

Chapter One Renaissance and Reformation 1450-1600

Early Modern European Society and Culture

The Big Picture

- 1500 Euro – local, hierarchic, slow, poor, dangerous...
- Status was usually inherited instead of achieved
- Central institutions weak, unstable, unambitious
- Authority with guilds, neighbourhoods, parishes, families
- 1500-1600 religion, philosophy, natural science mingled with God filled world
- Scarcity of info gave way to abundance with press, media, literacy
- Early modern Euro – very dangerous → famine, disease, accidents, violence
- Insecurity set tone for arts, faith, feelings

A Dangerous World

- Disease, poor diet, scarce clothing, crowded housing, dirty streets and rivers, abundant rats, fleas, lice
 - Swift and quick, killing many
 - Typhus, smallpox, bubonic plague
- Bubonic plague continued to resurface; transmitted through rats, mice
- Wounds, diarrhea, respiratory infections
- Of all children a quarter died by 1, another quarter by marriage; 1 in 7 women died from childbirth → death a fact of life
- The people themselves were also very violent
- Danger of hell and the devil
- Europeans had three shields: religion, community, government

Religion

- Religion had three main tasks: providence, salvation, community
- Providence: God's justice on Earth, there were no pure accidents
 - All bad things were seen as punishment for sin
 - All good things were seen as a reward
- Many also prayed to the Saints who were more local and specific
- To get help for sins, you need "grace" channeled through the Church; with out this grace Christians were doomed to eternity in hell
- Holidays and celebration brought in the community aspect
- Religion was a social glue, and defined a social ethic
- Rich web of beliefs and practices draped over a lot of life
- Reformation would rip out many beliefs and alter others; sudden, violent, passionate

The Honour Code

- Stated: Be proud, not humble. Be rich, not poor. If thine enemy smite thee, smite him back. If not, he will steal thine honour.
- Rooted in custom and opinion – ones honour
- Religion fought honour – mercy against wealth and pride, humble simplicity
- Euro culture juggled both honour and religion
- Renaissance, deeply Christian and laced with honour
- Reformation worked to squelch honour's violence, pride, and love of luxury

Communities

Families and Friends

- Early modern Euros took shelter in communities from dangers (natural and human)
- The more dangerous the world the more willing one makes sacrifices to groups
- Shielded members from violence; tried to advance social life, business, politics
- Of all modern solidarities – family most important
- Property was families bedrock
- The whole land regime was mostly male; females could inherit dowry
- Household – basic unit of ownership and production (land, buildings, tools)
- Family included everyone living under the same roof
- Young people told to marry for money, land, and good connections
- Only poor could enjoy a truly loving marriage

The Renaissance Social Hierarchy

- Little idea of democracy or equality; distinction between high and low
- From middle ages, Renaissance inherited feudal attitudes
 - Arrangement that was economic, social, political, legal
- Lords (those who held feudal lands) – power to judge, tax, run market, wine press...
- Middle Ages shifted into early modernity – feudalism didn't crumble; social inequity
- Renaissance – movement in high culture, little impact outside elite class
- Reformation affected everyone

Demography

- Pre-modern world close to Malthusian equilibrium
 - As population rose, resources became scarce, mortality increases = ME
- First shock of Black Death – population of Euro kept falling due to aftershocks
 - 1400 began to stabilize at half pre-plague pop; 1480 began to grow
 - Grew for next 140 years, then began to fall again; strained resources

Political Bodies

- After fall of Roman Empire, political units began to crumble; Feudalism more local
- 1000 to 1500 trend began to reverse
- By 1500 kings emerged more competent – “Renaissance monarchies”
- Hired more officials, laid down more law, surrounded with courts
- Monarchs grew richer; ambitious people swarmed – hoped to receive gifts...
- All countries not equal
- 1500-1700 Euro monarchs got stronger; process not smooth, faced opposition; eventually compromised and co-opted

A Revolution in the Military

Fortresses and Firearms

- Middle Ages perfected two devices: knights on horseback & stone castle
- Knights – ruled battle field; Castles – stronger defensive upper hand
- Gunpowder changed everything – cannons could destroy castles
- About 1500 Renaissance military engineers invented star-shaped bastioned fortress
 - sloping walls of earth, clad in stone, protruding platforms
 - Costly to build and seize; thus only states could afford either option

