

# Chapter 10

## The Renaissance & Discovery

- “rebirth”; transition from medieval to modern times
  - Medieval Europe (pre-12th c.)
    - fragmented, feudal society
    - agricultural economy
    - church-dominated thought, culture
  - Renaissance Europe (post-14th c.)
    - political centralization, national feelings
    - urban, commercial-capitalist economy
    - growing lay/secular control of thought & culture



## The Italian Renaissance (1375–1527)

- beginning: deaths of Petrarch (“father of humanism”) & Boccaccio
- end: sack of Rome by Spanish imperial soldiers, 1527
- spread of “civic humanism” (humanism + civic reform) through northern Europe
- Italian city-states: Milan, Florence, Venice, Papal States, Naples—prosperous urban centers of trade & commerce



## The Italian City-State

- left to develop by endemic warfare between popes & Holy Roman emperors
- characterized by intense social strife & competition for political power
- social classes: old rich, new rich, small business owners, poor
- Cosimo de' Medici – Florentine banker & statesman
- despots hired by many city states to keep order, usually with mercenary armies obtained through military brokers called *condottieri*
- art & culture flourished nonetheless, because of the profusion of wealth



# Humanism

- the scholarly study of Greek & Latin classics and the ancient Church Fathers, in hopes of reviving worthy ancient values
- advocated *studia humanitatis*: liberal arts study (grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, politics, philosophy) — to celebrate the dignity of humankind & prepare for life of virtuous action
- Italian humanists searched out manuscript collections, making volumes of Greek & Latin learning available to scholars



## Revival of Greek Studies

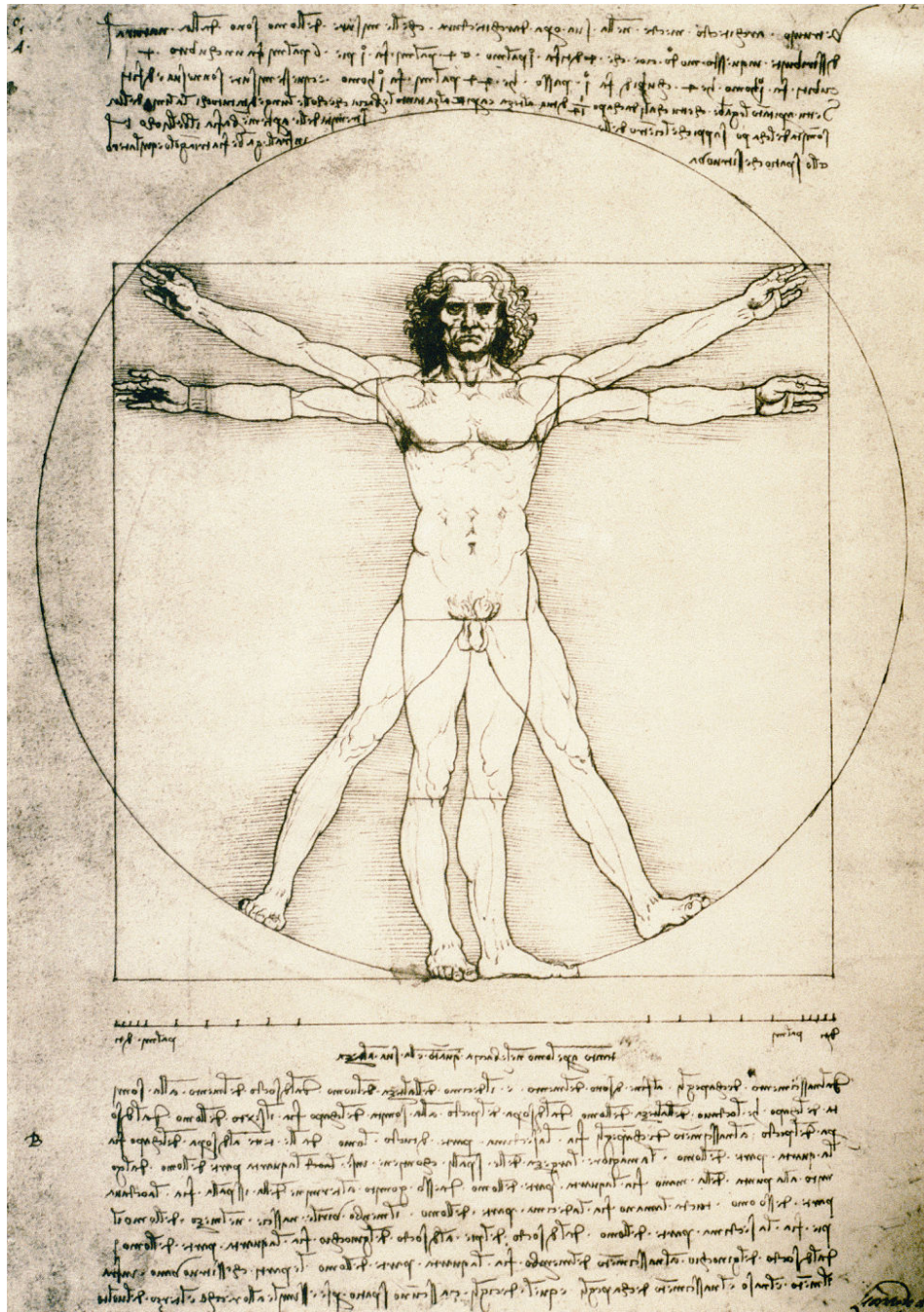
- educational reforms guided by ideals of useful education & well-rounded person
- Florentine “Academy” — not a formal school, but gathering of influential Florentine humanists devoted to reviving Plato & the Neoplatonists
- Platonism: flattering view of human reason as part of the ideal (eternal) world, versus the real (perishable) world; human freedom
- humanist critical scholarship: Lorenzo Valla exposes *Donation of Constantine* as forgery



