. The Latin language itself was, therefore, increasingly seen as a monument reflecting the greatness of Rome.

        5. There was a consequent desire to return to its purity, as reflected in ancient texts, and to avoid the Latin of the Middle Ages as too redolent of the irrelevant values that 14th -century Italians wished to escape.

- **B.** As these attitudes became more widely known and accepted by the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th centuries, there was a sense among Italians that they could recover the glory of ancient Rome.
    1. The recovery would have to start with the rehabilitation of the pure Golden Age Latin.
    2. Scholars, including Petrarch and his friend Giovanni Boccaccio, followed by others, such as Poggio Bracciolini and Niccolo Niccoli (d. 1437), searched through libraries across Europe to recover lost or forgotten ancient texts to increase their knowledge of ancient civilization.
    3. Their success was such that, by the end of the 15th century, almost the entirety of extant ancient Latin literature had been recovered.
- **C.** Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) deserves special mention as the Humanist who perhaps did most to restore the heritage of ancient literature.
    1. Appointed as a papal secretary in the early 15th century, Bracciolini followed the papal court to Constance for the council that was to heal the Great Schism in the Church, a cataclysmic break that we shall learn about in Lecture Twelve.
    2. This gave him the opportunity to scour the half-abandoned monastic libraries of the region to look for unknown ancient authors, and how successful he was!
    3. In 1415 in Cluny, Bracciolini discovered the great forensic orations of Cicero, previously not fully available.
    4. In St. Gall, he found the Vitruvius manuscript, as well as the complete text of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, which had been known only in fragmentary form.
    5. The discovery of Quintilian was of particular importance, contributing to the expansion of rhetorical education, as well as adding to the ideal of Civic Humanism through the assertion that to be a great orator, one must be a good man.

III. This explosion of knowledge of ancient texts gave rise to new disciplines.

- **A.** The recovered manuscripts were often in poor copies and, in some instances, difficult to read.
    1. This required new tools to be found in order to get at the original texts and, therefore, intentions of the authors.
    2. So it was that scholars invented philology and textual editing to ensure that the recovered texts reflected the original work of the ancient author, free of medieval interpolations.
    3. In just a few decades, this discipline had developed to the point that Lorenzo Valla could prove through philological evidence that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery and the Apostles' Creed was written well after the time of Christ.
    4. Thus, it was not only the content of ancient texts that changed the Humanists' view of their world but also the instruments developed to read them.
    5. Scholarship became a tool of the Renaissance mind, useful in separating the true from the false, the good from the bad.
- **B.** To reinforce this textual work, other disciplines had to develop.
    1. Archeology was born in the attempt to determine what ancient buildings had actually looked like and what they had been used for.
    2. Numismatics—the study of coins and medals—helped scholars identify ancient sculptures, provided a clearer chronology of the past, and gave insight into the ancient Roman economy.
    3. Large collections of manuscripts and ancient coins, medals, and artifacts were established by such scholars as Niccolo Niccoli, and these were usually open to other scholars, further spreading an interest in ancient material.

IV. The rediscovery of classical texts had a powerful impact on the arts of architecture and sculpture.

- **A.** Italians were convinced that there was a connection between the built environment and human action.

  1. Consequently, architects began to apply the vocabulary of ancient Roman architecture to their own buildings.
  2. Poggio Bracciolini's recovery in 1415 of the complete text of Vitruvius's *De architectura libri decem* greatly facilitated this process.
  3. For example, architects began using the three Vitruvian orders: Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian.
  4. Of these architects, Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) was the most influential in the 15th century.
  5. Alberti produced a modified version of Vitruvius's work.
  6. He was also a practicing architect, designing buildings that reflected his classical obsession, such as the Palazzo Rucellai in Florence (1452–1470), Sant'Andrea in Mantua (1470–1476), the façade of Santa Maria Novella in Florence (1456–1470), and the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini (1450 but unfinished).

B. Discoveries of classical sculptures and bronzes inspired modern practitioners.
  1. For example, after a hiatus of 1,000 years, portrait busts in marble were produced in Florence. Such sculptors as Mino da Fiesole (1429–1484) resurrected with great skill the head and shoulder images of prominent men, while Francesco Laurana (1453–1502) produced elegantly serene portrait busts of women.
  2. The example of the wonderful equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius in Rome motivated sculptors to attempt to reproduce, for the first time since antiquity, the life-size figures of horse and rider.
  3. Two of the most famous of these were Donatello's *Gattamelata* (*The Honeyed Cat*) for the piazza of Sant'Antonio in Padua (1445–1450) and Andrea Verrocchio's splendid image of the condottiere Colleoni (1480s) in the Campo San Giovanni e Paolo in Venice.

C. Donatello also broke new ground when he created *David* (1430–1435), the first freestanding male nude figure since antiquity.
  1. In so doing, he not only broke the hesitation to employ full nudity and sculpture in the round, but he managed to infuse his figure with that ancient reflection of ideal beauty, grace, and authority that was to characterize Renaissance sculpture.
  2. After Donatello, the figure of David was regularly created, as illustrated in the David of Verrocchio (1473–1475) and the 17-foot high iconic image by Michelangelo (1501).
  3. David came to be seen as emblematic of the Florentine Republic, the cradle of Humanism and the Renaissance.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, "Humanism," pp. 84–95, and "Art and Architecture," pp. 223–239, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Secondary Sources:

Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*.

Supplementary Reading:

Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture*.

Phyllis Gordan, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What did Renaissance scholars, architects, and artists see in ancient texts, buildings, and sculpture that so attracted them?
2. Why was portraiture in painting and sculpture a primary genre of the Renaissance by the 1440s?

Lecture Seven

Florence—The Creation of the Republic

Scope: Florence was the cradle of Humanism and the Renaissance. By the mid-13th century, the city had become a rich, expanding center for the production of high-quality woolen cloth and a growing international banking industry. Huge new fortunes were being made by men whose families had only recently emigrated from the countryside. Florence also witnessed a complete victory of the Guelf faction over the Ghibellines, making it a leading pro-papal city. However, despite their wealth and influence, these merchants were largely excluded from any role in the government of the commune, which was dominated by old aristocratic landed families (magnates) or old established mercantile families (*grandi*) who had earlier merged with the magnates. Moreover, the traditions of urban violence and family feuding made commerce difficult. The result was a bourgeois revolution in 1293, which established a republic founded on guild membership and shared responsibility. This republican constitution institutionalized mercantile ambitions and disenfranchised the magnate and *grandi* families and became the context for the Florentine Renaissance.

Outline

I. It was in the 14th century that the ideas of Humanism took root.

  A. Although Florence was not a seaport and, hence, did not benefit to the same degree as some other Italian cities, it became wealthy through the manufacture, finishing, and sale of high-quality woolen cloth.

    1. This trade changed the social structure of the city by attracting large numbers of peasants from the countryside to work in the woolen industry.

    2. It equally created a class of very wealthy merchants whose families had enjoyed citizenship and influence for only a short period.

    3. The communal (city) government, however, was still dominated by the old magnate clans, descendants of the feudal knights who continued to hold estates in the countryside but also had built fortified palaces in the city, and the *grandi*, families of long-established wealthy merchants who had intermarried with the magnate clans and adopted their values.

  B. The Guelf-Ghibelline conflict in Florence was decided in favor of the Guelfs, as the Ghibelline faction was dependent almost entirely on the old nobility, whose influence was in decline.

    1. The Guelf victory resulted in the proscription of the Ghibelline families, exiling and removing them from access to public office.

    2. Florence emerged as the most important pro-papal state in north-central Italy and, as a result, was rewarded.

    3. In particular, the lucrative papal banking monopoly was transferred from Siena to Florence.

    4. With the vast expansion of opportunities in banking, the greater merchants—those who dominated the cloth industry—became extraordinarily wealthy.

    5. The introduction of the Florentine gold florin in 1237 provided an international currency whose value was carefully maintained.

    6. Florence benefited greatly from having its currency accepted almost universally throughout Europe and even in longer distance trade.

II. The newly enriched great merchants might have controlled the economy of the city, but they had no influence on civic government.

  A. The control of the city remained firmly in the hands of the old nobility: the old magnate and *grandi* families.

    1. Even though the merchants were strong supporters of the Guelf party, they were not eligible for public office.

    2. Despite the importance of long-distance trade, banking, and cloth manufacture, there was little support by the old ruling elites for the kinds of public policy that would benefit trade and commerce.

    3. The feudal, violent values of the old nobility made the city unsafe; family feuds, pitched battles between bands of retainers, and intimidation within the city walls all flourished unchecked.
  - **B.** The result was a bourgeois coup d'état in which the merchants of the greater guilds took control of the city administration.
    1. The merchants proposed to the communal government that they would select representatives, or priors, who would assist the nobles in economic and fiscal matters. These functions, at first financial and administrative, increasingly assumed more of the daily operation of the government.
    2. Once accepted, the priors extended their influence throughout the city, especially in local military organization. The military was led not by a Florentine but by a *podestà*, who was always a foreigner and served on annual contracts.
    3. Because the hiring of the *podestà* was an administrative matter, the priors found themselves in control of both the neighborhood militias and the army.

- **III.** With this power, in 1283, the merchant priors initiated the first phase of their coup, completing the process a decade later.
  - **A.** The priors declared themselves the new collective executive of the communal government.
    1. The representatives of the seven Greater Guilds (*arti maggiori*)—really mercantile cartels—took control as a committee of the executive functions of government.
    2. Initially, the old noble families did not suffer overmuch, but year after year, the merchant patricians widened their control and began to institute policies in their own interest.
    3. This was best represented in the decree freeing all serfs in the Florentine countryside in 1289.
    4. This greatly weakened the power base of the magnates, who could no longer demand that their serfs riot and fight for them.
    5. At the same time, it benefited the merchants greatly by ensuring them an endless supply of cheap labor for the cloth industry as the newly freed serfs flocked to the city.
    6. This event, and the success of the noble knights in battle against the Ghibellines of Arezzo at Campaldino (1289), made the old noble families lash out.
  - **B.** Anxious to bring stability and peace to the city, the merchant priors completed their assumption of government with the enactment of the Ordinances of Justice in 1293.
    1. These ordinances became the constitution of the Florentine Republic throughout the Renaissance.
    2. They brought the 14 lesser, or craft guilds (*arti minori*) into the government.
    3. Approximately 3% of the population was now eligible for office—a high proportion in the context of the late 13th century.
    4. Any adult male citizen who paid tax, owned property, matriculated in a guild, and was not otherwise disqualified was able to hold office.
    5. All magistracies rotated; the more powerful they were, usually the shorter the term of office.
    6. For example, priors (the nine highest executive officers in the state) could hold office for only two months at a time and were required to live in the new Palazzo della Signoria (the town hall) for the duration of the time they served.
    7. The intent was to spread authority as widely as possible among the ruling elite and not allow any one individual, family, or faction to hold power long enough to subvert the state.
  - **C.** The ordinances dealt a direct blow to the magnate and *grandi* families.
    1. Magnates and *grandi* were excluded from government, and lists of their families were drawn up to ensure that this would occur.
    2. Only men matriculated in a guild were eligible for office (although *grandi* and magnates were not eligible, even if matriculated in a guild).
    3. Magnates and nobles were to be prosecuted for crimes and had to pay a bond for good behavior, and the entire extended kin group was responsible for the actions of all adult males.
    4. A prior called the "Standard Bearer of Justice," armed with 1,000 men, was added to enforce these ordinances.

IV. The ordinances changed not just the government of Florence but also its appearance.

- **A.** The nobility had lived in huge fortified compounds topped with tall towers.
  - **1.** These had made life dangerous in the city, because owners of these palaces were safe from any retribution.
  - **2.** These towers dominated neighborhoods and gave physical control of parts of the city to nobles.
  - **3.** The nobles had often formed alliances, called Tower Societies.
  - **4.** Towers were linked by catwalks or tunnels, giving even more local power to the nobility.
  - **5.** These noble towers were both feared and resented by the merchant class, who saw them as symbols of both public power in private hands and the essential lawlessness of the nobility.
  - **6.** Consequently, the ordinances required that the towers be torn down to a certain height, depriving the nobles of their urban fortresses.
- **B.** The best architects were called to construct new civic buildings that reflected the wealth and size of the new city, as well as the new social and political order.
  - **1.** Arnolfo da Cambio (c. 1240–1302) was asked to construct the town hall, or Palazzo della Signoria as it was known then, a building he began in 1299.
  - **2.** The large piazza in front of the Palazzo della Signoria and the building itself symbolically occupied space that had once been the site of the towers of the Uberti, a violent Ghibelline clan.
  - **3.** Arnolfo was also called upon to build the Franciscan Church of Sta. Croce, a task he began in 1295.
  - **4.** And, in 1296, Arnolfo was commissioned to rebuild the city's cathedral, because the old building was too small for the expanding city and no longer reflected the wealth and dignity of Florence.
  - **5.** Arnolfo created an enormous neo-Gothic structure that advertised the bourgeois republic's new self-confidence and growing wealth.
  - **6.** The artist Giotto was asked to design its bell tower.
- **C.** Florence had been transformed from a city of tall, spiky, privately owned towers to a communal cityscape of public buildings and towers.

V. By the early 14th century, then, Florence was in the process of a complete change, both politically and physically.

- **A.** A new conception of the state was being established based on shared mercantile values and symbolized in bricks and mortar, as it would later be in stone and bronze and paint.
- **B.** Florence now had a republican government in which power and authority were broadly diffused.
- **C.** The appearance of the city had been completely altered by making the tower—a symbol of authority—reflect only public, corporate authority.
- **D.** The mercantile patriciate now required a set of values by which to live and institutionalize its needs and ambitions. Humanism would prove ideal for that purpose.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, "Florence in the Renaissance," pp. 33–70, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Secondary Sources:

Gene A. Brucker, *Renaissance Florence*.

Supplementary Reading:

John M. Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus in Florentine Electoral Politics, 1280–1400*.

Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did the Florentine merchants choose a republican form of government in 1293?
2. Why was the physical rebuilding of public spaces and buildings so important in the decade immediately after the Ordinances of Justice?

Lecture Eight

Florence and Civic Humanism

Scope: The newly enriched and politically dominant mercantile classes of Florence did not identify with the values and principles of the Middle Ages. Those were clerical, feudal, and rural, whereas their lives were secular, mercantile, and urban. Urban merchants required secular education to practice their professions; they required clearly formulated laws; they required knowledge of vernacular languages; they required tuition in arithmetic and accounting; and they required a value system that validated what they did rather than consigned the pursuit of profit and interest to the vices of the damned. These new men, the product of social mobility and secular education, found a set of ideals consonant with their own in the recovery of ancient Rome. Romans of the time of Cicero were, after all, like them: urban, cosmopolitan, secular, mercantile citizens of a republic. Therefore, the application of ancient principles and models already visible in the career of Petrarch had a special appeal to 14th- and 15th-century Florentines. Moreover, Petrarch had solved the old disjunction between classical pagan and later Christian values by proving that although ancient Romans might have lived before the Christian dispensation, that did not detract from their essential virtue or goodness as human beings. They enjoyed ethical principles that were not incompatible with sincere Catholic belief. This adaptation of classical learning to the demands of Italian life was called *Humanism*, and when applied to the Florentine Republic, it developed into *Civic Humanism*, in which the responsibility of the good citizen to the community took on a powerful ethical force and prepared one for service in this world rather than the next.

Outline

I. Now that the Florentine merchants controlled the instruments of government, they saw the need for new ideas to animate their personal and collective lives.

- **A.** Although Petrarch had solved the problem of the conflict between Christian and pagan values by emphasizing the common humanity and shared purpose in leading good lives, it was still difficult to reconcile the moral ambiguities of trade and banking.
  - **1.** The biblical injunction against taking money at interest offended the consciences of the wealthy, successful bankers in Florence.
  - **2.** Not only did they fear for their souls, but they could not understand how an occupation that so obviously benefited the community could be morally wrong in all cases.
  - **3.** It was permissible to make profit from lending money or going beyond the “ just price” by charging what the market would bear; after all, even the Church needed money.
  - **4.** But this profit was permitted only under certain strict conditions.
  - **5.** It was possible to work around these conditions, but such ruses troubled the consciences of pious bankers and merchants.
- **B.** Increasingly, Humanist authors defended the making of money by bankers and merchants.
  - **1.** They argued that taxes paid on wealth helped in the building of a stable community that was able to help the poor and accomplish positive social goals.
  - **2.** Wealth accumulated by citizens provided reservoirs of capital in case of war or disaster.
  - **3.** Employment increased and, with it, poverty, crime, abandoned children, and other social ills declined.

II. Florentine Humanist writers began to argue against the Christian model of apostolic or Franciscan poverty as an aid to salvation; instead, they suggested that service to the community through charity, public service, and personal integrity counted as much, based on classical ideals.

- **A.** These merchant patricians were still devout Christians, but they increasingly interpreted their faith in a new civic or communitarian way, founded on their secular lives and service to the republic.
  - **1.** Rather than endow monasteries or perpetual masses for their souls (although this still occurred), these merchants chose to contribute to public buildings for the beauty and commodity of the city, to provide dowries for poor girls, or to establish secular institutions.

   2. The ancient principles of active engagement in the community for the benefit of all, instead of the Christian example of forsaking the world, became celebrated.

B. The secular life was thereby exalted, and the confessional life of the spirit left to its own sphere.

   1. Florence became altogether a more secular state.
   2. Priests and those in religious orders were not permitted to hold office or engage in politics.
   3. Even the traditional Guelf allegiance of Florence could be compromised, resulting eventually (1375) in a war against the Church.

III. These new ideals also had powerful political implications. Humanism became the elite ideology of Florence in its civic context.

A. Florence converted Petrarch's Humanism—the study of ancient texts and their application to contemporary life—into Civic Humanism.

   1. Petrarch had been born in exile and never set down roots in any one place for his whole life. His scholarship and ideas, then, were personal rather than communal.
   2. Giovanni Boccaccio (d. 1375), Petrarch's friend and colleague, however, was invited to lecture at the Florentine university, and he used this opportunity to spread Petrarch's Humanist message.
   3. There grew around Boccaccio a coterie of educated young laymen in Florence, eager to put these ideas into practice.
   4. Almost all of these young men were trained in the law or as notaries, that is, practitioners of the *ars dictaminis*.
   5. They looked to secular careers in the civil services of republics or as secretaries in principalities of papal Rome.
   6. They did not wish to take religious orders, because they wanted to marry and have families.

B. Among this group was a young notary, a disciple of Petrarch's, named Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406).

   1. After a career working in smaller cities, Salutati was named chancellor of Florence in 1375, the year of Boccaccio's death.
   2. Salutati believed strongly that the classical virtues, together with rhetorical skills and ethical behavior, provided the best preparation for public life.
   3. He was chancellor as the city matured and grew; thus, he was able to provide paid positions to young, educated laymen, like himself, in the communal bureaucracy.

C. Civic Humanism became the entrée into public service and a social escalator.

   1. It was now obvious that it was possible for a bright young man to acquire an education and become a scholar but not have to enter the Church; he could marry, have children, and achieve worldly success, while still serving the community.
   2. The best-trained Humanists competed for positions in the Florentine government, and they left their mark on the city.
   3. Humanism was now applied not just to the individual scholar's life, as in the case of Petrarch, but to the benefit of the republic, the community. Civic Humanism was born.
   4. Salutati's long career permitted him to mentor the next generation of Civic Humanists who would follow him as chancellor of the republic, men of the stature of Leonardo Bruni (d. 1444), Carlo Marsuppini, (d.1453), and Poggio Bracciolini (d. 1459).

IV. The ideology of Civic Humanism changed the culture of the Florentine Republic.

A. The career and writing of Leonardo Bruni illustrates this perfectly in the subject city of Arezzo.

   1. Bruni acquired an excellent Humanist education and joined the circle of Salutati in Florence.
   2. He wrote works that moved Florence ever farther away from the model of Franciscan poverty and Christian humility as essential virtues and closer to the classical ideal of the engaged citizen working for his own personal intellectual development, expanding his wealth, and serving his community.
   3. Bruni, for example, translated the pseudo-Aristotelian *Economics*, pressing for a non-biblical but secular and classical definition of the rewards for a life well spent.

    4. He wrote the *Panegyric on the City of Florence*, in which he praised his adopted city as a bastion of liberty, commodity, and commerce, based on a classical Greek model.
    5. Most important, he wrote a new history of Florence that rejected the traditions of Florentine historiography up to that point and provided instead a different ideological ideal, based on the special gift of republican liberty.

B. Bruni's *History of the Florentine People* is a classic work based on the style of the Roman historian Livy.

1. It is also a redefinition of Florence's traditional self-image and collective values.
2. First of all, it rejects any kind of divine intervention: Given that history is the consequence of human agency, we are responsible for the state of our lives and our communities.
3. Most previous assumptions about Florence's foundation and past were rejected so that a new ideological model could be erected.
4. In the past, Florentines had celebrated their city as having been founded by Julius Caesar and, after its destruction by the barbarians, re-founded by the emperor Charlemagne.
5. Bruni rejected these imperial connections and worked to prove, instead, that the city had always been the enemy of kings and tyrants and that the traditions and memory of Florentines had always been republican.
6. The consequence of Bruni's work was a growing belief that Florence had always been a beacon of freedom and republican liberty opposed to tyranny and that its current citizens had a responsibility to sustain this noble past.

C. Writing more than five centuries later, in 1955, Hans Baron created the term *Civic Humanism* in his book *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*.

1. This book argues that Bruni's perspective—and, hence, that of the Florentine educated elite—had changed as a consequence of a desperate war against Milan.
2. Giangaleazzo Visconti (whom we will meet in Lecture Twenty) attempted to unite all of north-central Italy between Venice and the Papal States into a powerful Milanese-dominated monarchy.
3. By 1402, the duke of Milan had succeeded in subduing all the major states in the region except for Florence.
4. Left without allies, Florence was required to surrender, but the republic refused.
5. Giangaleazzo invaded Florentine territory, but the city held firm and, miraculously, the duke died of fever in 1402, leaving an underage heir, resulting in the disintegration of his empire.
6. Florence rejoiced and attributed its constancy to its love of liberty and its willingness to sacrifice everything to sustain it, even against overwhelming odds.
7. Whether Baron's analysis is correct or not (and it has had many opponents), there is no doubt but that Florence defined itself as the bastion of republican liberty and the enemy of tyrants.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, "Humanism," pp. 72–83, 95–108, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Leonardo Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts*.

Vespasiano da Bisticci, *The Vespasiano Memoirs: Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century*.

Supplementary Reading:

Hans Baron, *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was Civic Humanism so ideally suited to the needs and aspirations of the Florentine mercantile elite?
2. To what extent was Humanism a practical requirement for service in republican Florence as well as in education for cultivated leisure?

Lecture Nine

Florentine Culture and Society

Scope: The recognition that Humanism could provide the necessary skills to contribute both to a good personal life and to the benefit of the community as a whole animated the Florentine Republic. Classical rhetoric came to be seen as a useful tool, because it was now necessary to influence one's fellow citizens in the process of forming public policy. Their new roles as active citizens in this world, with responsibility to their city and access to political power through election, gave the Florentine patricians in the guild democracy a great deal of self-confidence. They believed that they could rival or even surpass the achievements of the ancients. Accepting control of their own lives and their community, these citizen magistrates worked to turn Florence into a work of art, literally and figuratively. Competition became the vehicle for excellence in politics, society, and culture. Important public commissions—such as the baptistery doors and the dome of the cathedral—were determined by open competition judged by a panel of engaged citizens. Public art was made to serve secular political needs, such as adopting the figure of David as a symbol of the republic. Private citizens endowed public buildings and built imposing palaces in classical style to reflect and celebrate their taste, wealth, and values. In the process, Florence became an artistic and architectural monument to Humanist principles.

Outline

I. The values of Civic Humanism were quickly and naturally applied to political and social life.

- **A.** Consequently, rhetoric became a practical, useful skill applicable to the republican environment.
  - **1.** As a republic, there was no prince to rule unilaterally or who was susceptible to flattery.
  - **2.** Public decisions could not be made by one man but required consensus within a community or committee.
  - **3.** Political success resulted from the ability to convince one's fellow magistrates of the wisdom of one's position.
  - **4.** Humanism, in which the command of rhetoric was based on classical models such as Cicero and Quintilian, then became the preferred training for the mercantile elite.
- **B.** Humanism was not only useful in politics, but it was also seen as a social caste mark.
  - **1.** The abilities to speak well, to use classical exempla, and to reflect an ethical demeanor were identified as marks of leadership.
  - **2.** Candidates for public office would illustrate their abilities to convince others through their eloquence, requiring prolonged and continuous study in the humane letters.
  - **3.** Based on Humanist belief and tradition, it came to be accepted that good speech reflected sound ideas put forth by good men: From eloquence came truth.
  - **4.** Debating an issue was, thus, the most certain way to determine good policy and identify the best among options.

II. The belief that the community should benefit from the collective wealth and talent of the city was a key principle of Civic Humanism, and the beautification of the city formed part of this belief.

- **A.** The model of debate and competition was applied to artistic commissions.
  - **1.** To determine which artist was the best for a public commission, a committee of judges had to be convinced through a competition.
  - **2.** It was in this way that Lorenzo Ghiberti won the commission for the baptistery doors of the cathedral complex.
  - **3.** Similarly, in competition with Ghiberti, Filippo Brunelleschi won the contract for the dome of the cathedral, in a remarkable feat of engineering, building that huge dome over the crossing of the nave and transept.
- **B.** Individual wealthy citizens felt the need to celebrate their family success and beautify the city through private commissions.
  - **1.** In a republic without titles and a revolving senior administration, these provided permanent evidence of a family's status.

    2. A number of monumental family palaces were built in the decades after 1440 to reflect the social standing and wealth of these mercantile families: Palazzo Medici, Rucellai, Strozzi, just to name a few.
    3. Many of these builders were bankers, and these huge structures reflected the security of their banks.
    4. Wealthy families also engaged the greatest artists to decorate their family chapels in local churches.
    5. These chapels reflected the family's wealth, taste, and public spirit, as they were visible to any visitor.

III. New conceptions of the state arose as well, under the influence of Humanism, many of them reflected in new approaches to finances.

- **A.** Collective, secular principles of government responsibility began to replace Christian charity and family responsibility as the sole hope for social amelioration.
    - **1.** As early as the 1340s, Florentines had adopted imaginative means of state financing that bound citizens to the government.
    - **2.** The financial emergency of the 1340s caused the republic to pool all outstanding government debts into a single funded debt called the *Monte*.
    - **3.** To service the *Monte*, shares were sold to investors, and these shares paid a fixed rate of interest.
    - **4.** Thus, even small tradesmen with very little surplus capital could get a return on their money.
    - **5.** The face value of these shares fluctuated with the circumstances of the republic.
    - **6.** Perhaps even more significantly, these shares made citizens feel active and engaged in the government, because official policy now affected the net worth of any citizen holding shares.
- **B.** In 1425, this connection between citizen and state increased with the state dowry fund, or *Monte delle doti*.
    - **1.** The price of dowries was rising, making it difficult for families with many daughters to marry them honorably.
    - **2.** To help, the dowry fund was established. Fathers deposited a fixed amount with the fund at a girl's birth and collected this amount plus all accrued interest when the girl reached 15, the age to consider marriage.
    - **3.** The fund was designed to be self-financing, because only the original principal, with no interest, was returned if the girl died beforehand, as perhaps half of girls did.
    - **4.** Although it was a brilliant idea, one effect was simply to further inflate the cost of dowries.
- **C.** In 1427, Florence experimented with an income tax, called the *catasto*.
    - **1.** This operated much like modern systems, as it was self-assessing.
    - **2.** Citizens with property listed income and assets and deducted liabilities and expenses and were then taxed on the difference.
    - **3.** The intent was to establish a fairer system than previous models of taxation, and it in part succeeded; however, political influence and suppression of income were, as usual, mitigating factors.
    - **4.** It is no accident, then, that the very word *state* (*lo stato*), referring to the community, its territory, and government, first appears in Italian.

IV. These financial innovations allowed the Florentines to take control of their lives in other spheres.

- **A.** They were allowed to treat their city as a work of art.
    - **1.** The city was a work of art in the sense that it was seen as the visible representation of the community.
    - **2.** It was malleable, changeable, and indeed, perfectible.
    - **3.** The city also became a work of art in the aesthetic sense.
    - **4.** To make the city more elegant was a wealthy citizen's duty and the commune's responsibility.
    - **5.** Florentines believed this to be true, because the state was an instrument to achieve certain goals, generally accepted as good and virtuous, at least for the property-owning classes.
- **B.** This is not to suggest that the high principles and ambitious collective values were always followed or even accepted by all Florentines.
    - **1.** These ideas were largely the possessions of the propertied classes, who held a monopoly on social and political power.
    - **2.** Other, older duties and practices, such as family loyalty, personal vendettas, or political differences, made the republic in practice less a perfect work of art than one might have hoped.
    - **3.** Competing economic interests challenged the idea of the collective good.

    4. **4.** Political, military, or economic challenges strained every fiber of the state on occasion, driving powerful citizens back into the security of extended kin groups or mutually beneficial political allegiances.
    5. **5.** But even with these negative pressures, the self-confidence and the collective republican ideology were honored, at least in public and in the official rhetoric of Humanists and the government.

V. The disenfranchised poor, although oppressed and often in an economically precarious situation, seemed to have accepted this Civic Humanist principle, as well.

- **A.** Although the city was divided by factional dispute, the poor contributed to the stability of the republic.
    - **1.** They did not revolt after the 1378 *Ciompi* Revolt.
    - **2.** In dangerous times, such as the Milanese wars, they did not threaten the internal security of the republic.
    - **3.** And later, they seemed to want good leadership in the republic, as manifested in their general support of the Medici regime after 1434.
- **B.** In fact, the poor appeared to have pride in the beauty and strength of the city.
    - **1.** The great public buildings, the palaces, and the churches, decorated with the new style of Humanist art, were all visible to them.
    - **2.** Further, given that simple people are in no way stupid people, it can be argued that the poor participated in this 15th-century explosion of culture and social experimentation with positive results.
    - **3.** The poor are often silent, but there is wide evidence of their pride in being Florentine.
- **C.** Thus, although they suffered economically and politically, the poor shared with the property-owning elite a commitment to the city and its ideals.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, “Florence and the Renaissance,” pp. 65–67, and “Art and Architecture,” pp. 209–219, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Secondary Sources:

Paul Robert Walker, *The Feud That Sparked the Renaissance: How Brunelleschi and Ghiberti Changed the Art World*.

Supplementary Reading:

Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History*.

———, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300–1600*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How real a concept was turning the city into a work of art for 15th-century Florentines?

2. To what extent was the republican and mercantile principle of competition the foundation for the efflorescence in art and culture in Florence?

Lecture Ten

Renaissance Education

Scope: Education in the Middle Ages was largely under the control of the Church. As Humanism matured, it was gradually institutionalized into a system of secular education that spread across the entire Italian peninsula. Teaching correct Golden Age Latin (and, later, Greek) became central to the Humanist program. Fluency in these ancient languages meant that students would be able to read ancient texts with facility, understand their references, and free themselves of dependence on corrupt medieval editions of the classics that were marred with error and interpolation. The pursuit of clear and correct editions of ancient texts was aided by the survival of ancient grammars. On the other hand, Italian Humanists often wrote their own grammar and style manuals. Philology and textural editing were invented to recover the pristine texts intended by the ancient authors. And the reading of classical works became a sure way to train students in developing skills of stylistic analysis. A Humanist education for boys was increasingly important, because it became a caste mark of social status or a vehicle for paid service in a republic's chancery (the civil service) or as a prince's counselor. Education, then, became a social escalator, permitting bright and ambitious boys to rise above their births while still remaining in the world, able to marry and have families.

Outline

I. The institutionalization of Humanism in Florence stimulated interest in schools, teachers, and texts that taught correct Latin style, rhetorical elegance, and ancient literature.

- **A.** Starting at an early age (approximately five), children would be taught the basics of Latin grammar and vocabulary.
  - **1.** Teachers used blocks decorated with letters, rhyming texts, and simple passages from both classical and Christian sources, such as Valerius Maximus's *Facta et Dicta*, the creed, and the Lord's Prayer.
  - **2.** Standard grammars from antiquity, especially Donatus and Priscian, were almost universally used to teach the complexities of Latin grammar.
  - **3.** When they reached about eight years of age, pupils were introduced to simple Latin texts, such as Julius Caesar's *Commentaries* and St. Jerome's *Vulgate* translation of the Bible.
  - **4.** Soon they read the orations of Cicero and the *Aeneid* of Virgil.
  - **5.** Throughout the school day, pupils had to reply in Latin, taught as an instinctive alternative first language; vernacular Italian was not permitted.
- **B.** Young teenagers were introduced to increasingly difficult texts that were challenging both in style and content—difficult authors, such as Sallust, and morally ambiguous authors, such as Ovid.
  - **1.** Students were given difficult passages of prose composition and instructed to model their style on that of Cicero.
  - **2.** After the mid-15th century, Greek was introduced into the curriculum, and its study was begun ever earlier as the century progressed, with double translation (Latin to Greek, then back to Latin) becoming popular.
- **C.** Other subjects besides the humanities were introduced.
  - **1.** For example, science would be studied by reading Pliny's *Historia naturalis* (a methodology that has been argued as significantly impeding the progress of science during the early Renaissance).
  - **2.** The mathematical subjects of the medieval *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music) were added.
  - **3.** Arithmetic was taught because of the usefulness of keeping accounts, and many boys in important cities, such as Florence, were destined for mercantile careers.
  - **4.** Geometry had particular significance, because Plato required it in his Academy and because it was seen as useful in warfare.
  - **5.** Astronomy was often associated with astrology, both because there was deep interest in astrology in the Renaissance and because it facilitated the understanding of ancient texts.
  - **6.** Music was taught because people had to make their own entertainment; however, only string, and keyboard instruments and singing were taught. Brass instruments were left to those of lesser social rank, because they were believed to disfigure the face when being played.

II. This Humanist education was reserved almost entirely for boys.

- **A.** Girls of families with property would occasionally be educated at home with their brothers by tutors until about the age of eight.
    - **1.** Literacy in Italian was seen as mandatory for girls, as was basic numeracy, in preparation for running a household.
    - **2.** Latin instruction was usually just sufficient to allow the girls to follow the liturgy and, perhaps, read devotional texts.
    - **3.** Girls were seldom taught ancient authors on the grounds that they were unnecessary and potentially morally dangerous for females.
- **B.** After age eight, while the boys would continue in Humanist learning, the girls would be given instruction in the domestic arts, including weaving, embroidery, and the management of servants and of a household.
    - **1.** This reflected the belief that a Humanist education trained students for an active life in the world as magistrates, merchants, or civil servants.
    - **2.** Because women were confined to the domestic sphere, a rhetorical education was deemed unnecessary.
    - **3.** A small number of women were highly educated in Humanist subjects, but a very small number only, their privilege resulting from a generous father or, less often, husband.
    - **4.** For women who wanted a high degree of education, the most common career was that of a nun, because many convents had good libraries and texts in Latin.
    - **5.** These would be, of course, almost altogether theological.

III. Schools were invariably small and private.

- **A.** In such cities as Florence, many wealthy patricians were educated privately at home by tutors.
    - **1.** Still, schools existed, often run by celebrated teachers of the humanities.
    - **2.** These gave tuition to small numbers of boys together.
    - **3.** Other schools were run to give basic training in elementary Latin and in reading and writing in the vernacular, together with precise training in arithmetic and business skills, for boys destined to be apprenticed to merchants when still young, perhaps about 12.
    - **4.** Even here, though, Humanism did begin to influence the quality of instruction and certain texts.
- **B.** In princely regimes, there was often a school or academy associated with the court.
    - **1.** These palace schools trained members of noble families, occasionally admitting as well very bright boys who were identified as potential civil servants.
    - **2.** In addition to the Humanist curriculum, these schools also taught the courtly arts, such as dancing, musical performance, drawing, riding, and fencing.
    - **3.** Despite the privileged nature of most of the pupils, the regime was often harsh—little or no heat, cold baths, and rigorous lessons.
    - **4.** There was, however, very little corporal punishment, because almost all Humanist educators thought such action contrary to human dignity and love of learning.
    - **5.** Slower pupils were kept in these schools, but their curriculum tended to have a greater proportion of martial subjects and physical activity.
    - **6.** After a number of years at such an academy, many boys would be sent directly to serve at court to practice their courtly arts or to a military commander to perfect the skills needed to be a soldier.
    - **7.** Only a few of the others would be sent to a university to study law or the *studia humanitatis*.

IV. Not only schools but also university curricula in Italy were influenced by classical learning.

- **A.** The liberal arts—*studia humanitatis* or *litterae humaniores*—dominated university curricula.
    - **1.** These humane or liberal studies (that is, studies worthy of free men) included poetry, rhetoric, ethics (moral philosophy), and history.
    - **2.** Through the course of the Renaissance, ever more gifted and ambitious students were attracted to the best teachers of these disciplines to prepare for secular careers.
- **B.** Study of the law benefited greatly from Humanism as ancient legal texts and commentators supplanted medieval glossators.
    - **1.** The improvement in classical Latin also improved legal language, making comprehension of the law easier.

        2. Roman civil law was seen increasingly as separate from canon law, the law of the Church, and served for precisely the needs of secular government and society.
    - **C.** Like law, medicine was entered only after some period of study in the arts.
        1. In many Italian universities, such as Padua, arts and medicine constituted a single faculty.
        2. The study of ancient texts made the ancient physicians, such as Galen, more available in better editions or translations from the original Greek to Latin.
        3. As with science in general, the commitment to classical authors enshrined the ancient physicians and their texts until the mid-16th century.
        4. Physicians were not trained to practice invasive medicine; rather, they unquestioningly followed Galen's theory of the humors.
    - **D.** The expansion of knowledge of Greek made other physicians better known and the pharmacopeia better understood.
        1. In the 16th century, the interest in correct anatomy, dissection, and practical medicine revolutionized the study and practice of medicine in Italy.
        2. Andreas Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (printed in 1543) provided a brilliantly illustrated text to show the structure of the human body.
        3. Anatomical theaters were built in universities.
        4. A renewed interest in botany resulted in botanical gardens being established to grow simples for creating medicine; Padua established the first of these in 1545.

- **V.** The story of education in the Renaissance was one of increased secularization.
    - **A.** Previously, education had been seen merely as a prelude to theological studies and a priestly vocation.
    - **B.** Indeed, the training of priests and monks remained essentially theological throughout the Renaissance, with continued emphasis on the Scholastic, Aristotelian method and texts of the Middle Ages.
    - **C.** Humanism privileged the secular because of the role of ancient pagan texts.
    - **D.** Under Humanism, the concept of community changed from the body of the faithful to the social structures and political obligations that constituted the Renaissance city.
    - **E.** As we shall see in the next lecture, these themes were clearly reflected in Florence and illustrated under the Medici hegemony.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, "Learning and Education," pp. 269–296, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Secondary Sources:

Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600*.

Supplementary Reading:

Robert Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was medicine so closely connected with the study of arts and antiquity in the Renaissance?
2. A Humanist education remained the foundation of Western education until well into the 20th century. What elements of education to this day can you trace to Renaissance Humanist studies?

Lecture Eleven

The Medici Hegemony

Scope: The creation of a guild republic did not end the social and political tension in Florence. Ancient family rivalries, conflicting economic interests between the greater and lesser guilds, and fear of the thousands of disenfranchised woolen industry workers, or *ciompi*, on the part of property holders all made Florence a fractious place. Various attempts at importing a *signore*, or lord, to impose order had failed, and the *Ciompi* Revolt of 1378 had driven the lesser guildsmen into an unequal alliance with the great merchants, whose conservative oligarchic policies were tolerated only out of insecurity. However, by 1433, the oligarchic faction was becoming ever more unpopular. An unsuccessful war against Lucca galvanized the opposition, which was led by the richest man in Florence, Cosimo de'Medici, who assumed power in 1434. Rather than interfere with the constitution, Cosimo chose to manage the republic indirectly, changing only the way in which eligible candidates for office were selected. He successfully manipulated the republic for 30 years and died respected as "father of his country." Cosimo was briefly succeeded by his son, Piero (r. 1464–1469), who was not as adept at managing Florentine sensibilities. It was Piero's son, Lorenzo (r. 1469–1492), known as "the Magnificent," who continued his grandfather's tradition.

Outline

I. The advent of Civic Humanism did not end Florentine political factionalism, because the economic and social interests of the greater and lesser guilds were essentially different.

  A. The greater guildsmen were international entrepreneurs working in capital-intensive industries; the lesser guildsmen were small craftsmen or traders whose concerns were the local market.

  B. The great mercantile patrician families saw themselves as socially superior to the lesser guildsmen.

  C. Many greater guildsmen began to integrate with the disenfranchised but still socially prominent magnate and *grandi* families.

II. Conflict led to two attempts to impose order on the political factionalism by appointing a foreign *signore*.

  A. In 1325, Florentine patricians appealed to King Robert of Naples, head of the Italian Guelfs, to end the instability in the city.

    1. Robert sent his son, Charles, duke of Calabria, to act as *signore*.

    2. Because Charles's only experience of government was the Neapolitan model of unchecked monarchy, he began to rule as if he were an absolute prince.

    3. Robert's early death in 1328 saved Florence from developing into a principality ruled by the Angevins.

  B. Not having learned their lesson, and suffering from desperate financial pressures resulting from huge loans to foreign monarchs (especially the king of England) and an expensive war to capture Lucca, the patricians invited a French noble, Walter of Brienne, duke of Athens, related to the Angevins of Naples, to rule as their *signore* in 1342.

