The Italians before Italy: Conflict and Competition in the Mediterranean

Part I

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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 the journal 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 first Director of the Office of Teaching Advancement.

Much of Dr. Bartlett’s career has been devoted to bringing Italian 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, and he has been the recipient of numerous teaching awards, most notably, the 3M Teaching Fellowship, awarded by the Canadian Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, and the inaugural President’s Teaching Award for the University of Toronto. In 2007, Dr. Bartlett was one of the 10 finalists in TVOntario’s Best Lecturer competition, which pits students’ favorite instructors against one another in a battle of charisma, clarity, passion, and conviction; that same year he was recognized by an inaugural Leadership in Faculty Teaching award by the government of Ontario.

Professor 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); co-editor or translator of four other books; and author of more than 35 articles and chapters on Renaissance history and culture. In 2003, he 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, Dr. Bartlett has been the academic consultant on the Illuminated Filmworks videos about 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 Italians before Italy: Conflict and Competition in the Mediterranean

Scope:

This course discusses the political, economic, and social worlds of the Italian city-states in the period from the Middle Ages to the loss of their autonomy in the later 16th century. The course includes some references to the status of certain Italian cities in antiquity and brief mention of their subsequent development from 1559 until the Risorgimento, the movement of Italian national unification in the 19th century. The focus is on the development of the institutions and structures that gave each independent state its essential character. Thus, Florence will be discussed in the context of the rise of the bourgeois republic and its concomitant mercantile economy, until the hegemony of the Medici family gradually transformed the commune into a monarchy in the 16th century. Siena, that other great Tuscan republic, which once rivaled Florence, will be shown to have declined over this period as a consequence of factional and class division, until it was incorporated into the Medici duchy of Florence in 1557.

Venice will be investigated not only as a state that managed to sustain republican patrician rule until its extinction at the end of the 18th century but also as a city-state that built, over time, a great empire on Italian soil and in the Mediterranean. Genoa and Pisa were also great mercantile republics but wracked by internal dissention and external threats. These cities once rivaled Venice for control of the luxury trade routes to the East and established maritime empires of their own until they were eclipsed by the Venetians. The complex history of Rome will emerge as the seat of an imperial papacy, building on ancient memories and responding to contemporary challenges, such as the Reformation, to create a state whose power rested more on confessional allegiance and artistic grandeur than on military force. Milan, despite suffering from many incompetent rulers, had the resources to create the most powerful state in the north, one that came close to uniting the peninsula while creating a vibrant courtly culture. The principalities of Mantua, Urbino, and Ferrara reflect simultaneously the exquisite culture and the brutal military power of their rulers, many of whom financed their states by serving as condottieri, that is, mercenary captains. Naples, that feudal kingdom to the south of the Italian peninsula, must be seen as a world apart from the republics and petty principalities to the north.

The introductory lectures in the course bring together the common threads of a history shared by the independent states of Italy. Various attempts were conceived to unite the peninsula, beginning with Dante’s hope that the Holy Roman Emperor would impose his rule and reduce the power of the pope. This Ghibelline vision remained strong, despite the continued authority of Rome and the papacy on the peninsula to sustain the Guelf cause. These almost ideological calls for unity accompanied the real ambitions of such princes as Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan to assemble the vast wealth and military power of his state to build a single kingdom from the mosaic of independent states. Equally, the Holy See attempted to use the authority of the Church to cement the allegiance of the entire Italian nation, both through faith and through force of arms. Cesare Borgia’s campaigns on behalf of his father, Pope Alexander VI, came close to success at the turn of the 16th century; and Pope Julius II’s campaigns restored papal rule in the states of the Church after the disintegration of Borgia power.