Ambitions of the State

- Early modern states would inherit their chief ambitions from their medieval predecessors; raise money, make war, feed the court, and do justice
- Early modern justice limited, the world became an unruly place; glorified violence, poverty, and theft
- Difficult to catch these criminals, the ones who were caught, were made into horrid examples to scare
- 1500 and 1650 justice began to get steadier, more ambitious, but not less cruel

Intellectual Life in the Renaissance

World Views

- fields of law, philosophy, political theory, history, literary theory, language studies, medicine, theology, and the natural sciences grew, and changed
- 1500s was still largely medieval, but by the 1700s it began to look almost modern
- changing world views can be summed up as which can be described as “Renaissance” and “Scientific Revolution”
- Renaissance means rebirth
- Renaissance artists and thinkers blended what they recovered with medieval traditions, and then added new knowledge

Aspects of the Medieval Worldview

- Notion of a divine plan – world a product of God’s intelligence
- Idea of hierarchy or “Great Chain of Being”
- Dualism – spirit on one hand and matter on the other
- Allegory – story to find the higher spiritual or moral meaning
- Providence – accidents don’t happen; God sees all
- Teleology – all things have an inherent purpose or goal

Renaissance Worldview

- Renaissance began as linguistic campaign; target medieval Latin
- Loose coalition of men we call “humanists” undertook task to restore lost eloquence
- Humanists unearthed lost works, perfected philology (study of vocab and usage), gave rise to school reforms that pushed eloquence in place of logic
- Renaissance more than humanism – taste for antique extended into visual and other arts

Renaissance Art

The Invention of Linear Perspective: Seeing Far into Space

- Realism emerged in Renaissance painting; extended to portrayal of 3D space
- 1440s Florentines worked on solving problem of vanishing point; pictures acquired depth
- Da Vinci worked out how distance fades colour, how shadows modulate, how surfaces pick up reflected tints of nearby objects
- Raphael mastered all new techniques, could paint amazing naturalism
- Images served as symbols
- Renaissance artists still Christian, art when sacred evoked the world around them

The Sense of History

Seeing Far in Time

- Renaissance, cultural integrity of antiquity mattered; sense of history still looked backwards – norm lay in the past
- Two things helped swing norm from past to future: growing awareness of conflicts and contradiction in ancient heritage, growing confidence

Print

- Medieval info scarce, books costly and for churches or rich collectors
- Johann Gutenberg invented movable type
- Books became popular and cheap, increase range of content, more accurate, more languages
- Fostered news, propaganda; lowered barriers; served as repression and rebellion
- Only minority could read and write

The High Renaissance in Rome

Patronage

- 14th century, principal residence of Renaissance was Florence
- Almost 60 years, Medici family patronized arts
- 1494, family fell; four revolutionary years as holy republic under puritan Savonarola
- Popes used wealth and power to draw artists to Roman court; most famous were Julius the second and Leo the tenth
- Under Leo's successor Clement the seventh, the Roman Renaissance died
 - Bungled foreign affairs, 1527, raged army of Germans and Spaniards stormed Rome
- Most artists scattered
- Roman Renaissance never recovered

Castiglione: The Courtier as Idealist

- 1514 Baldassare Castiglione – diplomat and courtier, served assorted princes
- Wrote *Book of the Courtier*
 - Series of polite, spirited conversations and debates
 - Models of discretion – key to courtly life was *sprezzatura*
 - Book caught on, many translations, people validated their wealth and show, preached self-control

Machiavelli: The Courtier as Cynic

- Secretary to Florentine Republic until 1512 when Medici retook city; suffered
- *The Prince* dedicated to Leo the tenth in hopes of a job; discarded usual restrictions on honour and religion
- Better to be loved or feared? Should he be generous?...
- Renaissance Englishmen called the devil “Old Nick” they had Mach in mind
- Charles the fifth kept this book by his side

Intellectual Developments

The Renaissance Spreads Through Europe

- 1500 Renaissance spread across parts of Euro that belonged to Church of Rome
- Orthodox Christian zone were little affected
- Mechanisms that helped Renaissance spread: Diaspora of Italian merchants, artists; movement of Euros in and out of Italy; new tourist trade
- The printing press allowed more northerners to pick up humanist scholarship of Italians → northern humanism, strong streak of piety and mysticism
 - Helped launch Reformation