    1. Walter ruled despotically, imposing new taxes to address the fiscal emergency and ignoring the traditions and sensibilities of the republican merchant elite.

    2. After just one year of harsh rule, Walter was expelled from Florence.

III. Having learned of the dangers of looking for a man on horseback to solve their problems, the members of the patriciate realized they had to cooperate in the rule of the city if they were to address its financial problems.

  A. Indeed, the1340s were a desperate financial period in Florence.

    1. The international financial crisis worsened to the point that Edward III of England was unable to meet his loan obligations to his Florentine bankers and repudiated his debts.

    2. This resulted in the bankruptcy of the two largest banks in Florence—and Europe—the Bardi and Peruzzi by 1345.

    3. The economic collapse drove the poor citizens (the "little people," or *popolo minuto*) of Florence to rebel.

        4. Although the rebellion was suppressed, it frightened the property-owning classes, inspiring in them more conservative attitudes.
    - **B.** The Black Death entered Italy in 1348.
        1. Between a third and a half of the inhabitants of the city died.
        2. Besides the human suffering, this disaster destabilized the economy ever further; vast numbers of the skilled cloth workers had died, while local and distant markets were severely restricted.
    - **C.** The lesser and greater guildsmen agreed to share power more fairly and work together to salvage the city economically and politically.
        1. The more numerous members of the 14 *arti minori* were ensured a reasonable proportion of the elected positions in the republic.
        2. The *Monte*, or consolidated public debt was established, making all citizens with surplus capital investors in the well-being of the commune.
        3. There followed a period in which Florence enjoyed the most widely distributed, open government in its history.

- **IV.** The situation for the poorest class, the struggling wool workers, or *ciompi*, had not improved.
    - **A.** The economic dislocation throughout Europe resulted in the decline in the market for luxury cloth.
        1. As a result, the *ciompi* were unemployed, starving, and restless.
        2. The response of the wool guild was to exercise tougher and more brutal control.
        3. Finally, in 1378, the *ciompi* revolted successfully, assisted by renegade patricians.
    - **B.** The effect of the *Ciompi* Revolt was dramatic.
        1. The *ciompi* did not want to destroy the republic; rather, they wanted access to its government.
        2. A new guild was established and named the Guild of the People of God, i.e.: a guild for woolworkers who did not own any property.
        3. For several years, wool merchants had to share places in the government with their employees.
        4. The lesser guildsmen, whose wealth and livelihood were tied up in their shops and stock, lived in fear of further rioting and destruction of property.
    - **C.** The property owners of the original 21 guilds staged a counter-revolution.
        1. By 1380, the propertied classes had reasserted their authority; they suppressed the *ciompi* guild and executed its leaders.
        2. The lesser guildsmen, now anxious to avoid further disruption, were willing to yield political influence for security.
        3. Control of the *Signoria* was then returned to the wealthy patricians of the greater guilds.
        4. The result was an oligarchic regime dominated by the richest families.

- **V.** The oligarchy sowed the seeds of its own demise.
    - **A.** Between about 1380 and the 1430s, the rule of the oligarchs grew ever more restricted.
        1. Fewer and fewer families were involved in government, and in a retrograde move, even disenfranchised magnate and *grandi* families were brought back unofficially into the ruling elite.
        2. This narrowing of the oligarchy began to alienate an increasing number of the lesser guildsmen, because their economic interests were not being addressed.
        3. Even some of the prominent greater guildsmen eventually became disaffected.
    - **B.** By the 1430s, opposition was growing toward the government, dominated at the time by the Albizzi family (and, hence, known as the Albizzi oligarchy).
        1. The leader of the opposition to the oligarchy was the richest man in Florence, perhaps in Europe, the banker Cosimo de'Medici.
        2. The Medici had established a huge international banking empire following the collapse of the Bardi and Peruzzi, but Cosimo had remained outside the very aristocratic, closed circle of the Albizzi, because his was a relatively new family.
        3. The unhappiness with the oligarchy reached its climax when it waged yet another expensive, long, and ultimately unsuccessful war against Lucca.
    - **C.** The Medici coup followed soon after.

    1. Hoping to preempt any attack on their position by the Medici faction, the oligarchs arrested and tried Cosimo on fabricated charges and exiled him from the city in 1433.
    2. However, this act instead galvanized the opposition, which took possession of the *Signoria*, exiled the oligarchs, and arranged for the triumphant return of Cosimo to Florence in 1434.

VI. The Medici hegemony was a remarkable period of prosperity in Florence.

- **A.** Cosimo was a sincere republican and had no desire to rule as a prince.
    1. He left the republican constitution intact, changing only one small element in its operation.
    2. He gave control of the *accoppiatori*, the magistrates who determined who was eligible for public office, to his supporters.
    3. Thus, the Medici could always be assured that their faction was in control and the government, sympathetic to them.
- **B.** Even though Cosimo continued to behave like a private citizen, he used his vast wealth and power to advance the city.
    1. He built an enormous new palace in the city for himself and his family.
    2. He spent equally vast sums on public buildings and the beautification of the city.
    3. He used his own money to help poorer or indebted political supporters.
    4. He also used his influence to weaken the positions of his enemies.
    5. Most significantly, the rule of his faction brought a greater level of political stability to Florence than it had ever known.
- **C.** This was paralleled in foreign affairs, where Cosimo demonstrated extraordinary diplomatic skill.
    1. Through an alliance with Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan, he engineered peace in the peninsula through the Peace of Lodi (1454).
    2. This accord was cemented by the formation of the 1455 Italian League.
- **D.** Cosimo's legacy was remarkable.
    1. On his death in 1464, Cosimo was greatly mourned; he had been almost universally admired.
    2. He was given the title of *pater patriae*, father of his people, and buried in the family church of S. Lorenzo.
    3. Medici manipulation of the Florentine constitution had imposed a stability and consistency of policy that permitted the artistic and cultural experiments of the Renaissance in Florence to occur.
- **E.** Cosimo was briefly succeeded by his son Piero, who was not as adept at managing Florentine sensibilities.
    1. Piero had been raised more like a prince than a republican citizen; he lacked his father's common touch.
    2. He also suffered terribly from gout that made it difficult for him to walk; hence, others had to attend him at his palace, again giving the impression of princely behavior.
    3. Fortunately, Piero ruled only five years until his death in 1469.
    4. It was Piero's son who continued his grandfather's tradition—the Renaissance paragon Lorenzo the Magnificent.
- **F.** With the establishment of the Medici hegemony after 1434, we see a change in the nature of Florence.
    1. Florence remained a republic, and its citizens remained committed to the ideal of liberty and republican institutions.
    2. Now, however, Florence also had a singular purpose—a force that could channel the energy of the Humanists toward shared goals that were recognized as the public good.
    3. Florence became a much more beautiful and harmonious place as a consequence of the Medici rule. Less time and energy was spent on political intrigue and factional disputes, leaving more time and energy available for patronage of art and architecture.
    4. Cosimo embodied the idea of republican dignity and the responsibility of the citizen to serve the state, and he became a model for other patricians to emulate, establishing the circumstances that would allow Florence to rise to a pinnacle of civilization under Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Secondary Sources:

Mark Phillips, *The Memoirs of Marco Parenti: A Life in Medici Florence*.

Supplementary Reading:

Alison Brown, *The Medici in Florence: The Exercise and Language of Power*.

J. R. Hale, *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of Control*.

Dale Kent, *The Rise of the Medici: Faction in Florence, 1426–1434*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Given the structure of Florentine society and the nature of the constitution, could Florence have achieved stability without being managed by one family or faction?
2. Were the Medici the destroyers or guarantors of Florentine republican liberty?

Lecture Twelve

The Florence of Lorenzo de'Medici

Scope: Despite the republican constitution of Florence, Lorenzo was born, in effect, a Renaissance prince. His father and grandfather had managed the state, using the Medici faction and their enormous wealth as instruments for control. Only 20 in 1469, when his father, Piero, died, Lorenzo was thrust into the political and diplomatic currents of the peninsula at a moment of general peace, leaving him free to engage in his true interest, the patronage of art and literature. As a collector, he filled the huge palace built by his grandfather with ancient sculpture, rare gems, and *objets de vertu*; he supported such poets as Poliziano and such philosophers as Pico della Mirandola; he discovered the genius of the young Michelangelo and patronized Botticelli. His own talents as a poet, diplomat, and statesman were such that he had little difficulty maintaining his control of the fractious Florentines. However, there was opposition, led internally by the ancient Pazzi family, jealous of the Medici hegemony, and externally by Pope Sixtus IV (d. 1484), who believed that Lorenzo was blocking the creation of a principality for his nephew. There was a conspiracy in 1478 to murder Lorenzo and his brother, Giuliano, at mass. The plot failed, although Giuliano was killed, and the aftermath was bloody vengeance on the conspirators. Angry, the pope excommunicated Lorenzo and declared war on him personally, ravaging Florentine territory. Rather than submit, Lorenzo slid away to Naples, the capital of the king commanding the papal armies, and made a separate peace, leaving Sixtus no choice but to abandon his aggression. Thereafter, Lorenzo tightened his control on the state, and a certain sadness characterized the last decade of his life.

Outline

I. After a rule of only 5 years, Piero died in 1469, leaving control of the city to his 20-year-old eldest son, Lorenzo, later known as "the Magnificent."

- **A.** Lorenzo was a brilliant young man, wise beyond his years, who had been used as a diplomat or family representative at a very young age by his father and grandfather.
- **B.** Lorenzo's character alone assured him of success; he enjoyed great personal charm and a charismatic personality.
- **C.** Piero had arranged Lorenzo's marriage to a woman from an ancient Roman baronial family, Clarice Orsini, to ensure that there would be no jealousy among the Florentine patrician families.

- **D.** Lorenzo had a luminous Humanist education, presided over by the leading lights of Florence's intellectual community.
- **E.** He also enjoyed a great natural talent as a poet.
- **F.** Like his grandfather, Lorenzo enjoyed a common touch that endeared him to all classes; he could discuss the complexities of Humanism with trained scholars and, on the same day, compose and recite obscene carnival songs.

II. During the early years of the Lorenzo's rule, he continued the Medici dynastic policy of spreading the family's influence.

- **A.** He made some youthful errors, such as a violent overreaction to an attempt by the subject city of Volterra to rebel, but he learned quickly from his mistakes.
- **B.** He continued the wise policies of his grandfather, not offending the pride and sensibilities of the Florentine elite and keeping the peace in Italy by sustaining a balance of power among the various major Italian states.
  - **1.** One of his daughters he married to a son of Pope Innocent VIII (d. 1492), resulting in greater Florentine influence in the Church.
  - **2.** His eldest son was married to a relative of his wife (of the Orsini family), cementing the connection with the great feudal families of the Roman campagna.
  - **3.** He arranged for his intelligent second son, Giovanni, to become a cardinal when still in his teens; ultimately, Giovanni would be elected to the papacy as Leo X in 1512.

III. Despite these diplomatic triumphs, Lorenzo underestimated the ambitions of Pope Sixtus IV.

- **A.** Sixtus had major dynastic and territorial ambitions.
  - **1.** He wished to make his nephew Girolamo Riario the ruler of Imola, a small city close to the borders of Florence.
  - **2.** The pope also supported an opponent of Lorenzo's as the archbishop of Pisa, a port city controlled by Florence.
- **B.** Fearing papal expansionism and the chronic instability of the Papal States that were so close to his beloved Florence, Lorenzo reacted negatively.
  - **1.** He chose not to lend the pope the money from the Medici bank to pursue his ambitions.
  - **2.** And he did not allow the archbishop to leave Florence, refusing to permit him to take up his see.

IV. Within Florence, there were still some ancient patrician families who resented the rule of the parvenu Medici; among these was the Pazzi, a rich and ancient family.

- **A.** In 1478, the Pazzi plotted to remove Lorenzo and replace the Medici with the Pazzi as rulers of Florence.
  - **1.** Sixtus aided the plot, taking the papal account away from the Medici bank and transferring it to the Pazzi.
  - **2.** The archbishop of Pisa himself became involved.
  - **3.** The conspiracy was to hire professional assassins to murder Lorenzo and his brother, Giuliano, in the cathedral at mass during Holy Week.
  - **4.** When the two brothers were in church, the assailants struck at the ringing of the bell during the Eucharist.
  - **5.** Giuliano died immediately; Lorenzo was wounded but was able to escape into the sacristy and bar the door.
  - **6.** The Pazzi then rode to the Palazzo della Signoria to take control of the government, while their supporters rode through the streets shouting, "Liberty, liberty!"
- **B.** The aftermath was cataclysmic.
  - **1.** Once the people of Florence learned what had happened, they became furious. Lorenzo was much respected, and the murdered Giuliano had been greatly beloved.
  - **2.** The conspirators were arrested in the palace, and their supporters were hunted down.
  - **3.** The Pazzi and the archbishop of Pisa were killed and their bodies were hanged from the windows of the Palazzo della Signoria.
  - **4.** Their palaces and those of their supporters were looted and burned.
  - **5.** The people rioted in the streets, shouting the Medici rallying cry, "*Palle. Palle.*"
- **C.** Pope Sixtus IV, for his part, was furious at the failure of his plot and the murder of an archbishop.
  - **1.** Sixtus declared war on Lorenzo personally, not on Florence, demanding that he be turned over to the Church.
  - **2.** When the Florentines refused, Sixtus required his vassal, the king of Naples, to attack Florence and kill or deliver Lorenzo.
  - **3.** Florence was not prepared for war, and the Neapolitan army encountered no resistance in the destruction of Florentine territory and the siege of the city.
  - **4.** There were insufficient provisions for a long siege, and Lorenzo was desperate.
  - **5.** Lorenzo stole out of Florence and sailed to Naples, the capital of the king ravaging his territory.
  - **6.** His goal was to convince King Ferrante that Naples, as well as Florence, would be the loser if the pope added Florence to his territory.
  - **7.** After several months of negotiation, Ferrante agreed, and thus ended the War of the Pazzi Conspiracy in 1480.

V. The last years of Lorenzo's life had lost the promise of his youth.

- **A.** Ironically, Florence's affection for and allegiance to the Medici had only increased through the turmoil of the Pazzi Conspiracy.
  - **1.** All that had been necessary to end the war at the very beginning was for the Florentines to surrender Lorenzo to the pope.
  - **2.** Yet Florentines of all classes refused and suffered the most terrible hardship to defend him.

    3. Lorenzo was out of his city for months while its territory was being ravaged by the pope's and Ferrante's armies, but there was no revolt against the Medici by either the patricians or the *ciompi*.
    4. When he returned from Naples in 1480, Florence welcomed Lorenzo back as a conquering hero.

- **B.** Despite the fact that the Medici hegemony was firmly in place, the conspiracy had had a powerful effect on Lorenzo's personality and policies.
    1. The death of his beloved brother had left him shattered, his health deteriorating, and his mood despondent.
    2. Lorenzo became more fearful, often traveling through the city with armed retainers.
    3. He began behaving more like a prince, seeing the revenues of the state as his own, rather than using his personal wealth (which was in decline) to support the republic, as his grandfather had done.
    4. He altered the Florentine constitution through the creation of the Council of 70 as the primary legislative agency, one that gave the Medici faction overt control of the instruments of government.
- **C.** In Lorenzo's last years, the situation in Florence was dramatically altered.
    1. The messianic Dominican preacher Savonarola, about whom we shall hear more, was directing sermons against Lorenzo.
    2. Some of Lorenzo's closest friends, including Pico della Mirandola, became enthralled with the Dominican's gloomy message.
    3. Lorenzo died in 1492, only 43 years of age, leaving control of the Medici faction and rule of the city to his irresponsible and dull-witted eldest son, Piero de'Lorenzo.

Primary Source Texts:

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Supplementary Reading:

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Questions to Consider:

1. Did power corrupt the Medici?
2. Were the Pazzi and Pope Sixtus IV justified in their opposition to Lorenzo de'Medici?

Timeline

1265	Dante Alighieri born
1293	Florentine Ordinances of Justice
1296	Construction begun on the Cathedral of Florence by Arnolfo da Cambio
1297	Closing of the Great Council in Venice (*Serrata*)
1298	Construction begun on the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence by Arnolfo da Cambio
1298	Marco Polo recorded the story of his travels in the Far East
1300	The first jubilee year announced by Pope Boniface VIII
1300	Construction begun on the Franciscan Church of Santa Croce in Florence
1302	Dante banished from Florence
1304	Francesco Petrarca born
1309	Pole Clement V takes up residence in Avignon
1310	Bajamonte Tiepolo revolt; Council of Ten established in Venice
1313	Giovanni Boccaccio born
1321	Dante Alighieri dies
1325	Charles of Calabria in Florence
1327	Petrarch sees Laura in a church in Avignon
1331	Coluccio di Piero Salutati born
1341	Petrarch crowned poet laureate in Rome
1342–1343	Walter of Brienne in Florence
1343	*Monte* established in Florence
1345	Bankruptcy of Bardi and Peruzzi banks
1348	The Black Death appears in Italy; death of Petrarch’s Laura
1351	Giangaleazzo Visconti born
1357	Giotto di Bondone takes over construction of the cathedral in Florence
1374	Petrarch dies
1375	Coluccio Salutati chosen chancellor of Florence
1375	Giovanni Boccaccio dies
1377	Filippo Brunelleschi born
1377	The papacy returns to Rome from Avignon
1378	The Great Schism begins
1378	*Ciompi* Revolt in Florence
1378	Lorenzo Ghiberti born
1380–1381	War of Chioggia; Venice embarks on mainland expansion
1385	Giangaleazzo Visconti consolidates power in Milan
1386	Construction of il Duomo begins in Milan

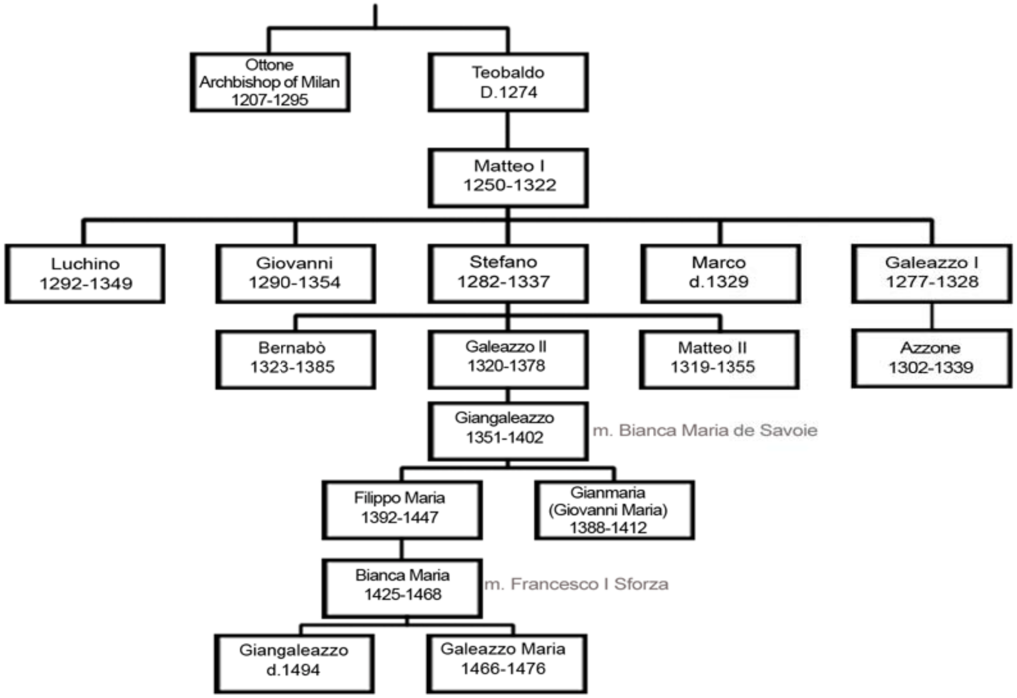
1389	Cosimo de'Medici born
1401	Francesco Sforza born
1402	Giangaleazzo Visconti dies
1404	Leon Battista Alberti born
1406	Coluccio Salutati dies
1406	Florence conquers Pisa
1407	Birth of Lorenzo Valla
1409	Council of Pisa
1412	Galeazzo Maria Visconti murdered; succeeded by Filippo Maria
1414	Council of Constance; Pope Martin V elected; end of the Great Schism
1418	Brunelleschi commissioned to raise the dome on the cathedral in Florence
1422	Federigo da Montefeltro born
1425	Lorenzo Ghiberti begins the baptistery doors in Florence ("Gates of Paradise")
1425	*Monte delle doti* (state dower fund) established in Florence
1427	Florentine *catasto* (tax on income and wealth)
1427	Leonardo Bruni chosen chancellor of Florence
1431	Pope Martin V dies
1433	Marsilio Ficino born
1433	Donatello's *David*
1434	Cosimo de'Medici returns from exile
1435	Monastery of San Marco established in Florence
1436	Completion of the dome of the cathedral in Florence
1436	Pope Eugenius IV crowned
1440	Platonic Academy founded in Florence
1442	House of Aragon takes control of Naples
1443	Pope Julius II born (Giuliano della Rovere)
1444	Leonardo Bruni dies
1444	Federigo da Montefeltro becomes duke of Urbino
1444	Work begins on the Medici palace
1444	Bramante born
1445	Botticelli born
1446	Brunelleschi dies
1447	Nicholas V elected pope (Tommaso Parentucelli)
1449	Lorenzo de'Medici, "the Magnificent," born
1450	Francesco Sforza conquers Milan
1452	Leonardo da Vinci born

1452	Girolamo Savonarola born
1453	Fall of Constantinople
1454	Angelo Poliziano born
1455	The formation of the Italian League
1455	Lorenzo Ghiberti dies
1463	Pico della Mirandola born
1464	Cosimo de’Medici dies; Piero de’Medici assumes power
1466	Francesco Sforza dies
1469	Niccolò Machiavelli born
1469	Piero di Cosimo de’Medici dies; Lorenzo de’Medici assumes authority
1471	Sixtus IV elected pope (Francesco della Rovere)
1472	Leon Battista Alberti dies
1474	Girolamo Savonarola joins the Dominicans
1475	Cesare Borgia born
1475	Pope Leo X born (Giovanni de’Medici)
1477	Titian born
1478	Pazzi Conspiracy; death of Giuliano de’Medici
1478	Giulio de’Medici (Pope Clement VII) born
1478	Baldassare Castiglione born
1482	Federigo da Montefeltro dies
1482	Guidobaldo da Montefeltro becomes duke of Urbino
1483	Raphael born
c. 1485	Sandro Botticelli paints *The Birth of Venus*
c. 1486	Sandro Botticelli paints *La Primavera*
1492	Lorenzo de’Medici, “the Magnificent,” dies
1492	Pope Innocent VIII dies
1492	Pope Alexander VI crowned (Rodrigo Borgia)
1494	Angelo Poliziano dies
1494	Pico della Mirandola dies
1494	Charles VIII of France invades Italy
1494	King Ferrante (Naples) dies
1495	Savonarola’s constitution proclaimed in Florence
1495	Charles VIII captures Naples
1495	The League of Venice created
1496	Pope Alexander VI excommunicates Savonarola
1498	Savonarola executed

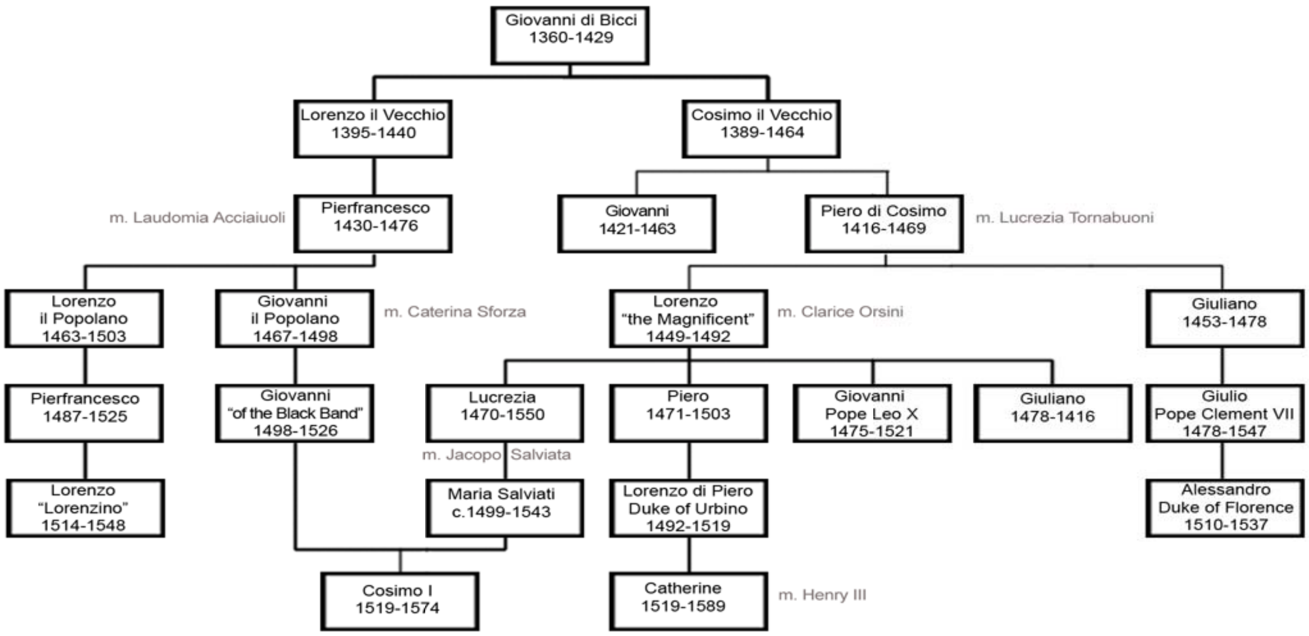
1498	Machiavelli becomes secretary of the Ten of War
1499	Marsilio Ficino dies
1500	France conquers Milan
1502	Piero Soderini elected *gonfaloniere* for life in Florence
1503	Naples under the Spanish viceroy
1503	Piero de'Medici dies
1503	Pope Alexander VI dies
1503	Julius II crowned (Giuliano della Rovere)
1504	Cesare Borgia surrenders to Julius II
1504	Michelangelo's *David* installed in the Piazza della Signoria in Florence
1506	Pope Julius II begins demolition of the original Church of St. Peter
1506	Bramante begins the design of the new St. Peter's
1506	Machiavelli inaugurates his Citizen Army
1507	Cesare Borgia dies
1508	Raphael begins painting his *Stanze*
1508	Michelangelo commissioned by Pope Julius II to paint the Sistine Chapel ceiling
1509	The League of Cambrai defeats Venice
1510	Sandro Botticelli dies
1511	The Holy League formed
1511	Alessandro de'Medici born
1511	Giorgio Vasari born
1512	Michelangelo finishes the Sistine Chapel ceiling
1512	The Medici resume power in Florence
1512	France defeats the combined papal/Spanish powers at Ravenna
1513	Pope Julius II dies
1513	Pope Leo X elected (Giovanni de'Medici)
1513	Niccolò Machiavelli charged with conspiracy against the Medici
1515	Francis I of France wins Battle of Marignano
1516	Charles V becomes king of Spain
1516	Giovanni Bellini dies
1519	Giulio de'Medici assumes power in Florence
1519	Charles V elected Holy Roman Emperor
1519	Leonardo da Vinci dies
1520	Machiavelli begins *History of Florence*
1520	Raphael dies
1521	Pope Leo X excommunicates Martin Luther

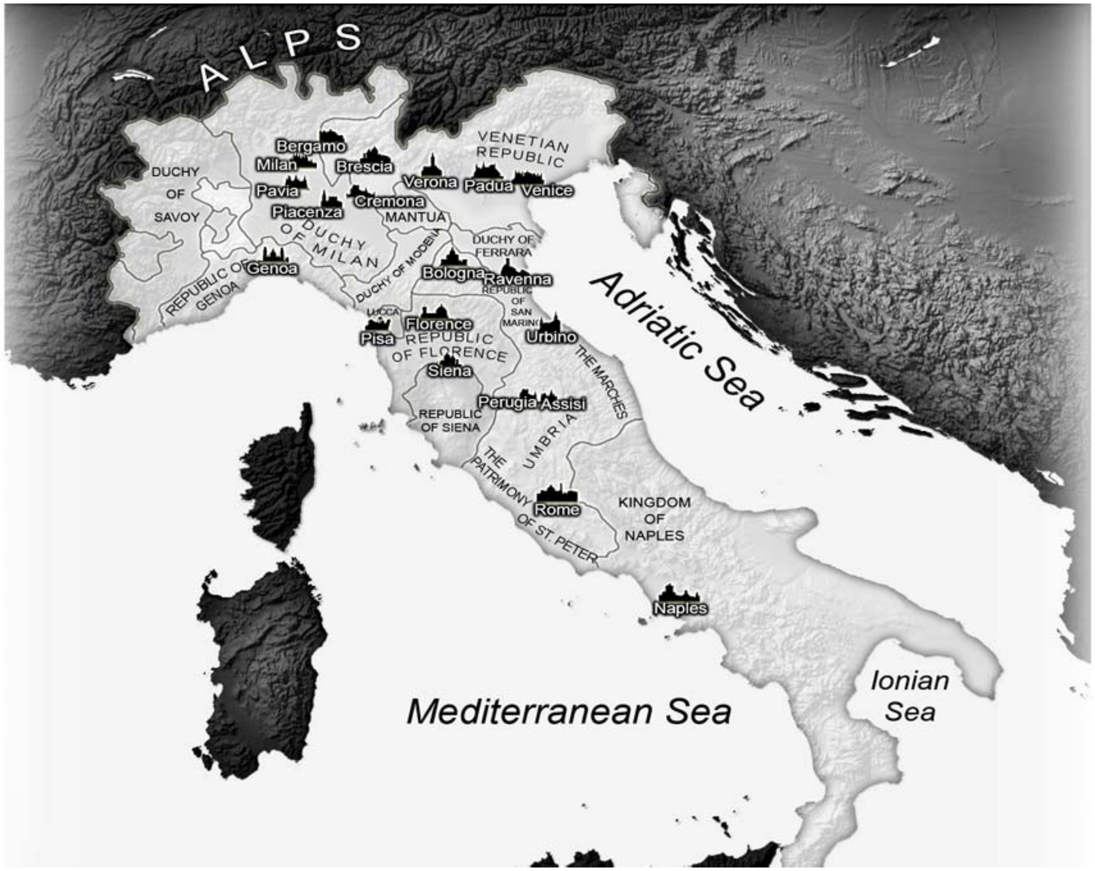
1521	Pope Leo X dies
1522	Adrian VI elected pope (Adrian Dedel of Utrecht)
1522	Piero di Tommaso Soderini dies
1523	Pope Clement VII crowned (Giulio de'Medici)
1524	France captures Milan
1525	Battle of Pavia; Frances I of France imprisoned
1527	Sack of Rome
1527	Medici expelled from Florence
1527	Niccolò Machiavelli dies
1528	Baldassare Castiglione permits printing of *The Courtier*
1529	Baldassare Castiglione dies
1529	Charles V crowned Holy Roman Emperor at Bologna
1530	The end of the Florentine Republic
1530	Alessandro de'Medici named ruler (later, duke) of Florence
1534	Pope Clement VII dies
1534	St. Ignatius Loyola founds the Society of Jesus
1534	Pope Paul III elected (Alessandro Farnese)
1534	Michelangelo begins *The Last Judgment* on the Sistine Chapel altar wall
1534	Lucrezia Borgia dies
1537	Alessandro de'Medici murdered
1537	Cosimo I de'Medici (later, grand duke of Tuscany) assumes control in Florence
1540	Pope Paul III officially approves the Society of Jesus
1542	Pope Paul III establishes the Roman Inquisition
1543	Nicholas Copernicus has printed *De Revolutionibus*
1543	Andreas Vesalius has printed *De humani corporis fabrica*
1543	Council of Trent called by Paul III
1545	University of Padua establishes the first botanical garden in Europe
1556	St. Ignatius Loyola dies
1559	Index of Prohibited Books
1563	Council of Trent ends
1564	Michelangelo dies
1569	Cosimo I elevated as grand duke of Tuscany

Visconti Family Tree


Ottone
Archbishop of Milan
1207-1295
Teobaldo
D.1274
Matteo I
1250-1322
Luchino
1292-1349
Giovanni
1290-1354
Stefano
1282-1337
Marco
d.1329
Galeazzo I
1277-1328
Bernabò
1323-1385
Galeazzo II
1320-1378
Matteo II
1319-1355
Azzone
1302-1339
Giangaleazzo
1351-1402
m. Bianca Maria de Savoie
Filippo Maria
1392-1447
Gianmaria
(Giovanni Maria)
1388-1412
Bianca Maria
1425-1468
m. Francesco I Sforza
Giangaleazzo
d.1494
Galeazzo Maria
1466-1476

Medici Family Tree


Giovanni di Bicci
1360-1429
Lorenzo il Vecchio
1395-1440
Cosimo il Vecchio
1389-1464
m. Laudomia Acciaiuoli
Pierfrancesco
1430-1476
Giovanni
1421-1463
Piero di Cosimo
1416-1469
m. Lucrezia Tornabuoni
Lorenzo
il Popolano
1463-1503
Giovanni
il Popolano
1467-1498
m. Caterina Sforza
Lorenzo
"the Magnificent"
1449-1492
m. Clarice Orsini
Giuliano
1453-1478
Pierfrancesco
1487-1525
Giovanni
"of the Black Band"
1498-1526
Lucrezia
1470-1550
Piero
1471-1503
Giovanni
Pope Leo X
1475-1521
Giuliano
1478-1416
Giulio
Pope Clement VII
1478-1547
m. Jacopo Salviata
Lorenzo
"Lorenzino"
1514-1548
Maria Salviati
c.1499-1543
Lorenzo di Piero
Duke of Urbino
1492-1519
Alessandro
Duke of Florence
1510-1537
Cosimo I
1519-1574
Catherine
1519-1589
m. Henry III


ALPS
VENETIAN REPUBLIC
DUCHY OF SAVOY
Bergamo
Milan
Brescia
Verona
Padua
Venice
Pavia
Cremona
Piacenza
MANTUA
DUCHY OF MILAN
DUCHY OF FERRARA
Genoa
DUCHY OF MODENA
Bologna
Ravenna
REPUBLIC OF GENOA
REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO
LUCCA
Florence
Urbino
Pisa
REPUBLIC OF FLORENCE
Adriatic Sea
Siena
THE MARCHES
Perugia
Assisi
REPUBLIC OF SIENA
UMBRIA
THE PATRIMONY OF ST. PETER
Rome
KINGDOM OF NAPLES
Naples
Mediterranean Sea
Ionian Sea

Glossary

Accoppiatori: Commissioners for elections in the Florentine Republic.

Arrabbiati: The anti-Savonarolan faction in Florence (literally, “hotheads”).

Bands of Hope: Youths pledged by their parents to Savonarola.

Camera: The papal finance ministry.

Caput mundi: “The head of the world”; a description of Rome from classical times.

Catasto: Florentine income and wealth tax of 1427.

Ciompi: Poor, oppressed Florentine wool workers.

Citadini Originari: Wealthy citizens of Venice who did not have noble status.

Conciliarism: The doctrine that sovereignty in the Church resides in a general council rather than the person of the pope.

Condottiere: A mercenary captain.

Cortegiane oneste: High-class courtesans.

Doge: The Venetian word for “duke.”

Gonfalioniere: Standard Bearer of Justice; one of the nine priors in Florence charged with enforcing the Ordinances of Justice.

Grandi: Wealthy old families originally of merchant stock but closely connected to the nobility in Florence.

Guild: A voluntary organization in a trade, industry, or profession for regulating prices, skills, admission, and other business practices. Matriculation in a guild was required for entry into Florentine political life in the republic.

Magnates: Landed aristocrats.

Monte: Florentine-funded public debt.

Monte delle doti: Florentine state dowry fund.

Monte di pietà: Florentine communal lending body for the poor.

Mundualdus: Male representative of a woman in court.

Palle: Medici rallying cry; the Italian word for “balls,” referring to the five (later, six) balls on the Medici coat of arms.

Parlamento: The gathering of all heads of households to approve or reject a basic law.

Piagnoni: The pro-Savonarolan faction (literally “snivelers”).

Podestà: Foreign military commander under annual contract with Florence.

Quadrivium: Four of the seven liberal arts of the Middle Ages: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

Roman *campagna*: The rural territory outside Rome.

Rota: The central church court in Rome.

Sacred College: The College of Cardinals in Rome.

Scuola: A lay service organization or confraternity in Venice.

Serrata: The closing of the Venetian Great Council in 1297.

Studia humanitatis* or *litterae humaniores: The Renaissance liberal arts, usually including poetry, philosophy, ethics, history, and rhetoric.

Terraferma: Venetian mainland territory.

The Italian Renaissance

Part II

Professor Kenneth Bartlett

THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

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Professor of History and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto

Kenneth Bartlett, Professor of History and Renaissance Studies at the University of Toronto, received his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto in 1978. He served as editor of *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* and president of the Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies. He was founding director of the University of Toronto Art Centre and remains coordinator of faculty programs in Arts and Science.

Much of Professor Bartlett's career has been devoted to bringing Renaissance culture into the undergraduate and graduate classroom. He has taught regularly in the University of Toronto Program in Siena, Italy, as well as in the Oxford Program. In 2002, he was appointed the first director of the Office of Teaching Advancement for the University of Toronto. He has been the recipient of the Victoria University Excellence in Teaching Award, the Students Administrative Council and Association of Part-Time University Students Teaching Award, and the Faculty of Arts and Science Teaching Excellence Award. In 2005 he was awarded a prestigious national 3M Teaching Fellowship.

Dr. Bartlett is the author of *The English in Italy, 1525–1558: A Study in Culture and Politics* (1991); *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance* (1992); and *Humanism and the Northern Renaissance* (with M. McGlynn, 2000). He was co-editor or translator of four other books and the author of more than 35 articles and chapters on Renaissance history and culture. In 2003, Dr. Bartlett was co-curator of the exhibition *Gods, Saints and Heroes: Italian Renaissance Maiolica from the Metropolitan Museum of Art* at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art. In addition, he has been the academic consultant on the Illuminated Filmworks videos on the Vatican Library, *The Halls of Virtuous Learning*, *The Galleries of Sixtus V*, *and Pages of Light*, as well as for the international exhibitions *Raphael and His Circle: Drawings from the Royal Collection at Windsor* and *Angels from the Vatican* at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Dr. Bartlett lives in Toronto with his wife, Gillian.

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The Italian Renaissance

Scope:

This course on the Italian Renaissance will attempt to answer the question: Why was there such an explosion of creative culture, human ingenuity, economic development, and social experimentation in Italy beginning in the 14th century? It will also address the question of why the Renaissance ended in the middle years of the 16th century.

In order to investigate the phenomenon of the Renaissance in Italy, it is necessary to look at every facet of human endeavor. Thus, this series will not be a discussion of major political, military, or economic events, although these will appear, as appropriate. Rather, the course will follow the model of writing Renaissance history designed by its first great practitioner, Jacob Burckhardt, whose 1860 book-length "essay," *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, initiated the model of cultural history, that is, looking at a period in the past from several perspectives simultaneously to produce a sophisticated, multidimensional image. Just as each tessera in a mosaic contributes to the whole, so each element in social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, and religious history contributes to the composite picture of life in Italy in the years between the birth of Petrarch in 1304 and the terrible events of the 1520s–1540s that extinguished the flame that the poet first lit.

Several elements must first be assessed before the question of cultural development can be answered. We must investigate why the Italian peninsula was so different from the rest of Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries. How did the city-states of Italy manage to develop such sophisticated societies based on various forms of government, with social mobility and secular education, and amass such enormous wealth, when most of the rest of the continent still lived under feudal regimes, largely local economies, and clerically dominated culture? To what extent was the very lack of unity in the peninsula an advantage? And why did such states as Florence choose to invest so much of their surplus capital in art and learning? What was Humanism and why was it a peculiarly Italian phenomenon in the 14th century? And why do we begin our study of the culture of the Renaissance with Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374), or Petrarch, a poet and thinker who believed he had the misfortune to have been born outside his age? These are complex parts of a complex story, but one worth telling because the Renaissance gave us so many of the tools by which we still interpret our lives and the world around us.

In discussing these aspects of the culture of the Renaissance, we will see that many of the fundamental perspectives of the modern world were formed at that time. It has been argued that Petrarch invented the contemporary concept of the individual, writing in his *Secret Book*, the first psychological autobiography since Augustine's *Confessions*. Such artists as Donatello and Brunelleschi developed the principles of linear perspective, which permitted the creation of a three-dimensional image on a two-dimensional plane. In so doing, not only did they open the way for Naturalism in art—reproducing what the eye sees—but they set the intellectual stage for modern cartography and, hence, the voyages of discovery, because objects could be put in correctly calibrated relative space and distances could be precisely mapped. The desire of Renaissance thinkers to know themselves and others drove artists to perfect the reproduction of correct anatomy in painting and sculpture, with Donatello's *David* the first freestanding male nude figure since antiquity. Portraiture allowed viewers to identify their fellow citizens or famous men and women through their appearances and, soon after, through the skill of the painter, acquire an insight into their characters. All of this was the product of the Italian Renaissance mind.