Finally, this course argues that the richness of the culture of Italy resulted from its lack of political unity. The various constitutional, cultural, and economic experiments among the patchwork of states, together with their competition with one another and their jealousy and ambition, all made such an efflorescence of culture possible.
Lecture One

Italy—A Geographical Expression

Scope: Italy as an idea has ancient origins, but Italy was not in reality a united country until 1860. To discuss Renaissance Italy, then, is to discuss a collection of independent states, each with its own constitutional structure, economy, and ambitions. We start this course with a discussion of the general circumstances of the peninsula before turning to the Crusades and analyzing how this European adventure added enormously to the wealth and power of the peninsula, particularly in the maritime republics, such as Venice, Genoa, and Pisa. Competition in the Mediterranean over trade resulted in constant warfare amongst these states, only to be superseded by the desperate struggle of Christians against the Turks. Rome, as the capital of Christendom, was the hinge on which Italian affairs turned in our period. To the south, the feudal dynastic monarchy of Naples was a fief of the Church, ruled by foreign dynasties and prey to the factionalism of its magnate families. Dynastic difficulties also threatened the signorial regimes of Milan, Mantua, and Ferrara, as well tiny Urbino. Equally volatile, but for different reasons, were the independent republics in Tuscany. Eventually, that territory would be stabilized and united through the imperial ambitions of the Medici of Florence. Altogether, the mosaic of the peninsula and the tense competition among its states resulted in the Renaissance explosion of imagination and creativity, and even today continues to provide rich and diverse local cultures in modern, united Italy.

Outline

I. Before the Italian city-states were united under Victor Emmanuel II of the House of Savoy in 1861, Italy was, as Prince Clemens von Metternich said to Lord Palmerston, “merely a geographical expression.”
   A. After the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476, Italy was a fragmented collection of independent states.
   B. Some of these states can be grouped in clusters, such as the maritime republics of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa. These states reaped economic advantage from the Crusades and from the geographical position of the Italian Peninsula as the natural point of contact between East and West.
   C. There were other Italian states, as well.
      1. Rome was the center of Christendom, defined by both its imperial memory and its Christian present.
      2. Naples was a great feudal kingdom. Because of the chaos surrounding its various dynasties, almost all of which were foreign, it became the battleground of Italy and the point of entry for invaders who would bring about the end of Italian independence.
      3. The principalities of north-central Italy were characterized by the dynasties that ruled them. The rule of these families involved not just the extension of political and military might but also the creation of culture as an element of policy.
      4. The republics of Siena and Florence were the petri dishes of politics. Here, new forms of social, political, and economic organization could be tested, but the independence of these states would be severely compromised by events of the 16th century.
   D. When Charles VIII of France crossed the Alps in 1494 to claim the kingdom of Naples, the result would be not only the loss of Italian liberty, but the transformation of Italy into the battleground of Europe, where the struggle between the French royal House of Valois and the imperial/Spanish House of Habsburg would ultimately be determined.
   E. The Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559, to a large extent, ended this struggle by establishing spheres of influence in the continent, but it also recognized the loss of Italian freedom, turning the peninsula over to the House of Habsburg, which would rule much of it until the period of Italian unification in the 19th century.
   F. This course focuses on the years before the middle of the 16th century, when the Italians were managing their own affairs to a large degree, creating their own culture, and defining what it was to be not just Italian but Genoese, Florentine, Roman, or Neapolitan.
   G. The Risorgimento, the movement that ultimately brought the peninsula together under the rule of the House of Savoy and King Victor Emmanuel II, saw Italy not only as a place of history but as a nation of people who spoke the same language, shared elements of the same culture, and shared the same religion. We will
look at the complexities of the peninsula before that time, beginning in the Middle Ages.

II. The celebrated phrase “It’s not impossible to rule the Italians, merely pointless,” has been attributed both to Giovanni Giolitti (the long-serving prime minister of Italy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries) and to Benito Mussolini. It’s a commonly held belief, in fact, that the Italian Peninsula is particularly intractable to centralized control and government.

A. There seem to be forces at work that deflect the desire to turn the peninsula into a single entity. It is, in fact, a democratic challenge to rule Italy, as the number of Italian governments that emerged since World War II can attest.

B. But Italy’s long, complex history of opposition can help us understand how this curious circumstance was brought about. The particularism, the geographical separation, the sense of localism versus a sense of national patriotism—all of these things are the result of history.

C. We should also remember that for the 400 years before unification, Italy’s history was a tale of foreign oppression. During this period, to pay one’s taxes willingly, to cooperate with the government, or to recognize the ruler as legitimate was a form of collaboration.