## Renaissance Art

- embraced natural world & human emotion
- works characterized by rational order, symmetry, proportionality; addition of *linear perspective* (3-D look)
- Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519): lived Renaissance ideal of the universal person: painter, advisor to kings, engineer, physiologist, botanist, etc.; *Mona Lisa*
- Raphael (1483–1520): large Vatican fresco: *The School of Athens*
- Michelangelo (1475–1564): 18-foot sculpture of David; Sistine Chapel frescoes—10,000 sq. ft., 343 figures, 4 years to complete





Leonardo Plots the Perfect Man  
Vitruvian Man by Leonardo da Vinci, c. 1490. The name “Vitruvian” is taken from that of a first-century C.E. Roman architect and engineer, Marcus Pollio Vitruvius, who used squares and circles to demonstrate the human body’s symmetry and proportionality.





Christine de Pisan, who has the modern reputation of being the first European feminist, presents her internationally famous book, "The Treasure of the City of Ladies," also known as "The Book of Three Virtues," to Isabella of Bavaria amid her ladies in waiting.





A wealthy man oversees apple-picking at harvest time in a fifteenth-century French orchard. In the town below, individual house gardens can be seen. Protective fences, made of woven sticks, keep out predatory animals. In the right foreground, a boar can be seen overturning an apple barrel.





Combining the painterly qualities of all the Renaissance masters, Raphael created scenes of tender beauty and subjects sublime in both flesh and spirit.

Musee du Louvre, Paris/Giraudon, Paris/SuperStock





*The School of Athens* by Raphael (1483–1520). Painted in 1510–11 for the Vatican Palace in Rome, it attests the influence of the ancient world on the Renaissance. It depicts Greek philosophers whose works humanists had recovered and printed.

Vatican Museums and Galleries, Vatican City, Italy/Giraudon/Bridgeman Art Library





## The French Invasions (1494–1527)

- French king Charles VIII (r. 1483–1498) storms through Italy when invited by ruler of Milan in hopes of weakening Naples; later driven back out
- Pope Alexander VI: corrupt member of Borgia family, children Cesare & Lucrezia
- Louis XII (r. 1498–1515): allies with Alexander and takes Milan & part of Naples
- Pope Julius II: “warrior pope” drives French out again
- Francis I (r. 1515–1547): third French invasion
- leads to Italian political decline & Habsburg-Valois (Spanish-French) wars of first half 16th c., all French losses

## Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527)

- convinced by chaos of foreign invasions that Italian political unity & independence were ends justifying any means; concluded only a strongman could impose order on a divided & selfish people (Italians)
- admirer of Roman rulers & citizens
- *virtù*: ability to act heroically & decisively for the good of one's country
- *The Prince* (1513): recommends temporary use of fraud & brutality to achieve Italian unity; hoped for strong ruler from the Medici family