In addition, Renaissance writers, in their desire to know the world around them and make correct observations about that world and the variety of its inhabitants, extended the importance of individual experience and privileged it. In other words, life became less a vale of tears on the part of faithful servants of God acting out a role he had determined for them with little sense of personal agency. Rather, individuals, acting either alone or in concert with their fellow citizens, could assume some responsibility for creating art, ideas, and even social experiments that benefited our lives on Earth. Secular knowledge, practical skills, political involvement, marriage, family, and even the paying of taxes became instruments for human fulfillment and the means of constructing a more pleasant and meaningful life. The human perspective changed from the theocentric world of the Middle Ages to the anthropocentric world of the Renaissance. This shift emphasized the ideal of the creation of an individual life as a work of art and the building of cities that were equally things of beauty and commodity. It celebrated human achievement, including social mobility and social responsibility. This is not to say that the Renaissance was pagan or any less Christian—it was not—but it shifted the balance in the role of human free will and unleashed the creative spirit of thousands of individuals. Fame and history became important to Italians, who saw themselves as part of the human continuum; the ancient pagan classics could be applied to contemporary situations in art, learning,

and even ethics, because it could be shown that the ancient Greeks and Romans were good men with good advice concerning the human condition. Salvation remained a matter of faith and religious communion, but the complexity of human experience on Earth had been recognized and validated.

The Renaissance manifested itself differently in different places in Italy. The great republics, such as Florence and Venice, enjoyed a form of government that permitted a different kind of social and economic organization. These, especially Florence, have often been identified as the primary theaters of Renaissance culture. However, this is both unfair and incorrect. As we will see, small, petty principalities, such as 15th-century Urbino, contributed greatly to the Renaissance ideal, as did the enormously complex but equally influential city of Rome. Rome was at once the center of Western Christianity, with its bishop the head of the Church, and the city, the head of the Roman Empire, the living memory of a time when Italy ruled the known world and created so many of its fundamental institutions and ideas. Humanism, Renaissance culture, and the desire for fame and personal power infected the Church just as much as it did the republican magistracies in Florence or the courtly societies of monarchical regimes. We will need to look severally at the major centers of Renaissance culture to trace the flexibility of its dominant ideals and see how competition and patronage in different environments added to the rich growth of Italian culture.

Many of the principles of Renaissance Italian Humanism and ideals remain with us today, and not just the appreciation for Naturalism in art and the validity of individual experience, without which we could not have experimental science, for example. The principles of Renaissance education, based on knowledge of the Greek and Roman classics, remained the foundation for elite education well into the 20th century. Philosophical ideas, such as the dignity of man (a precursor of the principle of basic human rights) and the belief in ideal worlds, still inform our discourse. Italian commercial inventions still drive the engines of any capitalist society, and acceptance of the unique responsibility of the individual to construct himself or herself into the best model of achievement and civic engagement continues to go straight to the heart of a free society. These principles might have developed in the seemingly distant world of Renaissance Italy, but their attraction to the essence of human nature and the multiplicity of human experience make them as valid now as they were then.

Finally, we will discuss why these heroic ideals and institutions collapsed. Here, too, there might be lessons to learn for our own world. I will suggest that the conditions that gave rise to such noble practices and principles were crushed by the terror of war, occasioned by the French invasions of Italy in 1494, which turned the peninsula into the battleground of Europe for almost 60 years. I will argue that unspeakable events, such as the 1527 sack of Rome, made it difficult to sustain such ideals as the dignity of man. And the repressive reaction of the Church and many Italian states to the challenge of the Reformation introduced mechanisms that crushed the imagination, freedom of speech, and freedom of action. The introduction of the Roman Inquisition in the 1540s, the Index of Prohibited Books in the 1550s and 1560s, and the growing authoritarianism in the monarchies that ruled Italy snuffed out the light that Petrarch and those of his generation had lit. Of course, there were external forces, such as the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 and the consequent shift of the European economy to the Atlantic seaboard from the Mediterranean (the *Media Terra*, the center of the world since the beginning of recorded European history). But challenges had been met previously; now they appeared insurmountable. There was a failure of will, imagination, and belief. For example, Italians were still among the greatest of seafarers, but they sailed for Spain, England, and France; Italians remained great shipbuilders, but they continued to construct shallow- draft, wide-beamed galleys that were suited to the Mediterranean—where trade was being strangled by the Turkish advance—and completely useless on the open ocean, where new opportunities lay.

In many ways, the Renaissance was an attitude and a quality of mind, a belief that “Man is the measure of all things,” that “Man can do anything that he but wills.” It was a failure of will and a loss of belief in the capacity and creativity of the human mind that ended the Renaissance, because it put an end to the principles that had driven its creation and expansion.

Lecture Thirteen

Venice—The Most Serene Republic

Scope: Venice, the other great republic in the peninsula, is a curious place. It was founded by Romans fleeing the barbarian invasions in the 5th and 6th centuries, seeking safety in the lagoons where the river Po meets the Adriatic. It was, therefore, not a Roman foundation and not originally an episcopal see. Its initial economy was fishing, which soon expanded to local and, eventually, long-distance maritime trade. The calling of the Crusades made Venice enormously rich and permitted the republic to become the most powerful maritime state in Europe and the richest city in the West. The social organization of the city resulted from its origins as well; fiercely independent, the inhabitants knew no prince or bishop but ruled themselves by choosing magistrates, who were seen only as *primi inter pares*, "first among equals." At the end of the 7th century (697), the duke (*doge* in Venetian dialect) emerged as the elected head of state. In 1297, the system was codified in the *Serrata* (or closure of the Great Council) with the institution of legally defined classes. The *Serrata* limited membership in the Great Council, the source of political power in Venice, to families who had sat there previously and whose names were recorded in the Golden Book. Thereafter, Venice was a republic of nobles whose economic and political interests were almost entirely associated with the success of the state. The city also avoided the factional crises of the other Italian states as the Guelf-Ghibelline struggle did not obtain. Moreover, the fear of the impoverished working class in cities, illustrated by the *ciompi* in Florence, was not present. The industrial workers in Venice were the skilled employees of the Arsenal, building the vast fleets for Mediterranean trade and protection, and the glass workers were equally privileged and well paid. Consequently, Venice was a stable and homogeneous society, divided informally by wealth and occupation.

Outline

I. The Venetian Republic, the other great republic in the peninsula, was a unique city-state in Italy.

- **A.** Venice was not a classical foundation but a city that was founded in the 5th and 6th centuries by Romans fleeing the barbarian invaders.
  - **1.** With no land available for agriculture, Venice became a maritime republic, the early Venetians living at first by fishing but soon developing a flourishing local trade around the Adriatic.
  - **2.** Close connection with the Byzantine Empire gave these maritime traders an impetus to develop economic relations with Constantinople and the eastern Mediterranean.
  - **3.** Venice gained powerful economic advantages during the Crusades and enjoyed a privileged position in trade with the East.
- **B.** Venetian society was altogether different from that of the other states of the peninsula.
  - **1.** It was extremely homogenous, given that all classes were in some way involved in trade, the sea, or the large state or in protected manufacturing concerns, such as the Arsenal and the glass industry.
  - **2.** Unlike Florence, for example, there were no fundamental divisions between such groups as the Guelfs and Ghibellines, because papal or imperial power was irrelevant to the republic.
  - **3.** Also, there were no divisions based on occupation or economic activity, as between the wealthy mercantile classes and the landed nobles, because there were originally no lands to cultivate.
  - **4.** Even the class and occupational divisions in the city were mitigated by the shared adherence to trade and by the observation that there was no large, disenfranchised, and discontented mass of poor equivalent to the *ciompi* in Florence.
  - **5.** In fact, many trades were highly privileged, such as the armament and shipbuilding workers of the Arsenal and the glass workers, who sustained Venice's long monopoly on the production of mirrors and decorated glass.
- **C.** In the late 7th century (697), an independent duke (*doge* in Venetian dialect) was elected as a *primus inter pares*, or "first among equals," to rule the city.
  - **1.** The doge was to rule for life but was carefully monitored to ensure that no doge might establish arbitrary or hereditary rule.
  - **2.** A council consisting of the most prominent families would share power and elect the doge.

        3. From this group developed the Great Council (*Maggior Consiglio*), representing the heads of the wealthiest merchant families.

- **II.** Venice became a more stratified and closed society as those wealthy merchants concentrated ever more authority into their own hands.
    - **A.** The enormous profits from long-distance luxury trade, which became almost a Venetian monopoly by the 13th century and celebrated in the accounts of Marco Polo, separated the old, established merchant patricians from their less wealthy fellow citizens.
        1. This culminated in the *Serrata* of 1297, that is, the closing of the Great Council to all but those families who had sat there previously.
        2. These families were defined as "noble."
        3. Their names were recorded in the official genealogy of the nobility, the Golden Book, kept by the republic itself.
        4. Beneath the nobles were the "original citizens" (*cittadini originari*), usually well off and substantial Venetians but of families who did not qualify as noble.
        5. Their genealogy was kept in the Silver Book.
    - **B.** The duties and responsibilities of the nobles and original citizens were clearly prescribed.
        1. Only nobles were eligible for political office and high positions, such as subject city governors or ambassadors.
        2. However, the nobles—including the doge himself—had to use private funds to support their offices, usually at great expense.
        3. Original citizens could hold important jobs as secretaries and secondary officials, including the office of chancellor.
        4. Unlike the nobles, they were paid for these positions.
    - **C.** The nobles and original citizens were quite happy with the Venetian system, as were members of other classes, even though their privileges might have been reduced.
        1. For example, members of the artisan class were greatly respected and treated with deference because they were needed to support the maritime trades.
        2. The Arsenal was an enormous shipbuilding facility in the center of Venice. Those who worked in the Arsenal were paid high wages and were entitled to wear distinctive red caps.
        3. The glass workers were also highly paid and greatly respected but labored under threat. If a Venetian glass worker took his skills to another city, all his property was confiscated by the state and his name was added to the "hit list" of the republic's professional assassins.
    - **D.** Venice was an extremely integrated society. This integration was partly achieved through fear of its harsh laws and partly through the recognition that all citizens had important roles to play.
        1. For example, the role of the nobles was often ceremonial in the exercise of Venetian law.
        2. The nobles were prevented by law from discussing any political matter except in the Hall of the Great Council and the covered arcade adjacent to it in the Ducal Palace. Here, political factions were formed.
    - **E.** The roles in Venetian society were strictly defined, which had both positive and negative consequences.
        1. Everyone recognized his role and, to a large extent, played it well; respect was also accorded to the roles of others.
        2. Unlike in Florence, however, the members of the political elite did not seek Humanist education. Humanism tended to become established in the lower levels of the citizen classes and did not spread upward to energize the state.
        3. The merchant patricians remained just that—merchants. Their sons were often poorly educated and sent to sea when they were very young. The young men would then acquire increasingly larger commands until they were eligible to enter the councils of the republic at about the age of 30.
    - **F.** Another element that served to bind the Venetians together was the establishment of the *scuole*, that is, lay confraternities that ran poor-relief hospitals and charitable activities and enjoyed ceremonial splendor.
        1. Almost all propertied citizens belonged to these organizations, which were not unlike modern service clubs, such as the Elks, Jaycees, Rotary, or Shriners.
        2. The roles they performed were extremely important; they assumed most of the social service responsibilities for the city, supported by charitable donations and donated time.

        3. The *scuole* took pressure off social divisions, because all members were equal.
        4. Officers were elected, and it was possible that a member of the citizen class would be in charge over a noble.
        5. Thus, these confraternities brought the classes together and gave ritual celebrity to members of the citizen class.

III. The Republic of Venice was a stable society whose constitution was viewed by many contemporary observers as the ideal model of political and social organization.

- **A.** Venice was a remarkably peaceful society.
    1. All were equal under a harsh legal system, in which trials were held in secret.
    2. The citizens were paid for their services and could amass more wealth, even if they were excluded from political activity.
    3. But the members of the nobility had to sacrifice their time and personal wealth if elected to political office.
    4. The poor seemed generally content, served by the *scuole* and enjoying considerable protection under the law and high wages and honor if employed in the Arsenal or glass factories.
- **B.** The poor, too, had their own recognized culture.
    1. For example, the Arsenal workers wore distinctive caps and played their own particular game of building human pyramids.
    2. Gondoliers and boatmen had regular races and regattas.
    3. Neighborhoods engaged in local, organized brawls on bridges, where strong young men from contiguous areas of the city tried to push one another into the canals.
    4. The official foot marks, set in the bridges to mark where the opposing teams were to stand, can still be seen in the city.

IV. Venice was not, of course, an entirely harmonious and peaceful society.

- **A.** Two serious threats to the integrity of the republic resulted in increased surveillance of all classes.
    1. In 1310, a young patrician, Bajamonte Tiepolo, made an unsuccessful attempt at a coup, for which he was promptly executed.
    2. The main consequence of this was the creation of the Council of Ten (1315), a body of powerful patricians who had extraordinary powers and the right to investigate, remove from office, or punish any Venetian.
    3. The council's secret deliberations and the lions' mouths boxes for denunciations (including in the doge's palace) inspired fear of this office.
    4. This did not stop the attempt of an aged doge, Marin Falier, to effect a coup in 1355.
    5. He was tried by the Council of Ten and executed on the very spot where he had been crowned.
- **B.** The infrequent rebellions and the official proclamation of harmony also obscured the fact that there were real divisions in Venetian society.
    1. These divisions were between young and old patricians and between old and newer noble families.
    2. There were also divisions between the rich patricians and poor noble families, a group that was often despised by other classes of citizens because of their willingness to sell their votes in the Great Council.

V. On the whole, however, Venice functioned successfully and in harmony for an extremely long period.

- **A.** It lasted from 697 (the election of the first doge) to 1797 (the year the republic was extinguished by Napoleon), exactly 1,100 years.
- **B.** It represents one of the greatest constitutional experiments in European history.
- **C.** It well deserved its title, "a most serene republic."

Primary Source Texts:

D. Chambers, and B. Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450 to 1630*.

Secondary Sources:

D. S. Chambers, *The Imperial Age of Venice, 1380–1580*.

Robert Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice*.

Supplementary Reading:

Frederic Lane, *Andrea Barbarigo, Merchant of Venice, 1418–1449*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was the Venetian Republic so stable for such a long period of time?
2. Why were the classes beneath the nobility content to be excluded from political influence?

Lecture Fourteen

Renaissance Venice

Scope: Its social and political context meant the Renaissance arrived late in Venice. Looking to Byzantium rather than to Italy, having little motivation to make cultural or intellectual connections with other Italian states, and not seeing itself as a city with a classical Roman past, Venice was isolated from the first appearances of Humanist values in the peninsula. Also, the social structure separated the educated members of the chancery, or civil service, from the dominant political families. Everything changed, however, after 1380, when Venice decided to expand onto the mainland in order to protect its flank, its food supply, and trade routes. Venice conquered the sophisticated cities of northern Italy, such as Vicenza and Verona, and in 1405, Padua, with its celebrated university. There, Venetians confronted and began to adopt Humanist and Renaissance artistic values. Such architects as Sansovino and Palladio worked in Venice to bring the classical style to maturity. Painters, such as Bellini, Carpaccio, Giorgione, Tintoretto, Veronese, and Titian, developed a unique use of light and color to reflect the atmosphere of the Veneto in which they lived. The wealth of the city meant patronage flourished, and official commissions to adorn public buildings quickly institutionalized this transformation.

Outline

I. Although Venice had largely avoided participation in the constant warfare and instability of the Italian peninsula, by the mid-14th century, changing conditions drove it to look to the peninsula for expansion.

- **A.** As it had grown in wealth, it had grown in size, to the point where it could no longer easily feed itself.
- **B.** Also, Venice had grown fearful of attack from the landward side.
- **C.** Further, expanding trade required that Venice control the roads and passes through the mountains separating Italy from northern Europe.
- **D.** A victory over Genoa in the War of Chioggia (1380) allowed Venice to expand westward.
- **E.** In the first decade of the 15th century, it captured important cities, such as Vicenza, Verona, and Padua.

II. With a large territorial state being assembled in the *Terraferma* (the Italian mainland), Venice faced new opportunities and dangers.

- **A.** For the first time, Venetian patrician families were able to invest in land.
  - **1.** After the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, Venice's privileged position in trade with the East was weakened.
  - **2.** In turn, maritime commerce became much more dangerous.
  - **3.** Venetian patrician families pulled fortunes out of trade to invest in landed estates on the mainland, putting their money into secure, if low-yielding, ground rents.
- **B.** However, the expansion of Venetian territory had been enormously rapid and insensitive.
  - **1.** Venice had, therefore, alienated the traditional powers of the peninsula, the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor.
  - **2.** This resulted in the War of the League of Cambrai and the disastrous humiliation of Venice at the Battle of Agnadello in 1509.
  - **3.** The subject cities rose against their Venetian masters, and the complete destruction of the republic was averted only when the pope had a change of heart and sided with Venice.
- **C.** After the War of the League of Cambrai, Venice had to struggle to reassert its authority over its subject territory.
  - **1.** However, Venetians still recognized the need to preserve the food supply and protect the city itself.
  - **2.** Moreover, by the early 16th century, the Venetians were becoming increasingly aware that their mercantile empire itself was under threat.
  - **3.** The Portuguese voyages of exploration and Vasco da Gama's successful mission to India around the Cape of Good Hope began to eviscerate Venetian long-distance trade in spices and luxuries.

        4. The Portuguese navigators shifted the economic center of Europe from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic seaboard. The cities of Spain and Portugal and, later, England, France, and the Low Countries would now come to dominate long-distance trade.

III. The Venetians, despite losing their seaborne empire, did have an alternative. The *Terraferma* empire they had created would provide food, protection, and a new economic and cultural model for the city.

- **A.** Previously, Venetian culture had been rooted in the traditions of the East.
    - **1.** This was visible in Venetian architecture in its onion-shaped domes, Turkish crenulations, golden mosaics, alabaster windows, and marble decoration.
    - **2.** These Eastern traditions were also sustained in Venetian painting.
- **B.** However, with the conquest of the *Terraferma* state, new opportunities in culture and art began to creep into the Venetian consciousness.
    - **1.** We see these new influences in architecture as early as the mid-15th century, in the use of Gothic tracery and the pointed arch, such as on the Porta della carta, the entry into the Ducal Palace.
    - **2.** In painting, already in the 14th century, such artists as Paolo Veneziano (c. 1300–c. 1360) began to bring Gothic influences into the Venetian style.
    - **3.** This movement reached fulfillment in the early 15th century with such painters as Gentile da Fabriano (1378–c. 1427), working in an international Gothic style within the confines of Venetian churches and other buildings.
- **C.** This spread of new models culminated in the 15th century with the family of the Bellini.
    - **1.** Jacopo Bellini (c. 1400–1470), father of Gentile (c. 1427–1507) and Giovanni (c. 1430–1516), worked in a distinctly Venetian style of Humanist/Naturalist painting.
    - **2.** Jacopo's sons went on to develop a very characteristic Venetian style of Renaissance painting that took advantage, not just of the Florentine influence in composition and use of linear perspective, but of the unique qualities of Venetian light.
    - **3.** The Venetian colorists' style spread dramatically throughout the *Terraferma* empire, influenced both by the Italian mainland and by Venetian tradition.
- **D.** Venetian culture was always something different, always the exception to the Italian Renaissance rule, and we can see the causes of this in the history and circumstances of the city.

IV. The Venetians were proud of the fact that they were a victorious, seafaring people, able to take influences from other cultures and apply them to their own needs.

- **A.** The Venetians also took physical artifacts from the places they conquered. For example, after the conquest of Constantinople in 1204 in the Fourth Crusade, the Venetians took away elements that would remind them of that victory, including the *Pala d'oro*, the great golden altar screen in the Basilica of San Marco.
- **B.** In another conquest, the Venetians took away the *Four Tetrarchs* (c. A.D. 305), porphyry figures that are images of four rulers of the Roman Empire. These came to symbolize Venetian dominance, the idea that Venice had become the new Rome, the Constantinople of the West.
- **C.** The most dramatic of all the Venetian tributes of war was, perhaps, the *Quadriga*, four bronze horses that the Venetians took from the Hippodrome in Constantinople.
    - **1.** The horses may originate from Greece in the 5th century B.C., or they may have been made in the time of Constantine.
    - **2.** They were placed on the façade of the Basilica of San Marco, where copies of the originals can be seen today.
- **D.** These trophies of war became part of the Venetian consciousness of a new form of empire.
    - **1.** Previously, the Venetians saw their empire as physical and economic.
    - **2.** Ultimately, even though that empire declined, its memory was sustained through culture and art.
    - **3.** This is wonderfully reflected in the Basilica of San Marco. The winged lion of St. Mark still dominates the city but is, essentially, a memory of the Eastern empire from which it was stolen.
- **E.** Painting, sculpture, and architecture became more than just decoration of the city; these arts became an ideological statement, a reflection of the power and beauty of an integrated community.

    1. Florence was a city of individual genius, whereas Venice was a city of collective values and symbols used to generalize the honor and glory of the republic. The symbols of Venice are everywhere, and in many ways, the public buildings became symbolic in themselves.
    2. The Ducal Palace, for example, is not just the place where the doge lived but the place where all of the offices of government were held. For this reason, the decoration of the palace reflects the glory of the republic over any individual.
    3. Two terrible fires in 1574 and 1577 destroyed much of the old palace and its decorations, but the fires also gave the Venetians an opportunity, in a time of economic crisis, to look back to the past in redecorating the palace and find a sense of glory that would sustain them.
    4. Much of the new decoration was done by two of the greatest painters of Venice, Paolo Veronese (1528–1588) and Jacopo Tintoretto (1518–1594), working to create images of Venetian power and victory.
    5. Venice itself became an exercise in civic propaganda at a time when the republic's power and authority were in decline.

V. The Venetians allowed decline to take place but never quite admitted that it was happening.

- **A.** The merchant patricians invested more in land and less in trade, launching the era of the great Venetian country houses that culminated in the architecture of Palladio (d. 1580).
- **B.** Palladio managed to integrate the outbuildings of these working farms into the façades of the great Venetian villas. He created an environment in which the "life of the villa" also became part of the collective unconscious of Venice.
- **C.** Palladio borrowed from the architectural vocabulary of the ancients but gave it a Venetian flavor. His work represents the arrival of the Renaissance in Venice, ironically, as a result of Venetian decline rather than Venetian superiority.
- **D.** Venice came to define itself in terms of what it had been rather than what it was in the present.
- **E.** Venetian arts and architecture, as well as the "mind" of Venice, benefited enormously from contact with the Italian mainland.
    1. The conquest of Padua in 1405 gave Venice the greatest university in Europe.
    2. The Venetians insisted that patricians could be educated only at the University of Padua.
    3. This university offered greater freedom and a wider flow of ideas than any other in Europe, producing such thinkers as Copernicus and, ultimately, Galileo.
    4. The University of Padua brought the Venetian mind into the Humanist discourse, making the Venice of the 16th century, in some ways, more exciting in its economic decline than the Venice of the earlier Renaissance, when it was the greatest economic power in the West.

Secondary Sources:

Manfredo Tafuri, *Venice and the Renaissance*.

Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*.

Supplementary Reading:

Margaret King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was Renaissance style in art and architecture so late in reaching Venice?
2. Consider why Venetian painting is celebrated for its color and why portraiture was a leading genre.

Lecture Fifteen

The *Signori*—Renaissance Princes

Scope: The republics of Florence and Venice represented only one model of statecraft that flourished during the Renaissance. The more usual political structure was the principality—princely regimes or despotisms, such as Urbino and Milan. Although feudalism had set only shallow roots in northern Italy, the traditions of monarchical rule in Europe were strong during the Middle Ages. Princes (in Italian, *signori*, or lords) received their sovereignty either from the Holy Roman Emperor and were seen as Ghibelline or from the pope and, hence, were Guelf. These rulers in theory were imperial or papal vicars, acting in their overlord's name; in reality, they were usually independent despots whose families established hereditary rule sustained by force. Principalities often developed brilliant courts that adopted a form of Humanism suited to their values: The Roman Empire was privileged over the republic; the educated, articulate citizen was a loyal counselor to the prince rather than a fractious magistrate; and the praise and glorification of the ruler became a recurring image in art.

Outline

I. In contrast to the republics of Florence and Venice, other Italian states were principalities, controlled by princes or despots who wielded absolute authority.

- **A.** The source of princely sovereignty was rooted in the medieval period.
  - **1.** Following the collapse of the imperial Roman dominion in the 5th century and the invasion of the barbarian tribes, two separate models of princely authority arose, Roman imperial power and barbarian chieftain traditions.
  - **2.** The monarchical traditions of Italy were further reinforced by the invasions of the Germanic emperors into the peninsula.
  - **3.** Charlemagne was crowned in Rome in A.D. 800, and later, the Ottonians, the Hohenstaufens (the line of Frederick Barbarossa, d. 1190), and other imperial families sought power bases in Italy.
- **B.** However, the rise in urban life during the late 11th and 12th centuries created needs in Italian cities that were suitable for bourgeois merchants, needs that were antithetical to the rural, feudal values of the old nobility.
  - **1.** In some cities in northern and central Italy, popular revolts in favor of a more broadly based government resulted in the formation of communes, or civic government.
  - **2.** In some instances, nobles were forced to share power with merchants.
  - **3.** In others, imperial or papal vicars were expelled in favor of bourgeois communes, as in Milan, which became a commune in 1080; Genoa, in 1099; Florence, in 1105; and so on.
  - **4.** The creation of communal governments did not, however, end discord, because the traditional powers of the old nobility, the Church, new mercantile families, and the empire remained in opposition.

II. Conflict between classes, factions, and families often led to factional leadership by an important family, usually supported either by a class of citizens (merchants or the nobility, for example) or a number of dependent but still powerful family groups.

- **A.** A form of urban civil war resulted, in which a dominant authority was overthrown by a new, more powerful faction.
  - **1.** For example, the Gonzaga, led by Luigi Gonzaga, overthrew and murdered the "captain" of Mantua, Rinaldo Buonaccolsi, in 1328, resulting in the establishment of the Gonzaga principality.
  - **2.** Similarly, Azzo d'Este in 1240 succeeded in uniting the Guelf faction to claim hereditary rule of Ferrara.
- **B.** Certain families were established as imperial vicars and remained in their positions for centuries.
  - **1.** For example, the Della Scala of Verona were made rulers of the city by the emperor Henry VII in 1277 and held power for more than a century.
  - **2.** In some instances, as in Milan, this process could be tortuous.
  - **3.** It took more than 30 years of turbulent fighting with the resurgent Della Torre faction for the Visconti family to gain ultimate control of the city in 1310, under the auspices of the emperor as imperial vicar.

- **C.** Unlike republics, all authority in Italian despotisms came from the prince.
    - **1.** Because of factional and family disputes, princes usually had real, potential, or imaginary rivals killed or exiled, often resulting in a harsh regime.
    - **2.** As a despot, the prince's personality determined everything.
    - **3.** Sometimes, a prince was a great connoisseur of culture and a gifted patron of the arts; sometimes, he was a military leader; sometimes, a dangerous, cruel, and paranoid ruler.
    - **4.** Seldom did a prince permit other sources of power to develop, not only among his nobility but also in the Church and the guilds, all of which tended to be controlled directly or indirectly by the authority of the ruler.
    - **5.** As a result, even the cityscape and architecture of Italian principalities differed from republics.
    - **6.** As in despotisms, the palace of the prince was usually a fortress to protect him from enemies within and without the city walls.
    - **7.** Unlike in republics, there were seldom many large open spaces for the potentially hostile populace to gather.
    - **8.** It was difficult for trade and commerce to flourish in principalities because of the lack of freedom and opportunity for the mercantile classes.
    - **9.** On the other hand, agriculture was often important, as were the development and even production of military materiel, as in Milan.

III. Although the *signori* were despots wielding total authority, this did not mean that they were necessarily cruel, unthinking, and unlettered princes.

- **A.** Humanism was often attractive to despots, often because the rhetoricians, poets, and historians could praise the prince, comparing him to ancient leaders and recording his deeds.
    - **1.** The reputation of the prince depended on patronage, and patronage attracted many of the greatest Humanists to princely courts, such as Petrarch's eight years in Milan in the 14th century and Leonardo da Vinci's long residence there at the court of Lodovico il Moro at the end of the 15th century.
    - **2.** Painters were summoned to decorate public buildings as signs of a prince's largesse to his people and duty to the Church, and portraits were produced to immortalize the prince's image.
    - **3.** To compete with the great Republic of Florence and papal Rome, princes often employed Humanists to write elegant letters and serve as ambassadors and publicists to add to their luster.
- **B.** A major departure from the traditions of republican literature and learning was the emphasis on traditional chivalric stories, which emphasized aristocratic and princely virtues.
    - **1.** Stories of Charlemagne and his knights, as well as tales from the Arthurian tradition, crossed the Alps to find comfortable homes in northern Italian princely courts and at the royal court of Naples.
    - **2.** The greatest center for these tales was the rich and elegant court of Ferrara, where such poets as Boiardo, Tasso, and Ariosto produced some of the greatest epic poetry of the Italian Renaissance.
    - **3.** These tales also appear in paintings and fresco cycles, such as the Del Cossa frescoes of the 15th century in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara or the Pisanello frescoes in the Castello San Giorgio-Palazzo Ducale complex in Mantua.

IV. Taken together, the princely courts established a different iteration of the culture of the Renaissance.

- **A.** It was an aristocratic culture in which the traditions of knightly valor, crusading zeal, and noble birth were paramount.
    - **1.** Military traditions were much more stressed, because it was understood that courtiers and princes had the responsibility of military leadership.
    - **2.** In Florence, Venice, and papal Rome, the citizens did not practice the art of war; rather, mercenaries were employed to fight.
    - **3.** Those mercenaries were often the *condottiere* princes who hired themselves and their armies to fight other states' wars for profit.
- **B.** There was less openness and mobility.
    - **1.** The learned Humanist's responsibility was to praise the prince and offer good counsel, not to discuss ideas openly and freely.
    - **2.** Social mobility was much more difficult because noble birth was usually a required entrée into the court, except for exceptional geniuses.

    3. Rather than achieve excellence through competition, courts relied on the singular taste and patronage of the prince.

V. Given that our natural sympathy is with republics, we need to be aware of our biases before approaching the Renaissance principalities.

- **A.** Because of our natural appreciation of more open forms of government, the despotisms of the Italian Renaissance tend to receive much negative commentary.
    1. Our sympathy is not with tyrants who ruled outside the law, even if, on occasion, they were great patrons of art, such as Lodovico il Moro of Milan.
    2. The often ambiguous reputations of those whose absolute power corrupted them detract from their other achievements.
    3. We remember Sigismondo Malatesta as the Wolf of Rimini and the bizarre despot he was rather than as the patron of Alberti's *Tempio Malatestiano* at Rimini.
- **B.** However, we must recognize the unique and positive characteristics of the despotisms.
    1. There were positive elements in the patronage patterns of princes, such as Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan and the Este of Ferrara; official laudatory culture does not necessarily mean weak or inferior culture.
    2. In some areas, the despotisms were more enlightened than the republics, for example, in their attitudes to women.
    3. Women ruled principalities, and the daughters of the nobility were often well educated and played important roles in the court.
    4. The sisters Isabella d'Este (who became Marchesa of Mantua) and Beatrice (Duchess of Milan) could not have achieved their eminence in Florence or Venice.
- **C.** As we shall see in the next lecture, a principality could, indeed, be a model for extraordinary culture and accomplishment.

Secondary Sources:

Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy*.

Supplementary Reading:

John Larner, *The Lords of Romagna: Romagnol Society and the Origins of the Signorie*.

Werner L. Gundersheimer, *Ferrara*: *The Style of a Renaissance Despotism*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Does lack of political freedom necessarily produce an inferior culture and society?
2. Compare the patronage of culture in a republic and a despotism.

Lecture Sixteen

Urbino

Scope: Although a tiny principality of only 40 square miles perched in the Apennines, Urbino became one of the most celebrated sites of Renaissance culture. Because the inhospitable nature of the terrain made it difficult to coax much from the soil, the population sustained itself for generations by serving as mercenary soldiers fighting under the *signori* of the Montefeltro family. The most famous of the Montefeltros was Federigo, who ruled from 1444 until his death in 1482. In addition to being a great leader, never losing a battle, and—uncharacteristically for a mercenary—never betraying a client, Federigo was among the greatest patrons of culture in the Italian Renaissance. His new palace was a center for study and art, welcoming such painters as Piero della Francesca and Giovanni Santi, father of Raphael. He patronized scholars who worked constantly on his library until it became one of the most important collections of manuscripts in Europe, and his books were among the most beautiful, as illustrated by the incomparable Urbino Bible. After many pregnancies, Federigo's wife, Battista Sforza, finally produced an heir, Guidobaldo (1472–1508). But he proved to be sickly and weak, no match for the invasion of Cesare Borgia.

Outline

I. One of the most remarkable of the Renaissance principalities was the state of Urbino.

- **A.** Urbino is a tiny, 40-square-mile principality perched on a hilltop in the Apennines, isolated by geography from many of the important states of the peninsula.
  - **1.** It is some 20 miles from the Adriatic in an area of Italy known as the *Marche*, or Marches.
  - **2.** The Marches were part of the historical Papal States.
  - **3.** As a result, the rulers of Urbino were papal vicars, whose sovereignty came from the Holy See.
  - **4.** It was a stable principality, governed by the Montefeltro family from the time of the Middle Ages.
- **B.** The Montefeltro *signori* of Urbino were mercenary captains or, in Italian, c*ondottieri*.
  - **1.** Their vocation was a direct result of their geographical circumstance.
  - **2.** The soil of the rocky, mountainous principality of Urbino made agriculture difficult.
  - **3.** But the race of mountaineers produced in Urbino was tough, resilient, and ideally suited to the rigors of the military profession.
  - **4.** As it happened, most Italian warfare of the period was conducted by *condottieri*.
  - **5.** The word *condottieri* stems from the Italian word *condotto*, meaning contract.
  - **6.** These mercenaries were contract soldiers who earned their living by fighting wars for other states.
  - **7.** And the Montefeltro *condottieri* were among the best.

II. Federigo da Montefeltro (r. 1444–1482) was known as the "Light of Italy," the greatest prince of his age.

- **A.** As a *condottiere*, he was invincible.
  - **1.** He never lost a battle and sought always to protect the lives of his soldiers.
  - **2.** Unlike most *condottiere*, he was honest and honorable; he never betrayed a client or switched allegiances for higher pay.
  - **3.** For example, fearing that Federigo might change sides in a desperate moment, the Venetians offered him an increase in his fee, but he returned it, with the statement that his honor was worth more.
  - **4.** His success resulted in his ability to charge huge fees: 65,000 ducats annually as a retainer when he was not at war; 165,000 annually when in the field.
  - **5.** In total, he served three popes, two kings of Naples, and two dukes of Milan, as well as the Venetian and Florentine republics, and he never broke his word.
  - **6.** He was decorated with almost every military honor from near and far, including the English Order of the Garter, which he proudly wore in the portrait by Berruguete (or Justus van Ghent).
- **B.** Although Federigo was often kept far from his beloved Urbino, he ruled it well, imposing justice and stability on his tiny state.
  - **1.** He took care of the families of his soldiers who might be killed or wounded, providing, for example, dowries for their daughters.

        2. When in residence, he walked unarmed and unattended throughout the city early each morning, inquiring in shops and businesses of the state of affairs and his subjects' well-being.
        3. He would also spend part of the day in his garden, waiting for citizens to seek an audience so that he could solve disputes.
        4. All citizens, regardless of rank, were equal under the law, to the point that Federigo once insisted that a merchant serve him with a suit for nonpayment of a debt, while he himself often forgave his debtors.
        5. In times of surplus, Federigo purchased and stored great quantities of grain, selling it in years of famine at cost to ensure that his subjects remained healthy, well fed, and content.

III. Kenneth Clark, in his groundbreaking series *Civilization*, identified Urbino in the reign of Federigo as perhaps the most civilized place on Earth.
    A. Although destined for a military career, Federigo received an excellent Humanist education, studying as a youth with the celebrated Vittorino da Feltre.
        1. His academic interests were the classics, particularly history and philosophy.
        2. History he saw as the most useful of subjects, but he read widely in both Plato and Aristotle.
        3. Books and his library were his great passion, financed by his profit as a *condottiere*.
    B. The library Federigo collected was the finest outside of Florence and Rome.
        1. He engaged the best copyists and editors to find the best exemplars of manuscripts and copy them for his use.
        2. When first establishing his library, he kept 30 copyists employed for 14 years copying the best versions of Greek and Latin manuscripts.
        3. He appreciated beautiful bindings as well, having his books set in covers displaying his coat of arms.
        4. Beautifully illustrated books also intrigued Federigo, the finest example of which is universally acknowledged as one of the most beautiful manuscripts in the world: the Urbino Bible, copied in purple and gold in two volumes and decorated with miniatures by the Ghirlandaio workshop in Florence.
        5. It is no accident that one of Federigo's most favorite portraits depicts him together with his son, in full armor and his ducal robes, reading a beautiful book.
    C. It was only appropriate that Federigo live in a grand palace worthy of his fame and accomplishments.
        1. He began the building of his huge and elegant palace in 1468 on the promontory of the mountain in Urbino.
        2. The military architect Luciano Laurana designed a building that is, on the exterior, a strange mixture, part *condottiere* fortress and part pleasure dome.
        3. The interior was full of exquisite details, especially the doors, doorframes, fireplaces, and intarsia panels.
        4. These were so perfect and famous that Lorenzo de'Medici sent artists to draw them so that he could admire the decoration in Florence.
    D. Federigo filled his palace with paintings, many of which were executed specifically for him.
        1. Northern European artists, such as Justus van Ghent, the Spaniard Pedro Berruguete, and many Italian painters, including Piero della Francesca and Melozzo da Forlì, contributed to his collection.
        2. Piero's famous portrait of Federigo and Battista (now in the Uffizi) and his Urbino Altarpiece (with its portrait of Federigo and some members of his circle, now in the Brera, Milan) illustrate the quality of his patronage and his desire for fame.
        3. Berruguete was commissioned to paint portraits of famous men for the duke's private study as inspiration.
        4. Most telling, his court painter was one Giovanni Santi (or Sanzio) whose son, born and initially trained in Urbino, was the great Renaissance painter Raphael.

IV. The Court of Federigo was famed across the peninsula.
    A. Federigo was a devoted husband and father, traits very unusual among Renaissance princes.
        1. In 1460, at the age of 16, he married Battista Sforza, niece of Francesco Sforza of Milan.
        2. Battista was well educated and enjoyed great skill in administration, often ruling in her husband's name while he was away.

    3. Sadly, only the last of her eight pregnancies produced the male heir required for the succession; Battista died in childbirth at 26.
- **B.** The duke and duchess liked to be surrounded by interesting men and women.
    1. These followers were attracted to Federigo's court by his fame as a military commander and as a patron of culture.
    2. The most celebrated of these was Pietro Bembo, a Venetian noble and, later, cardinal who helped define the formal Italian language.
    3. Some of the most famous families of Italy also sent their sons to be educated in both war and culture, making Urbino a kind of finishing school.

V. Surrounded by fame and glory, Federigo died after a reign of 38 years in 1482.

- **A.** Federigo was succeeded by his son, Guidobaldo da Montefeltro (r. 1482–1508)
    1. Although very intelligent and promising in his early years, Guidobaldo began to exhibit symptoms of the disease that was to waste his body and turn him into an invalid.
    2. In 1488, the young man was married to Elisabetta Gonzaga of the ruling family of Mantua, sister-in-law of the celebrated Isabella d'Este.
    3. From her wedding night, she knew that her invalid husband was impotent; however, she took no measures to dissolve the canonically invalid marriage and was content to live with him more as a sister.
    4. They were devoted to each other, and Elisabetta remained loyal to Guidobaldo without question, sharing his and his state's humiliation at the hands of Cesare Borgia.
- **B.** The crisis for Urbino came in 1502.
    1. Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI, attempted to unite and centralize the states of the church under Borgia control.
    2. Urbino was a papal vicariate and theoretically under the sovereignty of the Holy See; in 1502, Cesare faithlessly declared his support of the Montefeltro family and promised protection.
    3. Believing him, the duke provided Cesare with his artillery, which the Borgia then used to attack Urbino.
    4. Despite heroic efforts by the citizens and the court, including freely yielding all of their private wealth, jewels, and even wedding rings to hire additional soldiers, Guidobaldo knew his illness made him unfit for military leadership; he and the duchess fled.
    5. The Borgia entered the city and claimed it for the pope.
    6. Hundreds of brutal soldiers were billeted in the beautiful palace, which was looted, with Cesare taking all the art for himself, valuing it for a drumhead sale at 150,000 ducats.
    7. The death of Pope Alexander and Cesare's illness in 1503 resulted in the collapse of the Borgia ambitions.
    8. The papal garrison was driven out of Urbino, and the people rose up and demanded the return of the duke and duchess.

VI. Guidobaldo and Elisabetta returned to their beloved Urbino, to great rejoicing.

- **A.** Clearly, however, the Montefeltro had no security, because they had no male heir. For this reason, Guidobaldo adopted his nephew, who also happened to be a nephew of Pope Julius II, Francesco Maria della Rovere, as his successor.
- **B.** The period that followed was one of stability for the last years of Montefeltro rule, often described as the Urbino twilight.
- **C.** The culture that Federigo had established was fulfilled in these last years, but with a kind of melancholy perspective. This culture, however, is fundamentally important to our understanding of the Renaissance ideal, because it spawned Baldassare Castiglione, whom we will meet in the next lecture.