Desiderius Erasmus and Thomas More

- Erasmus translated, from Greek to Latin, the New Testament, correcting many philological errors of the official Bible
- Wrote *Colloquies* – model Latin conversations for schoolchildren
- Wrote *The Praise of Folly* – satirized fools and criticized princes for their violent wars
- Became Euros public intellectual with vast correspondence
- Erasmianism – had moral core; blended humanism with piety
- Although him and many of his followers were Catholic, his ideas helped start the Protestant Reformation
- More wrote *Utopia*; plays upon “good place” and “no place” → no place this good could ever exist
 - Intended for dangers of wealth, pride, and political power
 - opened with moral risks of serving monarch
- 1935 the pope honoured with martyrdom with sainthood; after service of Henry the eighth, he didn't join Henry in the break with Rome

Writing in the Vernacular

- More to non-Italian Renaissance than Latin scholarship
- Spain, France, England... acquired literature in the vernacular: poetry, plays, histories, travel tales, how-to books
- Shakespeare had a huge variety, as did Christopher Marlowe
- Northern painting also flourished → invented oil paint, pioneered landscape
 - Northern art had eye for everyday detail less prominent in Italian art

Skepticism

- Renaissance gave birth to movements that eroded medieval thought: skepticism
- Michel de Montaigne – inventor of the essay; had materialist philosophy that world was only stuff, not spirit
- Blaise Pascal – inventor of ancestral calculator

The Growth of Science

- Best scientific work was done by Arabs who had better grasp of Greek heritage
- 16th century had more and better translations of Greek mathematics, astronomy, geography, medicine...
- Intellectual developments contributed to process called “the demystification of the world”
- Dualism gave way to materialism; magic, providence, allegory drained away
- Scientific Revolution was a slow process
- 1500 – 1650 religion gripped Euros the most

The Reformation

A Matter of Perspective

- Reformation's various solutions were rooted in culture and politics of the time
- 1500 papacy had taken trappings of the early modern state; reuniting after schism – returned to Rome
- 1440-1510 series of popes retook control of part of central Italy over which Rome had sovereignty
- Pope used wealth of the church to reward clients and to advance his kin; double personality – at once prince and father of all believers

The Pre-Reformation

- One ingredient for Reformation was anticlericalism
 - People often accused clergy of idleness, wealth, meddling, hypocriticalness
- Another ingredient was appetite for spiritual experiences among clerics and educated
- 15th century Euro had shift toward more meditation, understanding, feeling in religion
 - Erasmus focused on individual experience and overlooked uses celebration in community; faith was salvation, not providence
- Reformation broke out, Erasmus & humanists stayed with Rome – his ideas influenced reformers on both sides of widening religious divide

Martin Luther and the Start of the Reformation

- Knack for language, surfacing in his Bible translation, helped found modern German prose
- Sent by his confessor to teach at University of Wittenberg; lectured on St. Paul
 - Found passage in Romans to the effect that we are saved “by faith alone”; it was not the outward action, but the inward spirit that brought salvation
- Pope Leo launched sale of indulgences aimed at funding new Saint Peter's Cathedral
 - He who could not go, could still find grace in cash
- Indulgences set off the Reformation
- 1517, chief seller of indulgences neared Saxony (where Luther was teaching) – Luther posted on door of Wittenberg's castle church 95 things against the practice
- Print broadcast his points all over Germany; the pope issued a papal order and Luther burned it
- Charles the fifth, summoned Luther and before the monarch he refused to submit and recant: “Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise.”
- He had two basic points: by faith alone, and by scripture alone
- Clergy no longer intermediaries between God and humans – became “ministers” or teachers
- Protestantism stripped away medieval heritage
- In Euro zealots staged a massacre of art; the new religion wrought havoc with high culture
- Germany and Scandinavia moved to Lutheran model of state churches under protection of local rulers; ministers became civil servants
- Jean Calvin founded a church and theology that spread; Calvinist churches took over Scotland and the Netherlands...
- Calvinist theology pushed Luther to his logical consequences; if works are nothing, all is in the hands of God; predestined to heaven or hell
- Calvinist churches less hierarchic; congregation ran itself

- English detractors called their Calvinists “Puritans”
- Some churches – Mennonites, Baptists, Quakers – lay low or fled; Hutterites to Canada and Mennonites and other to North America

The Counter-Reformation

The Church Responds

- Under Paul the third, general council met on and off for 18 years producing a papal victory
- Trent pushed bishops into their cities and strengthened their authority
- To strengthen clergy each bishops district erected a seminary to train priests
- Three countermeasures that didn’t come from Trent are: the Roman inquisition, the Roman Index of Prohibited Books, and the founding of religious orders given to teaching, propaganda, and social services
- Jesuits – stood for efficiency, skill, effective propaganda, highly regarded schools
 - Fanned out across Euro, Asia, Americas; winning new converts
- Against Protestantism, Catholics deployed almost all arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, stagecraft, preaching, pamphlets
 - Developed Baroque style: splendid buildings, furnishings, ceremonies