**Santi di Tito's  
portrait of  
Machiavelli,  
perhaps the most  
famous Italian  
political theorist,  
who advised  
Renaissance  
princes  
to practice artful  
deception and  
inspire fear in their  
subjects if they  
wished to be  
successful.**



# Revival of Monarchy

- after 1450, divided feudal monarchies → unified national monarchies
- rise of towns, alliance of growing business classes with kings — broke bonds of feudal society
- the **sovereign** state: powers of taxation, war making, law enforcement no longer reside with semiautonomous vassals, but with monarch & royal agents; taxes, wars, laws become national rather than regional matters

## Revival of Monarchy (cont.)

- France: two cornerstones of 15th-c. nation-building:
  - collapse of English Empire in France after Hundred Years' War, 1453
  - defeat of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, 1477 — perhaps strongest political power in Europe at the time
  - Charles VII (r. 1422–1461), Louis XI (r. 1461–1483) — doubled territory
- Spain: 1469 marriage of Isabella of Castile & Ferdinand of Aragon
  - together secured borders, ventured abroad militarily, Christianized Spain
  - brought Spanish church under state control, ended toleration of Jews & Muslims
  - sponsored Christopher Columbus, leading to Spanish Empire in Mexico & Peru, helping make Spain the dominant European power in 16th c.

## Revival of Monarchy (cont.)

- England
  - turmoil of **Wars of the Roses**, 1455–1485 (Lancaster vs. York)
  - 1485 Battle of Bosworth Field seats Henry VII, first Tudor monarch
  - Henry brings nobles to heel with special royal court, the Star Chamber
- Holy Roman Empire: Germany & Italy exceptions to 15th-c. centralizing trend
  - the many (princes) fought off the one (emperor)
  - divided into some 300 autonomous entities
  - 1356 Golden Bull between Emperor Charles IV & major territorial rulers: established seven-member electoral college; elected emperor & provided some transregional unity; imperial *Reichstag* created



# The Northern Renaissance

- northern humanists: more interested than Italians in religious reform & educating laity
- **printing press** with movable type: Johann Gutenberg, Mainz, mid-15th c.
  - precursors: rise of schools & literacy (demand for books); invention of cheap paper
  - by 1500, printing presses running in more than 200 cities in Europe
  - rulers in church & state now had to deal with more educated, critical public; also powerful tool of religious/political propaganda

# Humanism & Reform

- Catholic humanist reformers pave the way for Protestantism
- Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536): most famous northern humanist; Catholic educational & religious reformer
- Germany: Reuchlin controversy—humanists defend Christian scholar of Judaism on grounds of academic freedom
- England: Thomas More (1478–1535), best-known English humanist; *Utopia* (1516)
- France: Guillaume Budé, Jacques Lefèvre
- Spain: humanism in service of Catholic Church; Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros: Grand Inquisitor, founder of University of Alcalá, biblical scholar



**Albrecht Dürer**  
**(1471–1528). *Self-***  
***portrait at Age 28***  
***with Fur Coat.***

1500. Oil on wood, 67 × 49 cm. Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.  
Photograph © Scala/Art Resource, NY





The Renaissance celebrated human beauty and dignity. Here the Flemish painter Rogier van der Weyden (1400–1464) portrays an ordinary woman more perfectly on canvas than she could ever have appeared in life.

Rogier van der Weyden (Netherlandish, 1399.1400–1464), "Portrait of a Lady." 1460. .370 × .270 (14 × 10 ); framed: .609 × .533 × .114 (24 × 21 × 4 ). Photo: Bob Grove.

Andrew W. Mellon Collection. Photograph © Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.





The printing press made possible the diffusion of Renaissance learning, but no book stimulated thought more at this time than did the Bible. With Gutenberg's publication of a printed Bible in 1454, scholars gained access to a dependable, standardized text, so Scripture could be discussed and debated as never before.

# Impact in Europe

- at first condemned for the treatments of the native populations, **Columbus** and other explorers are hailed 300 years later for opening up the world to new civilizations
- influx of spices and precious metals increases inflation in Europe
- new wealth however increased the expansion of printing, shipping, mining, textile, and weapons industries





**Map 10-1 RENAISSANCE ITALY** The city-states of Renaissance Italy were self-contained principalities whose internal strife was monitored by their despots and whose external aggression was long successfully controlled by treaty.