Primary Source Texts:

Vespasiano da Bisticci, "The Life of Federigo da Montefeltro," in *The Vespasiano Memoirs: Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century*.

Secondary Sources:

James Dennistoun, *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino*.

Supplementary Reading:

Alison Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence: Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Was it moral for the rulers of Urbino to use their subjects as mercenary soldiers?
2. Would Federigo's character and personality guarantee equal success as a leader in today's world?

Lecture Seventeen
Castiglione and *The Book of the Courtier*

Scope: The victory of monarchies in Italy and the examples of the aristocratic societies of the French and Spanish invaders of Italy changed the character of the later Italian Renaissance. The new model of behavior was the ideal courtier serving a wise and virtuous prince. The emphasis in Humanist education shifted toward elite caste marks, increasingly reflecting aristocratic values and courtly and military prowess. Furthermore, the loss of Italian liberty meant that public life changed, with less social mobility available and little call for rhetorical skill in government. As early as the regime of Cosimo de'Medici (d. 1464) in Florence, there had been a growing interest in Platonic ideas. These stressed the dignity of the individual soul; the value of knowledge, including the arcane and the mystical; and the power of love. In the charged and courtly world of 16th-century Italy, these elements created a new perspective in art, learning, and social intercourse best exemplified in Baldassare Castiglione and his *Book of the Courtier*. Castiglione (1478−1529) was born into a noble family in Mantua but served Guidobaldo, son of the celebrated Federigo, duke of Urbino. Recovering from an injury, he became attached to the duchess Elisabetta Gonzaga (d. 1526) and a familiar of the duke. The treachery of Cesare Borgia drove the ducal family into exile and scattered the court, but it was reconstituted after their restoration following the fall of the Borgia. This is the environment of *The Book of the Courtier*, written over a period of many years but printed only at the end of Castiglione's life. In it, the ideals of a perfect society are discussed over four nights of dialogue. The role of women was central and the place of love assured, but the love was the platonic version in which the soul sought knowledge of the divine through contemplation. The book became a guide for how Italians could sustain their culture through manners and learning, despite their loss of liberty and confidence following the foreign invasions.

Outline

I. As mentioned at the end of the last lecture, the return of Guidobaldo and Elisabetta after the collapse of the Borgia papacy and Cesare Borgia's attempt to create a monarchy in central Italy resulted in a kind of melancholy stability for Urbino.

- **A.** This world is re-created in what is perhaps our greatest record of the period, Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*.
  - **1.** In it, we see a different Urbino, not the great Urbino of Federigo da Montefeltro, but the pale reflection of Federigo's Urbino found in the rule of his son.
  - **2.** The light that had shone so brightly in Italy had almost gone out, extinguished by the French invasions of 1494 and the attempts by the northern European powers to turn Italy into a battleground to determine the hegemony of the continent.
- **B.** The waning years of Guidobaldo's rule saw an element of political stability and papal support. Indeed, some of the aspects of Federigo's court were re-created.
  - **1.** The great families of Italy again sent their sons to the court of Urbino as a kind of finishing school.
  - **2.** This re-emergence of Urbino's culture began to fade, however, as Guidobaldo's health declined. As he grew older, he grew weaker, to the point where he spent most of his days in bed.
- **C.** The rule of the duchy was passed to Elisabetta, who proved to be a resilient and talented administrator.
  - **1.** She was responsible, not just for guiding the political and economic life of Urbino during her husband's illness, but also for governing its social world.
  - **2.** Urbino became a feminized state, ruled by a woman with great ability. Her court attracted, among others, Baldassare Castiglione, whose *Book of the Courtier* immortalized the ideal courts of Federigo and Guidobaldo.

II. The life of Count Baldassare Castiglione is associated with many of the great events of Italy during the tumultuous years of the first decades of the 16th century.

- **A.** Castiglione's life before his entry into the court of Guidobaldo reflected his rank and privilege.
  - **1.** He was born in Mantua in 1478 to a noble father and mother from the reigning family of Gonzaga, whose great palace was just across the piazza from the Castiglione palace.

    2. In 1496, he entered the glittering court of Lodovico il Moro of Milan, where he proved a great favorite because of his handsome face, grace, and gravely elegant demeanor.
    3. The death of Castiglione's father in 1499 resulted in serious pressure on the part of his mother for him to marry so that he might beget an heir to the family title and estates.
    4. But Baldassare avoided marriage, preferring to worship women from afar in a Platonic, courtly manner.

  B. The fall of the Sforza in Milan drove Castiglione to serve, first, his distant relative the marquis of Mantua, then, in 1504, Guidobaldo da Montefeltro of Urbino.
    1. Castiglione might have remained just another aristocratic member of the Montefeltro court except that an accident led to his convalescence in the palace of Urbino.
    2. While recovering from the injury—a broken foot (an accident that would inevitably impede any continued career as a soldier)—Castiglione became very close to the virgin duchess Elisabetta.
    3. Duke Guidobaldo, given his condition, was initially suspicious of the handsome and polished young man.
    4. Guidobaldo sent Castiglione on diplomatic missions, trying to put some distance between the young soldier and his wife, the duchess.
    5. However, all were soon convinced that Castiglione's admiration for Elisabetta was Platonic and pure, leaving the virgin duchess, the invalid duke, and Castiglione to live in a curious unconsummated triple relationship until the duke's death in 1508.

  C. The death of Guidobaldo in no way changed this arrangement, as the throne passed to his adopted heir, his nephew, Francesco Maria della Rovere.
    1. Castiglione continued to worship the duchess and serve the new duke, who recognized his skills and appointed him ambassador to the pope in 1513.
    2. Soon after, however, the dynastic ambitions of the new pope changed everything; Leo X de'Medici deposed Francesco and set in his place his nephew Giuliano de'Medici.
    3. This left Castiglione unemployed and unable to serve at court.

III. Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* is one of the most read and influential books to emerge from the culture of the Italian Renaissance—the definitive account of life at a Renaissance court.

  A. Castiglione began his book in about 1508 while still living in Urbino.
    1. He worked on its text, polishing and enlarging it, until 1528, when he permitted it to be printed because several unauthorized versions were circulating and he wanted only the final text to be known.
    2. *The Courtier* is a dialogue in four books on the subject of what constitutes the perfect courtier or, in Book III, the perfect court lady.
    3. The frame is a series of evening discussions in the rooms of the duchess Elisabetta, organized as a game to pass the time.
    4. The duchess's kinswoman Emilia Pia is made mistress of ceremonies, charged to keep order.
    5. Guidobaldo is ill and never appears, although his spirit is present.
    6. The interlocutors in the dialogue are young men, and a few women, from the greatest families in Italy, sent to the Montefeltro court for finishing.
    7. All the characters are carefully and individually drawn to create almost a theatrical environment.
    8. For verisimilitude, Castiglione himself is not present but puts himself outside the frame on a diplomatic mission.

  B. Despite the many jokes and interventions of the clowns in the group, the general tone is extremely melancholy.
    1. Federigo, the Light of Italy, is dead, and there is no one to take his place.
    2. His son is impotent, the Fisher King, unable to bring peace and security to Italy.
    3. The barbarians are victorious in their ruthless brutality.
    4. This is the context of the dialogue.

  C. Why, then, discuss something as apparently superficial as how to be an ideal courtier?
    1. The discussion is really a metaphor for the perfectibility of man and how culture can save even a defeated people.
    2. The rules of courtly etiquette and success are reflections of the deep culture of the Renaissance that, try as they might, the barbarians at the gates cannot destroy.

    3. It is a very Neoplatonic book, as we shall find in Lecture Nineteen, because the interior soul remains free and perfectible, even in prison.
    4. The shards of learning and civilization maintained by Italians are the source of hope for better times; the barbarians might take their freedom, property, even their lives, but their high culture will be sustained as long as individual men and women strive to reach the perfect, the ideal, or the divine.
    5. A strong sense of *après nous le deluge*—a premonition of impending social and political collapse—permeates the book.
    6. But equally, there is still hope.
    7. The longing for the past described in the prefaces by the old men of the court must be seen as recognition of the imperfect world in which they now live compared to the age of Federigo.
    8. But their memory of those great times keeps them alive for future generations to cultivate and restore.

IV. The world of Guidobaldo's court, for all of its wit, brilliance, and splendor, is a flicker of light in a dark world, and Castiglione reminds us of it.

- **A.** It is a world turned upside down.
    - **1.** The male ruler, Duke Guidobaldo, is impotent and in his bed, leaving his authority to women, a virgin duchess and a widow (Emilia Pia).
    - **2.** To the Renaissance mind, this is an inversion of the natural world, one that cannot bear fruit.
    - **3.** The company talks all night, inverting the order of nature itself.
    - **4.** So, too, the natural order in Italy had been inverted through the invasions of the barbarians and their disciples, including Cesare Borgia.
- **B.** The darkness reflects as well the melancholy end to Castiglione's own career.
    - **1.** When he was forced to leave Urbino in 1518, he returned, disconsolate, to Mantua, where he finally married a young girl of noble birth, who quickly bore him a daughter.
    - **2.** Sadly, his young wife died in childbirth, again leaving the count desolated and melancholy and without a male heir.
    - **3.** Castiglione returned to serve the papacy and eventually took religious orders.
    - **4.** Pope Clement VII sent him as ambassador to Charles V.
    - **5.** But not even Castiglione's diplomatic skills could forestall the barbaric event that came to be known as the sack of Rome in 1527.
    - **6.** Shattered by the barbarism of the sack, Castiglione became even more melancholy and died while in Spain at the beginning of 1529.

V. Despite the sadness of his later life, Castiglione was recognized even in his own time as a great man.

- **A.** Charles V, who knew him well, honored him on hearing of his death as one of the greatest examples of chivalry.
- **B.** He had been a very close friend of great artists, especially Raphael, who painted his portrait.
- **C.** His skill in diplomacy and administration was such that only his early death kept him from the highest ecclesiastical office.
- **D.** His legacy has been the Platonic, ideal court of Urbino, one that was a fiction to give the readers of 1528 hope and that gives us hope in the perfectibility of humankind to this day.

Primary Source Texts:

Baldessare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*.

Secondary Sources:

Sergio Bertelli, *Italian Renaissance Courts*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Was Castiglione the ideal gentleman?
2. Castiglione believed that culture can survive the assaults of the barbarians. Is he right?

Lecture Eighteen

Women in Renaissance Italy

Scope: It has been argued that women did not have a Renaissance, that their position was better during the Middle Ages. There is some truth to this, in part because the classical literature that was recovered during the Renaissance was often misogynistic. Roman law also disadvantaged women; they had no legal persona before the courts and had to be represented by a male proctor, usually a blood relation or husband. Women could not own property in their own names, except under very unusual circumstances. In essence, they were subject to their fathers until marriage and, thereafter, to their husbands. In light of the Humanist belief that the purpose of a classical education was to prepare for public life, learning for women was seen as superfluous. Indeed, it generally came to be regarded as an outright danger to a female's virtue and reputation. Despite these inherent disadvantages, many women rose to great heights, often assisted by high birth. Beatrice (d. 1497) and her sister, Isabella d'Este (d. 1539), for example, were patrons of art and skillful representatives of their princely husbands. Laura Cereta (d. 1499) became a celebrated Humanist scholar, and Sofonisba Anguissola (1532–1625) became a famous painter. Wealth, rank, and a sympathetic husband or father permitted women to fulfill their ambitions, but for the majority, life was very difficult. Poor women were particularly marginalized, because there were few opportunities for work outside the convent, domestic service, or prostitution.

Outline

I. The world of Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, which we discussed in the last lecture, was a world turned upside down, one largely dominated by women.

- **A.** Although it is difficult to generalize about the peninsula, Italian women during the Renaissance had even less independent authority than they had had in the Middle Ages, with the single exception of those in agricultural labor.
  - **1.** In the country, agricultural labor was not easily distinguished by gender; both men and women were needed in the fields.
  - **2.** But because cities drove the Italian economy during the Renaissance, women were usually seen in subsidiary roles.
  - **3.** Very few independent occupations in cities were open to women other than domestic service, prostitution, or convents.
  - **4.** The continued operation of some form of Roman law also placed women in a disadvantaged position; they could not hold property in their own names or represent themselves in court.
- **B.** Italian Renaissance families were patriarchal, with girls and women almost completely controlled by their fathers, brothers, or husbands.
  - **1.** The fundamental role for women was marriage and the production of male heirs.
  - **2.** An unblemished reputation was considered necessary for a good match; thus, girls were carefully controlled in the family to ensure virginity at marriage and a reputation for virtue and obedience.
  - **3.** Rarely were they allowed to mingle socially with men from other families and, then, under only the tightest supervision.

II. Marriage was never based on a love match but on social standing, economic needs, or business or political alliances.

- **A.** The age of marriage was usually 16 or 17 for girls, but their husbands were usually older, in their late 20s or even 30s.
  - **1.** Church law required that both parties agree to the match, although it would be difficult for a young girl to deny her parent's wishes.
  - **2.** First, a marriage contract was drawn up by a notary and signed by the two families.
  - **3.** This contract determined important financial arrangements, such as the amount of the dowry, which was mandatory for any woman from a family with property. This money remained in the name of the bride's family after the marriage, but her husband could invest or spend the money as he saw fit.

   4. **4.** If the marriage contract negotiations were successful, an elegant party was held, almost as the first act in the wedding itself.
   5. **5.** At this point, the young man and woman were allowed to get to know each other, but always under strict supervision and never alone.
   6. **6.** Next, the official wedding was held. Before the Council of Trent, this ceremony was simply an exchange of vows; after the council, a priest was required to be present.
   7. **7.** Subsequently, a great party was held at the home of the bride, followed by a formal procession from the bride's house to the groom's, where she would be installed as the new head of household responsibilities.
   8. **8.** Marriage was not, in any way, a romantic event; marriages were determined by social convenience and social need. Of course, problems arose, such as conflicts between the bride and her mother-in-law, but in general, the arrangements worked well for generations.

- **B.** Marriage was literally "till death do us part."
  - **1.** There was no provision for divorce, only annulments on specified grounds, but even these were seldom sought because they represented a great source of shame.
  - **2.** Should the wife be widowed, the dowry reverted to her for her support.
  - **3.** However, a widow who remarried or returned to her birth family would have to leave her children with her late husband's kin.
- **C.** Poor women could marry whomever they chose because no property was involved.
  - **1.** They had, however, few resources to protect themselves and their families from a brutal husband or poverty.
  - **2.** If left unsupported, without a dowry to marry honorably, and with no other recourse, poor girls would sometimes resort to prostitution, an occupation both regulated by society and deplored.
  - **3.** Florence maintained state brothels, ostensibly to protect honorable girls and reduce the practice of homosexuality.
  - **4.** Venice and Rome were both known for their courtesans and prostitutes, many of whom became celebrated figures in the city.
  - **5.** The great courtesans (*cortegiane oneste*), such as Veronica Franco in Venice (c.1546–1591), were often highly intelligent, educated women who wrote poetry and performed music to entertain their clients.
  - **6.** However, these constituted a small minority of those driven to practice the trade out of financial necessity.

III. Neither the Church nor Humanism was well disposed toward women.

- **A.** St. Paul's injunction, that women be silent in church, together with the male exclusivity of the hierarchy of the Church, relegated women to only a supporting role in religion.
  - **1.** God in Genesis made man first and woman second; hence, it was argued, that she was subject always to men.
  - **2.** The fall of man through Eve's offering of the apple to Adam was seen as the danger posed by women.
  - **3.** Nevertheless, there was an important opportunity for women in convents, where they ruled over themselves, often controlled considerable property, and acquired deep learning.
  - **4.** Convents were attractive options for fathers who had many daughters or limited resources, because convents required smaller dowries than husbands.
  - **5.** Many girls were pleased to accept convent life because of the relative freedom when inside the walls, the opportunity to pursue some depth of learning, and their very reasonable fear of childbirth.
- **B.** Rather than liberating women, the recovery of ancient ideas proved to their disadvantage.
  - **1.** Classical medical principles, found in Aristotle and other ancient writers, defined a subsidiary position for women.
  - **2.** Women were often described as imperfect men, weak in reason and discipline and ruled by appetites, hence in need of constant monitoring and control.
  - **3.** Under Roman law, a woman had to be represented by a legal guardian, or *mundualdus*, because she could not sign documents or sue in court on her own.
  - **4.** Civic Humanism stressed the role of the active life of the engaged citizen in the *polis*.

5. This life was forbidden to women; they could not vote, hold public office, or function in the marketplace.
6. Consequently, most Humanist authors advised that women not be taught the classical languages, rhetoric, and other skills that pertained to the active political life.
7. Learning beyond what was necessary for household accounts, reading devotional literature, and following the liturgy in Latin was seen as not only useless but dangerous for women.
8. Secular literature could lead women astray and make them less obedient and subservient as wives, reducing their value in the social marketplace.

C. There are examples of some women who, through the support of remarkable fathers or husbands, achieved some recognition for their intellectual abilities.

1. Laura Cereta (1469–1499) was educated through the support of her father.
2. Although married to a Venetian merchant, she found herself widowed soon after; this condition permitted her to pursue her scholarship even more assiduously.
3. She published a volume of learned letters but had to stop her scholarship after the death of her father because she received no further support for her ambitions.
4. Some very talented women made great reputations in otherwise purely masculine professions, such as painting.
5. An example is Sofonisba Anguissola (1532–1625), a woman from a family of artists in Cremona who became a celebrated portraitist, even summoned to the Spanish court to paint for Philip II.
6. However, these examples of great Humanist women are, in the end, the exceptions that prove the rule.

D. It is ironic that in the great Humanist republics, such as Florence and Venice, where political freedom was greatest, social and personal freedom for women was most restricted.

IV. The situation in principalities was different from the republics because princely courts attracted aristocratic families either to live in the palace itself or to spend much time there.

A. The intermingling of noble families at court meant that large numbers of women were constantly engaged in social activity outside the home.

1. The need for princely entertainments, such as banquets, balls, and theatricals, brought married—and some unmarried—women together with men from outside their families.
2. To secure a good match, it often benefited a noble father to educate his daughters and provide sophisticated social skills to catch the attention and hold the interest of a potential suitor, a match made possible because of the intermingling of noble families at court events.
3. In particular, the person of the prince himself was the highest goal.
4. Although a princely match was unlikely, royal favor could offer noble families many advantages.

B. The consort of the prince played a role in ruling the state that would have been unimaginable to a woman in Florence or Venice.

1. These duchesses or princesses often ruled in their husbands' names while their men were away at war.
2. Among the most famous of these was the formidable Isabella d'Este, the marchioness of Mantua.
3. Isabella's equally accomplished sister, Beatrice, wife of Duke Lodovico il Moro of Milan, functioned as the social focus of her noble community, as did Battista in the Montefeltro court at Urbino.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, "Marriage, the Family and Women," pp. 139–208, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Secondary Sources:

Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis, eds., *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy.*

Supplementary Reading:

Gene Brucker, *Giovanni and Lusanna: Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence*.

Franco Cardini, introduction, *The Medici Women*.

Questions to Consider:

1. The purpose of marriage in Renaissance Italy was to ensure that property was transferred from one generation to the next in an orderly fashion. Is this a good basis for marriage?
2. What are the most significant differences between the situation of Renaissance women and those of today?

Lecture Nineteen

Neoplatonism

Scope: The Humanists, beginning with Petrarch, largely rejected the philosophy and the methodology of the Middle Ages known as *Scholasticism*, that is, the application of Aristotelian logic to theology. This did not mean that they rejected the original writings of either Aristotle or his teacher, Plato. On the contrary, both enjoyed great status as classical writers. Many of the dialogues of Plato were only just becoming available with the spread of Greek texts in the late 14th and early 15th centuries; thus, there was a sense of novel discovery. Even more important, Platonism had had a substantial influence on early Christianity. Such concepts as the immortality of the soul and the interconnection of all creation had deep roots in Platonic thought. The impetus to institutionalize Neoplatonism in the Renaissance was Cosimo de'Medici's decision to commission the young scholar Marsilio Ficino (d. 1499) to translate the Platonic corpus into Latin. Soon, Ficino gathered around him a group of learned laymen and scholars whose interest in Plato turned his study into a kind of court; its members included such luminaries as Lorenzo the Magnificent, Angelo Poliziano (d. 1494), and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494), as well as such artists as Botticelli (d. 1510) and Michelangelo (d. 1564).

Outline

I. Neoplatonism was the philosophy based on the works of the Greek philosopher and teacher Plato (427–347 B.C.).

- **A.** Platonism enjoyed great authority during antiquity; even such classical luminaries as Cicero studied at the school Plato founded.
  - **1.** Plato's works were not so much a coherent philosophical system as a series of dialogues, such as the *Phaedrus* or *Gorgias*.
  - **2.** In fact, it was not just Plato but a long succession of thinkers who worked to refine and augment his ideas over the centuries to develop the philosophical system we know as *Neoplatonism*.
  - **3.** Of these successors, one of the most influential was Plotinus (d. A.D. 270), who expanded on Plato's thinking in his treatises *The Enneads*.
  - **4.** Also important to the Neoplatonic tradition was St. Clement of Alexandria (d. A.D. 215), an early Christian who saw many similarities between Plato's teachings and the message of his own religion.
  - **5.** This connection with Christianity was later reinforced by influential church fathers, such as St. Augustine (d. 430), who remarked that to be a Platonist is to be half a Christian.
- **B.** During the Middle Ages, however, interest in Neoplatonism declined.
  - **1.** As we noted in the lecture on Dante, the mode of thought that prevailed in the Middle Ages was known as *Scholasticism*.
  - **2.** This intellectual outlook stressed the logic of Aristotle, an empirical and rational approach, rather than the more mystical, abstract notions of Plato.
  - **3.** But in the Renaissance, with the rediscovery and translation from Greek of Platonic and Neoplatonic texts, a growing interest in these more abstract ideas began to develop.

II. The Neoplatonism of the 15th century is difficult to categorize, because it grew from a wide range of traditions and circumstances.

- **A.** The Humanists in Florence were particularly attracted to Neoplatonism.
  - **1.** Leonardo Bruni, who knew Greek very well, translated Platonic dialogues, including the *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias*, into Latin.
  - **2.** The study of Plato received wider recognition as a result of the Council of Florence, which brought the Byzantine emperor and his court, together with a number of learned bishops, to the city in 1438–1439.
  - **3.** Cosimo de'Medici put the imperial party up in his palace.
  - **4.** The result of their conversations and deliberations was to bring a deeper knowledge of Plato into the center of Florentine political and intellectual life.
- **B.** In essence, Neoplatonism believes in the existence of realities that are outside the ability of humans to fully comprehend and grasp.

        1. To put it simply, the heart of the doctrine is that all humans have a soul, which is reflected in reason and speech.
        2. This soul was, before birth, part of the divine order of the universe.
        3. The soul remembers only imperfectly the perfect sphere of the divine cosmos.
        4. On Earth, the soul must contend with the imperfect perception of things, perception based not on pure knowledge but on imperfect concrete matter.
        5. The soul yearns to return to the divine sphere, or God.
        6. This can be best accomplished through love, which ignites the upward progress of the soul toward the divine.
    - **C.** The perfection of the ideal world of the divine sphere of the soul and our memory of it can best be illustrated through an example.
        1. If I were to ask any of you to describe a unicorn, all of you could do so and the descriptions would be universally consistent.
        2. But how many of you have actually seen a unicorn? Not one of you.
        3. Neoplatonism argues that this demonstrates there must be a reality outside empirical experience.
        4. In other words, the concrete, empirical, rational world is not sufficient to answer all the questions of the cosmos.
    - **D.** The idea of table is another example.

- **III.** Renaissance Neoplatonists, while resolutely Christian in their religion, desired to merge Platonic beliefs with the central tenets of Christianity.
    - **A.** They noted key congruences between pagan, mystical beliefs and Christian revelation, such as the immortality of the soul and its origin in the divine, as well as the soul’s desire to return to the celestial sphere.
        1. Both Neoplatonism and Christianity suggested that the ascent of the soul was best accomplished through love, which Neoplatonists defined as the recognition of the divine soul in another.
        2. Beauty was the reflection of divine goodness, and the contemplation of beauty found in love helped the soul escape the confines of the material body and world to seek reunion with the divine.
        3. Mystical knowledge and even magic—white magic—could help in the process of escaping the imperfect material world by superseding the senses, which are functions of the physical body.
        4. Humans enjoy free will to permit their search for the good, the beautiful, and the true, and it is up to the individual to determine whether he or she will be bound to the corruptible, imperfect material world or attain knowledge of the divine.
    - **B.** From this thinking arose the doctrine of the *Unity of Truth*.
        1. Neoplatonists argued that all religions and philosophies reflect some elements of absolute divine truth.
        2. By learning—knowing everything there is to know—an individual has access to more truth and beauty.
        3. The more such knowledge one has, the easier the ascent of the soul toward knowledge of God.

- **IV.** Neoplatonism was so important to Renaissance thought that Cosimo de’Medici founded the Platonic Academy in Florence in the mid-15th century.
    - **A.** Cosimo asked the young Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), the precocious and brilliant son of his personal physician, to translate all the known works of Plato, together with *The Enneads* of Plotinus, into Latin.
        1. In 1462, Cosimo gave Ficino use of his villa at Careggi as a home and site for his work on Plato.
        2. Ficino, then, was the center of the Academy, which was continued after Cosimo’s death by his son and grandson, Piero and Lorenzo.
        3. The Academy was not a school but a gathering of intellectuals, artists, and patricians who shared an interest in Plato.
        4. It was under Lorenzo de’Medici (d. 1492) that it achieved its greatest influence, given the ruler’s personal interest in Platonic ideas.
    - **B.** The Academy had a wide membership of important figures in a variety of professions.
        1. Ficino and another important philosopher, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494), produced important Neoplatonic texts, such as Ficino’s *Platonic Theology* and Pico’s *Oration on the Dignity of Man*.

        2. Angelo Poliziano (d. 1494) was a leading vernacular poet who incorporated Neoplatonic ideas into his work, especially the *Verses on the Jousts of Giuliano de'Medici*.
        3. Sandro Botticelli (d. 1510) was a painter who used Neoplatonic iconography. His famous paintings of the birth of Venus and springtime (*La Primavera*), for example, reference Neoplatonic discussions of pure love, beauty, and rebirth.
        4. And Michelangelo (d. 1564) produced both exquisite painting and sculpture with Neoplatonic themes, as well as superb Neoplatonic poetry.
        5. This Neoplatonic love poetry, inspired by both men and women, is altogether spiritual, with little or no sexual content, only the desire to harness love to elevate the soul toward God.

V. Florentine Neoplatonism was well suited to the court culture of the Medici under Lorenzo.

- **A.** The desire for secret or private knowledge implicit in Neoplatonism was in keeping with the growing aristocratic milieu of Italy in the 16th century.
    1. The truth was that pure Civic Humanism did not fit well with the political reality of Lorenzo's Florence.
    2. Contrary to the egalitarian spirit of Civic Humanism, Florentine politics were subtly controlled by the Medici faction.
    3. Indeed, the Medici behaved, in some ways, more like *signori* than the "first among equals" (*primus inter pares*) doge of Venice.
    4. Neoplatonism was a philosophy of the elite—difficult and recondite and requiring great learning and sophistication to understand.
- **B.** Neoplatonism gratified the intellectual yearnings of the Florentine patriciate without threatening political stability.
    1. As opportunities in the public sphere declined, the centrality of the intimate private reality, seen as greater and closer to God than a civic life, was appealing.
    2. Neoplatonism provided an escape from the harsh world of the 16th century by linking fundamental Humanist principles of the ennobling role of knowledge and the efficacy of classical wisdom to the private pursuit of self-fulfillment.
    3. In this way, ideas implicit in Petrarch have come full circle, as the individual scholar was preferred to the active citizen and love became an unconsummated ideal.
    4. The monastic cell was exchanged for the scholar's study, and the engaged citizen serving the *polis* was superseded by the thoughtful philosopher who knew better than to challenge the harsh imperfections of a fallen world.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, "Florentine Neoplatonism and Mysticism," pp. 117–137, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Secondary Sources:

James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*.

Supplementary Reading:

Nesca A. Robb, *Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Remembering our discussion of Castiglione, what Neoplatonic elements do you recognize in his life and works?
2. Can you identify any elements of Neoplatonic thought still current today?

Lecture Twenty

Milan Under the Visconti

Scope: Milan was the model of the despotic monarchy. Ruling over the vast and fertile Lombard plain, the city had been briefly the capital of the late Roman Empire and, as the see of St. Ambrose, an important episcopal center during the Middle Ages. The struggles between the Ghibellines and Guelfs had, therefore, been particularly bitter. The Visconti family, which had ties to both factions, emerged victorious from the chaos, being formally recognized by the city in 1349 as hereditary rulers. By engaging in almost constant warfare and brutal repression, the Visconti built Milan into the most powerful state in northern Italy. The wealth of the rulers and the city, combined with the Visconti desire for lasting fame, stimulated the patronage of art and literature. Giovanni Visconti (d. 1354), who ruled simultaneously as *signore* and archbishop of Milan, was Petrarch's patron, and Giangaleazzo Visconti (d. 1402), who built a huge territorial state through brilliant diplomacy and warfare, began the celebrated cathedral and the monastery of Pavia. His successors were cruel, incompetent, and strange, culminating in the last of his line, Filippo Maria (d. 1447). Filippo married his natural daughter to the mercenary general Francesco Sforza (d. 1466), who seized the city and assumed the role of duke.

Outline

I. Somewhat ironically, most approaches to Renaissance culture focus on the great republics of Florence or Venice or papal Rome rather than on despotic Milan.

- **A.** Yet Milan emerged as the most powerful state in Italy during the late 14th and early 15th centuries, challenging the power of other states, including Florence.
    - **1.** Apart from the Kingdom of Naples, Milan was the closest political entity in Italy to a northern European territorial, dynastic monarchy, such as that in France or England.
    - **2.** In particular, Giangaleazzo Visconti (d. 1402) came close to uniting much of Italy north of Rome into a territorial state.
    - **3.** Had he succeeded, the united territory might have been able to resist the foreign invasions at the end of the 15th century, invasions that cost Italy her independence for more than 350 years.
- **B.** Milan's power arose directly from its geographical position at the head of the vast, fertile Lombard plain.
    - **1.** It had been an important center from the time of the Roman imperial age, serving as capital of the western Roman Empire in the 4th century.
    - **2.** It had also been an important religious center, reaching its glory in the 4th century under its bishop, St. Ambrose (d. 397), who was a leading figure in the development of orthodox Catholicism.
    - **3.** During the Middle Ages, Milan remained a significant northern Italian power, both under the Lombards and in the age of the communes.
    - **4.** The Peace of Constance in 1183 gave the communes of northern Italy effective autonomy from the Holy Roman Empire.
    - **5.** There followed fierce struggles among the powerful noble families, until Ottone Visconti, archbishop of Milan, and his nephew Matteo took power in 1311.
    - **6.** This family would rule the Milanese state until its extinction in 1447.

II. The early Visconti ruled as vicious despots, guilty of tyranny, rapacious taxation, and often great brutality.

- **A.** Yet such tyrants as Giovanni Visconti (d. 1354) were tolerated, and often respected, for their success in warfare and diplomacy.
    - **1.** Giovanni was highly successful both as *signore* and archbishop of Milan.
    - **2.** It was he who attracted Petrarch to his court in 1353.
    - **3.** Very ambitious, he made war against the papacy, resulting in a total of four excommunications in his lifetime.
    - **4.** But his efforts resulted in a great expansion of the territory of Milan to include Parma, Brescia, Bergamo, Como, Piacenza, and eventually, Bologna.
    - **5.** Not all these acquisitions were achieved with military prowess.
    - **6.** Bologna he secured through a huge bribe.

        7. In the 1360s, Giovanni and his nephew Galeazzo, who succeeded his uncle, also began the Visconti policy of marrying their daughters into the royal families of Europe, thereby securing political influence through peaceful means.
        8. This policy ultimately led to the death of Italian liberty.
    - **B.** The death of Galeazzo in 1378 divided the Visconti territory between his brother Bernabò and his son Giangaleazzo.
        1. Bernabò was a hated ruler whose cruelty and heavy taxation in Milan separated him from his cultivated, intelligent, and pious nephew Giangaleazzo ruling in Pavia.
        2. Bernabò planned to murder his nephew and unite all the Visconti dominions under himself, but the plot was leaked to Pavia.
        3. Taking the initiative, in 1385, Giangaleazzo invited Bernabò to a meeting.
        4. Suspecting no harm from his despised, monkish nephew, Bernabò agreed, bringing his eldest sons as well.
        5. They were captured and killed soon after, with Giangaleazzo emerging as the sole ruler of the Visconti patrimony, a position confirmed when he was awarded the title of duke by the emperor.

- **III.** Giangaleazzo Visconti was a brilliant ruler who experimented with new forms of statecraft to build a coherent, efficient state as a prelude to his ambitious project to unite Italy under his rule.
    - **A.** He created a remarkable infrastructure in his territories.
        1. He began construction of the beautiful Certosa di Pavia and the stupendous Milan cathedral.
        2. A canal was built between Milan and Pavia, creating an inland waterway along the Po.
        3. The canals served to irrigate the soil, making the fertile Lombard plain even more productive.
        4. A postal system was started, with 100 riders covering the cities and towns of the Milanese day and night.
    - **B.** Giangaleazzo also pursued innovative public policy.
        1. He regulated public health throughout his dominions, requiring quarantining for infectious diseases.
        2. He supported the university and endowed the teaching of Greek.
        3. Humanists, poets, and artists were welcomed to his court, including Pietro Paolo Vergerio.
    - **C.** Giangaleazzo's economic plans were highly successful.
        1. The important armaments industry in Milan was reinforced, both to produce the materiel for his wars and to bring great wealth into the city, because Milanese armor was considered the best in Europe.
        2. His policies of taxation were fair, unlike in most despotisms and even unlike the Republic of Florence.
        3. Every citizen, including nobles and priests, had to pay a fair tax.
        4. As a result of these policies, Milan had almost matched the wealth of Venice by 1400, with an income more than twice that of Florence.
    - **D.** After assuming complete control over the Visconti territories, Giangaleazzo pursued a vigorous policy of expansion, with a plan to unite all of Italy.
        1. He moved quickly to seize by force or reacquire such critical states as Brescia, Piacenza, Cremona, Verona, and Padua.
        2. In 1399, he purchased rule of Pisa for the enormous sum of 200,000 gold florins.
        3. In 1400, he moved into Umbria, annexing Perugia and Assisi.
        4. The Republic of Siena yielded to him the same year.
        5. Lucca and Bologna fell in 1401, leaving only Florence between Giangaleazzo and rule of all north-central Italy between Venice and the states of the Church.
    - **E.** It is believed that Giangaleazzo's plan was to conquer Florence, then attack the states of the Church, much weakened as a result of the Avignon papacy.
        1. Had these territories yielded, he would have attacked the Kingdom of Naples by land and sea, uniting all of Italy.
        2. But it came to nothing; Giangaleazzo died from a fever in 1402 while preparing to take Florence.
        3. The question arises, then, whether the duke could have succeeded in uniting the entire peninsula under Milanese rule.
        4. If he had succeeded, the history of Italy would have been much different.

IV. Giangaleazzo had despaired of a male heir.

- **A.** He asked the Virgin Mary to intercede, and he promised to dedicate the boy to her, if she provided a son to his duchess.
  - **1.** A son was indeed born, but not wishing to make the longed-for heir a monk, Giangaleazzo merely named him Gianmaria.
  - **2.** Gianmaria was only 13 when his father died, and there was a struggle for the regency, during which Giangaleazzo's empire disintegrated, with most of the conquered territories reasserting their independence.
  - **3.** Florence took Pisa; Venice took Vicenza, Padua, and Verona; Siena and Bologna became independent once more.
  - **4.** When he assumed power, the young Gianmaria proved to be a cruel, rapacious tyrant, more interested in his beloved dogs than in his state.
  - **5.** As a result, he was murdered by his nobles in 1412.
- **B.** Gianmaria was succeeded by his brother Filippo Maria (d. 1447).
  - **1.** Filippo Maria was intelligent and shrewd, a good, if ruthless, tyrant who had great administrative skills and a real interest in culture.
  - **2.** But he was also very strange and paranoid, devoted to magicians and astrologers.
  - **3.** The murder of his brother made him cautious to the point of never leaving his castle, eating constantly until he was extremely fat.
  - **4.** Although he lacked a legitimate heir, he had a natural daughter, Bianca, whom he married to his favorite and most successful general, the *condottiere* Francesco Sforza. Her dowry was not money but the control of several northern cities.

V. Upon the duke's death in 1447, the Milanese rioted, declaring a republic.

- **A.** Again, neighboring states took Milanese territory and the kings of France and Aragon claimed the crown.
- **B.** The republic, in a fateful move, turned to Sforza for defense, and he was happy to comply.
- **C.** Sforza's army protected the city, but once security seemed to have returned, he was dismissed.
  - **1.** Angry and ambitious, Sforza himself laid siege to the city.
  - **2.** Starved into capitulation, the republic opened the gates and Sforza entered the city in 1447, distributed bread to the population, and called the heads of all households for a *parlamento*.
  - **3.** In this gathering, he demanded that their popular sovereignty grant him the title of duke; they had no choice and did so, despite the anger of the emperor whose fief Milan was.
  - **4.** A new dynasty had been born.
- **D.** The Sforza represented a completely different dynasty from the Visconti.
  - **1.** The Visconti had become enervated and increasingly curious in their behavior; through their symbol, they had become known as the "Viper of Milan."
  - **2.** Francesco Sforza put an end to the tyranny, ruthlessness, and bizarre character of the Visconti rule.
  - **3.** Francesco Sforza was a soldier, largely uneducated and rough but fair and just; his rule would impose order and bring new glory to a lethargic city.

Secondary Sources:

E. R. Chamberlin, *The Count of Virtue: Giangaleazzo Visconti*.

Supplementary Reading:

Ernest Hatch Wilkins, *Petrarch's Eight Years in Milan*.

Sergio Bertelli, *Italian Renaissance Courts*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How is it that a tyranny can be fairer to citizens than a republic?
2. The Florentines referred to Giangaleazzo as the "Viper of Milan." Did he deserve this title?

Lecture Twenty-One

Milan Under the Sforza

Scope: Filippo Maria Visconti had married his natural daughter, Bianca, to his most successful mercenary general, Francesco Sforza. Having saved the city, Sforza was dismissed by the republic that had arisen on the duke's death. He seized the government and had himself named duke of Milan, the first of the new dynasty. Francesco was a fine ruler who, together with Cosimo de'Medici, ensured the stability of the peninsula through the Peace of Lodi (1454) and the Italian League (1455). His death in 1466 resulted in yet another cruel and incompetent ruler who was murdered by his nobles, leaving the throne to a minor. The new duke's uncle, Francesco's son, Lodovico il Moro (d. 1508), emerged as regent and later assumed full authority as duke of Milan. Lodovico and his incomparable bride, Beatrice d'Este, presided over a brilliant court in which Leonardo da Vinci resided for many years. Lodovico was removed from his throne by the French in 1500, presaging the control of Milan by foreign powers until the unification of Italy.

Outline

I. Milan was fortunate in its new duke; the Sforza were the perfect antidote to the enervated Visconti.

- **A.** Francesco Sforza ruled the city in the same way he ruled his mercenary army—with ruthless efficiency and great ability.
- **B.** In establishing his rule, Sforza realized that he would have to compensate for the circumstances in which he had achieved the duchy. He ruled by popular sovereignty, for which there was no basis in constitution or law in Milan.
- **C.** Despite his low birth, Francesco proved to be an excellent *signore*.
  - **1.** His personality was rigorous and almost bourgeois in its domesticity; his marriage eventually produced eight children, several of them sons to ensure the continuation of the new dynasty.
  - **2.** He ran Milan the way he managed his mercenary army, with shrewd intelligence, fairness, and rigorous authority.
- **D.** He also attended to the lessons of his grandfather-in-law, the great Giangaleazzo Visconti.
  - **1.** Like Giangaleazzo, Francesco was an important patron of culture and civic building, both for his own sake and for that of the city.
  - **2.** He continued to employ Humanists at his court and further endowed the university.
  - **3.** He began the enormous Castello Sforzesco in the center of the city as a fortified palace to protect his dynasty and as a locus for court culture.
  - **4.** The Great Hospital was built at his command, again following the Visconti tradition of regulating public health.

II. In terms of foreign policy, Francesco was a shrewd pragmatist.

- **A.** He shifted the traditional Milanese diplomatic policy away from hostility toward Florence to an active alliance with that republic.
  - **1.** This resulted from his close personal friendship with Cosimo de'Medici, who had lived in Milan during his exile in 1433 and who continued to maintain an important branch of his bank in the city.
  - **2.** Both men were the first of their line to rule—Francesco as duke and Cosimo as the head of the dominant faction in the republic.
  - **3.** And both men recognized the need for stability to cement their rule.
- **B.** Francesco also saw the dangers coming from France and the House of Aragon, both of which had claimed Milan through inheritance from the female line.
  - **1.** This was the negative aspect of the Visconti policy of marrying into the royal families of Europe.
  - **2.** To short-circuit their demands and reduce the opportunities for a clash that could lead to war, Sforza set about to establish close relations with France and Naples.
- **C.** In 1454, Francesco and Cosimo brokered the agreement that came to be known as the *Peace of Lodi*.
  - **1.** The treaty defined five spheres of influence for the great powers in the peninsula: Venice, Milan, Florence, the papacy, and Naples.

