The Renaissance (1400-1600)
The Renaissance

- Italy was a center of commerce
- Recovered from the Black Death
- Begins in Florence around 1400
- Rulers & Merchants were wealthy & used their $ to patronize governments, schools & the arts
- City life was strong – Italy wasn’t unified
Italy, 1494, showing the largest of the city-states. The city-states were among the most wealthy urban areas in the world.
Largest Cities in Western Europe, ca. 1500. There were as many large cities in the Italian peninsula as in all of the rest of western Europe.
Italian City-States

• Communities resisted being ruled by kings or popes
• Were wealthy & independent
• Many were European centers of banking & trade
• Major city-states: Florence, Venice, Milan
• New social classes (especially merchants) led to urban growth & conflict
• Usually ruled by wealthy families
• Some were republics
Florence

• Birthplace of the Italian Renaissance
• Maritime power, textile & banking industries
• Believed they were the “new Rome”
• Artists & Scholars were supported by the Medici family who ruled the city-state starting in 1434
• Became Europe’s 5th largest city
• Minted 1st gold coin (florin) in 1252
Humanism

- Scholars studied ancient manuscripts (Greek, Latin)
- New intellectual movement that focused life on Earth
- Focus shifts away from religion & the after life
- Also promoted individualism
- Study of humanities seen as essential for being good citizens (theology, history, politics, philosophy)
- Belief that studying those subjects celebrated humanity & prepared people for good living
- Knowledge of humanities could civilize mankind
- Also promoted improving people through education, politics, sports & arts
View of Florence looking toward the Santa Maria del Fiore, known for Brunelleschi’s dome (the 1st dome successfully completed since ancient Rome)
The Ponte Vecchio (Old Bridge) – oldest of Florence's bridges (1345) on the Arno River. It was the only bridge not destroyed on Hitler’s orders during World War II.
The Baptistery of San Giovanni, Florence

- Octagonal building across from cathedral
- Until end of 1800s, all Florentines baptized there
- Building began around 1059
- Bronze doors done by Ghiberti during the Renaissance (took 21 years to complete)
- Interior based on Rome’s Pantheon
Mosaic ceiling of The Baptistry of San Giovanni dates from 1225
The Big 3 Artists: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael
Adoration (or Procession) of The Magi (1459-60), Medici Family Chapel, Florence
Leonardo da Vinci’s Last Supper
The Feast of the Gods
by Bellini & Titian – National Gallery of Art, Washington DC
The David by Donatello

- Completed in 1430
- 1st free standing bronze nude sculpture since antiquity
- Depicts teenage King David standing on Goliath’s head
- Florence identified w/ David – symbol
The David by Michelangelo

- Completed in 1504 (took 3 years to sculpt)
- Commissioned by Florence’s wool merchant guild
- Represents King David as a classical Greek hero
- Came to symbolize Florence’s strength over its rival city-states
- Considered one of the greatest sculptures in the world
Palazzo Vecchio, Florence

- Town hall of Florence
- Building began in 1299
- Tower once held prisoners (Cosimo de’ Medici, Girolamo Savonarola)
- Seat of government later moved to the Uffizi
- Michelangelo’s *David* stood at the entrance until 1873
- Includes courtyards, concert hall, chapel, map room, outdoor terrace
- Concert hall contains frescoes of Florentine triumphs over Pisa & Siena
Sala dell'Udienza (Hall of Justice, Palazzo Vecchio)
The Prince by Machiavelli

- Written as a guide for how to be a good Renaissance ruler
- Goal of government: bring stability
- Rulers should be ready to use force & deceit to hold onto power
- “Ends justify the means”
- People don’t like change & fear it
- We should learn from history
- Most influential work on politics—still read & used
Renaissance Rome

- Papacy returned in 1420 after the Great Schism
- Pope & cardinals were wealthiest class
- Lots of the city re-built, including St. Peter’s Basilica, the world’s largest Christian church
- The Renaissance shifts from Florence to Rome
- Wasn’t a center of banking & trade but became 3rd largest European city
Villa Farnesina, Rome
Italian Renaissance home
St. Peter’s Basilica

- Chief architect was Michelangelo
- Greatest architectural undertaking in Christendom
- World’s largest Christian church
- Headquarters of the pope & part of The Vatican
The Sistine Chapel

• Commissioned by Pope Julius II in 1508
• Michelangelo took 4 years to complete the ceiling in frescoes
• Paintings depict stories from Genesis in The Bible
• Climax of Western art
• Michelangelo considered greatest living artist
Venice

• Major port city on the Adriatic Sea
• Link between Asia & W. Europe
• Workshops prod. high quality glass
• Republican gov’t controlled by council of merchants, overseen by the doge (duke)
Doge Andrea Gritti (r. 1523-38)
by Titian – National Gallery of Art, Washington DC
St. Mark’s Basilica, Venice – Consecrated in 1071 & finished in 1617; great example of Byzantine style with mosaics
Venice’s Grand Canal
Urbino

- Walled city in Italy’s Marche region
- Palazzo Ducale built by Duke Federico da Montefeltro in 1400s
- Montefeltro was a Renaissance prince and patron of the arts
- Palace was setting for Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* and includes famous Italian Renaissance paintings
- Raphael was born there
Duke Federico da Montefeltro, Urbino
Palazzo Ducale, Urbino
La Cita Ideale
Ducal Palace, Urbino