D. These deep-seated attitudes toward government were very much a part of the Italian experience and Italian history. Such attitudes were defined by social and economic issues in the various regions of the country, as well as by larger issues: interdependence versus independence of Italian states, the sense of competition versus cooperation, the union of self-identification as an Italian versus the fragmentation of identification as a Genoese, a Florentine, a Venetian, or a Neapolitan.

III. The fragmentation of the Italian Peninsula began even during the Roman Empire.

A. In fact, the idea of Italy being united under Rome is something of a myth. The Romans had a veneer of unity that covered a great deal of fragmented local allegiances, traditions, and cultures that continued even during the most powerful years of the empire.

B. Rome did provide some elements of unity that were particularly significant, such as a single law, a single coinage, and the vehicle for contact and communication through roads and harbors.

C. Other elements, however, were always on the periphery. Sicily, for example, the breadbasket of the Roman Empire, maintained the memory of the Greeks that had settled that island during the period of colonization in the ancient world. Such elements contributed to the explosion of culture and imagination seen among the Italian people.

IV. As we look at the political, social, and economic development of the cities in Italy and the states they represented, the element of culture is always present, and indeed, we still see this element today.

A. One of the most exciting and rewarding experiences of a tour of the peninsula is the observation of how the world changes by traveling just a few kilometers down the road. Visitors note the difference in wine and cheese, language, politics, architecture, and fashion from one city to the next. The identification between people and place in Italy is profound and part of the national collective unconscious.

B. The Mediterranean is, in fact, the place that defined European culture and politics for a long period of recorded history. The Mediterranean is the Media Terra, the “center of the Earth,” where culture and civilization developed.

1. During the period of Italian fragmentation, the Mediterranean became a source of threat. This was the time when the Turks, representing Islam, and the Christians, representing the Latin West, fought for supremacy of that inland sea.

2. This wasn’t only a battle of religions but also a struggle for the economic authority that came with controlling the sea routes between East and West. It came about as a result of the expansion of Islam into the Mediterranean and into Europe itself.

C. The Italian Peninsula grew rich because of its geographical position and its ability to control the luxury trade routes that moved from the East to the West. The peninsula also found itself the vanguard of Latin Europe once the challenge of the Turks was made visible, and up until the 1560s, that challenge seemed to be insurmountable.

V. The issue of sovereignty and power has also loomed large in the history of Italy.
A. With the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 and the fragmentation of imperial authority, who would control the destinies of the people who had lived under Roman rule? Occasionally, individuals simply assumed power on their own, enforcing obedience and providing some measure of protection and administration. Thus, local power based on the exercise of force became extremely important.

B. Ultimately, two sovereign powers were recognized on the peninsula, one that resulted from the religious circumstances of the empire and one from the political memory of imperial authority.
1. The Romans had imposed a single rule and a religion over most of the known world. This religion was closely identified with the cult of the empire and the emperor. Thus, the combination of paganism and political power was part of the Roman mentality and was built into the structure of their rule.
2. In 313, however, the emperor Constantine the Great, with the Edict of Milan, adopted Christianity as the official religion of the empire, and Christianity played a completely different role.
3. The emperor now represented secular power, and the bishop of Rome—the pope—represented ecclesiastical power, although both claimed to be acting for God. The result was two sources of authority and an issue that would divide all of Italy.
4. The supporters of the papacy and ecclesiastical sovereignty would be known as Guelfs. The supporters of imperial sovereignty were Ghibellines. This division between Guelf and Ghibelline would become one of the dynamics that helped characterize the Italian state system itself.
5. The idea of separation between Guelf and Ghibelline was not merely abstract; it was also a reflection of differences of social class, geography, and circumstance.

VI. The role of words in Italian culture has always been fundamental.

A. We associate with Dante (d. 1321) the creation of a single language that would glue the peninsula together. Despite his own objections, the Tuscan dialect used by Dante became the literary language of Italy. Further, we associate the creation of an Italian people with the Three Crowns of literature: Dante, Petrarch (d. 1374), and Giovanni Boccaccio (d. 1375).