    2. The following year, this treaty was reinforced by a military alliance, the Italian League, which offered collective security to the peninsula.
    3. The result was a remarkably peaceful and stable period of 40 years in Italy, with far fewer wars than usual.
    4. The Italians were able to develop their Renaissance cultures in an atmosphere of relative security and wealth, as fewer of the accumulated riches of the peninsula were spent on fruitless fighting.

III. In the midst of this success, Francesco Sforza died in 1466, leaving his throne to his son and heir, Galeazzo Maria.

- **A.** Unfortunately, Galeazzo Maria was a reversion to the worst excesses of the Visconti.
    1. Incompetent, cruel, rapacious, greedy, and lustful, he confiscated property and demanded for his pleasure the wives and daughters of his courtiers.
    2. Aware of the models of classical tyrannicides, such as that committed by Brutus, and acting to cleanse their state of the duke's excesses, young men from Milan's noblest families assassinated the duke while in church.
    3. Two were killed immediately by Sforza's guards; the third was captured and tortured to death, but his famous last words were in Latin: *Mors acerba, fama perpetua* ("My death may be bitter but my fame will be everlasting").
- **B.** Galeazzo Maria's heir was a seven-year-old boy, Giangaleazzo Sforza.
    1. As a result, there was an immediate struggle for the regency among the surviving brothers of the dead duke.
    2. Lodovico, called *il Moro*, "the Moor," because of his dark complexion, was eventually successful.
    3. Lodovico was a brilliant and talented ruler, a great diplomat, and one of Italy's kindest patrons to artists and scholars.
    4. He married the young, beautiful, and very well educated Beatrice d'Este, sister of Isabella, who brought a charm and gaiety to the court, compensating somewhat for Lodovico's grave character.
    5. Milan became the cultural center of Italy, rivaling the circle of Lorenzo de'Medici in Florence.
    6. Leonardo da' Vinci was enticed to the court, where he worked from 1483 until 1498, painting, designing stage equipment, and serving as an ornament to the Milanese.
    7. Milan prospered from its years of relative peace, with artists decorating the Castello Sforzesco and the city.
- **C.** But Lodovico was, after all, only a regent, one who could rule only until the young Giangaleazzo Sforza came of age.
    1. The real duke, Giangaleazzo, who was now a young adult, had been married to the daughter of the king of Naples.
    2. Anxious to preserve her future position as duchess of Milan, this Neapolitan princess proposed that her father intervene militarily to restore her husband to the throne and depose the regent, Lodovico.
    3. The prospect of losing power haunted Lodovico, particularly when Beatrice bore him a son and heir in 1493.
    4. It was feared that when the real duke took power, he would have Lodovico and Beatrice's son murdered or, at least, exiled with his family in order to secure Giangaleazzo's rule.
    5. Lodovico acted quickly.
    6. He petitioned the cash-starved Emperor Maximillian to grant him the ducal title, saying that Francesco Sforza had assumed the title illegally and that, consequently, the young Giangaleazzo had no right of succession.
    7. Lodovico sweetened his argument with an enormous gift of 400,000 Venetian ducats and his niece as a wife for the emperor.
    8. Maximillian agreed to the terms and named Lodovico the legitimate ruler of Milan in 1493.

IV. For a time, it appeared that Lodovico had managed to negotiate his way safely to the throne and secure his dynasty.

- **A.** In 1494, Giangaleazzo died, perhaps by poison, leaving no impediment to Lodovico's total control.
    1. To neutralize the anger of the king of Naples and remove his claim to the duchy, Lodovico welcomed the plan of Charles VIII of France to invade Italy and claim Naples.

    2. Lodovico even partly financed the campaign, greeting Charles VIII ostentatiously as an ally.
    3. The French invasion was an easy campaign, with the French taking Naples.
    4. Only at the end was the danger of such foreign interventions clear.
    5. Lodovico changed sides and joined the Italian opposition, defeating the French inconclusively at Fornovo as they retreated across the Alps.

B. The crisis worsened when Charles VIII died by accident in 1498, leaving as his heir the duke of Orleans as Louis XII.
    1. Louis' mother had been a granddaughter of Giangaleazzo Visconti and promptly claimed the duchy of Milan.
    2. The French again invaded, and Lodovico was unable to stop their advance.
    3. Beatrice d'Este had died in childbirth, many said from melancholy over Lodovico's many public mistresses.
    4. Shattered by remorse, the duke retreated into solitary prayer when decisive action was required.
    5. In 1500, the splendid and impregnable Castello Sforzesco was betrayed to the French through the treachery of its captain.
    6. But Lodovico escaped in disguise to his relative, the emperor.

C. Lodovico attempted a return and actually broke into Milan but was again betrayed, this time, by his brother-in-law, the marquis of Mantua.
    1. Captured by the French, he was taken to France as a prisoner, where he was held in a bleak dungeon.
    2. When asked what he wished to take with him of all his treasures, he replied that he wanted only his copy of Dante.
    3. Lodovico il Moro died in captivity in France on May 17, 1508.
    4. The history of Milan thereafter is one of foreign oppression until the Risorgimento.

Primary Source Texts:

Diana Robin, *Filelfo in Milan: Writings, 1451–77*.

Secondary Sources:

Gregory Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court: Milan Under Galeazzo Maria Sforza*.

Supplementary Reading:

Alison Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence: Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why would it be argued that Francesco Sforza did not have the right to claim the throne of Milan?
2. The friendship between Francesco Sforza and Cosimo de'Medici contravened centuries of hostility and warfare between Milan and Florence. How important is friendship in the political sphere?

Lecture Twenty-Two

The Eternal City—Rome

Scope: Rome was as much an idea as it was a city and, as a consequence, had a much different character from that of Florence during the Renaissance. Its ancient heritage was everywhere to be seen in huge ruins. The legend of the Donation of Constantine (in which the emperor was said to have given rule of the western empire to Pope Sylvester when the capital was moved to Constantinople) permitted the pope to claim universal sovereignty. And the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul made the city an attraction for pilgrims, ambitious scholars and clerics, and those who wished to serve or profit from them. Rome was, then, a cosmopolitan city of foreigners, with an enormous floating population of pilgrims and clergy from across Europe. However, conflict damaged the city during the 14th century. Violence among the great Roman families resulted in the Babylonian Captivity, during which the pope abandoned Rome to reside in Avignon between 1305 and 1377. There were insufficient funds to maintain the great churches and palaces, and the population and the number of pilgrims and visitors fell precipitously. The Renaissance, then, came late to Rome.

Outline

I. Ancient Rome had become a central place in the imagination of Europeans, especially Italians, for it spoke profoundly to the Humanist imperative to recover the past.

- **A.** The classical city had suffered a significant decline in the Middle Ages.
  - **1.** The enormous circuit of the ancient Aurelian walls (A.D. 272–279) indicated the extent of the imperial city, which had once boasted a population of more than 1 million inhabitants.
  - **2.** However, much of the huge ancient city was abandoned by the early Middle Ages, only a small settlement remaining, concentrated in the bend of the Tiber.
  - **3.** The aqueducts were ruptured, resulting in insufficient fresh water for Rome after about the 5th century.
  - **4.** The swamps around the city bred malaria.
- **B.** The ruins of the ancient city were everywhere to be seen.
  - **1.** Some buildings, such as the Pantheon, were still in use.
  - **2.** Others were turned into fortresses such that in the Middle Ages, there were few easily passable streets.
  - **3.** Many other ancient sites had not been maintained but used as quarries for dressed stone and marble to be burned into lime for plaster.
- **C.** Yet the Italians saw these ruins as their own national history and legacy, one that, with the rise of Humanism, they sought to preserve and honor.

II. The ancient city of Rome was equally vital to the Christian imagination.

- **A.** The Roman Church had had its capital at Rome, a continuum from ancient times.
  - **1.** St. Peter, martyred there under Nero, was believed to have been the first bishop.
  - **2.** His tomb and that of St. Paul, the other apostle martyred in Rome, were pilgrimage sites throughout the Middle Ages.
  - **3.** For centuries, it was believed that the Roman popes were the legitimate rulers of the western empire, inheriting their authority directly from Constantine.
  - **4.** The popes maintained their residence in the apostolic palace attached to St. John Lateran, Rome's cathedral.
  - **5.** Hence, Rome was the destination for centuries of pilgrims seeking holy places and ambitious clerics wanting to make their careers in the head office of the Roman Church.
- **B.** The Church and the holy sites brought in vast amounts of revenue from across Europe.
  - **1.** The pilgrims to Rome brought money with them, which they spent on the necessities of life while there.
  - **2.** Pilgrimage provided employment for the innkeepers, servants, and purveyors of food and domestic articles.
  - **3.** Ambassadors from all over Europe, together with their retinues, sought audiences with the pope and spent lavishly, often on luxury goods.

    4. High clerics and ambitious office seekers also contributed to the local economy.
    5. The huge revenues of papal taxation largely found their way to Rome, where they financed the central functions of the Church.
    6. The fines and charges of these offices provided much wealth and professional employment to a city that existed on service industries alone.
  - **C.** Although the Church dominated the economy, the papacy was ambiguous about its role in ruling the city itself and, thus, contributed to Rome's civic instability.
    1. In the Middle Ages, the potential riches of the city attracted the greed of the small number of immensely powerful feudal families with their bases in the Roman *campagna*, families such as the Colonna, Orsini, Savelli, and Frangipane, among others.
    2. To them, the papacy and the Church were offices to control or plunder.
    3. The rich pilgrims or clerics were occasionally intimidated within the city, as well as robbed on the road.
    4. And these families fought within the city walls for advantage, or control, of certain parts of the city.
    5. The instability in part stemmed from the weak civic government; the secular administration of the city could not stand up against either the Roman barons or the papacy.

III. This instability in Rome and central Italy drove the French-born pope, Clement V, to take up residence, in 1305, not in Rome but in Avignon.

  - **A.** Clement's move heralded the *Babylonian Captivity*, the period from 1305 to 1377 when a series of French popes ruled from Avignon.
    1. The separation of the bishop of Rome from his see, with the resulting weakening of the connection between the pope as successor to St. Peter and the Roman emperors, resulted in much consternation in Europe.
    2. The enemies of France during the Hundred Years' War believed that the Church favored the French king and that papal taxation was being used to support French armies.
    3. Not only were the popes French but so, too, was a plurality of cardinals, a phenomenon that changed the nature of the Sacred College.
    4. Their perceived immorality was attacked, most notably by Petrarch in his book *Liber Sine Nomine*, or *Book Without a Name*.
  - **B.** By the later half of the 14th century, there was a swelling of protest against the Avignon papacy.
    1. The Church was powerfully affected by the preaching of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Brigit of Sweden, who demanded the return of the papacy to Rome.
    2. These pious women were supported by the Italians in the Church who disliked the influence of the French and who saw the hostility generated by insensitive French governors of Italian provinces of the Papal States.
    3. This hostility reached the point where Florence, a leading Guelf state, made war on the Church in 1375 (the War of the Eight Saints).
    4. Finally, Pope Gregory XI decided to return the papacy to Rome, arriving in 1377.

IV. Gregory XI's return to Rome was neither easy nor highly successful.

  - **A.** The Roman barons had been unchecked for more than 70 years, and the city had been devastated by the loss of its major employer.
    1. The population had plummeted to fewer than 20,000 citizens.
    2. The instability had continued in the streets, and the suffering caused by rioting was augmented by the poverty endured by the common people, who had been left with insufficient work by the absence of the papacy.
    3. Many of the major churches were in ruins, and the papal palace was uninhabitable by the papal court.
  - **B.** Gregory's decision was unpopular with the Sacred College.
    1. The majority of French cardinals had no desire to leave their comfortable palaces in Avignon or the newly built and beautiful papal palace.
    2. They also had little sympathy for the Roman people.
  - **C.** In the midst of trying to repatriate the papacy, Gregory XI died suddenly in Rome, causing a crisis in leadership.

    1. The Roman people feared, reasonably, that the unhappy French cardinals would elect one of their own as pope and return to Avignon, ensuring the further decline of their city.
    2. The Romans rioted around the papal conclave and demanded that they choose an Italian, thereby increasing the likelihood that the papacy would remain in the see of St. Peter.
    3. In fear, the French cardinals yielded, choosing the aged archbishop of Bari as the new pope, Pope Urban VI.

D. The election of Pope Urban VI, rather than ending the division in the Church, precipitated the second period of rule of Avignon popes, a period known as the Great Schism (1378–1417).

E. Although he had been a learned and reasonable cardinal, Urban VI became a difficult pope, alienating the French and even some Italian cardinals. He demanded that the cardinals return to canonical living.

    1. Claiming that Urban's election had been invalid, the French cardinals repaired to Agnani, where they elected a new pope**,** Robert of Geneva, who took the name Clement VII.
    2. Both popes excommunicated each other and both created parallel colleges of cardinals and central church offices, Urban from Rome and Clement from Avignon.
    3. All Europe lined up behind one or the other; the Great Schism had begun.

F. The effect of this schism was cataclysmic. The faithful were in turmoil: To whom should they offer allegiance?

G. The Great Schism also had a devastating effect on Rome. It was believed that the reconstruction of the papacy in the Holy See would revitalize Rome, but in reality, only a portion of the Church remained in Rome, which was not enough to restore the city to its former elegance, power, and dignity.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, "The Church and the Papacy," pp. 309–315, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Petrarch, *Book Without a Name* (*Liber Sine Nomine*).

Secondary Sources:

Guillaume Mollat, *The Popes at Avignon, 1305–1378*.

Supplementary Reading:

Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What effect would the papacy moving to Avignon have on Rome?
2. Why was there such tension between the papacy and the secular authorities in the city during the Middle Ages and early Renaissance?

Lecture Twenty-Three

The Rebuilding of Rome

Scope: The Babylonian Captivity was followed hard upon by the Great Schism of 1378–1417, in which there were two and, finally, three competing popes. With the papacy absent or competing for souls and revenues with anti-popes, the authority of the Church and the wealth of Rome declined. The schism was finally ended, not through purely religious means, but by a general council of the Church (Constance, 1414–1418) under the authority of the German Holy Roman Emperor who, with memories of the Guelf-Ghibelline conflict, also claimed to be the sovereign heir of the Roman emperors. The return of a united papacy in 1420 required the rehabilitation of the neglected, derelict public and religious spaces of the eternal city. Driven by a desire for grandeur and concrete evidence of the end of the schism in the Church, popes increasingly looked to ancient models for authority, not only the example of St. Peter but also their imperial legacy. For example, Nicholas V (d. 1455) began the Vatican Library and brought artists and architects to rebuild the city and restore an ancient aqueduct to ensure sufficient fresh water. Sixtus IV (d. 1484) continued this work, constructing the first bridge across the Tiber since ancient times and establishing hospitals and churches, as well as the Sistine Chapel in the apostolic palace.

Outline

I. The Great Schism was a scandal for the Roman Church, both because the administrative structure of the church was divided and because the division caused great moral problems.

- **A.** Heretical movements began to develop in several parts of Europe to challenge the traditional doctrine of the Church.
- **B.** In England, John Wycliffe and his Lollards questioned everything from the ownership of property on the part of the Church to the injunctions against the Bible in the vernacular.
- **C.** In Bohemia, Jan Hus and the Hussites began to rise against the German episcopate and the established order of the empire.

II. The faithful and rulers of Europe realized the schism had to end.

- **A.** The first attempt was the Council of Pisa (1409), called by a group of cardinals from both colleges to end the schism.
  - **1.** Both the Roman and Avignonese popes were declared deposed and a third pope was elected in their places.
  - **2.** However, neither other pope recognized the council and both refused to abdicate, leaving the absurd situation of three popes.
- **B.** It was Emperor Sigismund of Bohemia who intervened, summoning a council to meet at Constance in 1414.
  - **1.** The council met, arranged the abdication or dismissal of all three popes, and elected in their places a single man to head a reunited Church in 1417.
  - **2.** The newly elected Roman noble, Cardinal Oddone Colonna, took the name Martin V and returned the papacy to Rome in 1420.
  - **3.** The Great Schism had come to an end.

III. The Renaissance recreation of Rome as the *caput mundi*, or "head of the world," became a central policy in restoring the badly damaged prestige of the papacy.

- **A.** Humanism provided a perfect cultural context for the reconstruction of the city.
  - **1.** The impetus of Humanism was to recover the culture of antiquity.
  - **2.** The application of archeology to classical studies resulted in the ruins of ancient Rome being excavated, measured, and drawn by scholars and artists, such as Brunelleschi and Donatello.
  - **3.** This provided a direct physical connection between the ancient city and its Renaissance successor.
  - **4.** The papacy realized that its double claim to sovereignty—as heir both to St. Peter and to the Roman emperors—could be reinforced by building a great city.
- **B.** There began an ambitious program of rebuilding Rome that would occupy succeeding popes for centuries.

        1. Martin V oversaw the repair and decoration of derelict churches, in particular Rome's cathedral. St. John Lateran, the primary papal residence.
        2. Martin's successor, Pope Nicholas V (r. 1450–1455), decorated the palace on the Vatican hill near to where the emperor Constantine had built the great Basilica of St. Peter in the 4th century.
        3. Nicholas shrewdly moved the papal residence to this palace, thereby making a concrete connection between the rule of the pope and St. Peter himself.
    - **C.** Nicholas, a Humanist by training and a friend of Cosimo de'Medici, also strove to make the city healthier and safer.
        1. For example, he reconnected an ancient aqueduct to bring sufficient fresh water to the city for the first time in 1,000 years.
        2. He paved streets to make the movement of goods and pilgrims in the city easier.
        3. These improvements permitted the population to grow and start to fill again the vast empty spaces within the ancient Roman walls.

- **IV.** It was during the lengthy reign of Pope Sixtus IV (1471–1484) that this ambitious plan of rebuilding the Vatican and the city took hold.
    - **A.** Sixtus made the bold move of changing the law that required that the property of high ecclesiastics who died in Rome revert to the Church.
        1. Previously, bishops and cardinals only rented houses when in Rome, or if they built structures, they did so without grandeur, because the structures would become the property of the pope at their deaths.
        2. But after Sixtus's reform, high officials in the papal court were permitted to pass their palaces, houses, and villas to their families.
        3. This generated a great building boom, as wealthy cardinals, bishops, and papal officials sought to establish noble lines using money gained from the Church.
        4. And even more to Rome's benefit, this expansion was copied by the secular nobility of Rome, who competed with the ecclesiastics for grandeur.
    - **B.** At the same time, Sixtus encouraged the development of large-scale public works.
        1. He constructed the first new bridge over the Tiber since ancient times, the Ponte Sisto.
        2. He built a hospital complex to care not only for Romans but also for sick and indigent pilgrims.
        3. He also re-founded Nicholas V's Vatican Library, giving it large new quarters and a great many new manuscripts and opening it to all scholars.
    - **C.** All of this rebuilding and development was consciously done to reflect the classical Renaissance taste and style.
        1. For example, one of the most important of the new ecclesiastical palaces—the Cancelleria, built for Cardinal Riario, the nephew of Sixtus IV—was the first major building to reflect fully the new Renaissance principles of design.
        2. Sixtus IV rebuilt in Renaissance style the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, just inside the Flamminian gate, as a burial site for his family.
        3. Its prominent situation as the first church pilgrims from the north would see on entering the city walls announced the new style of the city to the world.

- **V.** By the turn of the 16th century, Rome was, thus, a vibrant, expanding, dynamic city, the damage done by the Babylonian Captivity and Great Schism fully overcome.
    - **A.** The city was developed in human terms, as well as in physical structures.
        1. Jubilees, which were called every 25 years, brought hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to the city to visit the holy places and receive indulgences for their sins.
        2. These foreign visitors needed to be fed, housed, and served, resulting in a large migration of people not only from Italy but all over Europe to increase the population and add to its cosmopolitan atmosphere.
        3. Thousands of masons from Lombardy poured into the city to work on the huge construction projects.
        4. Germans largely dominated the baking of bread; the English were the sellers of rosaries around St. Peter's; and the Tuscans were the bankers.
        5. The foreigners looked for support among their countrymen, resulting in the building of "national" churches and hospices.

B. This expansion of the city brought with it urban problems.
  1. Rome was a city of men, given that the members of the clergy were celibate and many of the foreign workers came without their families to get established.
  2. Prostitution was widespread and resulted in many poor young girls being brought into a trade they would have preferred to have avoided.
  3. Disease and plague were recurrent crises, brought from all over Europe by the pilgrims.
  4. The increased population and the many visitors drove up the price of food for all Romans, adding to the burden of the poor.

C. Nevertheless, the papacy and the Church worked hard to fulfill the needs and spiritual aspirations of both the local inhabitants and the visitors.
  1. Once more, Rome became *caput mundi*—the center of the world—as pilgrims and travelers returned to their homes across Christendom to describe the churches, paved streets, palaces, and holy sites.
  2. In some ways, bricks and mortar had succeeded in establishing the idea of an imperial papal city more successfully than ever had the claims of medieval popes to universal sovereignty.

Secondary Sources:

Paolo Portoghesi, *Rome of the Renaissance.*

C. W. Westfall, *In This Most Perfect Paradise: Alberti, Nicholas V, and the Invention of Conscious Urban Planning in Rome, 1447–1455*.

Supplementary Reading:

Loren Partridge, *The Art of Renaissance Rome, 1400–1600*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was the Great Schism such a terrible scandal for the Church?
2. Do you agree that the physical appearance of a city reflects its political, economic, and social stability?

Lecture Twenty-Four

The Renaissance Papacy

Scope: After Martin V returned a united papacy to Rome in 1420, it was the ambition of almost every Renaissance pope to reestablish the authority of the Holy See. But if absolute papal theocracy were to be firmly reestablished, it would be necessary for the pope to enjoy economic, military, and political power, as well as spiritual primacy. There was, therefore, built into the papacy an ambiguous dual authority, one religious and one secular. As the heirs of St. Peter, the popes who ruled during the Renaissance were the leaders of Catholicism. But also as the reputed heirs of the Roman emperors, they were regarded as universal sovereigns. Thus, the story of the Renaissance papacy is one of family and personal ambition, a desire to increase the grandeur of Rome and the see of St. Peter while also increasing the power of the pope's family so that it could outlast his death. In fact, the Renaissance popes were most often seen by their neighbors as powerful Italian princes, ruling a large state that cut across the center of the peninsula north of the Kingdom of Naples.

Outline

I. One of the immediate consequences of the Council of Constance was the establishment of the principle of *conciliarism*.

- **A.** This principle asserted that the pope is subject to the will of the Church acting as a body through a general council.
    - **1.** To ensure that an event like the Great Schism would not reoccur, the Council of Constance took measures to guarantee that regular councils would be held in the future.
    - **2.** The mandate of these councils was to review the state of the Church and hold the pope accountable.
    - **3.** Initially, Pope Martin V (r. 1417–1431) agreed; he had little choice, given that he owed his election as pope to a council.
    - **4.** However, the principle of papal theocracy—the pope answers only to God—was too well established to yield easily.
- **B.** Martin returned to Rome in 1420, with the intent of making his rule as unrestrained as possible.
    - **1.** Almost immediately, he reactivated the complex central bureaucracy of the Church, including the papal *Camera*, or finance office, and the *Rota*, the central Church court.
    - **2.** This allowed him both to restore central taxation to all of Christendom and to reestablish Rome and the papacy as the final appeal in canon law and on moral questions.
    - **3.** Martin was not seriously challenged in this.
    - **4.** Few Catholics doubted the need to restore the operation of the central offices of the Church.
    - **5.** And Martin spent most of the money, which began to flow only slowly, on necessary projects.
    - **6.** However, with stable sources of income, popes would now be able more easily to disregard the requirement for frequent councils and pay little attention to any detractors.
- **C.** Unfortunately, his successor, Eugene IV (r. 1431–1447), did not enjoy Martin's universal support.
    - **1.** Another council was held at Basle to remove Eugene on the grounds that he had not been accountable to regular councils.
    - **2.** The schism was resurrected with the election of an anti-pope, Felix V (r.1440–1449).
    - **3.** Eugene spent little of his papacy in Rome, seeking security mostly in Tuscany, including Florence.
    - **4.** It was only the blameless and irenic character of his successor, Nicholas V (r. 1447–1455), that prompted the anti-pope to resign, thus restoring unity to the Church.
- **D.** In the face of increasing external threats, most notably from the Ottoman Turks, there followed an uneasy truce in the Church, with popes wielding increasingly unrestrained authority over the next 100 years.

II. The ensuing story of the papacy is one of family and personal ambition.

- **A.** From the crowning of the pious Nicholas V to the ascent of Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503), the papacy underwent a period of gradual moral decay.
    - **1.** Nicholas himself desired, first, to be a good pope; second, to restore the city of Rome; and third, to spread learning. These ambitions he accomplished with skill and grace.

    2. But his immediate successors were far less distinguished.
    3. And while Sixtus IV (r. 1471–1484) did much, as we have seen, to restore Rome's grandeur, his rule was marred by unrestricted nepotism.
    4. In his desire to create principalities for his family, Sixtus used the wealth and spiritual weapons of the Church, as we saw in his attack on Lorenzo de'Medici.
    5. His argument that he wished only to centralize his territory and make it truly accountable to papal rule disguised the reality that his policy was purely for the benefit of his dynasty.

  B. Innocent VIII (r. 1484–1492), the immensely rich banker from the Cibò family, was not interested either in a pious life or in great art and architecture.
    1. He had children whom he openly recognized.
    2. He largely left the running of the Church to the Florentines, as his son had married a daughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent.
    3. His patronage was largely personal, such as the building of his elegant belvedere opposite the apostolic palace and his tomb.
    4. Although charming and jovial, Innocent's moral failings and self-indulgence brought the reputation of the papacy into disrepute and paved the way for the scandals of his successor, the Borgia pope Alexander VI.

III. Alexander VI Borgia (r. 1492–1503) was quite rich and, in effect, bought the papacy with the spectacular fortune he had amassed as papal vice-chancellor.

  A. As a consequence of many years in the Sacred College, Alexander was a skilled administrator and a discerning patron of the arts.
    1. Nevertheless, under his pontificate, the moral authority of the papacy reached its lowest point, especially in his use of the resources of the Church to wage war on the states of the peninsula in an attempt to create a principality for his family.
    2. He lived a scandalous personal life, having several children by his mistress Vanozza Catanei, including Lucrezia, whose husbands often met sad ends, and Cesare, the military leader who almost succeeded in uniting all central Italy into a Borgia kingdom.
    3. The scandalous annulment of Lucrezia Borgia's first marriage, the murder of her second husband in the pope's apartments, and the extremely inappropriate physical closeness between the pope and his daughter gave the papacy the atmosphere of the Roman Empire under a depraved emperor, such as Tiberius.
    4. The mysterious murder of Alexander's eldest son, generally believed accomplished by his brother Cesare, allowed Cesare to abandon his office of cardinal (his father had hoped he would subsequently be elected pope) and become a soldier.
    5. Cesare's military campaigns were carried out with ruthlessness, adding to the evil reputation of the family whose military leader was an efficient psychopath.

  B. With the papacy seen as a place of moral degradation and the stability of the peninsula undone by the Borgias' military ambitions, it is not surprising that Savonarola in Florence preached against the Holy See and that Charles VIII of France entered Italy as the new Charlemagne, sent to cleanse the Church and lead a new Crusade, according to prophecy.

IV. The next conclave chose the nephew of Sixtus IV, and the implacable enemy of the Borgias, as Julius II, a name he chose to honor Julius Caesar over Alexander's namesake of Alexander the Great.

  A. Julius II (r. 1503–1513) created the imperial papacy both through his military campaigns and through his dramatic patronage of art.
    1. Julius, a fearsome commander in the field, continued the policy of waging war to unite and control the Papal States.
    2. Known as the "warrior pope," he remarked that he preferred the smell of gunpowder to that of incense.
    3. He humbled the great Roman baronial families and imposed complete control over the rule of the city.

  B. Julius was also one of the greatest patrons of art in Western history.
    1. Raphael was commissioned to decorate the personal rooms of the pope, painting the Stanza della Segnatura with *The School of Athens* and *The Disputation over the Sacrament*, among other images.

        2. Michelangelo was engaged to decorate the vault of the Sistine Chapel, which had been built by and named after Julius's uncle Sixtus IV.
        3. Michelangelo was also to carve for Julius the most elaborate tomb since antiquity, a task never completed but linked to the rebuilding of St. Peter's.
        4. The commission of Bramante for plans for the new Basilica of St. Peter was the most audacious of all Julius's projects.
        5. It took someone of Julius's character to pull down the holy church, then almost 1,200 years old and built by Constantine to honor the tomb of St. Peter.
        6. But Julius intended the new St. Peter's to be the largest church in the world (as it is) and the site of his vast tomb, which was to sit beneath the dome over the grave of the apostle.
        7. The building of the new St. Peter's was the largest construction project in Rome since antiquity.
        8. But to pay for it, the pope permitted the German Dominicans to sell indulgences, which helped spark the Protestant Reformation.

V. Julius's successor (with a short reign between) was Leo X, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

    A. He was another great patron of art, continuing Raphael's work in the papal apartments.

    B. But it was during his reign that the revolt of Martin Luther took place (1517), a threat the pleasure-loving, aesthetic, and erudite pope failed to take seriously.

    C. Although by personality Leo was an irenic pope, he continued the dynastic ambitions now so central to almost all papal policy.
        1. He used his ecclesiastical power for the recovery of Florence for his family.
        2. He also waged war against Urbino to provide a principality for his brother.
        3. At the time of his death in 1521, the events of the Reformation were well advanced, and these would forever destroy the unity of the Church.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, "The Church and the Papacy," pp. 297–339, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Secondary Sources:

Peter Partner, *Renaissance Rome, 1500–1559: A Portrait of a Society*.

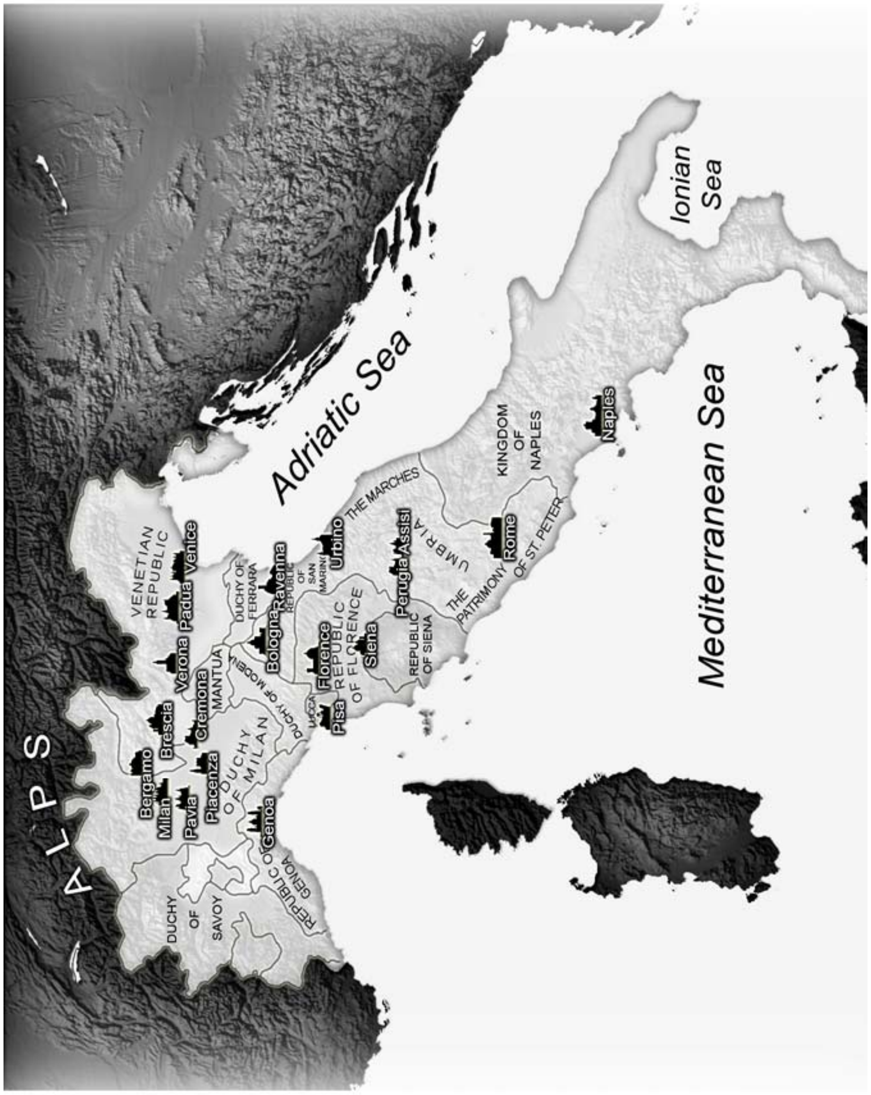
Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*.

Supplementary Reading:

Michael Mallett, *The Borgias: The Rise and Fall of a Renaissance Dynasty*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was the Church unable to exert continued control over the papacy through general councils?
2. Consider why so many popes practiced nepotism, the enriching and promoting of their families, at the expense of the Church.


ALPS
Adriatic Sea
Ionian Sea
Mediterranean Sea
VENETIAN REPUBLIC
DUCHY OF SAVOY
DUCHY OF MILAN
REPUBLIC OF GENOA
DUCHY OF MODENA
MANTUA
DUCHY OF FERRARA
REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO
LUCCA
REPUBLIC OF FLORENCE
REPUBLIC OF SIENA
THE MARCHES
UMBRIA
THE PATRIMONY OF ST PETER
KINGDOM OF NAPLES
Bergamo
Milan
Pavia
Brescia
Piacenza
Cremona
Verona
Padua
Venice
Genoa
Bologna
Ravenna
Urbino
Pisa
Florence
Siena
Perugia
Assisi
Rome
Naples

Biographical Notes

Alexander VI, pope (b. 1431; papacy, 1492–1503). As the nephew of Pope Calixtus III, Roderigo Borgia rose quickly through the ranks of the Church. He became a cardinal in 1456, vice-chancellor in 1457, and ultimately, pope in 1492. Alexander's papacy is best known for its nepotism, because he worked to secure high-level appointments and strategic marital alliances for his four illegitimate children fathered with his mistress Vanozza Catanei. His eldest, Juan, was destined to serve the Church as military commander but was murdered before he could fill this position. The role went to his next son, Cesare, known for his ruthless behavior. Alexander arranged several marriages for his daughter Lucrezia in an attempt to secure various political alliances. In spite of this focus on his family and his attempts to develop a Borgia kingdom, Alexander was a skilled administrator who worked to strengthen Rome's authority. Perhaps his greatest failure was his inability to recognize the threat that Charles VIII's invasion in 1494 would pose for Italy.

Borgia, Cesare (1475–1507). Cesare was one of four illegitimate children born to Rodrigo Borgia (Pope Alexander VI) and his mistress Vanozza Catanei. His career in the Church was launched by his father's election to the papacy in 1492, after which he was given many prominent appointments, including that of cardinal of Valencia and duke of Valentinois, and charged with various diplomatic missions. Cesare had a reputation for being ruthless and violent and is believed to have murdered his older brother. He led a series of campaigns in Emilia and Romagna, conquering the local princes in order to carve out his own principality. As he was turning his attention toward Florence, his father died (1503), and with the election of Giuliano della Rovere (Julius II), a bitter enemy of the Borgias, he was rendered powerless.

Bruni, Leonardo (1370–1444). Italian Humanist Leonardo Bruni's skill in Latin and Greek earned him a position in the papal court of Innocent VIII and enabled him to translate works by Aristotle and Plato. By 1415, he had taken a position in the Florentine government, rising to chancellor in 1427, where he used his influence to help spread Humanism. For Bruni, who viewed the ancient Roman Republic as a model state and praised Cicero's political activity and civic spirit, Humanism was closely associated with an active lay life. This interest in Civic Humanism is reflected in his *History of the Florentine People*, a work modeled on the historical writings of Livy and one that influenced the development of history as a discipline.

Clement VII, pope (b. 1478; papacy, 1523–1534). Giulio de'Medici was educated by his uncle Lorenzo the Magnificent and made a cardinal in 1513 by his cousin Pope Leo X. Like his two predecessors, he was a great patron of the arts, commissioning works by Cellini. His inability to make decisions led to the sack of Rome by the French in 1527, resulting in a seven-month period that saw the city ravaged and its art and culture destroyed. During this period, Clement sought refuge in Castel Sant' Angelo.

d'Este, Isabella (1474–1539). Born in 1474 to the duke of Ferrara, Ercole I, and his wife, Eleanora of Aragon, Isabella d'Este and her sister, Beatrice, were raised in the court culture of Ferrara, surrounded by poets, painters, and intellectuals. They each received a Humanist education, uncommon for women of the period, and Isabella was known to be a talented dancer, singer, and musician, who also excelled at hunting and riding. In 1490, Isabella married soldier and marquis Francesco Gonzaga (1466–1519) at the age of 16. As marchioness, Isabella had a great impact on both court life and in the political sphere. She was an avid reader and collector of art, books, tapestries, and antiquities. She was a patron of Leonardo da' Vinci, Titian, and Perugino and brought to Mantua great intellectuals of the period, including Pietro Bembo and Castiglione. Isabella was also a skilled ruler and gained a reputation for justice, diplomacy, and tenacity when governing Mantua for her husband during his absences on military campaigns, when he was briefly imprisoned in Venice, and after his death.

de'Medici, Cosimo, il Vecchio (1389–1464). Cosimo, the son of the wealthiest banker in Italy, Giovanni di Averrado de'Medici, was a follower of Humanism, a patron of the arts, and the founder of the Platonic Academy in Florence. He used his wealth to commission works by such artists as Lorenzo Ghiberti and Benozzo Gozzoli, to subsidize the search for classical texts by such Humanists as Niccolo Niccoli and Poggio Bracciolini, to rebuild San Lorenzo and the convent of the Badia at Fiesole, and to construct the Palazzo Medici. His political contributions are equally impressive. By 1433, the Medici were the most prominent and most influential family in Florence. As a result, they had many opponents, including the Albizzi and Peruzzi families, who collaborated to run Cosimo out of town. In 1434, Cosimo returned to Florence with the help of the Popular Party and effectively "ruled" Florence until his death in 1464. Although never officially elected into Florentine government, Cosimo used his connections and influence to ensure the promotion of his policies and the election of those who supported his interests. In 1454, Cosimo helped to negotiate the Peace of Lodi with Milan, which established a balance of power in Italy.

de'Medici, Lorenzo, "il Magnifico" (1449–1492). Son of Piero de'Medici and grandson of Cosimo, Lorenzo took control of Florence at the age of 20 following his father's death. He was an active member of the Platonic Academy, a patron of the arts, and a beloved citizen of Florence. He was trained in the Humanist tradition and was surrounded by the leading intellectuals and artists of the day, including Pico della Mirandola, Angelo Poliziano, Marsilio Ficino, Michelangelo, and Botticelli. Politically, he was very astute and successfully strengthened and held together the republic during his rule (1469–1492). In 1478, he survived an attempt on his life by his detractors, the Pazzi family, in a plot that involved Pope Sixtus IV. This incident sparked a war between Naples and the papacy, which was ended through Lorenzo's efforts.

de'Medici, Piero, "il Sfortunato" (1471–1503). The eldest son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Piero de'Medici ("the Unfortunate") succeeded his father in 1492 as ruler of Florence but proved to be lacking his father's diplomacy and his ability to rule effectively. During the French invasion of 1494, the Medici were expelled from Florence by their fellow citizens. All of Piero's attempts to regain his position in Florence failed, and he drowned while serving in the French army at the Battle of Garigliano.

Ferdinand of Aragon and Naples (1452–1516). With the marriage of Ferdinand, king of Sicily (1468–1516), Castile and Leon (1474–1504), Aragon (1479–1516), and Naples (1504–1516), to Isabella of Castile in 1469, Spain was united. Their rule focused on strengthening royal authority and curbing noble power. As a result of their efforts to maintain the purity of the Christian faith (through the establishment of the Inquisition in 1478 and the expulsion of the Jews in 1492), they were given the title of "Catholic Kings" by Pope Alexander VI in 1494. From 1479 to 1516, Ferdinand was involved on some level in almost every international conflict and negotiation, including a struggle with France for control of Italy during the Italian Wars (1494–1559).

Ficino, Marsilio (1433–1499). Ficino was an Italian philosopher, physician, and philologist and the most influential Renaissance Neoplatonist. Educated in Greek, Latin, and medicine, Ficino is best known for introducing Platonic philosophy to Europe. Much of his life's work focused on Plato and included translating Plato's texts into Latin; acting as the first president of the Florentine Platonic Academy; teaching Plato at the Academy, which attracted the leading citizens, thinkers, and artists of Florence; and publishing such works as the *Introduction to the Philosophy of Plato* and the *Platonic Theology* (1482). He further contributed to the growing body of ancient Greek literature with translations of Homer, Plotinus, and Dionysius the Areopagite.

Julius II, pope (b. 1443; papacy, 1503–1513). Giuliano della Rovere was educated by his uncle, Francesco della Rovere (Pope Sixtus IV) and, like him, was a member of the Franciscan Order. In 1471, he was made a cardinal by his uncle and held a number of episcopal sees and papal appointments before being elected pope in 1503. Julius's papacy is marked by significant artistic and military achievements. Under his patronage, Michelangelo painted the Sistine Chapel ceiling, Raphael painted rooms in the Vatican Palace, and Bramante began to rebuild St. Peter's (to be completed in 1612). Julius, who assumed personal command of an army, is often referred to as the "warrior pope" for his active role in the efforts to defend the Church and extend its temporal power. He is recognized for his efforts to free the papal court of abuses and for attempts to reestablish the pontifical estates and free Italy from control by foreign powers.