Social Control

- Both Catholicism and Protestantism stressed individual experience, and conscience; both strove to mobilize believers’ feelings; both attended more salvation, less providence
- Overall, both looked to moral reform

Sixteenth-Century Politics

Spain

- Struggles with France, until 1559 it became weakened and Spain became temp hegemony; 1660 France returned to dominate
- Spain was a divided place
- Two things put Spain on world stage: Christopher Columbus (brought riches of the world), the accident of inheritance that left the throne to Charles the fifth (became tied to Germany as well as expanding fortunes)

France

- Death of Henry the second left monarch to his three incompetent sons
- Spread of Calvinism and ambition of noble factions put France in almost 40 years of civil wars – “Wars of Religion”
- “Saint Bartholomew’s” massacre – Parisian mobs wiped out hundreds of Calvinist nobles; Henry the third slaughtered and decade later Henry fourth of Bourbon took over
- Henry died and Louis the 14th relied on Richelieu who backed Protestants in 30 years war

England

- 1700 it built global trading empire with colonies/posts on several continents
- Reformation here came from above
- Henry cut all church’s papal ties and took over autonomous Church of England
- Partial Reformation – Bible went English, monasteries succumbed
- Henry died and heir Edward the sixth took place; Church became more Protestant

- Edward died throne went to Mary who married cousin and burned Protestants; many fled and many absorbed Calvinist ideas; Catholic restoration
- Mary died and throne went to Elizabeth the first
- ...
- England prospered; London grew as port and center of manufacture, arts, literature, intellectual

Italy

- Italy was not a single state until 1870
- 1490 France, Spain, German Empire began to wade in
- French invasion 1494
- Sack of Rome 1527 wrecked the local Renaissance
- France was down, and Spanish power brought tranquility; next 60 years prosperous
- Italian cities churned out cloth, arms, glass, art; population grow and living standards fell – famines; still remained most urban place in Euro
- 1620 – France recovered, clashed with Spain and regained Italian ambitions
- 1630-1656 plagues swept peninsula, cutting down city dwellers → trading elites shunned commerce

Germany

- Holy Roman Empire elected monarch chosen by seven electors; Kaiser
- Under him: mix of middling princes, ample lands, imperial free cities, imperial free knights
- The empire had become hereditary
- Charles fought two wars against a Protestant Schmalkalkic League
- Latter defeat threatened retirement forced him to treaty: Peace of Augsburg
- In this pact “he who holds the power determines the religion” tried to settle question for religion; worked for 63 years
- Militant Catholicism and assertive Calvinism clashed
- 1618 Thirty Years War; peace of Westphalia 1648 – reaffirmed religious settlement of 1555 and the territorial status quo
- War/peace replaced Czech elite...helped discredit religious war

The Netherlands

- Good farms, many rivers for roads
- Rivers invited trade and traders, trade stimulated industry
- War and politics turned role to Amsterdam, which until 17th century, dominated Euro commerce until London took over
- Rebellion against Phillip the seconds Catholic rule exalted Amsterdam
- Rebellion against Spanish Duke of Alva – civil war
- 1580s – Spanish army retook south, seizing Antwerp; driving skilled and refugees into the north
- Decades of warfare 1609-1621
- Dutch northerners prospered; trading, plundering, taking forts and markets; colonized economy of Baltic
- Netherlands, though Calvinist, were still tolerant of faiths and ideas
- Amsterdam welcomed Jews; many converts from Spain and Portugal

Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire

The Gradual Rise of Muscovy

- Nucleus of future Russian empire was Moscow
- Ivan “the terrible” pushed his borders down the Volga to the Caspin – pushed out boarders of Russia
- Exhausted Muscovy with unsuccessful Baltic wars
- Killed son and heir; his death lead Muscovy to time of troubles (1606-1613)
- At least 20 pretenders tried for the throne
- Under new Romanov dynasty – Muscovy stabilized and grew slowly

The Turkish Empire

- Turkey was feared by Euro, it grew and grew; took Egypt and spread through North African coast
- Differences between empire and Euro: one was a kind of slavery, practice of tolerance of other faiths, manner of choosing a sultan
- Turkey didn’t do bad until 1600; it couldn’t keep pace with Euros scientific and technological experiments – no Renaissance or Scientific Revolution
- Balance of power soon turned against Turkey