B. We find other literary references pervading the culture of Italy. The idea of gattopardismo, for example, is a literary allusion, a reference to a novel written by Prince Giuseppe Tommasi di Lampedusa in the 1950s called Il Gattopardo, or The Leopard.
1. The character Don Fabrizio remarks that for everything to remain the same, everything will have to change.
2. Of course, this comment seems to reflect the nature of Italian politics since World War II, which was, until recently, characterized by revolving-door administrations but consisting of the same politicians.
3. The situation was something like a game of musical chairs on the political stage. The theater of democratic action seemed to be at work, but the reality was that a relatively small number of people exercised power for their own political and personal advantage.

C. Italy, then, is the distillation of all these elements. It is the result of imaginative myth-making, the definition of a world that exists perfectly in art or literature, or architecture, or even political theory, when in fact, other things going on beneath the level of mythology are much more closely related to the reality of political action.

VII. As we will see, Italy must be understood locally in order to be understood generally. We will learn how Italy functions as a unity by seeing how its parts operated together and interrelated with one another. To begin, we must start with the collapse of the Roman Empire and the rise of the city-states.

Essential Reading:
J. Larner, Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch, 1216–1380.

Supplementary Reading:
L. Martines, Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy.

Questions to Consider:
1. Are the factors discussed to explain the diversity of Italian political and cultural life applicable to other places at other times?
2. Consider what constitutes the local culture and the political and social traditions of the region in which you live. How do these differ from other parts of your country and why?
Lecture Two
The Question of Sovereignty

Scope: The collapse of the Roman Empire in the 5th century A.D. left the Italian Peninsula at the mercy of competing interests. It was invaded by various barbarian tribes, some of whom stayed to establish kingdoms. At the same time, the Byzantine emperors attempted to recover parts of the old empire in the west by establishing political and military bases, as well as by offering protection to local cities, such as Venice. For its part, the papacy managed to sustain enough authority to control considerable territory around Rome and central Italy, an ecclesiastical state that was enlarged by gifts from pious rulers. Finally, the Germanic kings, after the coronation of Charlemagne in Rome, claimed to inherit the sovereignty of Roman rule. They made regular incursions into Italy to seek tribute, initiating the Guelf-Ghibelline struggle that was to dominate Italian politics for centuries to come. The consequence of this complex and chaotic environment was the emergence of a great many independent states, simultaneously jealous of their territorial integrity and ambitious to expand.

Outline

I. With the collapse of the Roman imperial system and the deposition of the last Roman emperor in 476 A.D., the issue of sovereignty became central in Italy.
   A. Some of the barbarian invaders that came into the Italian Peninsula were heavily Romanized and Christian. Others, such as Huns, were nomadic, had no connection with either the religion or the traditions of Rome, and had little desire to sustain anything of the imperial system. Consequently, the peninsula experienced a sense of collapse.
   B. This unhappy situation was made more complex by the attempts of Byzantine emperors to reconquer bits of the peninsula.
      1. These incursions of the Byzantines destabilized some of the barbarian kingdoms, including some of those that were the most Romanized and deeply established.
      2. The Byzantine incursions also had positive outcomes, such as the development of Venice close to the exarchate at Ravenna, thereby forming a new state—the Venetian Republic.
   C. There was no central government on the peninsula to control the coinage, establish a single law, or maintain communications. Thus, power was assumed by those who could do so. For example, on the vast estates, the latifundia, landlords used their peasants as private armies to ensure some order and protection.
   D. However, Italy, unlike the rest of Europe, didn’t suffer from the collapse of urban life. The cities in Italy continued and, in many cases, thrived, partly because the episcopal sees were located in cities. Cities also had the advantage of being centers of trade and markets.
   E. With no central government in place, local government assumed new importance. The world of Italy was defined locally, in economic terms according to the locality that it served and in political terms by those who could assume authority and provide the basic organization of life.