Leo X, pope (b. 1475; papacy, 1513–1521). Giovanni de'Medici, the second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was destined for a career in the Church, from an early age serving as an abbot and a cardinal before becoming the first Medici pope in 1513. As a young man, he received a Humanist education, taught by both Andrea Poliziano and Marsilio Ficino. He was known to be good-natured and well spoken, and his election to the papacy was met with high hopes from politicians, artists, and scholars. However, although viewed as a great diplomat, Leo was unsuccessful in political and religious affairs and paid little attention to the dangers threatening the papacy. In particular, he reacted too slowly when dealing with both the French invasion of 1516 and the developing Protestant Reformation. He was a great lover of entertainment, particularly banquets, and the arts, including music, theatre, and poetry, and Rome became the center of the literary world under Leo. In addition to great artistic commissions, Leo donated funds to convents, hospitals, pilgrims, and the sick. With his generosity and his spending habits, Leo managed to run through the papal coffers extremely quickly and, as a result, created new offices, announced jubilees, and expanded indulgences to raise money for the bankrupted treasury.

Montefeltro, Guidobaldo da (1472–1508). Guidobaldo was the son of Federigo da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza, duke and duchess of Urbino. He followed his father to become duke in 1482, serving until his death in 1508. Like his parents before him, Guidobaldo and his wife, Elisabetta Gonzaga (1471–1526), actively supported the arts and culture of Urbino. The unique court culture established here attracted young men from all over Europe and encouraged the participation of women. The great painter Raphael was raised in the court culture of Urbino during Guidolbaldo's reign, and Baldassare Castiglione served under him. Castiglione's work *The Courtier* is set in Urbino and relates a discussion among members of Italy's leading families at the palace of Guidobaldo and his wife. Guidobaldo is the absent character in this work, confined to bed, with Elisabetta acting as host.

Nicholas V, pope (b. 1397; papacy, 1447–1455). As a young man, Tommaso Parentucelli studied theology and worked as a tutor for the Strozzi and Albizzi families in Florence, where he came into contact with leading Humanist scholars. He was in the service of Niccolo Albergati, bishop of Bologna for 20 years, and was involved in diplomatic missions in Italy and Germany at the request of Pope Eugene, for which he was awarded the position of cardinal in 1446. The following year, 1447, he was elected pope. Nicholas V's primary goal at the outset of his papacy was to restore Rome—its monuments, churches, fortifications, streets, and aqueducts. He was particularly interested in rebuilding the Vatican Palace, St. Peter's, and the Leonine City. Nicholas was a patron of the arts, literature in particular, and he welcomed leading Humanists of the day into the papal court. In addition, he established the Vatican Library, bringing in more than 5,000 volumes during his papacy. On the political front, Nicholas supported the Peace of Lodi (1454) and entered the Italian League in 1455, which helped to secure the Papal States from further attacks.

Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni (1463–1494). Pico della Mirandola was an Italian philosopher, scholar, and Neoplatonist who devoted his life to study. He began his education at the age of 14 in Bologna studying canon law, but his quest for complete wisdom led him to study a wide range of disciplines, including languages (Greek, Latin, Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac), theology, philosophy (including Hebrew philosophy), the Cabala, occult lore, mathematics, music, and physics. At the age of 24, he traveled to Rome to post his 900 theses on a range of topics, prefaced in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, with a challenge to other scholars to join him in debate. Thirteen of his theses were condemned as heretical by Pope Innocent VII and Pico fled to France. He settled in Florence after being absolved by Pope Alexander VI, became a member of the Platonic Academy, and devoted his life to defending Christianity.

Raphael of Urbino (1483–1520). Born the son of a court painter and poet from Urbino, Raffaelo Sanzio would become one of the most skilled and prolific painters of the High Renaissance. He first studied painting in Urbino before moving to Perugia in 1500 to study under Pietro Perugino, then to Florence four years later to study with Leonardo da Vinci. In 1508, he was invited by Pope Julius II to paint rooms in the Vatican Palace, where he completed the *School of Athens*, the *Dispute of the Sacrament*, and *Parnassus*. His most well- known works also include portraits of Popes Leo X, Julius II, various cardinals, and Baldassare Castiglione. Raphael died at the age of 37 from pneumonia.

Salutati, Coluccio (1330–1406). Trained as a notary, Coluccio Salutati went on to hold various public offices, including the chancellorships of Todi (1367–1368), Lucca (1370), and Florence (1375–1406). A friend and correspondent of Petrarch, Salutati was a Humanist scholar with an interest in classical literature, culture, and history who actively contributed to the revival, rediscovery, and translation of ancient texts. During his term as chancellor, Humanism was institutionalized in the Florentine Republic, with Salutati hiring scholars trained in this tradition for positions in civic government. As a result, Florence became the leading center of Humanism in Europe.

Sforza, Francesco (1401–1466). As a *condottiere* employed by the duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza led a number of successful campaigns on Rome. Hoping to retain some of these captured lands for himself, he attempted to persuade Duke Filippo Maria Visconti to provide him with an independent principality in Lombardy as a dowry for marrying his daughter. The duke refused and Sforza turned against him, joining the Florentine and Venetian alliance. When the duke died in 1447, Sforza set in motion his plan to seize power. After defeating the Venetian army at Caravaggio, he marched on Milan and conquered the city in 1450, taking the title of duke. He proceeded to persuade Cosimo de'Medici to withdraw from the Venetian alliance to form a new Milanese-Florentine alliance, a move that brought the wars to an end with the signing of the Peace of Lodi in 1454.

Sforza, Lodovico, "il Moro" (1451/52–1508). Known as "il Moro" for his swarthy complexion, Lodovico Sforza, son of Francesco, served as the duke of Milan from 1494–1499. In order to protect Milan, he entered into an alliance with Charles VIII before the 1494 invasion of Italy but had turned against the French by 1495. He was eventually expelled from Milan in 1499 by Louis XII, who had a hereditary claim to the duchy of Milan. Overall, Lodovico was not a particularly competent ruler, showing much more interest in the social and cultural pursuits of his court. During his short marriage to Beatrice d'Este (who died in childbirth in 1497), the Milanese court flourished with the arrival of Leonardo da Vinci as military engineer and court painter.

Sixtus IV, pope (b.1414; papacy, 1471–1484). Born Francesco della Rovere to a poor family, the future pope studied theology and philosophy at the University of Pavia. He served as procurator in Rome and was made cardinal in 1467. Once elected pope, Sixtus launched a crusade against the Turks and attempted to reunite the Eastern Church with Rome but was not particularly successful in either endeavor. The last decade of his papacy was dominated by rather unscrupulous behavior, including nepotism and involvement in an attempt in 1478 to overthrow the Medici in Florence (resulting in an assassination attempt on Lorenzo). Following this event, Sixtus embarked upon a two-year war with Florence that was eventually resolved because of his inability to garner support from other Italian states. There were some bright spots during his reign. Sixtus was a great patron of the arts who commissioned the construction of the Sistine Chapel and the Sistine bridge across the Tiber, redesigned the Capitoline Museum, and added a collection of ancient statuary to the complex. He also strengthened the Vatican Library and made major improvements to the city of Rome

Visconti, Giangaleazzo (d. 1402). After murdering his uncle Bernabò, Visconti seized power in Milan in 1385 and, 10 years later, was recognized as duke by the emperor. During his reign, Visconti united the territories of Milan, supported the armament and silk industries, built hospitals and the Milan cathedral, and tried to enrich the culture of his city. He also led numerous campaigns to expand his territories and purchased or conquered cities around Milan, such as Pisa. Successfully taking over much of Lombardy, he set his sights on Umbria and Tuscany, including Florence, the only city that refused to surrender to Visconti. With his sudden death in 1402, Florence was saved and his efforts to carve out a northern Italian kingdom were dissolved; however, Italy was sent into chaos as struggles to regain conquered territories developed.

The Italian Renaissance

Part III

Professor Kenneth Bartlett

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Much of Professor Bartlett's career has been devoted to bringing Renaissance culture into the undergraduate and graduate classroom. He has taught regularly in the University of Toronto Program in Siena, Italy, as well as in the Oxford Program. In 2002, he was appointed the first director of the Office of Teaching Advancement for the University of Toronto. He has been the recipient of the Victoria University Excellence in Teaching Award, the Students Administrative Council and Association of Part-Time University Students Teaching Award, and the Faculty of Arts and Science Teaching Excellence Award. In 2005 he was awarded a prestigious national 3M Teaching Fellowship.

Dr. Bartlett is the author of *The English in Italy, 1525–1558: A Study in Culture and Politics* (1991); *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance* (1992); and *Humanism and the Northern Renaissance* (with M. McGlynn, 2000). He was co-editor or translator of four other books and the author of more than 35 articles and chapters on Renaissance history and culture. In 2003, Dr. Bartlett was co-curator of the exhibition *Gods, Saints and Heroes: Italian Renaissance Maiolica from the Metropolitan Museum of Art* at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art. In addition, he has been the academic consultant on the Illuminated Filmworks videos on the Vatican Library, *The Halls of Virtuous Learning*, *The Galleries of Sixtus V*, *and Pages of Light*, as well as for the international exhibitions *Raphael and His Circle: Drawings from the Royal Collection at Windsor* and *Angels from the Vatican* at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

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The Italian Renaissance

Scope:

This course on the Italian Renaissance will attempt to answer the question: Why was there such an explosion of creative culture, human ingenuity, economic development, and social experimentation in Italy beginning in the 14th century? It will also address the question of why the Renaissance ended in the middle years of the 16th century.

In order to investigate the phenomenon of the Renaissance in Italy, it is necessary to look at every facet of human endeavor. Thus, this series will not be a discussion of major political, military, or economic events, although these will appear, as appropriate. Rather, the course will follow the model of writing Renaissance history designed by its first great practitioner, Jacob Burckhardt, whose 1860 book-length "essay," *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, initiated the model of cultural history, that is, looking at a period in the past from several perspectives simultaneously to produce a sophisticated, multidimensional image. Just as each tessera in a mosaic contributes to the whole, so each element in social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, and religious history contributes to the composite picture of life in Italy in the years between the birth of Petrarch in 1304 and the terrible events of the 1520s–1540s that extinguished the flame that the poet first lit.

Several elements must first be assessed before the question of cultural development can be answered. We must investigate why the Italian peninsula was so different from the rest of Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries. How did the city-states of Italy manage to develop such sophisticated societies based on various forms of government, with social mobility and secular education, and amass such enormous wealth, when most of the rest of the continent still lived under feudal regimes, largely local economies, and clerically dominated culture? To what extent was the very lack of unity in the peninsula an advantage? And why did such states as Florence choose to invest so much of their surplus capital in art and learning? What was Humanism and why was it a peculiarly Italian phenomenon in the 14th century? And why do we begin our study of the culture of the Renaissance with Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374), or Petrarch, a poet and thinker who believed he had the misfortune to have been born outside his age? These are complex parts of a complex story, but one worth telling because the Renaissance gave us so many of the tools by which we still interpret our lives and the world around us.

In discussing these aspects of the culture of the Renaissance, we will see that many of the fundamental perspectives of the modern world were formed at that time. It has been argued that Petrarch invented the contemporary concept of the individual, writing in his *Secret Book*, the first psychological autobiography since Augustine's *Confessions*. Such artists as Donatello and Brunelleschi developed the principles of linear perspective, which permitted the creation of a three-dimensional image on a two-dimensional plane. In so doing, not only did they open the way for Naturalism in art—reproducing what the eye sees—but they set the intellectual stage for modern cartography and, hence, the voyages of discovery, because objects could be put in correctly calibrated relative space and distances could be precisely mapped. The desire of Renaissance thinkers to know themselves and others drove artists to perfect the reproduction of correct anatomy in painting and sculpture, with Donatello's *David* the first freestanding male nude figure since antiquity. Portraiture allowed viewers to identify their fellow citizens or famous men and women through their appearances and, soon after, through the skill of the painter, acquire an insight into their characters. All of this was the product of the Italian Renaissance mind.

In addition, Renaissance writers, in their desire to know the world around them and make correct observations about that world and the variety of its inhabitants, extended the importance of individual experience and privileged it. In other words, life became less a vale of tears on the part of faithful servants of God acting out a role he had determined for them with little sense of personal agency. Rather, individuals, acting either alone or in concert with their fellow citizens, could assume some responsibility for creating art, ideas, and even social experiments that benefited our lives on Earth. Secular knowledge, practical skills, political involvement, marriage, family, and even the paying of taxes became instruments for human fulfillment and the means of constructing a more pleasant and meaningful life. The human perspective changed from the theocentric world of the Middle Ages to the anthropocentric world of the Renaissance. This shift emphasized the ideal of the creation of an individual life as a work of art and the building of cities that were equally things of beauty and commodity. It celebrated human achievement, including social mobility and social responsibility. This is not to say that the Renaissance was pagan or any less Christian—it was not—but it shifted the balance in the role of human free will and unleashed the creative spirit of thousands of individuals. Fame and history became important to Italians, who saw themselves as part of the human continuum; the ancient pagan classics could be applied to contemporary situations in art, learning,

and even ethics, because it could be shown that the ancient Greeks and Romans were good men with good advice concerning the human condition. Salvation remained a matter of faith and religious communion, but the complexity of human experience on Earth had been recognized and validated.

The Renaissance manifested itself differently in different places in Italy. The great republics, such as Florence and Venice, enjoyed a form of government that permitted a different kind of social and economic organization. These, especially Florence, have often been identified as the primary theaters of Renaissance culture. However, this is both unfair and incorrect. As we will see, small, petty principalities, such as 15th-century Urbino, contributed greatly to the Renaissance ideal, as did the enormously complex but equally influential city of Rome. Rome was at once the center of Western Christianity, with its bishop the head of the Church, and the city, the head of the Roman Empire, the living memory of a time when Italy ruled the known world and created so many of its fundamental institutions and ideas. Humanism, Renaissance culture, and the desire for fame and personal power infected the Church just as much as it did the republican magistracies in Florence or the courtly societies of monarchical regimes. We will need to look severally at the major centers of Renaissance culture to trace the flexibility of its dominant ideals and see how competition and patronage in different environments added to the rich growth of Italian culture.

Many of the principles of Renaissance Italian Humanism and ideals remain with us today, and not just the appreciation for Naturalism in art and the validity of individual experience, without which we could not have experimental science, for example. The principles of Renaissance education, based on knowledge of the Greek and Roman classics, remained the foundation for elite education well into the 20th century. Philosophical ideas, such as the dignity of man (a precursor of the principle of basic human rights) and the belief in ideal worlds, still inform our discourse. Italian commercial inventions still drive the engines of any capitalist society, and acceptance of the unique responsibility of the individual to construct himself or herself into the best model of achievement and civic engagement continues to go straight to the heart of a free society. These principles might have developed in the seemingly distant world of Renaissance Italy, but their attraction to the essence of human nature and the multiplicity of human experience make them as valid now as they were then.

Finally, we will discuss why these heroic ideals and institutions collapsed. Here, too, there might be lessons to learn for our own world. I will suggest that the conditions that gave rise to such noble practices and principles were crushed by the terror of war, occasioned by the French invasions of Italy in 1494, which turned the peninsula into the battleground of Europe for almost 60 years. I will argue that unspeakable events, such as the 1527 sack of Rome, made it difficult to sustain such ideals as the dignity of man. And the repressive reaction of the Church and many Italian states to the challenge of the Reformation introduced mechanisms that crushed the imagination, freedom of speech, and freedom of action. The introduction of the Roman Inquisition in the 1540s, the Index of Prohibited Books in the 1550s and 1560s, and the growing authoritarianism in the monarchies that ruled Italy snuffed out the light that Petrarch and those of his generation had lit. Of course, there were external forces, such as the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 and the consequent shift of the European economy to the Atlantic seaboard from the Mediterranean (the *Media Terra*, the center of the world since the beginning of recorded European history). But challenges had been met previously; now they appeared insurmountable. There was a failure of will, imagination, and belief. For example, Italians were still among the greatest of seafarers, but they sailed for Spain, England, and France; Italians remained great shipbuilders, but they continued to construct shallow- draft, wide-beamed galleys that were suited to the Mediterranean—where trade was being strangled by the Turkish advance—and completely useless on the open ocean, where new opportunities lay.

In many ways, the Renaissance was an attitude and a quality of mind, a belief that “Man is the measure of all things,” that “Man can do anything that he but wills.” It was a failure of will and a loss of belief in the capacity and creativity of the human mind that ended the Renaissance, because it put an end to the principles that had driven its creation and expansion.

Lecture Twenty-Five

The Crisis—The French Invasion of 1494

Scope: The Italian Renaissance had flourished so richly in part because of the protected space of the peninsula. Surrounded on three sides by water and the Alps to the north, Italy had not suffered from foreign invasion on a large scale since the barbarian incursions after the collapse of Rome. However, at the end of the 15th century, the situation changed. The creation of dynastic territorial monarchies in the north, such as France, permitted the concentration of huge resources for foreign adventures. Also, the competing state system and the ambition of many of the ruling houses of Italy resulted in northern monarchies, such as France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire, having dynastic or sovereign claims on various states. In 1494, King Charles VIII of France decided to invade Italy with the largest army then amassed and with sophisticated materiel, such as mobile artillery, in order to assert his claim to the Kingdom of Naples. Initially aided by the Milanese, who thought to manipulate the French into destroying the threat posed to Lodovico il Moro's rule by the Neapolitans, the French army was virtually unopposed and the conquest of Naples was an easy victory. Although the Milanese realized their error and joined with the other Italian states to hurry the French out of Italy, Charles had shown that the rich cities of the peninsula were vulnerable and that the peninsula would never again enjoy its unmolested independence.

Outline

I. In previous lectures, we have alluded to the events of the French invasion of 1494, particularly its role in ending the Sforza rule in Milan (Lecture Twenty-One).

- **A.** In fact, this cataclysmic event can be interpreted as the crisis of the Renaissance in all of Italy: the beginning of the end of this remarkable historical period.
  - **1.** As you will recall, the Peace of Lodi (1454) and the Italian League (1455) negotiated between Cosimo de'Medici and Francesco Sforza had created spheres of influence on the peninsula.
  - **2.** The league had allowed for collective security, encouraging all the other major Italian states to come to the assistance of any one of them attacked from without.
  - **3.** The consequence had been a significant reduction of the endemic warfare of the peninsula.
- **B.** Contributing to this sense of security was the situation north of the Alps in the 15th century.
  - **1.** The potentially powerful dynastic monarchies in the north were, at the same time, divided.
  - **2.** France only became a centralized dynastic monarchy under Louis XI (d. 1483) following the end of the Hundred Years' War.
  - **3.** The Iberian peninsula similarly was not united until the dynastic union of Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469.
  - **4.** Thereafter, the energy of Isabel and Ferdinand remained directed toward the conquest of Granada and the expulsion of the Moors, not accomplished until 1492.
  - **5.** The Holy Roman Empire remained weak, because the emperor was elected and required the cooperation of the German princes for any coherent policy.
- **C.** There were, however, growing threats to the economy and stability of the Italian peninsula.
  - **1.** The capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 ended the virtual Italian monopoly on the luxury trade with the East, a source of great wealth, especially for Venice.
  - **2.** This also led to increased warfare in the Mediterranean with the Turks, who began to encroach on Italian territory, capturing previously safe harbors.
  - **3.** The dangers in the Mediterranean led to the exploration and opening of other routes to the East that further sapped Italian control of trade.
  - **4.** The economic center of Europe shifted away from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic seaboard, slowly reducing Italy to an economic backwater.
  - **5.** As peace was restored in Europe after the Hundred Years' War, Florence lost many of its markets for wool.

        6. Italian bankers also suffered, because England and France no longer came to them for huge loans with which to wage war.

II. The young, ambitious, and delusional king of France, Charles VIII (r. 1483–1498), had planned from the time of achieving his majority to take Naples, believing that he had a divine mission to take a crown he judged to have belonged to his family but had been usurped.

- **A.** The House of Aragon (co-ruling Spain with the House of Castile) had historic claims on not only Naples and Sicily but Milan, as well.
    - **1.** It was also rich in zealous, battle-hardened soldiers, whom the Spanish king wished to keep occupied in warfare outside of the kingdom rather than within.
    - **2.** Spain, then, would soon challenge France for hegemony in the peninsula.
- **B.** Events within the individual Italian states also contributed to the instability of the situation.
- **C.** Lorenzo de'Medici, one of the key proponents of the Peace of Lodi, died in 1492, leaving control of the city of Florence to his incompetent son Piero.
    - **1.** Piero was no match for the ascetic Dominican monk Girolamo Savonarola (about whom we will hear in the next lecture), who not only polarized and destabilized Florence but also added an atmosphere of apocalyptic fatalism.
    - **2.** Savonarola was a millennial preacher, prophesying that the judgment of God was at hand.
    - **3.** His working of the old Italian prophetic tradition helped create a mood of doom and inevitability that sapped Florentine resolve.
- **D.** In the same year that Florence lost its leader, the pope, Innocent VIII, died in Rome.
    - **1.** Although morally suspect, Innocent had at least been a peaceful pope who had married his son to a daughter of Lorenzo de'Medici and had actively cooperated in the period of stability in Italy.
    - **2.** Elected in his place was the ambitious Borgia pope Alexander VI, who plotted to establish a Borgia kingdom in Italy based on the states of the Church.
    - **3.** Alexander was also willing to cooperate with northern powers to weaken opposition in Italy and aid his cause.
    - **4.** Thus, the Borgia campaigns exploded the Peace of Lodi and brought a deep vein of instability and danger back into Italian diplomacy and politics.
- **E.** The situation reached its head in 1494, when King Ferrante of Naples died, leaving the crown to his ambitious son Alfonso.
    - **1.** The House of Aragon had already separated Sicily from Naples.
    - **2.** As you will recall, Lodovico il Moro and Beatrice d'Este of Milan had a son whom they were afraid would be murdered by the rightful Sforza duke, Lodovico's nephew Giangaleazzo II, should he ever assume active rule.
    - **3.** Giangaleazzo II was married to the sister of Alfonso, king of Naples, who plotted with the legitimate duke to take control away from the regent Lodovico and set Giangaleazzo in power.
    - **4.** To preempt this danger and destroy the threat from Naples, Lodovico encouraged the French to invade the peninsula and take the crown of Naples.

III. When Charles VIII crossed the Alps into Italy in 1494, he led the largest force Italy had seen since the barbarian invasions of the 5th century.

- **A.** The military campaign proved to be easier than anyone in France could have predicted, with virtually no resistance offered against Charles.
    - **1.** The Milanese welcomed his troops.
    - **2.** The Venetians could mount no opposition, because they were occupied in the Mediterranean against the Turks.
    - **3.** Florence, under the foolish leadership of Piero de'Medici, tried to broker a peace with the French.
    - **4.** Piero achieved only a humiliating arrangement, through which Florence lost control of Pisa, the republic's prized port on the Arno, as well as fortresses on the republic's perimeter.

        5. The pope, Alexander VI, was interested only in his own family ambitions and was willing to bargain away the security of Italy rather than alienate the French.
        6. Naples could not, then, hold out against this invincible force.
        7. It capitulated in 1495, and Charles entered the capital as king.
    - **B.** With Naples captured, France had to find a way of keeping the kingdom and neutralizing the forces that were becoming alarmed at Charles's easy victory.
        1. Unable to stay indefinitely in Naples, Charles began his return to France in 1495.
        2. In the intervening months, however, the other states of Europe and Italy realized the extent of the danger.
        3. Spain and the Holy Roman Empire saw the political implications of French control of Italy: the extinction of Aragonese claims to Naples and the ability of France to attack the Holy Roman Empire on two fronts.
        4. Venice joined them, followed by Milan, as Lodovico il Moro realized his mistake in inviting the French to intervene: Milan, too, could be claimed by the French royal house.
        5. The French were harried on their retreat, one inconclusive battle being fought at Fornovo.
        6. In the end, Charles lost control of Naples, and the House of Aragon returned to reassert its authority.

- **IV.** Charles may have lost, but he had illustrated the weakness and division of the Italian peninsula and rich prizes available for the taking.
    - **A.** Charles died without issue from an accident in 1498 while planning his second campaign in Italy.
    - **B.** He left as his heir his cousin, the duke of Anjou, who as Louis XII, intended to pursue Charles's claim on both Naples and Milan.
    - **C.** Italy's history for the next 350 years would be one of foreign occupation and control.

Primary Source Texts:

Alessandro Benedetti, *Diaria de Bello Carolino* (*Diary of the Caroline War*).

Francesco Guicciardini, *The History of Italy*.

Secondary Sources:

Denys Hay and John Law, *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance, 1380–1530*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Consider why the Italians were so slow to anticipate the danger posed by the northern European monarchies. Do you think Renaissance cultural ideals had anything to do with their complacency?
2. Petrarch, Machiavelli, and other Renaissance Italians believed that the northerners were barbarians. Was their assessment fair?

Lecture Twenty-Six

Florence in Turmoil

Scope: One of the casualties of the French invasions of 1494 was the Medici hegemony in Florence. Lorenzo de'Medici had died in 1492, succeeded by his incompetent eldest son, Piero. The French invasions caused Piero to panic in 1494, driving him to yield to all of the French king's demands, including the payment of a huge indemnity and the loss of the port at Pisa and the fortresses protecting the Florentine perimeter. On hearing of his capitulation, the Florentines drove him and his family from the city and declared the pristine republic restored. But 60 years of Medici rule had so weakened the opposition that a power vacuum ensued. The only force sufficiently organized to fill the void was led by a millenarian Dominican monk, Girolamo Savonarola (d. 1498). He had come to Florence to preach, soon becoming prior of San Marco, from which his sermons on Florence's divine mission attracted large crowds. In particular, he attacked Lorenzo de'Medici, claiming he had stolen the people's liberty, assuming spiritual leadership of a faction of republicans, and demanding a harsh puritanical regime.

Outline

I. Girolamo Savonarola, a zealous political and social reformer, came to Florence as a result of his early career as a millenarian preacher.

  A. Savonarola was born in Ferrara in 1452 into a family of celebrated physicians with good court connections.
    1. In 1474, he entered the Dominican order, initially without the knowledge of his family.
    2. He began his religious life in Bologna and developed a reputation for great asceticism and learning, writing scholastic materials and poetry against what he saw as the decadence and depravity of his age.
    3. In 1481, he entered Florence for the first time, sent there by the Dominican order.
    4. However, he was not a success: His gloomy, apocalyptic sermons and their rough delivery alienated the Florentines, who were familiar with Humanist culture and more accustomed to rhetorically elegant preachers.
    5. Savonarola left in 1485 and traveled about Italy, perfecting his style and becoming increasingly influenced, particularly as the century drew to a close, by the Book of Revelation and the Italian prophetic tradition of the apocalypse.
    6. At the instigation of Pico della Mirandola, Lorenzo de'Medici invited Savonarola back to Florence in 1489 to the monastery of San Marco, founded by his grandfather, Cosimo.

  B. This second period in Florence was, for Savonarola, much more successful than the first.
    1. From 1490, he began his fiery sermons, describing the last days and the anger of God: He claimed that the judgment of God was at hand and would be harsh.
    2. The Florentines this time responded enthusiastically, attending in such large numbers that the sermons had to be moved from San Marco to the cathedral of Florence itself.
    3. In 1491, Savonarola was appointed prior of San Marco.
    4. Despite his refusal to offer Lorenzo de'Medici the customary allegiance, Lorenzo graciously continued his generous support of the monastery.

  C. Savonarola began to assert his growing ambition and independence, separating San Marco from the control of the Dominican order and demanding the strictest adherence to monastic discipline.
    1. He himself grew even more ascetic, practicing constant vigils and mortifications and wearing a hair shirt.
    2. His sermons also grew more radical, castigating the Florentines in general for their immoral lives and Lorenzo in particular for his "pagan" tendencies.
    3. Nevertheless, when dying in 1492, Lorenzo sent for Savonarola for extreme unction, given that it was common for the Medici to rely spiritually on the prior of San Marco.

II. The death of Lorenzo in many ways focused Savonarola's attacks on the Medici and their circle more sharply, because he recognized the incompetence and immorality of Lorenzo's heir, Piero.

- **A.** The crisis of the French invasions of 1494 also played perfectly into Savonarola's hands.
    - **1.** Savonarola began preaching that Charles VIII of France was the new Charlemagne, foretold in prophecy as sent by God to chastise Italy, cleanse the Church, and vanquish the infidels by reclaiming the Holy Land in preparation for the second coming of Christ.
    - **2.** He also declared that Florence was the chosen city and Florentines were the instruments selected by God to bring about the cleansing of the Church and the moral regeneration of Italy.
    - **3.** In so doing, Savonarola capitalized on the Humanist belief in Florence as the new Athens, or new Rome, but now interpreted as the new Jerusalem.
    - **4.** This message appealed to those in Florence who were more influenced by radical religion than classical Humanism, those who were troubled by the secular, almost pagan element of much of Laurentian culture.
    - **5.** There was also a deep apocalyptic strain of prophetic tradition in Italy, and Savonarola built successfully on these old beliefs.
- **B.** The coming of Charles VIII to Florence revealed the stupidity and cowardice of Piero; he yielded to all of Charles's demands, such as posting French garrisons in the Florentine perimeter fortresses and the port of Pisa.
    - **1.** When the Florentines learned of this capitulation, they rioted and drove the Medici out of the city.
    - **2.** The palaces of the Medici supporters were looted, including the great Palazzo Medici itself, which was stripped of its wonderful collections of art.
    - **3.** The small anti-Medici faction was strongly supported by the puritanical followers of Savonarola, who saw an opportunity to turn Florence into a theocratic image of the Dominican's message.

III. The political conditions in Florence were extremely unstable after the expulsion of the Medici.

- **A.** Charles paraded through the streets as a conqueror, and he failed to honor his commitments to Piero.
    - **1.** Pisa was not returned to Florence but permitted to declare its renewed independence, eliminating Florence's only access to the sea.
    - **2.** An embassy that included Savonarola was sent to Charles VIII, but Savonarola's intentions were not to restore Florence's dignity or possessions.
    - **3.** Rather, the Dominican wished to cement Florence to the French in the belief that the king would cleanse the Church and, in particular, depose Pope Alexander VI, whom Savonarola increasingly saw as the Antichrist.
- **B.** In the previous 60 years, the Medici had so weakened any of the forces of opposition that once the anger over Piero's policies of appeasement had subsided, there was no single group in the city able to fill the vacuum left by the Medici.
    - **1.** The only constitutional mechanism was a *parlamento*, that is, a summoning of the heads of household to the piazza by ringing the bell in the Palazzo della Signoria.
    - **2.** The *parlamento* granted authority for 20 citizens to appoint a new *Signoria* and fill vacant magistracies for one year.
    - **3.** Thereafter, all offices would again be filled by the usual electoral means of lot and voting from all eligible citizens.
    - **4.** The council then abolished all the means of Medici control of the city.
- **C.** The power vacuum left by the Medici became very apparent as factions returned full force.
    - **1.** Some wanted a return to narrow oligarchic rule, as before 1434.
    - **2.** Others wanted a theocracy guided by Savonarola.
    - **3.** Others wanted a broadly based participatory republic, as after 1343.
    - **4.** Many wanted the Medici to return.
    - **5.** Moreover, personal, family, and factional strife appeared once more, making clear the success of the Medici hegemony in controlling such special interests and personal grudges.

        6. It appeared that the republic would break down and that the crisis in government was becoming extreme.

IV. At this point, it was agreed that Savonarola be admitted to address the council.
- **A.** This was done despite Florentine law and tradition that barred clerics from any political role.
    - **1.** The situation was dire.
    - **2.** Savonarola had the greatest respect in the city.
    - **3.** The ascetic also seemed to be above factionalism.
- **B.** In his address to the council, Savonarola proposed a radical new model of political, moral, and economic reform: a political vision expressed in his Constitution of 1495.
    - **1.** Savonarola took as his model the Venetian Republic, which was widely seen as the ideal stable, successful mercantile republic.
    - **2.** Like Venice, Florence was to have a Great Council in which sovereignty would be vested and that would be composed of representatives from old political families, that is, any who had held office for at least three generations.
    - **3.** But to avoid the closed oligarchy in effect in Venice, the Florentine Great Council was to elect 28 new members each year to replace those who died or left the city.
    - **4.** The Great Council would then elect the executive, the nine priors, again to serve, as before, for two months.
    - **5.** In addition, various committees were formed to deal with specific policies, such as taxation and war.
- **C.** It was a dramatic compromise of aristocratic and democratic traditions: Never before had so many citizens been able to serve the state.
    - **1.** There was no room in Florence large enough to hold the Great Council.
    - **2.** The artist/architect Cronaca designed the huge Room of the Five Hundred in the Palazzo della Signoria.
    - **3.** The great artists Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci were commissioned to decorate it.
- **D.** On June 10, 1495, the new constitution came into force, with the full support of Savonarola and his followers.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, “Girolamo Savonarola,” pp. 329–336, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Secondary Sources:

Lorenzo Polizzotto, *The Elect Nation: The Savonarolan Movement in Florence, 1494–1545*.

Supplementary Reading:

Donald Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence: Prophesy and Patriotism in the Renaissance*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How did the expulsion of the Medici after 60 years of rule help illustrate the dangers implicit in one family or faction controlling a republic for too long?
2. Savonarola’s appeal to the Florentines was the repudiation of everything Humanism stood for. In times of crisis, why does such a message resonate?

Lecture Twenty-Seven

Savonarola and the Republic

Scope: The regime established by Savonarola was a puritanical theocracy. Although the institutions of the republic continued, Savonarola had become the guiding force in the city and directed a potent faction that supported his policies. Simple pleasures, such as cards and carnival, were banned; bands of boys collected "vanities," parading them through the streets and setting bonfires in the Piazza della Signoria. A broadly based republican constitution was written by Savonarola and instituted by his followers. The monk began to preach against the Borgia pope, Alexander VI, resulting in his excommunication. Believing the French to be God's scourge for a decadent Church and a "pagan" Italy, Savonarola also refused to abandon the French alliance, despite the hostility of Italians to the foreign invaders. Diplomatic and natural disasters, however, began to alienate moderate Florentines, who in 1498, arrested Savonarola and tried and burned him as a heretic, yet his faction and his constitution for Florence survived him.

Outline

I. The restored republic of 1495 attempted at first to return to its most liberal roots, opening the *Signoria* to as many eligible citizens as possible.

  A. The new regime began well and moderately, granting amnesty to all previous supporters of the Medici.

    1. A new bank, the *Monte di pietà*, was established, largely through Savonarola's demands, to lend money to the poor at low interest.

    2. As compensation to the bankers, who protested this competition in lending, the Great Council abolished all taxes except the tax on land.

    3. Unfortunately, this move alienated large landowners in the countryside and led to a rise in rents and food prices that disadvantaged the poor.

  B. But it was Savonarola's moral legislation that caused the greatest divisions and disharmony.

    1. Entertainments, such as horse races, dice, cards, dancing, and carnival, were outlawed.

    2. The state brothels were closed, and homosexuality was cruelly punished as a capital crime.

    3. Torture was encouraged to foment a fear of wrongdoing and sin: Blasphemers, for example, had their tongues cut out.

  C. Young boys, offered by their parents, were gathered into Bands of Hope.

    1. These boys were sworn to attend sermons regularly and to avoid all sinful activities, including most childhood pastimes.

    2. Their education was to be purely religious, and they were required by law to inform on their teachers if they saw sinfulness.

    3. They roved the streets in bands that became increasingly thuggish, breaking up card games and dances and ripping immodest clothes from women in the street.

    4. They went from door to door demanding sinful possessions, such as mirrors, cosmetics, art depicting non-religious subjects, ancient literature, and popular authors, including Boccaccio.

II. During his period of control, Savonarola continued to preach and prophesize, intensifying his attack on the Church and its leaders.

  A. He preached that Christ was the true and only ruler of the city; hence, all laws and all behavior had to reflect his teachings, interpreted, of course, by his prophet, Savonarola, who spoke to God directly.

    1. This "Invisible King," in Savonarola's own terminology, was about to return to Earth and chastise the sinful, and Florence must be prepared to receive him.

    2. Pope Alexander VI was the Antichrist and Christians were to ignore or depose him.

    3. The institution of the visible Church was corrupt and had to be cleansed.

  B. Some Florentines listened with rapture and pride to these prophecies, wishing to become the new Jerusalem and the chosen people.

    1. Many others, however, remained silent from fear of the Bands of Hope and Savonarola's threats to denounce the sinful and punish them accordingly.
    2. A spiritual repression descended bleakly on the city.

III. The opposition to Savonarola's influence began to grow rapidly.

  A. Savonarola had made many enemies, especially among secular Florentines.
    1. The patriciate resented its loss of power, while the bankers remained angered over the *Monte di pietà*.
    2. Many Humanists and educated believers in secular governments were alarmed by the theocratic nature of Savonarola's policies and believed them to be unsound.
    3. They also resented the breach of traditional Florentine policy forbidding those in religious orders from having any role in politics.

  B. There was also powerful religious opposition to the Dominican.
    1. Franciscans and other religious orders were jealous of the success of the Dominicans and the consequent increase in their share of the city's religious donations.
    2. Traditional Catholics disliked Savonarola's extreme attacks on the papacy and his sermons against the decadence of the Church.
    3. And there were sincere Catholics who simply did not believe that Savonarola was God's prophet and that God spoke through him

  C. The division of Florence into factions supporting and opposed to Savonarola resulted in bitter civic discord and political and religious instability.
    1. The opposition to Savonarola came together into a group called the *Arrabbiati*, or the "Hotheads."
    2. They, in turn, named Savonarola's faction the *Piagnoni*, or "Snivelers," because of their tendency to cry and sob during the monk's sermons.
    3. The *Arrabbiati* viewed the *Piagnoni* as theocratic fanatics following a false prophet against the established Church, Florentine tradition, and the law.

IV. Savonarola's influence began to decline because of his inflexibility in foreign and economic affairs.

  A. Savonarola adhered absolutely to his alliance with France, because he had prophesized that the French king was the instrument of Christian regeneration.
    1. But Charles VIII repaid Savonarola's loyalty by selling the Florentine fortresses to her enemies, Genoa and Lucca, and permitting the subject cities of Arezzo and Volterra to rise in revolt against Florentine hegemony.
    2. France also permitted Pisa, Florence's only seaport, to declare its independence.
    3. The Florentine state was disintegrating, and Savonarola's response was only the renewal of hymns and prayers.

  B. These losses proved to be a significant economic blow.
    1. The loss of Pisa played havoc with Florentine trade.
    2. The loss of the rich cities of the *contado* meant a great reduction in taxes that resulted in fiscal crisis.
    3. The treasury was empty and the city was approaching bankruptcy.
    4. The *Monte* shares collapsed, selling for just 10% of their face value, wiping out the capital of small traders and rich merchants alike.
    5. A desperate gesture was to illegally borrow the funds of the state dowry, the *Monte delle doti*.
    6. This panicked fathers of many daughters, who feared that the fund's collapse would mean their girls would not have dowries and, hence, would be unmarriageable.

V. The mood in the city was growing powerfully against Savonarola and his faction, particularly after the *Piagnoni* attempted a political coup.

  A. Manmade disaster was augmented by nature.
    1. In what seemed to the *Arrabbiati*—and to some *Piagnoni*—as God's answer to Savonarola, rain came in 1496–1497 for 11 straight months.

        2. Crops were destroyed and famine claimed the city.
        3. Plague followed soon after; by early 1497, people were dying in the streets.
        4. In an attempt to aid the situation, the *Piagnoni Signoria* ordered the communal granaries opened.
        5. But thousands of desperate women rushed the storehouses and hundreds were trampled to death in the riot that ensued.
    - **B.** Soon after, five patricians of the noblest families were accused of plotting against Savonarola and in favor of the return of the Medici.
        1. They were summarily executed without a fair trial and in contravention of all Florentine law and procedure.
        2. A powerful pro-Medici faction formed.
        3. Riots between factions broke out regularly in front of San Marco.
        4. An attempt was made on Savonarola's life during a sermon, resulting in a bloody pitched battle between enemies and supporters within and outside the cathedral.
        5. Florence had descended into desperate anarchy.

- **VI.** The Church had also had enough of the chiliastic Dominican.
    - **A.** Pope Alexander VI was getting increasingly angry over Savonarola's attacks on his authority and the Church.
        1. Further, Savonarola's allegiance to France threatened the stability of the peninsula when it was clear that another invasion was imminent.
        2. Savonarola made both situations worse by writing to Charles VIII and requesting him to call a general council of the Church to depose the pope as an infidel and a heretic.
        3. The monk also answered the pope's offer of a cardinal's hat by giving a vitriolic, vicious sermon, which he then had printed and sent around Europe—even to the sultan of Turkey!
    - **B.** With the city in crisis and Savonarola's only response to burn vanities and insult the pope, the *Arrabbiati* moved, gaining control of the *Signoria* in April 1497.
        1. Savonarola was excommunicated by the pope but promised leniency if he would come to Rome.
        2. The *Signoria* encouraged Savonarola to leave the city, but he refused, showing his contempt for the pope by saying mass publicly.
        3. The *Arrabbiati* began to fear that a papal army might be ordered to Florence to silence Savonarola.
    - **C.** The Franciscans responded to Savonarola's claims of prophetic status by challenging him to an ordeal by fire: A Franciscan and Savonarola were to walk through flames to see which one God protected.
        1. Savonarola could not refuse, but on the appointed day, he made so many demands of the challenge that many hours passed while the entire city gathered to watch the ordeal.
        2. Then, at last, it rained and the fires were extinguished.
        3. This infuriated the mob, which lost faith in Savonarola and followed the *Arrabbiati* leadership to San Marco, where they arrested him and brought him to prison.
        4. Tortured and condemned as a heretic and traitor, Savonarola and two of his followers were burned on the Piazza della Signoria on May 23, 1498.

Secondary Sources:

Gene A. Brucker, *Renaissance Florence*.

Supplementary Reading:

Lorenzo Polizzotto, *The Elect Nation: The Savonarolan Movement in Florence, 1494–1545*.

Donald Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence: Prophesy and Patriotism in the Renaissance*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did the Florentine Republic have a policy to exclude those in religious life from political power?

2. Can you see any connection between the Civic Humanism of Bruni (see Lecture Eight) and the message of Savonarola?

Lecture Twenty-Eight

The Medici Restored

Scope: The broadly based republic established by Savonarola survived, but the factional disputes within the large Council of Five Hundred resulted in instability. To ensure continuity of policy, a new office, standard bearer of justice for life, was created, but it was not sufficient to preserve the city's liberty in a European environment of war and expansion. In 1512, the Medici were returned, with the head of the family, Cardinal Giovanni de'Medici (d. 1520), taking control and turning the clock back to the days of his father, Lorenzo the Magnificent. Just months later, Giovanni was elected pope as Leo X; thereafter, the fate of Florence and the papacy became inseparable, as Leo was succeeded in 1521 by his cousin Giulio as Clement VII (d. 1534). With the leaders of the Medici now in Rome, Florence was governed either by papal representatives or by young or lesser members of the family, who often were incompetent or insensitive to Florentine traditions.

Outline

I. Despite the fall of Savonarola, the broadly based republican constitution centered on the Council of Five Hundred remained in place in Florence.

- **A.** The execution of Savonarola resulted in quick political maneuvering by all those opposed to his rule.
  - **1.** The Medici began serious plotting to return, led by the clever second son of Lorenzo, Cardinal Giovanni, in Rome.
  - **2.** The various factions among the great patricians, all wishing a return to some form of oligarchic rule, also conspired to destroy the broad republic.
  - **3.** However, the *Piagnoni* still had significant influence and wished to continue the moral reform of the city and the French alliance.
- **B.** A renewed foreign threat was also becoming increasingly visible.
  - **1.** The death of Charles VIII of France in 1498 had left as his heir Louis XII, a claimant to the Kingdom of Naples and the duchy of Milan.
  - **2.** In 1500, Louis continued Charles's ambitions in Italy by marshaling a huge army to press his claims to Milan.
  - **3.** Venice was bought off.
  - **4.** And the papacy was made an ally when Louis gave the pope's son, Cesare Borgia, the French duchy of Valence and a French princess for a wife.
- **C.** Florence remained connected to its French alliance, but the factional turmoil in the republic made it difficult to follow any consistent policy.
- **D.** As a result, Piero Soderini (1450–1513) was elected *gonfaloniere* for life in 1502, a fundamental change to the Florentine Republic's principle of sharing executive power through a committee.
  - **1.** Soderini was committed to the republic and a good leader, but he relied altogether on the French alliance for his foreign policy.
  - **2.** He tried to galvanize the republic by letting Machiavelli create a citizens' army and tried other means of revitalizing the chaotic political situation in Florence.
  - **3.** But his election for life also introduced the principle of monarchical control, absent from Florence for centuries.

II. The French conquered Milan as planned, but a treacherous move against Naples renewed the warfare in the peninsula between the French and the Spanish.

- **A.** In a complicated series of maneuvers, including treacherous arrangements with Ferdinand of Aragon against his own cousin, Frederick, Louis moved against Naples.
  - **1.** The Spanish armies of Ferdinand the Catholic smashed the Neapolitans.
  - **2.** But immediately Louis and Ferdinand fell out over the division of the spoils.
  - **3.** In 1503, Ferdinand's great general Gonzalo da Cordoba defeated the French and drove them from the south, leaving all of Italy south of the states of the Church to Aragonese rule.

- **B.** By 1503, then, the Italian peninsula was divided between two hostile foreign powers, with France in the north centered in Milan and Aragon in the south in Naples and Sicily.

III. This chaotic, dangerous situation in Italy made Florence extremely vulnerable.

- **A.** Under Soderini, Florence was aligned with the French, who had been driven from the peninsula by the Holy League, led by the pope.
    - **1.** A powerful, influential cardinal in the Sacred College was Giovanni de'Medici, second son of Lorenzo and now head of the family.
    - **2.** It became Giovanni's primary policy to restore his family to the rule of Florence, working with pro-Medici patricians within the city and backed by a papal army.
    - **3.** On September 1, 1512, as Piero Soderini fled into exile, Cardinal Giovanni de'Medici triumphantly entered Florence at the head of 1,500 papal soldiers and took up residence in his family's palace.
- **B.** Cardinal Giovanni had no intention of ruling as a prince but restored all the institutions of the republic that had operated in his father's time.
    - **1.** Clever statesman that he was, Giovanni did not want to anger the sensibilities of the political classes.
    - **2.** He chose only to be a factional manager and power broker in the city.
    - **3.** He promised a return to a golden age and stability, in which Florence would be protected by the power of the Church.
    - **4.** To give legality to his position, he called a *parlamento*, which duly elected a committee of 40 members, all supporters of the Medici.
    - **5.** The committee was to restore the character of the Medici rule of the 15th century.
- **C.** Giovanni was brilliant in his almost theatrical restitution of Florentine tradition.
    - **1.** No symbols of monarchy were tolerated, but republican or simple magisterial dress was required of his faction.
    - **2.** The moral repression of Savonarola was reversed, with the restoration of popular entertainments.
    - **3.** It seemed that Laurentian Florence had returned.

IV. Heaven seemed to approve these measures, as Giovanni was elected pope in March of 1513, taking as his papal name Leo X.

- **A.** Florence rejoiced, but the election was, in fact, a mixed blessing for the city: The shrewd and sensitive Giovanni went to Rome, leaving rule of the city to papal governors.
    - **1.** From that time until the death of Pope Clement VII de'Medici in 1534, the history of Florence is linked to that of the papacy, with real power transferred to Rome.
    - **2.** Giovanni, as Leo X, had plans to link the Papal States with contiguous Florence to build a powerful Medici principality across the center of Italy, one capable of controlling the barbarian invaders.
    - **3.** Giovanni's younger brother, Giuliano, had been named as head of the family in Florence, stage-managing the republic in the manner of his father and brother, a task at which he excelled.
    - **4.** Sadly, the dynasty began to crumble when Giuliano died in 1516, leaving only an illegitimate son.
- **B.** Replacing Giuliano in Florence was the pope's nephew Lorenzo, then in his 20s.
    - **1.** Lorenzo had been raised as a prince and, unfortunately, acted like one, greatly offending the pride and sensibilities of the city's elites.
    - **2.** He took the title of Captain General of the Republic, stacked magistracies with his cronies, and took advice only from his favorites, ignoring the republic's institutions.
    - **3.** Only his early death in 1519 from syphilis saved the city from another revolt.
- **C.** In Lorenzo's place was set Giulio, the illegitimate son of Lorenzo the Magnificent's well-loved brother, Giuliano.
    - **1.** Despite his illegitimacy, Giulio had been made a cardinal.
    - **2.** He was very much like his cousin, the pope: a thoughtful, wise, sensitive ruler who was very popular in the city and restored the role of the family as manipulators but not transgressors of republican traditions.
    - **3.** Florence, then, was tranquil until the death of Leo X in December of 1521, at which time Cardinal Giulio returned to Rome in hopes of succeeding Leo.
    - **4.** The machinations of Piero Soderini's brother in the Sacred College ensured that the papal election went to the Dutchman Adrian VI.

        5. **5.** However, he died within months, leaving the papal throne open to the election of Giulio as Clement VII in 1523.

V. The transfer of Medici power back to Rome again left Florence subject to papal governors.

- **A.** Clement was unable to control the city through members of his family, because there were none appropriate to do so.
    - **1.** Rather, he appointed foreign cardinals to rule in his name.
    - **2.** Most of these were seen as outsiders with little sympathy for Florentine traditions.
    - **3.** Although they were unpopular, the cardinals were not despised as much as two young Medici bastards sent by Clement to prepare them for the future rule of the city.
    - **4.** In particular, Alessandro, who was certainly an illegitimate son of the pope by a Moorish slave, was already showing signs of the mental imbalance that was to characterize his future regime.
- **B.** But before Alessandro would assume rule of Florence, terrible events were to occur: the disaster known as the sack of Rome.

Secondary Sources:

J. R. Hale, *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of Control*.

Supplementary Reading:

Christopher Hibbert, *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*.

Questions to Consider:

1. By establishing the position of *gonfaloniere* for life, were Florentines already compromising the republic?
2. Was the election of Giovanni de'Medici a benefit or a disaster for Florence?

Lecture Twenty-Nine

The Sack of Rome, 1527

Scope: The struggle between the French and the Spanish-Imperial Habsburgs for domination of the continent often took place in Italy, where both crowns had competing dynastic claims. Led by a French traitor, the Constable of Bourbon, an imperial army, unpaid, undisciplined, hungry, and including many zealous German Protestant soldiers, arrived at the gates of Rome. On May 6, 1527, the walls were breached and the city was stormed by this savage army, left leaderless by the death of Bourbon in the first assault. His army then proceeded to spend the next almost eight months ravishing the city, murdering and torturing its inhabitants. The Medici pope, Clement VII, had taken refuge in Castel Sant'Angelo but was able to watch the destruction. Churches and private homes were despoiled, wealthy citizens were held for ransom, nuns were raped and murdered, and even the tombs of popes and bishops were opened in search of valuables. The last months of the sack saw the use of whatever was made of wood as fuel to keep warm. Those who could escape did, although many were killed by starving peasants outside the walls or captured by thugs for ransom. About 50,000 inhabitants either fled or were killed through the savagery, making this sack more brutal than even the barbarian incursions at the end of the Roman Empire. Rotting bodies, along with lack of sanitation, food, and clean water, then gave rise to disease that devastated the few left behind. The result was that the pope was, in effect, the creature of the emperor, and the Humanist belief in the dignity of man was seriously tarnished.

Outline

I. As we have already seen, the situation in Italy in the first decades of the 16th century was chaotic and desperate, with rival claims of France and Aragon threatening the stability of the peninsula.
   A. This situation was made worse by the Habsburg inheritance of the Spanish crown in the person of Charles V, who was subsequently elected Holy Roman Emperor.
      1. Italy was the battleground between the French House of Valois and the Spanish-Imperial House of Habsburg for hegemony over the continent.
      2. The succession of Francis I of France in 1515 renewed this struggle in a personal way, because the young man wanted military glory.
      3. Francis immediately embarked on an Italian campaign in 1515 against Milan, which was protected by a formidable army of Swiss mercenaries.
      4. At Marignano, Francis defeated the Swiss and took Milan
      5. However, in an extraordinary change in fortune, in early 1525, at Pavia, just outside Milan, Charles V defeated the French and captured Francis.
      6. The French were completely humiliated, and Charles became undisputed master of Europe.
   B. Charles V made a French traitor, the Constable of Bourbon, and cousin of King Francis, governor of Milan, but Bourbon was given insufficient funds.
      1. With no money to pay them, Bourbon began losing control of his troops by the late summer 1526.
      2. He tried everything possible, even selling his own property to pay his army.
      3. Ultimately, these brutal professional soldiers started to live off the land in northern Italy, savagely looting towns in Milanese territory.
   C. This practice resulted in a decision to march south toward Rome, where the best looting might be found.
      1. It is unlikely that Bourbon encouraged this, but he could not control his own soldiers.
      2. The army had abandoned all discipline and order and continued down the peninsula as the barbarians had done a millennium before.
      3. Florence escaped by bribing the soldiers to bypass the city, but this actually hastened their march.
      4. Moving with unprecedented speed, the imperial army reached Rome at the beginning of May 1527.

II. The situation in Rome was confused, in part because of the general conditions of Europe and in part because of the pope's character.
   A. The pope was Clement VII, cousin of Leo X de'Medici and illegitimate son of the murdered Giuliano de'Medici.

        1. The pope's character was exactly the wrong mix of elements at a time of crisis: He was very learned, charming, civilized, and shrewd, but he was also vacillating, indecisive, and occasionally naïve.
        2. In the terrible struggle between Habsburg and Valois, Clement had tried to be neutral, which meant that he was despised by both sides, especially by Charles V, who saw himself as the sword of the Church and the defender of orthodoxy against the rising heresy of Luther.
        3. Charles felt betrayed, given that France was forming alliances with the Protestant powers and even encouraging the Turks to attack central Europe to relieve pressure on France.
        4. Clement, though, saw the threat to the independence of the Church and to Italy of a continent completely controlled by the Habsburgs: He tried to steer an independent course.
    - **B.** Clement tried to stop the imperial army before it reached Rome, engaging a relative, Giovanni de'Medici, a *condottiere* general, and his famous mercenary force, the Black Bands.
        1. Unfortunately, Giovanni was killed in a skirmish with the imperials, and his mercenary band withdrew.
        2. Rome was now without any protection.
        3. When Clement called for all able-bodied men to rally for the defense of the city, fewer than 500 appeared.

- **III.** The capture of the city took place almost immediately and seemingly without any kind of coordinated plan.
    - **A.** The day following the arrival of the imperial army was so foggy that nothing could be seen beyond a few feet.
        1. Either sensing an opportunity or—more likely—unable to control the men, Bourbon led his troops in the scaling of the walls.
        2. Within the city, there was complete surprise; no one expected so quick an attack.
        3. Bourbon himself was killed in the first assault.
        4. Thus, the imperial army lost its last instrument of some kind of control: Leaderless, it became a band of murderers, looters, and rapists.
        5. Because the attack was a surprise, the bridges over the Tiber had not been severed; thus, the entire city lay open to the thousands of soldiers as they streamed over the walls.
        6. The pope and some fortunate members of his *Curia* managed to find safety in Castel Sant'Angelo, from which they watched the destruction of the city.
    - **B.** Working in small groups, the soldiers fanned out throughout the city, looting churches, taking wealthy citizens as hostages to be redeemed by their families, and slaughtering the poor on the spot.
        1. Protestant Germans hanged bishops and cardinals by their hair from ceilings until they told where they had hidden Church treasures and their possessions. Sometimes, Church officials were ransomed; sometimes, killed.
        2. All women, young and old, were repeatedly raped, and when they passed out or were no longer of interest, they were killed.
        3. Companies of Protestant Germans played dice for whole convents of nuns, for the pleasure of raping these virgins first.
        4. After the nuns had been brutalized for more than a week, they were slaughtered.
        5. The dead did not escape, as the soldiers pried open the tombs of popes, cardinals, and bishops to steal their vestments, rings, and miters, throwing the bodies onto the floors of churches or in the street.
    - **C.** There was no escape and no help to be had.
        1. The great Roman nobles who lived outside Rome, such as the Orsini, were not disposed to come to the pope's rescue.
        2. They had long simmered in anger at their loss of power under such popes as Julius II.
        3. As people fled the city, the Orsini abbot of Farfa sent thugs to rob those fleeing with their possessions.
        4. In this atmosphere of total anarchy, peasants set up roadblocks around the city to rob and kill all of those they stopped.
    - **D.** The initial, most brutal period of the sack lasted just over a week, but Europe had seen nothing on this scale of savagery for a thousand years.
        1. At least 40,000 people were killed; this total increases if those killed outside the city by the Orsini and the local peasants are included.

    2. Not more than about 15,000 inhabitants remained, including the several hundred surrounded in Castel Sant'Angelo with the pope and the *Curia*.

IV. After the first frenzy of slaughter and destruction, the invaders settled down in the city in an occupation that was to last for eight months.

- **A.** Conditions in the city continued to deteriorate.
    - **1.** As winter approached, there was insufficient firewood, so the soldiers began dismantling houses, stripping them of doors, windows, and roof beams to use for fuel.
    - **2.** The unburied dead rotted in the streets for some time, and eventually, many bodies were thrown in the Tiber, the source of much of the city's drinking water.
    - **3.** Disease and hunger began to spread among the army and those few citizens remaining in Rome.
- **B.** After some months, Pope Clement managed to escape the city in disguise.
    - **1.** In negotiations with Charles V, Clement was forced to recognize the power of the emperor in Italy, including sanctioning all of his claims to Italian territory.
    - **2.** An imperial coronation was granted, and Charles was duly crowned in Bologna in 1529, the last imperial coronation in Italy.
    - **3.** Rome was desolated for almost a decade, with its population depleted and even those who returned suffering from disease, made worse by serious flooding of the Tiber in the years immediately after the sack.
    - **4.** The thriving papal culture in Rome ceased for many years, with artists having fled the city, taking their talents—and the new style—to other centers in the peninsula.
- **C.** The Protestants exulted, saying that the sack was God's judgment on the Antichrist.
    - **1.** Broadsheets and woodcuts of the sack and the humiliation of the pope spread across Europe.
    - **2.** Charles V was sincerely regretful of the event and offered condolences to the pope, but never did he accept any responsibility for the sack.
- **D.** After this event, Italians had difficulty in continuing to believe in the dignity of man and the ideals of Humanism.

Primary Source Texts:

Benvenuto Cellini, *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*.

Secondary Sources:

André Chastel, *The Sack of Rome, 1527*.

Supplementary Reading:

Judith Hook, *The Sack of Rome.*

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was the sack so unspeakably savage?
2. Can the sack of Rome be seen as the end of the Renaissance?

Lecture Thirty

Niccolò Machiavelli

Scope: Machiavelli (1469–1527) was one of Renaissance Italy's most interesting thinkers. Best known for his political writing, such as *The Prince*, and historical works, such as *The History of Florence*, he was also a fine dramatist, letter writer, and diplomat. Born into a patrician Florentine family the year Lorenzo the Magnificent assumed control of the city, he pursued his career through the turbulent years of Savonarola's ascendancy and the restoration of the republic. He served as second chancellor, responsible for diplomatic work and, eventually, the creation of a citizen militia. Unfortunately, the militia was a failure, and his skill at negotiation did not save Florence or Italy from the scourge of foreign incursions and the ambitions of the Borgias. Still, his observations on these events and the lessons he learned entered the Western political consciousness. *The Prince* is his most read work. Written after the return of the Medici in 1512 removed him from power and relegated him to his small family villa outside the city, this book reviews the situation of Italy, particularly Florence, in an uncertain age. *The Prince*, using the ruthless Cesare Borgia as model, counsels harsh medicine, based on the need for strong leadership to protect Italy from the northern "barbarians."

Outline

I. Niccolò Machiavelli was born in Florence in May of 1469, the year Lorenzo de'Medici assumed control of the city.

- **A.** Machiavelli's early life corresponded to the glorious years of Laurentian Florence.
    - **1.** His family was of the most honored ranks of the patriciate but relatively poor.
    - **2.** He received an excellent Humanist education and was extremely well read in ancient authors, especially the Roman historians.
- **B.** But when he was just 25, his world was shattered by the French invasions of 1494.
    - **1.** He was in the city and witnessed the expulsion of the Medici, the regime of Savonarola, and the friar's execution in 1498.
    - **2.** The restoration of the broadly based republic that followed Savonarola's death in 1498 saw the appointment of the 29-year-old Machiavelli as second chancellor of the republic, responsible for translating executive decisions into policy.
- **C.** As all noted, Machiavelli was brilliant at his job: He was a natural administrator, a shrewd observer of current events, and a brilliant synthesizer whose reports and diplomatic dispatches still read as models of their genre.
    - **1.** He was sent on an embassy to Louis XII of France in 1500, an embassy that was to be a formative moment in his career.
    - **2.** He realized that the fate of Italy was being determined north of the Alps at the courts of the kings of France and Spain, rather than in Italy itself.
    - **3.** For Machiavelli, this was a painful lesson, given his Humanist education and his unshakable belief that Italy was the heir of Rome and the northern monarchies were still barbarians.

II. Soon after his return to Florence in 1501, Machiavelli was sent as ambassador to Cesare, son of Alexander VI Borgia, to represent Florentine interests.

- **A.** Machiavelli learned much from Cesare on this first mission.
    - **1.** First, he saw an Italian who appeared to be taking events into his own hands and directing them using the ruthless, brutal methods of the barbarians.
    - **2.** Second, he heard Cesare's advice that Florence should take back the Medici, because republics lack constancy and states need a firm leader in dangerous times.
    - **3.** Although a committed republican, Machiavelli listened to this advice, and he saw it as prudent counsel during times of crisis, if not as a universal principle.
- **B.** Florence came to agree with Cesare and the French, as witnessed by Piero Soderini's election as *gonfaloniere* for life in 1502.

        1. Because Soderini was Machiavelli's mentor and close friend, Machiavelli's career seemed assured and his influence was recognized.
        2. In 1503, Soderini sent Machiavelli back to Cesare Borgia for three months, again trying to negotiate Florence's protection from the Borgias' ambitions in central Italy.
        3. However, Machiavelli became entranced with the energy, ruthlessness, and single-mindedness of the Borgia and began to see Florence with some detachment.
        4. He recognized that Florence was a small player in a life-and-death game and that changes would have to be made if the republic and the city's liberty were to survive.
    - **C.** Machiavelli had listened carefully to the French and others about the dangers of relying on mercenary armies.
        1. As a keen student of Roman history, he knew that the Romans had conquered the world using armies of volunteers, well trained and rewarded and dedicated to fighting for their native land.
        2. He also thought that war would help encourage discipline and unity among the fractious, luxury-loving Florentines, just as it did during the Roman Republic.
        3. Soderini gave Machiavelli permission to establish a citizen militia in 1507 by appointing him secretary to the recently established war office.
    - **D.** The citizen militia saw its first action when the Holy League, under the newly crowned Pope Julius II, directed itself against the French army in Italy in 1503.
        1. Florence, as a close ally of France, was left desperately exposed as the league army, composed mostly of battle-hardened Spanish veterans, invaded Florentine territory.
        2. At Prato, a town just outside Florence that boasted excellent walls and defenses, Machiavelli arrayed his citizen militia to halt the Spanish mercenary advance.
        3. However, after the first breech of the walls by the league artillery, the members of the militia threw down their weapons and fled, leaving the road to Florence open and undefended.
        4. Soderini recognized there was no hope and fled into exile, allowing the Medici, as we saw in Lecture Twenty-Eight, to resume their role as first family in the city.
        5. Machiavelli first lost his job and later was implicated—falsely—in a plot against the Medici and was tortured and thrown into prison.
        6. Poor, suspect, and even in danger of his life, he decided to leave his beloved Florence and retire to a small farm owned by his family at San Casciano, just outside the city, in 1513.

- **III.** Machiavelli's forced retirement gave him enough leisure to concentrate on his historical and literary work.
    - **A.** *The Prince* arose from the correspondence that took place in the spring of 1513 between Machiavelli, in exile in San Casciano, and his friend Francesco Vettori.
        1. Machiavelli began by rehearsing the dangers to Italy resulting from the ambitions of Louis XII and noting how the barbarians had disrupted the peace of Italy since 1494.
        2. He focused on how Italians might drive out the barbarians and form a united front against them, using national rather than mercenary armies and learning the skills of brutality and ruthlessness from the barbarians, at least until they could be expelled and Italy given collective security.
        3. From Machiavelli's side of this correspondence came *The Prince*.
        4. And from this book, the passage from Machiavelli to Vettori describing his life in the country and the birth of *The Prince* is perhaps the most famous letter in the Italian language.
    - **B.** *The Prince* has been greatly misunderstood since its composition.
        1. It is an occasion piece addressing a particular moment in Florentine history, rather than an abstract work of political theory.
        2. It must be read as the work of a committed republican who is looking temporarily to tyranny as an instrument to save Italy and expel the barbarians, largely by using their methods, which have evidently succeeded so well.
        3. It is also a wake-up call for Italians to rise to their collective defense: If they failed to avoid internal strife, the barbarians would always exploit their fractious self-interest.
    - **C.** Machiavelli was also writing his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* at the same time.
        1. This text purports to be a Humanist commentary on Livy but is, in reality, a reflection on the recent history of Florence and Italy.
        2. It is much more abstract and self-consciously republican than *The Prince.*

        3. But it is also an indictment of Machiavelli's fellow Florentines for allowing luxury, lack of military rigor, factional strife, and class interest to weaken the republic, just as the Romans' weakness led to the collapse of the republic and the establishment of a tyrannical empire.

IV. As a result of his constant importuning of the Medici (including his dedication of *The Prince* to Giuliano de'Medici), Machiavelli was commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de'Medici as official historian with the responsibility to write *The History of Florence and the Affairs of Italy*.

- **A.** Machiavelli found this a difficult task, however, because he would have to discuss the republic between 1494 and 1512 from a pro-Medici perspective.
    1. But by 1525, he had brought the already large work up to the year 1492, the year Lorenzo the Magnificent died.
    2. This was not a problem, given that Machiavelli had respect for Medici foreign policy after 1450; by concentrating on that, he could avoid any comment about the decline of liberty, especially after 1480.
    3. In 1525, Machiavelli went to Rome to present his history to Giulio, now Pope Clement VII.
    4. Machiavelli was granted an annual stipend and offered some minor official work.
- **B.** The Medici were pleased with the *History of Florence* and Machiavelli now enjoyed a pension that allowed him to live again in Florence and reenter official life, although far from the level he had enjoyed under Soderini.
    1. The crisis in Italy and the sack of Rome in 1527 was, for Machiavelli, a human disaster and illustrative of all he had hoped to prevent.
    2. The expulsion of the Medici in 1527 as a consequence of the sack gave Machiavelli hope that he would be restored to high office and could contribute to the salvation of Italy.
    3. Ironically, his having been accepted and pensioned by the Medici now made him suspect to the ferociously republican regime, despite the fact that many of them had been his friends and colleagues before 1512.
    4. Again shut out of office, partly shunned as a Medici fellow traveler, in despair over the unbelievable barbarism of the sack of Rome, Machiavelli died sad and somewhat embittered in that terrible year, 1527.

Primary Source Texts:

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

Secondary Sources:

Maurizio Viroli, *Niccolò's Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Oscar Wilde suggested that cynicism is the last refuge of the idealist. How is this illustrated in Machiavelli's writings?
2. As with Machiavelli and, later, Guicciardini, politicians forced from office often write important histories of their own time. Why do out-of-work politicians so often turn to letters?

Lecture Thirty-One

Alessandro de'Medici

Scope: In negotiations with the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, to end the sack of Rome, the Medici Pope Clement VII made the recovery of Florence part of the treaty. With the collapse of Machiavelli's citizen army and after a terrible siege of the city, Florence fell to imperial troops in 1530. The last Florentine Republic had exhausted the republican patricians. Their courageous sons had died on the ramparts and outside the walls in fruitless attempts to break the siege. Pope Clement VII made it clear through the use of Spanish arms that the Medici were back to stay. Not having a more appropriate member of the family to rule in his place, Clement sent the 19-year-old Alessandro de'Medici as non-hereditary duke of the city. Alessandro, who was universally believed to be Pope Clement's natural son by a Moorish slave, was clearly mentally unstable. As long as Clement was alive, Alessandro listened to his councilors and to the bodies representing the political classes in the city. However, with Clement's death in 1534, the duke ruled ever more tyrannically, obliterating the symbols of the republic and making arbitrary decisions. He was also showing signs of madness, especially in the company of his favorite, his bizarre, insane cousin Lorenzo (Lorenzaccio). These two together engaged increasingly in depraved behavior until Lorenzaccio, for no apparent reason, assassinated Alessandro in 1537.

Outline

I. The collapse of papal authority with the sack of Rome galvanized the republican Florentines to drive out the pope's representatives, family, and garrison.

- **A.** The republic was restored for what was to be the very last time before the age of Napoleon.
  - **1.** The Great Council, designed by Savonarola, was reinstated.
  - **2.** A new *gonfaloniere* was elected from the anti-Medici faction.
  - **3.** Clement, a virtual prisoner in Rome, could do nothing.
- **B.** In negotiating peace with the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, Clement acquiesced almost totally, with his sole absolute demand being the re-conquest of Florence through the use of the same brutal army that had sacked Rome.
  - **1.** In Florence, wiser counsel suggested a compromise with the pope, leaving the republic intact but under Medici hegemony as before.
  - **2.** However, zealots, hoping for another change of fortune and fearful of the young Medici bastards, carried the argument: Florence would fight.
- **C.** The entire city mobilized, with Michelangelo put in charge of the defensive walls, soldiers hired and trained, and grain brought in to help last a siege.
  - **1.** In early fall 1529, the enormous Spanish army of 40,000 reached Florence but decided to lay siege to the city rather than attack.
  - **2.** The siege lasted 10 terrible months, with the youth of Florence sacrificing itself in pointless but heroic sallies and plague and famine reducing the population.
  - **3.** In 1530, the city surrendered.

II. The Medici had returned to Florence once again, but this time, there was no attempt to accommodate the sensitivities of the republican patricians.

- **A.** A pro-Medici emergency council was appointed, supported by a Spanish army.
  - **1.** The republican *gonfaloniere* was executed, and a Medici supporter was chosen to replace him.
  - **2.** The republican leaders were tortured to death in search of evidence against others.
  - **3.** Hundreds of leading citizens were banished in perpetuity and their property was confiscated.
  - **4.** The republican constitution that had governed Florence from the time of the Ordinances of Justice in 1293 was dead.
- **B.** Now the Medici were to rule as princes.

    1. The prince chosen was an unstable young man of curious appearance, the 19-year-old Alessandro de'Medici, universally acknowledged to be Pope Clement's VII's son by a Moorish slave girl.
    2. Given his age and his reputation for strange behavior, he was not proclaimed duke until nine months after the city fell to the Spanish army.
    3. Even then, he was not to be a hereditary ruler, only duke in his own person.
    4. Also, he was to be carefully controlled.
    5. The councils of the republic remained in place, and these the duke had to consult and heed.

III. As long as Pope Clement lived, Alessandro obeyed these restrictions; indeed, he even appeared to be trying to improve his reputation and cleanse his personal life.

  A. But in September 1534, Clement VII died, and with him, any control that Alessandro recognized also vanished.
    1. Alessandro ruled in an increasingly arbitrary manner, ignoring the councils and his advisors.
    2. Soon, he signaled the character of his regime by ordering that the great bell in the Palazzo della Signoria be smashed; from the foundation of the republic, this bell had sounded the call for a *parlamento* whenever the adult heads of household needed to assemble to grant ultimate sovereignty.
    3. In further insult to this symbol of republicanism, he ordered the bronze melted down to fashion medals of himself.
    4. He tore down the public symbols of the republic, such as the lilies, and replaced them with his coat of arms.
    5. He also had constructed the Fortezza da basso, the huge fortress within the city, which exists to this day.
    6. For the first time in Florentine history, the guns of the state were turned inward, on its own citizens, rather than outward in defense.
    7. The Spanish garrison was stationed in the fortress to defend the duke and ensure that Florence remained a loyal client state of the empire of Charles V.

  B. These acts of tyranny angered the patricians and even other members of the Medici family, who saw Alessandro's arbitrary and increasingly erratic rule as a threat to their futures.
    1. The duke's cousin Ippolito de'Medici, another illegitimate member of the family, tried to control Alessandro and convince him to honor the traditions of the city.
    2. Ippolito conveniently died in August of 1535, almost certainly by poisoning ordered by his cousin.
    3. Republican patricians in exile approached Charles V with charges of both tyranny and sexual impropriety against Alessandro on the occasion of Alessandro's request to marry Margaret of Austria, Charles's natural daughter.
    4. The exiles' shocking charges were delivered by the respected scholar and historian Iacopo Nardi, but they were answered by the brilliant careerist lawyer Francesco Guicciardini with such force that the charges were denied.
    5. Alessandro married Margaret, bringing both the Medici and Florence more deeply into the imperial orbit.

IV. The assassination of Alessandro reflects how accurate the charges of Nardi and the republicans had been and that the court had become a bizarre place of wicked depravity.

  A. Another Medici cousin, Lorenzo de'Medici, had been sent to Florence for his own and others' protection.
    1. He was called Lorenzaccio, a derogatory diminutive, because of his loathsome personality and ugly appearance.
    2. In Rome, he had been subject to outbreaks of violent mental illness, attacking classical statues with weapons and endangering the property and lives of those around him.
    3. It was felt that he could be more easily controlled in Florence by Duke Alessandro, a young man of similar age.
    4. The two deviants shared much in common: drunkenness, sexual ambiguity, and a love of violence and cruelty.

        5. Soon, the drunken, disturbed Lorenzaccio became Alessandro's favorite at court, where they often shared the same bed and lovers of both sexes, often very unwilling partners.
    - **B.** At some time in 1537 in this depraved environment, Lorenzaccio hatched the plan to murder his cousin Alessandro; the reason for this is not clear, but the young man was evidently mad.
        1. His scheme reflected the disgusting depravity of the two men.
        2. He lured Alessandro into a trap by promising to share with him the rape of their very young, pious, and chaste cousin, who had recently been married to a Florentine noble.
        3. Suspecting nothing and acting according to the plan, Alessandro entered the young woman's bedroom naked, only to find Lorenzaccio and a hired assassin waiting for him under the bedclothes.
        4. Alessandro fought savagely, biting the end off one of Lorenzaccio's fingers in the process, but he was ultimately stabbed to death, leaving Lorenzaccio to flee to Bologna.

- **V.** The city fell into chaos with Alessandro's murder.
    - **A.** Had the republicans acted swiftly and decisively, they might have been able to take advantage of the chaos following the murder to restore the republic.
        1. But it was the pro-Medici party, led by Guicciardini and Francesco Vettori, and the pope's ambassador, Cardinal Cibò, who acted first.
        2. The Medici were to continue to rule, but which Medici?
        3. Cibò demanded that the 4-year-old illegitimate son of Alessandro be named duke.
        4. Guicciardini demanded instead the teenaged cousin of Alessandro, the son of the late *condottiere* Giovanni delle Bande Nere, a solitary, distrustful but shrewd young man, Cosimo de'Medici.
        5. Republican patricians tried to break the impasse by suggesting a return to an oligarchic republic, hoping the city would respond to the traditional call for liberty.
    - **B.** The dangerous stalemate was broken when Guicciardini bribed the captain of the garrison to bring troops into the Piazza della Signoria and call for Cosimo's elevation.
        1. This show of force destroyed the confidence of the other parties.
        2. Young Cosimo was proclaimed duke, with Guicciardini confidently expecting to be the power behind the throne.
        3. It was believed that the poorly educated and young Cosimo would need a powerful chief minister to help cement his rule in the dangerous environment of 1537 Italy.
        4. This belief was wrong.

Secondary Sources:
Eric Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527–1800.*

Supplementary Reading:
Christopher Hibbert, *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall.*

Questions to Consider:

1. How could an educated, cultivated, and sensitive man like Pope Clement VII permit a ruler like Alessandro de'Medici to rule in his native Florence?
2. In the 19th century, in the play *Lorenzaccio* by Alfred de Musset, the murderer of Alessandro is portrayed as a freedom fighter and tyrannicide. Can this interpretation be sustained?

Lecture Thirty-Two

The Monarchy of Cosimo I

Scope: When 19-year-old Cosimo de'Medici (1519–1574) was installed as prince in 1537, many assumed that the architect of his victory, Guicciardini, would be the chief advisor to the inexperienced young prince. But as soon as he was installed, Cosimo decided to rule personally and dismissed the influential politician. A revolt led by patrician exiles followed but was brutally suppressed after the Battle of Montemurlo in 1537. Cementing his regime by allying with the Habsburg emperor Charles V, Cosimo married Eleonora of Toledo (d. 1562), daughter of the rich and influential Spanish viceroy of Naples. He enlarged the Florentine state through the conquest of Siena with Spanish help in 1557. And, in 1569, he was invested with the title of grand duke of Tuscany by the pope. Cosimo's intention was to build a centralized, despotic monarchy on the ruins of the republic. The patrician families were offered titles and attached to his court; he created orders of knighthood; and he initially turned the symbol of republican government, the Palazzo della Signoria, into his palace, before moving into the Palazzo Pitti to house his large family and increasingly elaborate court. He provided patronage to artists, including Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), who designed the Uffizi; Bernardo Buontalenti (c. 1531–1608), and Bartolommeo Ammanati (1511–1592). The Florentines had lost their freedom but had achieved stability in return.

Outline

I. The elevation of Cosimo de'Medici as duke of Florence in 1537 established the hereditary Medici monarchy that would last until the death of the Grand Duke Gian Gastone in 1737, the last of the Medici male line.

- **A.** Cosimo de'Medici (d. 1574) had an unusual background.
    - **1.** His strong-willed mother was herself a descendant of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Her husband's death when he was in his 20s during a skirmish with the imperial army that sacked Rome had left her exposed and fearful.
    - **2.** She had moved Cosimo constantly about Tuscany during the reign of Alessandro. As a result, her son grew up very intelligent but poorly educated, extremely distrustful and secretive, cruel, ruthless, and poorly socialized.
- **B.** True to his character, Cosimo, rather than honoring Guicciardini and Vettori for securing his succession, distrusted their motives.
    - **1.** He declared immediately that he intended to rule as an autocrat rather than serve their ambition.
    - **2.** Guicciardini was effectively exiled to retirement at his villa.
- **C.** Having rid himself of those who believed he owed his throne to them, Cosimo then had to turn against the republicans, the last significant republican movement in Florence until the time of the French Revolution.
    - **1.** Exiles, driven from the city in 1530, had been joined by republican patricians who hoped to restore the republic with Alessandro's death.
    - **2.** These young men, representing the oldest and most distinguished families in Florence, gathered an army to depose Cosimo.
    - **3.** Cosimo had at his disposal, courtesy of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, the Spanish army garrisoned in the city.
    - **4.** The republicans and Cosimo's Spanish army met at Montemurlo, near Florence, late in 1537; the republicans were defeated and many prisoners were taken.
- **D.** Cosimo seized victory with ruthless cruelty.
    - **1.** He beheaded all the rebel leaders publicly over four consecutive days in the Piazza della Signoria; those executed were the sons of the leading families of the city, related by kin and marriage to almost all the great patrician clans.
    - **2.** Cosimo's arbitrary decisiveness was calculated to forewarn the old families that the republic and republican sentiment were dead.

II. Cosimo, however, was anything but secure: He had defeated his enemies but he was ruler only *de facto*, not *de* *jure*, and he depended upon the Spanish garrison in the city for protection.

- **A.** Wishing to strengthen his connection to Charles V, he petitioned the emperor to marry Alessandro's widow, Margaret of Austria.
  - **1.** Charles refused, because he needed her more as the consort of the grandson of Pope Paul III Farnese, but in 1539, Cosimo received an attractive compromise proposal.
  - **2.** He was given the hand of Eleonora of Toledo, the daughter of the immensely rich Spanish viceroy of Naples; what is remarkable is that this couple formed an almost bourgeois union of great mutual respect and loyalty.
  - **3.** They produced many children, with Eleonora providing the cold and ruthless Cosimo with domestic happiness and comfort until her early death from malaria in 1562.
- **B.** The Spanish marriage placed Florence and Cosimo deep into the Spanish-Imperial allegiance.
  - **1.** Cosimo had relied on Spanish arms to secure his rule, but he knew that he would always be seen as a tyrant as long as his throne rested on foreign power.
  - **2.** The large Spanish garrison stationed in the Fortezza da basso did not make the situation better, prowling the streets at night, robbing citizens, brawling, and molesting Florentine women.
  - **3.** When Cosimo first petitioned Charles to remove the garrison, the emperor refused; he did not trust Cosimo sufficiently to risk a hostile power in central Italy.
  - **4.** Ultimately, however, seeing that Florence was stable and convinced by Cosimo's reliance on his Spanish wife, Charles withdrew the garrison.
- **C.** Internally, the only remaining opposition was a memory of the crisis of the 1490s.
  - **1.** The Dominican monks of San Marco kept the memory of Savonarola and his theocratic message alive.
  - **2.** Duke Cosimo emptied San Marco, sending the remnants of the *Piagnoni* out of the city.
  - **3.** He was now a completely independent ruler. He had shattered all internal opposition, he no longer relied on the Spanish, and he owed no debts.
  - **4.** He could proceed to create an absolute monarchy and remake the shape of Florence.

III. The result was the destruction of the still potent symbols and remnants of the republican constitution that had governed Florence for almost 250 years.

- **A.** Duke Cosimo decreed the abolition of the *Signoria*, including the offices of prior and *gonfaloniere*.
  - **1.** He himself became the head of the traditional councils, making them rubber-stamp appendages of his will.
  - **2.** Any official or patrician who resisted was thrown into the horrible prisons of Volterra.
- **B.** Cosimo knew that the republic would only truly die when its memory was tainted with failure and patrician disdain.
  - **1.** He worked on the traditional competition and jealousy among the great families by offering titles of nobility and sinecures at court to those who proved their loyalty.
  - **2.** In this way, the proud republican traditions of Florence were replaced by a servile aristocracy.
  - **3.** Cosimo restored feudal land tenure and encouraged the patricians—now his new court nobility—to abandon trade as unbecoming and live as landed aristocrats.
  - **4.** He encouraged the Humanist scholarly interests to be channeled through ducal academies under official control, patronizing historians to describe the republican period as a failed experiment.
  - **5.** He created crusading orders of knighthood and built a fleet of galleys to fight the Turks.
  - **6.** He supported maritime trade by constructing the port of Livorno and used his war galleys to protect Florentine commerce.
- **C.** Florence was also expanding and winning wars that the republic had not managed to complete.
  - **1.** Cosimo was intent on the conquest of Siena, Florence's ancient rival city to the south.
  - **2.** With the help of a Spanish army and after a terrible siege, Siena collapsed and was finally added to Florentine territory in 1557.