II. At the same time, the principle of universal sovereignty was sustained by the Roman Church.
   A. The bishop of Rome was recognized throughout Christendom as the leader of the Latin Church in the West. The connections with St. Peter and the empire under Constantine gave Rome a particular authority. Further, as the memory of the empire was sustained, the memory of the Church was sustained with it.
      1. The Edict of Milan (313), which made Christianity the official religion of the empire, reinforced powerfully the position of the bishop of Rome.
      2. Pilgrims from across Europe, looking for the place of martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul, saw Rome not just as a political or even an ecclesiastical unit but as a place of sanctity. This view also gave luster to the authority and power of the pope.
   B. The pope, though, was more than a spiritual leader; he also was a prince. He ruled a state that was associated increasingly with the exercise of political and secular, as well as ecclesiastical, power.
   C. The territory of the pope grew as a result of gifts and expansion, and the popes used their territory as a power base. They could offer the ability to rule to others, who would rule in the name of the pope and take
the sovereignty of the Church as their legitimization. In this way, the states of the Church began to send
tentacles beyond Rome, into parts of central Italy.

D. The Papal States were not, however, particularly stable. These territories varied dramatically in size and in
central government according to the personality of the pope and the circumstances in which he ruled.
Events both within and outside of Italy could have an effect on the amount of power the pope could
exercise.

E. The papacy had no secure sources of income. At times, the pope was able to impose taxes and use the
income for secular purposes, but that ability, too, depended on events elsewhere.

F. Papal policy, then, tended to be somewhat erratic and depended heavily on the personality of the pope and
the circumstances in Italy and Europe.

G. Finally, the pope wasn’t able to impose order on those who had the power to withstand him. The Orsini,
the Colonna, and other families ruled largely independently until the 16th century.

III. Another element to be factored into the political dynamic on the peninsula was the Holy Roman Empire and the
memory of secular sovereignty.

A. The Frankish King Charlemagne, following the policies of his father, wanted to protect the independence
of the Church from the forces that sought to bring it into secular control.

1. In order to do this, Charlemagne used the great empire that he assembled north of the Alps as an
instrument to legitimize the rule of the pope, protect the Church, and add to his own authority.

2. Thus, to some extent, Charlemagne was recognized by the pope as the secular extension of the
religious power of the Church. For this reason, on Christmas day in the year 800, in the Basilica of St.
Peter, Pope Leo crowned Charlemagne Holy Roman Emperor.

3. In so doing, Leo recognize Charlemagne’s authority and created another jurisdiction, another source of
sovereignty that revived the idea of imperial rule.

B. These two ideological elements—the sovereignty of the secular rule of the empire and the sovereignty of
the spiritual authority of the papacy—characterized Italy in the Middle Ages.

C. The result of this dual authority would become the fundamental divide between Guelf and Ghibelline—
between those who supported the pope and those who supported the empire. This dispute divided the
peninsula and, to some extent, became part of the relief of European life. In Italy, it became the basic factor
that characterized politics.

IV. Charlemagne’s successors made regular incursions into Italy to attack and plunder. The Germanic emperors had
only a small power base in their own territories, and they saw the rich cities of Italy as sources for ready cash.

A. Moreover, these emperors disrupted the social, political, and economic structures that were beginning to
develop indigenously.

1. The emperor might, for example, establish Italian rulers as imperial vicars to act in his name, thereby
giving authority to one faction to the exclusion of another.

2. In north-central Italy, in particular, imperial vicariates developed that reflected the values and feudal
structure of northern Europe, including the political element that saw sovereignty as residing in the
power of the Holy Roman Emperor.

B. In this situation, the contest between emperor and pope was, to some extent, inevitable.

1. In general, the supporters of the Ghibellines were feudal magnates, often rural-based, usually of the
knighthly class, and closely associated with the exercise of military authority.

2. The Guelf supporters tended to be urban and closely associated with mercantile wealth; they saw the
papacy as a much more irenic role and viewed papal values as hostile to, or at least in contravention
of, the principles that characterized feudal life in the countryside.

C. The initial winner in the first round of struggle between empire and papacy was Pope Gregory VII, known
as Hildebrand, who humiliated the Emperor Henry IV at Canossa in 1077. Henry, having been
excommunicated, had to go as a penitent to the castle of Matilda of Tuscany and stand barefoot in the snow
for days until, ultimately, Gregory gave him absolution.