    3. Cosimo was no longer content to be duke of Florence.
    4. After years of importuning the pope, Cosimo was finally granted the title of grand duke of Tuscany and the honorific of *Altezza*, or "Your Highness."

IV. After a half century of instability, danger, conquest, and suffering in Florence, Cosimo seemed to be bringing back a new Golden Age, reminiscent of the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

  A. Cosimo had symbolized his destruction of the republic by moving from the Palazzo Medici into the Palazzo della Signoria, transformed by the duke's architect and painter, Giorgio Vasari, into a royal residence.
    1. The old building was designed, however, as a town hall, not a palace.
    2. It was very small, uncomfortable, and unsuitable for court ceremonies.
    3. Also, Cosimo and Eleonora had eight children, a large family for the old town hall.
    4. In 1549, Eleonora used her great wealth to purchase the unfinished early-15th-century Palazzo Pitti, designed by Brunelleschi for the banker Luca Pitti, but his bankruptcy left it incomplete for more than a century.
    5. It required a year to refurbish and expand the enormous palace and lay out its gardens, but in the end, the Pitti became one of the great palaces of Italy.
    6. Cosimo moved there with his family and court, leaving the Palazzo della Signoria forever with the denomination of Palazzo Vecchio—the "Old Palace."

  B. Cosimo was not only ruthless but hardworking, insisting on knowing everything that happened within his state and everywhere else, as well.
    1. He had Vasari build the Offices (*Uffizi* in 16th-century Tuscan) of his growing bureaucratic civil service, attached to the Palazzo Vecchio, so he could walk into any office at any time.
    2. His routine of punishing work began to take its toll, and his health grew worse after the tragic death of Eleonora and several of his children just two years after moving into the Palazzo Pitti.
    3. Always emotionally dependent on his wife, Cosimo grew ever more melancholy, irascible, secretive and solitary.

  C. Cosimo effectively ceased to rule in any significant way after 1564, leaving the government of the state to his eldest son, Francesco.
    1. The loss of Eleonora drove Cosimo into a number of unsuccessful liaisons, including a disastrous second marriage.
    2. Soon after, Cosimo seems to have suffered a series of strokes that reduced him to an invalid, incapable of speech.
    3. Cosimo, first grand duke of Tuscany, died in 1574.
    4. He left a united, enlarged, peaceful, and very well if harshly governed principality.
    5. There were few, if any, who wanted a return to the republic: Freedom came, they believed after their experience between 1494 and 1537, at far too high a price.

Secondary Sources:

Christopher Hibbert, *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*.

Michael Levey, *Painting at Court*.

Supplementary Reading:

Eric Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527–1800*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Consider why Florentine patricians turned their backs so completely on the republic after 1537 and rushed to become the courtiers of the new duke.

2. Despite the fact that he owed his position to the death of Alessandro, Cosimo pursued Lorenzaccio assiduously for 10 years (by questioning physicians about a young man with a severed finger) until he was discovered and assassinated in Venice with a poisoned dagger. Why would Cosimo have done this?

Lecture Thirty-Three

Guicciardini and *The History of Italy*

Scope: Guicciardini was a remarkable, if flawed genius. Born into the highest ranks of the Florentine patriciate, he studied law in order to further his ambitions. A brilliant man, he attracted the attention of the republic and served, despite his youth, as an ambassador to Spain in 1511. The fall of the republic affected him not at all, as he was appointed by the Medici Pope Clement VII as governor of Modena in 1516, followed by ever greater responsibility until he became one of the pope's chief advisors. Unfortunately, it was, in part, his advice that resulted in the sack of Rome in 1527, after which he retired to Florence, where the restored republic had little use for him. The return of the Medici rehabilitated Guicciardini, and he assisted in the irresponsible despotism of Alessandro, on whose murder he hoped to advance. Cosimo de'Medici, however, intended to rule personally, and Guicciardini sought refuge in scholarship. During his diplomatic and political career, he had written some history and a collection of maxims that reflected his belief in experience over abstraction and his cynical belief in human fallibility. He himself had little loyalty and did whatever those in power required. However, his monumental work, *The History of Italy*, completed just before his death, became the model for new Humanist historiography, using documentary evidence and making balanced judgments on men and events. This book has been called the most important work of history between Tacitus and Gibbon.

Outline

I. Guicciardini was a flawed genius who illustrated brilliantly the unprincipled servant to great powers, able to deliver whatever was required without question, and the astute, cynical observer of his own time.

- **A.** Guicciardini was born to public responsibility and high office.
  - **1.** He was born in 1483 into one of Florence's greatest families; in every generation, his family had provided the leaders of the republic.
  - **2.** His grandfather had been one of the leaders of the Medici faction and had facilitated the return of Cosimo de'Medici from exile in 1434.
  - **3.** The family was richly rewarded, not only by Cosimo but by Piero and Lorenzo, as well.
  - **4.** Guicciardini's father broke from this tradition under the influence of Florentine Neoplatonism.
  - **5.** Not attracted by politics, he devoted his life to scholarship and philosophy, as was appropriate for a godson of Marsilio Ficino.
  - **6.** He and his family consequently escaped becoming suspect after the 1494 expulsion of the Medici and the return of the pristine republic under Savonarola's influence.
- **B.** Francesco Guicciardini reflected his father's deep commitment to philosophy and learning.
  - **1.** His early training in classical literature was superb, but he was not attracted to pure scholarship; instead, he wished to study the law and was far more given to empirical knowledge and Aristotle than to the abstractions of Plato.
  - **2.** He attended the universities of both Ferrara and Padua to study civil law, and his time there already described his character.
  - **3.** Always looking for better opportunities, he showed no loyalty, moving from professor to professor and from one university to the other when he thought he had gained as much as possible.
- **C.** In 1504, Guicciardini's cynical ambition was again made evident when he came very close to entering the Church at the age of 21.
  - **1.** His uncle, the bishop of Cortona, had just died but made provision for his nephew to assume his see, if his nephew so wished.
  - **2.** Guicciardini saw this as an opportunity, as his rank, legal training, astounding intelligence, and raw ambition would certainly, he thought, quickly lead to Rome, the Sacred College, and perhaps, the papacy.
  - **3.** His father, however, strongly discouraged him, saying he lacked the spiritual qualities necessary.

II. Francesco listened and continued his studies until he was named, at the remarkable age of 23, the professor of law at the University of Florence.

- **A.** He also married at this time, but again, his choice of a bride indicates his personality.
    - **1.** His wife was a member of the powerful Salviati family, related to the Medici by marriage and leaders of the aristocratic opposition to the republic of Soderini.
    - **2.** As Guicciardini was to write about his marriage: "The Salviati, in addition to their wealth, surpassed other families in influence and power, and I had a great liking for these things."
- **B.** A man of Guicciardini's qualities could not be held long by a university professorship.
    - **1.** In 1511, he was named Florentine ambassador to King Ferdinand of Aragon and Naples, the youngest ambassador to a major monarch in Florence's history.
    - **2.** Guicciardini made much of this opportunity in Spain, beginning to write those pithy political aphorisms known as his *Ricordi*.
    - **3.** He also continued to write a history of Florence that he had begun just before 1511, a history that was to cover the years between 1378 and 1509.
    - **4.** It was to be superseded by the author's own later work, but for that time, it was the most sophisticated work of history of the Italian Renaissance.

III. The fall of Soderini in 1512 and the return of the Medici occurred while Guicciardini was conveniently in Spain.

- **A.** He returned to Florence in 1515 and was immediately named, as a supporter of and relation by marriage to the Medici, to the new *Signoria*.
    - **1.** Guicciardini's skill as an administrator caught the eye of Pope Leo X, who in 1516, asked him to serve as papal governor of Modena, a territory that was traditionally part of the Este duchy of Ferrara, with its nobles and people little inclined to obey the papacy.
    - **2.** Before Guicciardini arrived, there had been four failed administrations in six years: Leo had given him a great challenge.
    - **3.** This opportunity made Guicciardini's career: He imposed order ruthlessly, used his exceptional intelligence to reorganize the territory, and reduced the powers of the great feudal families and city patricians.
    - **4.** Most remarkable, he was incorruptible, completely honest, a trait quite absent from most Renaissance governors.
- **B.** This success motivated Pope Leo to give Guicciardini additional responsibilities that led to a string of spectacular diplomatic achievements.
    - **1.** In 1517, Guicciardini subdued Reggio with the same brilliance with which he had governed Modena.
    - **2.** In 1521, he accomplished the extraordinary feat of holding Parma against the French, using his gifts for flattery, reward, and brutal ruthlessness to strengthen the city and its resolve.
    - **3.** In 1524, he was appointed governor of the Romagna, where government and commerce had virtually ceased because of the

      instability and unrest caused by feuding great families, papal officials, and independent towns. Guicciardini imposed once more a ruthless order, and calm and security returned to the province.
- **C.** By 1525, the international situation required Guicciardini in Rome, as chief advisor of Pope Clement VII.
    - **1.** Guicciardini counseled Pope Clement to keep his options open and not to abandon the French in favor of Charles V.
    - **2.** Guicciardini was made lieutenant general of the papal army and sent north, but he was unable to stem the advance on Rome.
    - **3.** In May 1527, Rome was sacked, with terrible consequences, which can be seen, in part, as Guicciardini's fault because of his advice that the pope not altogether desert the French.
- **D.** Still, Clement gave Guicciardini another major task: acting as papal representative in Florence after the restoration of the Medici under Alessandro in 1530.
    - **1.** Despite his own probity and honesty, Guicciardini advised the depraved duke.

    2. On the duke's murder in 1537, Guicciardini tried to take control of the situation for his own benefit.
    3. He intimidated the republican leaders and manipulated the papal representative by staging a military show of force in favor of his candidate, Cosimo de'Medici.
    4. As we have learned, Cosimo surprised Guicciardini by deciding immediately to rule as an autocrat and, in effect, exiled Guicciardini to his villa outside the city.
    5. Guicciardini's political career was over.

IV. However, during the imposed retirement of the last three years of his life, Guicciardini ensured his fame by revolutionizing the writing of history and producing one of the great books of the Italian Renaissance, the *Storia d'Italia* (*The History of Italy*), a book largely regarded as the greatest work of history between Tacitus in the 2nd century and Edward Gibbon in the 18th.

  A. Guicciardini was 55 years old when he began writing this great book in early 1538.
    1. It is a personal history, discussing events during his lifetime.
    2. He lets events speak for themselves: He has no agenda whatsoever.
    3. God is not a factor, but neither is the ideal of republican freedom so central to other writers, such as Bruni and Machiavelli.
    4. If Guicciardini has any transcendent or overarching values, they are completely hidden.
    5. Indeed, Guicciardini argues that in governing or politics, principles are worse than useless because they get in the way of opportunity and necessity: All that matters is experience and information.

  B. *The History of Italy* becomes, as a consequence of Guicciardini's singular vision, a very coherent study, almost a tragedy in the classical sense of the fall of princes.
    1. Guicciardini traces how the French invasions of 1494 set off a chain of events that the leaders of Italy could not control.
    2. First rulers suffer, then their states, then the whole peninsula: Poor decisions, bad information, or insufficient force account for much of this tragedy.
    3. His conclusion is that self-interest ultimately undoes all ambitious men because they lose sight of the larger picture.
    4. In other words, history will always turn out badly because those who shape it are motivated only by what serves them best, even at the expense of the greater good.

  C. In many ways, there is another intention in Guicciardini's *History of Italy*: the story of why one man of exceptional ability, honesty, hard work, cynicism, and ruthlessness lost his job, and this he presents as an exemplum for others.

Primary Source Texts:

Kenneth R. Bartlett, "Francesco Guicciardini," pp. 381–391, in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*.

Francesco Guicciardini, *The History of Italy*.

Secondary Sources:

Mark Phillips, *Francesco Guicciardini: The Historian's Craft*.

Supplementary Reading:

Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Guicciardini strongly believed that all men, regardless of what they claim, act only in their own interest. Do you agree?
2. History to Guicciardini is the complex web of events in which individuals are caught. Do you share this view?

Lecture Thirty-Four

The Counter-Reformation

Scope: It was not just the foreign invasions of Italy or the loss of economic power that affected the later Italian Renaissance. The revolt in the Church led by Martin Luther (1483–1546) from 1517 had a devastating impact. The Roman Church had seen itself as universal and confident and able to permit relative freedom of debate and belief. Only when the authority of the Church was attacked was there a strong response, as in the case of Savonarola. Luther's revolt changed that, especially as Protestantism spread so quickly and effectively through the printed word. The Church lost millions of adherents and much revenue as a consequence, and the unity of Christian Europe was shattered forever. To combat this danger, the Church responded by tightening controls. The Roman Inquisition was established in 1542 to determine centrally what and who were orthodox or heretical. In 1545, Paul III called a great council of the Church to meet at Trent whose purpose was to define doctrine and build discipline among Catholics; the council was to sit, with some interruptions, until 1563. As a consequence of Trent, the Index of Prohibited Books was created in 1559 to control what books were printed, read, and circulated, and the penalties for possession were severe. The claims of the reformers were also rejected and the authority of the Church and the papacy reinforced. The ultimate effect of these measures was to suppress open debate and original thinking. The principles that had stimulated the Renaissance initially were being overwhelmed by forces that demanded uniformity and obedience.

Outline

I. During the period of the Renaissance, the Church was latitudinarian in matters of academic or artistic debate, provided that the fundamental tenets of Catholic Christianity were accepted.

- **A.** As was illustrated by the works of many writers, Renaissance models had deep roots within the Church: There was no necessary wall between the two intellectual disciplines of Humanism and theology.
  - **1.** Petrarch had been in minor religious orders and saw his journey to self-knowledge as fully compatible with Catholic teaching.
  - **2.** Even those Humanists who had flirted with syncretic religion or paganism under the influence of classical letters or Neoplatonism ultimately returned to orthodox thought.
  - **3.** For example, Marsilio Ficino, who prayed to "St. Socrates" and pretended to adhere to purely Platonic ideals, eventually came to the conclusion that there was no necessary exclusion between Christianity and Platonism and, ultimately, became a priest.
  - **4.** Pico della Mirandola, who had argued for the Platonic Unity of Truth, in which all religions and philosophies participated in ultimate truth, ended his life as a devout follower of Savonarola.
  - **5.** Lorenzo de'Medici, the Magnificent, as well as being a patron of Neoplatonism and Humanism, was a very devout Catholic.
- **B.** Primary ideals of Humanism, such as the dignity of man, free will, and the deep connection among the soul, reason, and speech all resonated with practical Catholicism; for this reason, the Church offered little opposition to the movement.

II. On the other hand, Humanism was not universally accepted, despite the attempts by so many Humanist writers to reconcile Christianity and pagan thought.

- **A.** The Spiritual Franciscan movement followed the letter of St. Francis's rule and example.
  - **1.** For these believers, wealth, secular learning, and public office interfered with the struggle for salvation and, hence, were to be avoided.
  - **2.** The Spiritual Franciscans were often seen as heretical in Italy, preaching social discord by prophesying God's retribution on the proud and rich and exaltation of the poor and meek.
  - **3.** In Florence, these mystical Franciscans were regularly outlawed and driven from the city; on occasion, they were publicly burned.

- **B.** The example of Savonarola has already been presented: This mystical Dominican attacked "pagan" Humanism, classical literature, and secular art and practices.
  - **1.** His dominion over Florence after 1494 constituted a repudiation of Humanist values.
  - **2.** The burning of the vanities illustrated dramatically his hatred of the things of this world.
  - **3.** His ideas sparked a flame among devout Italians, who rejected classical studies, Humanism, and civic responsibility in favor of personal, mystical piety.
- **C.** The institutional Church rejected much of Savonarola's message.
  - **1.** Pope Alexander VI Borgia's offer of a cardinal's hat to Savonarola had been simultaneously an attempt to co-opt his popularity and to bring him under control.
  - **2.** His attack on the papacy and institution of the Church in many ways reinforced in official circles the danger of mystical spiritual values and the advantages of practical secular wisdom and knowledge.

III. The initial stages of Martin Luther's revolt, the revolt that ultimately led to the establishment of the Protestant church, had little influence in Italy.

- **A.** The pope was annoyed at Luther's attack on his authority, but Luther's theology caused less consternation than one might have supposed.
  - **1.** Pope Leo X thought that Luther, an Augustinian canon, was only engaging in traditional monastic rivalry in his attacks on the Dominicans' sale of indulgences.
  - **2.** It was only in 1520 that the pope finally felt forced to excommunicate Luther.
- **B.** Powerful churchmen, educated in Humanism and theology and possessed of a deep spirituality, felt much sympathy with some of Luther's claims.
  - **1.** These included influential Church officials, such as Venetian noble Cardinal Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542); Reginald Pole (1500–1558), cousin of Henry VIII of England and soon to be named a cardinal; and Gian Matteo Giberti, bishop of Verona (1495–1543) and papal datary.
  - **2.** Together, they attempted to seek reform within the Church and even hoped for reconciliation with the Lutherans.
  - **3.** The death of Leo X and the surprise election in 1522 of an ascetic Dutchman, Adrian VI, who had never been to Rome and who also wished to reform the Church focused reformist ideas in Italy.
  - **4.** Consequently, Italian reformers, often termed *Spirituali*, attracted many followers, including powerful clerics, princes, and artists, such as Michelangelo.
- **C.** Events in the 1520s made liberal accommodation with reform ideas more difficult.
  - **1.** Adrian VI died in just one year, having in that short time alienated many powerful ecclesiastics with heavy-handed attempts at reform.
  - **2.** The sack of Rome was a disaster for reform; Lutheran soldiers in Rome committed unspeakable atrocities and claimed they were wreaking judgment on a corrupt Church ruled by the Antichrist.
- **D.** In 1536, Pope Paul III Farnese established a commission to reform the Church.
  - **1.** In 1538, the commission submitted a report, *On the Reform of the Church* (*Consilium de ecclesia emendanda*).
  - **2.** It was a radical document that reflected much of the Protestants' position.
  - **3.** Consequently, it failed to change anything at that time, although it signaled a need for reform.

IV. By 1542, it was clear that there could be no reconciliation with the Lutherans, and the Church responded in decisive ways, under the energetic Pope Paul III.

- **A.** The Roman Inquisition was established in 1542.
  - **1.** There had been local or diocesan inquisitions to determine heresy for many years, but the Roman Inquisition was central: to decide from Rome who or what was orthodox, who or what was heretical.
  - **2.** A number of high-profile Catholic thinkers and clerics fled Italy to join the reformed confessions in that year, depriving Italy of many influential leaders.
  - **3.** Those left in Rome became increasingly conservative.

- **B.** Paul III wanted to control the reform movement and direct what was now spiritual war against the Protestants from the center of the Church.
  - **1.** He called a council of the Church to meet in the northern Italian city of Trent.
  - **2.** In 1545, the sessions began that would last until 1563, with some breaks.
  - **3.** The council's mandate was to confront the Protestant threat by reaffirming Catholic doctrine, reforming the Church where necessary, and rejecting heretical ideas.
- **C.** Trent revitalized the Roman Church.
  - **1.** The authority of the pope was confirmed.
  - **2.** Protestant notions of salvation by faith alone were rejected in favor of the Catholic emphasis on works.
  - **3.** All seven sacraments were confirmed.
  - **4.** The authority of Scripture was not sufficient; the teachings and traditions of the Church played a role in the faith.
  - **5.** The clergy were to be better educated and trained and subject to clear doctrinal control.
- **D.** To stop the spread of heretical ideas and control a new technology that the Protestants had used greatly to their advantage, the Index of Prohibited Books was established in 1559.
  - **1.** It determined from Rome what Catholics could and could not read.
  - **2.** Penalties for possessing or reading proscribed books were harsh.
  - **3.** All ideas now had to be approved before they could be spread.

V. The Church created new instruments and new religious orders to combat heresy.

- **A.** The Jesuit order, or the Society of Jesus, was recognized by Paul III in 1540.
  - **1.** It was founded by a Basque noble named Ignatius Loyola.
  - **2.** Wounded in battle, Loyola decided to be a soldier for Christ and the Church rather than in secular wars.
  - **3.** He wrote *The Spiritual Exercises*, a book of discipline, helping the faithful yield their will to God and the Church.
  - **4.** The order was to become the vanguard of the Catholic Counter-Reformation.
- **B.** Ignatius built his order around three elements: preaching, teaching, and missionary work.
  - **1.** Jesuits were not cloistered but out in the world, wearing inconspicuous clothes to help win converts.
  - **2.** They were to spread Catholicism and try to convert heretics.
  - **3.** The order established the most progressive and effective schools in Europe, schools in which a Humanist education in the classics and in rhetoric were used not to open minds to new ideas but to confirm approved articles of faith.

Primary Source Texts:

Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*.

Secondary Sources:

Gigliola Fragnito, *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*.

J. W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*.

Supplementary Reading:

Eric Cochrane, ed., *The Late Italian Renaissance, 1525–1630*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How compatible were the principles of Humanism with religion?
2. Do you agree that the Renaissance could only have flourished in Italy in an environment of lax Church control over men and ideas?

Lecture Thirty-Five

The End of the Renaissance in Italy

Scope: It is very difficult to establish when a period such as the Renaissance ended. What is clear, however, is that the Italian world was a very different place in 1550 from what it had been in 1450. There are particular events that can illustrate why that dramatic change occurred: the French invasions of 1494; the failure of the Italian states to work together consistently to protect the peninsula; the sack of Rome in 1527; and the closure of free thought, debate, and experimentation by the Church and its secular supporters after mid-century. Moreover, the victory of despotic monarchical regimes in such states as Florence ended the competitive, energetic world of the republic, replacing it with a singular, official ideology and power that everyone, regardless of rank or genius, had to obey. Art and literature, then, reflected increasingly the patronage and needs of princes and their servants, and these were not universally talented. Furthermore, the voyages of discovery in the later 15th century had moved the economic center of Europe from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic seaboard. It was now cheaper to buy spices and luxury goods in Lisbon or Seville than in Venice or Florence, because the route around Africa was faster and incurred fewer charges and dangers. The incessant wars of the period drained money that could have been spent on patronage, and religious debate consumed everyone. The consequence was a loss of the forces that had initially given rise to the Renaissance mentality: confidence and will. The disasters that befell Italy ended the belief that "man is the measure of all things" and that "man can do anything if he but wills."

Outline

I. The Renaissance in Italy can be seen to have declined with the conditions that encouraged its development two centuries earlier.

- **A.** Italy lost control of its political destiny.
  - **1.** The sack gave the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, control over the papacy and most of Italy, as was recognized in Charles's papal coronation as emperor in Bologna in 1529.
  - **2.** With Habsburg power dominant, every state had to craft policy that the imperials would find acceptable.
  - **3.** Milan and Naples were ruled directly by Habsburg governors.
  - **4.** Florence was a client state of the empire.
  - **5.** The only truly independent Italian state, Venice, was fighting a life-and-death struggle with the Turks in the Mediterranean; thus, it, too, wanted security in Europe and was unwilling to take chances.
- **B.** Therefore, the competition among the states of the peninsula that had given rise to different experiments in constitutional structure, statecraft, and social organization ceased.
  - **1.** A singular model of monarchical government was adopted in every major state but Venice.
  - **2.** The new importance of princely courts, and the examples of the Spanish nobles helping to administer the peninsula, destroyed whatever memories remained of ideas of republican participatory government.
  - **3.** Even social mores, customs, and behavior became courtly.
  - **4.** Trade was shunned as "bourgeois" in favor of landed wealth.
  - **5.** Participation in society was accomplished through service at court, in the Church, in learned academies, or in the military.
  - **6.** Government was left to the prince.

II. The enormous concentrations of wealth that had resulted from the Italian monopoly over long-distance luxury trade collapsed by the turn of the 16th century.

- **A.** The center of the European economy shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic coast.
  - **1.** The fall of Constantinople in 1453 and Turkish aggression in the Mediterranean and in southeastern Europe signaled an end to Italian control of the Mediterranean.

    2. The end of The Hundred Years' War in that same year permitted the economic recovery of the Low Countries, England, and France, now able to complete with Italy for markets.
    3. The Portuguese voyages of discovery led to direct sea routes to Asia, making the Italian middlemen superfluous.
    4. The Spanish voyages, especially those of Columbus, gave Spain access to the vast wealth of the New World.
  - **B.** The Italians did not participate in these expansions, except as the captains and cartographers who actually sailed for Spain, France, or England.
    1. The problems of Italy meant that Italians could not imagine new, daring enterprises: They were focused on self-preservation.
    2. The challenges to Italy drove the most dynamic Italians into a conservative, defensive posture and found them working to keep the known markets they knew in the Mediterranean rather than searching for new opportunities.
    3. This can be best illustrated in ship design: The Portuguese had demonstrated the dramatic flexibility of new forms of ship architecture, but the Italians continued to build huge galleys that were useless outside the Mediterranean.
  - **C.** As early as the 1520s, the Italians knew that their economic dominance was over, but they did nothing about it.
    1. They had lost their will as a result of decades of war, humiliating defeat, and foreign intervention.
    2. They sought security in safe ground rents, secure but low-yielding investments, and conspicuous consumption.
    3. Trade was just too uncertain and personally dangerous.

- **III.** The Reformation and Counter-Reformation made ideas dangerous rather than exciting, inhibiting challenges to the status quo.
  - **A.** Princes in Europe were encouraged to use force to convert their subjects and war to defeat Protestants.
    1. Charles V and his son, Philip of Spain, warred constantly in the name of Catholicism against the Dutch, the English, and the German Protestants.
    2. The French Wars of Religion were among the most terrible on the continent.
    3. All these events spilled into Italy directly as a result of Habsburg control of large parts of the peninsula and a desire on the part of the ecclesiastical establishment to keep Protestants and Protestant ideas out of Italy.
  - **B.** By the mid-16th century, the free exchange of ideas that had given such an impetus to the Renaissance was suppressed through such instruments as the Roman Inquisition and the Index of Prohibited Books.
    1. Scholars, teachers, and educated individuals were afraid to speak if there was any chance their words could be construed as heretical.
    2. Secular rulers, wanting to keep peace with the Church and with the Habsburg power in Italy, supported this suppression of thought and speech, often enforcing the Index and arresting heretics.
    3. Religious oaths were required from those who wished to graduate from universities.
    4. Society became much more conservative, with people looking for safe, solid, and secure places, without the taint of controversy.
  - **C.** Basic ideas central to the Renaissance mentality were questioned or rejected.
    1. Such concepts as the dignity of man were hard to sustain after the sack of Rome, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1572) in France, and the burning and persecution of heretics.
    2. The suppression of new ideas shattered the belief that man is the measure of all things: Rather, the measure of all things was man as approved by God through the Church.
    3. Man could no longer do anything if he but willed it: There were a great many things, carefully noted and circulated, that man could not do without incurring torture, imprisonment, and death.

- **IV.** Although it is tempting to assign the end of the Renaissance to a specific date or event, such as the establishment of the Roman Inquisition in 1542, this is too sharp a break and too specific a moment.

- **A.** On the other hand, there can be no doubt but that Italy in 1550 was a dramatically different place from Italy in 1450, as is most clearly illustrated through the example of Florence.
  - **1.** In 1450, Florence was a vibrant republic, managed with consent by the Medici family.
  - **2.** Civic Humanism was the dominant ideology among the political classes, with Neoplatonism offering an acceptable alternative for those more interested in scholarship than politics or trade.
  - **3.** The economy flourished, with the republican government providing support for the mercantile ambitions of its citizens.
  - **4.** Foreign policy was coalescing into a new alliance with Milan that would result in 40 years of stability and relative peace.
  - **5.** In every field, competition and genius were the means to success.
- **B.** In contrast, Florence in 1550 was an absolute monarchy in which Cosimo, a creature of the Habsburgs in foreign affairs, supported the orthodoxy of the Church, which solemnized his rule.
  - **1.** The government functioned to preserve and increase the power of the duke, not his citizens.
  - **2.** Trade was increasingly seen as dangerous and inappropriate for those patricians wanting court appointments and noble titles.
  - **3.** Art and architecture were creatures of the singular patronage of the prince and served to flatter and aggrandize him.
  - **4.** Feudalism had been reintroduced into the countryside.
  - **5.** The route to success had shifted from ability to clientage, connections, and flattery.

V. In conclusion, then, what we see is a failure of the conditions that had permitted the Renaissance to develop and thrive.

- **A.** But this is true not only in economic, military, and political spheres.
- **B.** The end of the Renaissance represented a failure of will.
  - **1.** The self-reinforcing energizing myth that drove men to do great things, simply because they believed they could, evaporated into a tendentious acceptance of tyranny and, all too often, of mediocrity, because at least it was safe.
  - **2.** Freedom and struggle were just not worth the effort.

Primary Source Texts:

Giovanni Della Casa, *Il Galateo*.

Secondary Sources:

Chris F. Black, *Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy*.

William Bouwsma, *The Waning of the Renaissance, 1550–1640*.

Supplementary Reading:

Gregory Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy, 1550–1800*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can ideas die?
2. Are there other examples of a vital society giving up on freedom because it proved just too demanding to sustain?

Lecture Thirty-Six

Echoes of the Renaissance

Scope: This course has introduced, developed, and discussed the Italian Renaissance as a cultural and intellectual phenomenon in the political and social context of the Italian city-states. The remarkable efflorescence of culture that Italy witnessed from the mid-14th to the mid-16th century stands as a monument to the human imagination. That Italy failed politically and economically by the end of that period in many ways puts this achievement into clearer perspective. Castiglione suggests in *The Book of the Courtier* that individual cultivation can be successfully achieved by any man or woman who seeks knowledge, truth, love, and beauty, regardless of the circumstances, although hard times make the process more difficult. In some ways, the Italian Renaissance continued strongly into the last century, as ideals of beauty based on Naturalism, proportion, and the ability to reproduce what the eye sees remained the foundation of academic art. The role of antiquity continued in the architectural vocabulary of public buildings, and the central place of the Greek and Roman classics was sustained in the education of elite groups in every Western nation. It can be argued, then, that the echoes of the Renaissance died only in the 20th century, with the triumph of objective science over purely human values.

Outline

I. It has been suggested that the Renaissance is, in many ways, still a part of our daily lives.

- **A.** The ideals of 15th -century Italian art and architecture remained the foundation of the Western traditions until the early decades of the 20th century.
  - **1.** Naturalism in art, with correct anatomy and linear perspective, lasted in academic painting and sculpture until very recently.
  - **2.** Reproducing what the eye sees is still an important Western ideal, whether in painting or in photography.
  - **3.** The use of a classical vocabulary in architecture remained fundamental in building until the end of the Beaux-Arts period in the 1920s.
- **B.** Certain principles that we have traced from Petrarch until the 16th century remain important elements of our collective characters in the West.
  - **1.** The primacy of individual experience is central, as is the belief that we have the capacity to create ourselves according to a set of principles that we choose to follow.
  - **2.** Each individual also has some degree of responsibility to the community and the community to him or her: These ideas are found clearly in the Florentine republic of the 15th century.
  - **3.** Participatory government is one of the foundations of our contemporary society.
  - **4.** Quality is best assured through competition, whether in the arts or in ideas.
  - **5.** Speech—the art of communication—is a good index of the appropriateness of an individual for public office.
  - **6.** And to achieve its goal, speech must be free.
- **C.** It was a set of Renaissance Humanist principles that dominated elite education in the West well past the late-19th-century rise of science.
  - **1.** Education was viewed as a preparation for citizenship.
  - **2.** Learning was not just instrumental but designed to build character and values.
  - **3.** Education was expected to equip a young person for useful leisure.
  - **4.** Physical training to effect a sound mind in a sound body was a necessity.
  - **5.** Knowledge of ancient texts and the Greek and Latin languages in which they were written would equip a citizen to fulfill any role.
  - **6.** The texts used to study the ancient world were those recovered by Humanist scholars and published according to their disciplines of philology and editing.

II. The Renaissance invention of the individual has remained a powerful force in our self-definition.

- **A.** Petrarch's concepts of romantic love have infused our own.
  - **1.** We all trace the progress or trajectory of our love for another in terms not very different from Petrarch's record of his feelings for Laura.
  - **2.** Platonic ideals of love find resonance, as well, in the principles of the uplifting power of love and the links among beauty, goodness, and truth.
  - **3.** All forms of human experience are valid in teaching us and others about our common humanity.
- **B.** The forms of literature developed or recovered by the Renaissance remain important.
  - **1.** The psychological autobiography, resurrected by Petrarch after a thousand years of neglect, is one of the most common forms of personal contemporary memoir.
  - **2.** The sonnet sequence invented by Petrarch defined poetic literature through Shakespeare, Sidney, and Spenser to Elizabeth Barrett Browning in the late 19th century.
  - **3.** The primary genre of the Renaissance, the dialogue, remains an important instrument for reflecting on the complexity of ideas and the multiple perspectives of human discourse.
  - **4.** Renaissance theater is still produced and still meaningful, as we see our common humanity rehearsed across centuries.
- **C.** Such ideals as free will, with human agency the cause of the events in the world, are found in Renaissance historians from Bruni to Guicciardini and drive us to accept responsibility for our actions and our lives even today.
  - **1.** Belief in the improvement of the individual person through education, example, and social support all reached maturity during the Renaissance.
  - **2.** Concepts so closely associated with this belief, such as the dignity of man, survive as well, although with a more tenuous hold on our imaginations after the terrible events of the past century.
  - **3.** Is man still the measure of all things? Can he still do whatever he will?
  - **4.** That depends on who is responding and the context. Still, such principles remain with us as powerful motives for improving our own and our society's condition.

III. The Renaissance, as we noted at the beginning of this series, has been described by historians of science as retrograde from the Middle Ages.

- **A.** There is no doubt but that the Aristotelian model of empirical observation contributed profoundly to an understanding of nature before the Renaissance.
  - **1.** But these principles were not suppressed, as the continued interest in Aristotle as a primary source for antiquity indicated.
  - **2.** Also, the Galenic medicine practiced during the Renaissance accorded with medieval education and medical knowledge.
  - **3.** Classical sources did tend to be seen as the final arbiter of knowledge, but the recovery of certain scientific texts, especially the geographers and mathematicians, did assist the movement of science: Not everything was based on Pliny's *Historia naturalis*.
- **B.** Other elements of the Renaissance mind, in fact, made modern science possible.
  - **1.** The artistic obsession with perspective and reproducing what the eye sees made the replication of observation possible and reproducible.
  - **2.** If a plant or animal is observed and described in one place, an image of that animal or plant can be reproduced and disseminated widely for others to comment on.
  - **3.** Also, with the privileging of individual experience, the very process of experimentation in science was validated, because experimental science presupposes the ability of the individual to see, interpret, and describe a phenomenon correctly and clearly.
  - **4.** Equally, the voyages of discovery could not have happened without the self-confidence of the Renaissance mind to imagine a world beyond what was described in Scripture or ancient texts.
  - **5.** Then, using the principles of linear perspective, these newly found places can be measured and drawn in space, with relative distances clearly indicated for others to follow.

- **C.** The evidence of this developing scientific interest can be seen in the remarkable moments of the 1540s, when so many of these ideas reached maturity.
  - **1.** In 1542, Nicholas Copernicus printed his text disproving the Greek Ptolemy's theory of the universe as geocentric.
  - **2.** Working mostly in Italy, Copernicus, a Polish priest, used mathematical tables to follow the paths of the celestial bodies that were visible to him.
  - **3.** Believing his data and despite the teachings of the ancients and the Church, he printed *De Revolutionibus* (*On the Orbits of the Heavenly Bodies*), confident in his individual observations and judgment.
  - **4.** The next year, in 1543, Andrea Vesalius, a Fleming working in Italy, had printed *De humani corporis fabrica*, a richly illustrated—and anatomically correct—description of the human body. Modern medicine was born.
  - **5.** At almost exactly the same time, the university in Italy where Vesalius taught, Padua, instituted its botanical gardens, the first in Europe, for the production of medicinal plants.
  - **6.** This was based both on ancient texts and Renaissance interest, but the modern connection between the pharmacopoeia and medical practice was institutionalized.

IV. Your choice to listen to these lectures is ample evidence that the Renaissance still resonates for us in the modern world.

- **A.** As you have followed this series of lectures with me, I hope you have found yourself identifying with some of the elements of the Renaissance mentality.
  - **1.** We must always remember that the Renaissance was a state of mind in so many ways: The concrete effects followed from those fundamental attitudes.
  - **2.** There was a clear end to these elements of Renaissance self-definition, caused by internal failures of confidence and will and by external forces that sapped their strength.
  - **3.** It must be a lesson for every society to be watchful for the threats that can serve to undermine the essence of the civilization built on these shared values.
- **B.** Equally, however, the Renaissance can show us, as did Castiglione in his *Book of the Courtier*, that ideas and culture have a powerful resistance to violence, brutality, and ignorance.
  - **1.** There are things we must keep safe to protect us against our ruin.
  - **2.** I leave you with a Renaissance Humanist principle as an assignment to take away. Humanists constantly asked the question: "How might I lead a more humane life [*Quam sit humaniter vivendum*]?"
  - **3.** This is a question still worth asking.
  - **4.** And, if you share the principles we have discussed in this course, you might respond as would most of our Renaissance Humanist friends: It is incumbent upon us all to turn our lives into works of art, that is, carefully crafted, elegant models of individual behavior, closely working with others in free association to achieve the mutual goals of our shared humanity. These should include the pursuit and production of beauty, as well as the accumulation of wealth, and we must always be aware that culture and the society that sustains it are fragile. But that, in so many ways, makes its preservation even more necessary.

Secondary Sources:

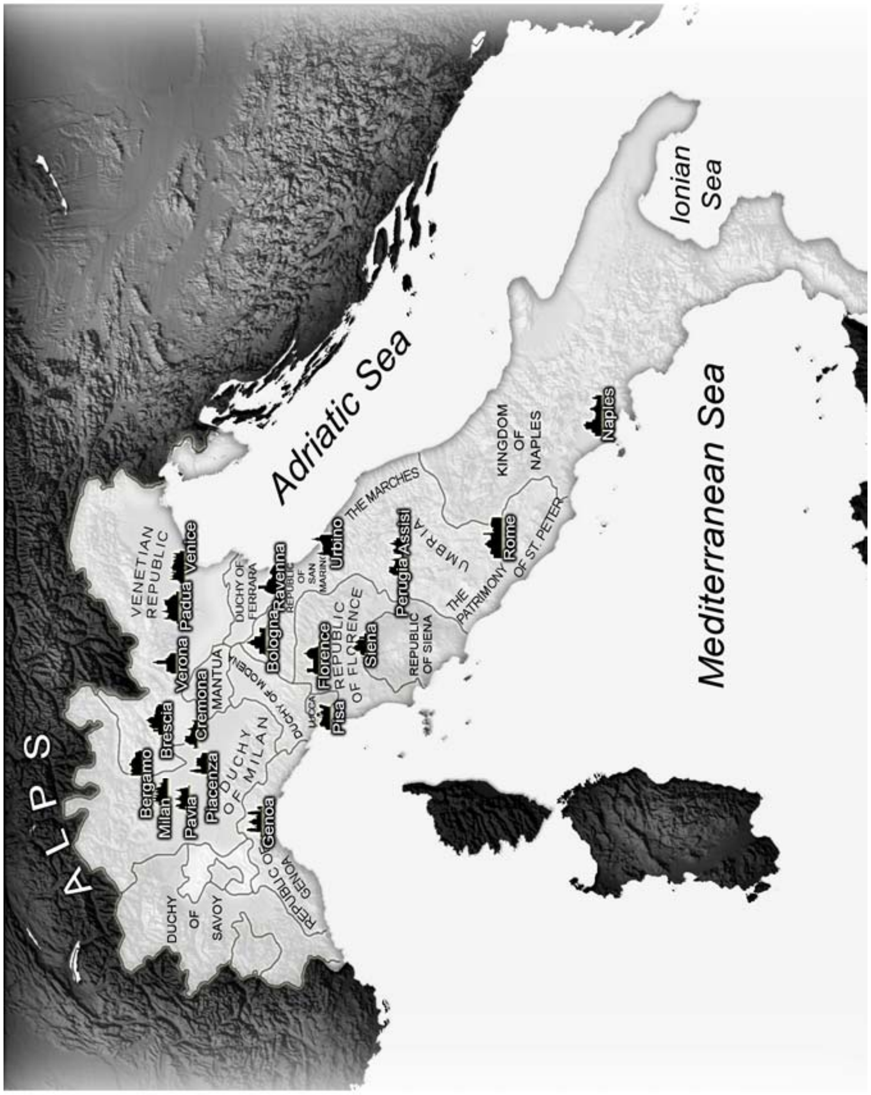
Alan Bullock, *The Humanist Tradition in the West*.

Supplementary Reading:

Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Discoverers: A History of Man's Search to Know His World and Himself.*

Questions to Consider:

1. Is there a place for Humanism in the 21st century?
2. Are science and Humanism mutually exclusive?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Assisi
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UMBRIA
THE PATRIMONY OF ST PETER
Rome
KINGDOM OF NAPLES
Naples
Adriatic Sea
Ionian Sea
Mediterranean Sea

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