D. The struggle between the two sources of sovereignty didn’t end with the humiliation of Henry IV at the
hands of Gregory VII. Various rulers acting in the name of either the emperor or the pope engaged in
proxy wars of these two elements of sovereignty on a local level.

1. Sovereign rights were always accessible if one was willing to support one ideological faction over the other, and the emperor and pope used this strategy effectively to gain small advantages.

2. Such allegiances, though, created two exclusive factions in the Italian Peninsula—the Guelfs and the Ghibellines—each of which saw themselves as representatives of true power and each of which recognized the danger inherent in not suppressing or completely destroying the other.

3. The term *Guelf*, in fact, comes from one of the imperial families that sought the authority of the papacy to challenge imperial rule. Similarly, *Ghibelline* is the Italianization of Waiblingen, the battle cry and the name of the castle of the House of Hohenstaufen.

E. By the time the Italian communes (independent states) had begun to coalesce and form their own governments, the struggle between Guelf and Ghibelline became more dangerous. Henry IV may have been humiliated, but his successor, Frederick Barbarossa, would not give the pope the same satisfaction.

V. The complex factors that determined whether a state would be Guelf or Ghibelline related to social class, history, geography, and perhaps most significantly, opportunity.

A. Political allegiance is often the exercise of opportunism—what is most beneficial at a particular time to a particular person. This was true of the Guelf-Ghibelline divide as with any ideological division.

1. If an individual wanted power and those who stood in his way were Ghibellines, he would become a Guelf and vice versa.

2. Similarly, it would be wise to be a Guelf if one was in the orbit of Rome or the Papal States or a Ghibelline if one was in the imperial orbit or a vassal of the emperor.

B. These elements working together resulted in not just an ideological divide but a practical and political divide.

1. The distinction between Guelfs and Ghibellines was not just an abstract question of the nature of sovereignty.

2. This division influenced real politics in a world where there were no political parties and where power was based on the exercise of force.

C. As we discuss the various states of Italy, we will see that this Guelf-Ghibelline divide is one of the dynamic factors that gives character to the various states. We will go beyond the idea of sovereignty into the actual practice that would become infused with tradition and, then, become an element of history itself.

D. It’s important to note that neither Guelf nor Ghibelline, neither pope nor emperor, was sufficiently powerful to knock the other out of the arena. For structural reasons, the powers were equally balanced.

1. Both the emperor and the pope were elected princes. They didn’t rule by heredity but by the ability to summon electors that would give them authority.

2. Consequently, the idea of establishing a singular policy that could be pursued over a long period of time was, essentially, nonexistent. Decisions were made based on local and immediate conditions, and that meant that neither pope nor emperor had sufficient power over time to eliminate the other.

3. This inability of one to destroy the other meant that the two sources of sovereignty would always characterize the Italian Peninsula and that Italy could not be united. There was no king or prince sufficiently powerful to use the authority inherent in his role to bring together a vast territorial state.

E. Because of the division of Guelf and Ghibelline, Italy was destined to remain fragmented, as imperial and papal vicars struggled with one another or as the power of either the pope or the emperor grew and the other waned. These elements also allowed for the discussion of what we now call political theory on a very high level.

1. It’s no accident that the great poet Dante wrote a political treatise on the nature of sovereignty. His *De monarchia* was a discussion of why the Ghibelline cause should be victorious in Italy.

2. Such discussions of political theory had to be taken into account by Italians because they affected everyday life.

F. The division between Guelf and Ghibelline also created a rich environment in which experimentation and competition could take place. The Italians of the Middle Ages were able to look at politics in creative ways, that is, to identify larger social and economic concerns while still dealing with local issues. This sense of diversity and energetic engagement with politics would characterize the Italian states.
G. There were some events, of course, that linked Guelf and Ghibelline, particularly the Crusades, which brought all of Latin Christendom together as one. The alliance of Christians took precedence over the division of Guelf and Ghibelline, and this, too, must be factored into the definition of the Italian Peninsula during the Middle Ages.

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

**Supplementary Reading:**
O. Prescott, *The Lords of Italy.*

**Questions to Consider:**
1. Why was the question of whether the Holy Roman Emperor or the pope enjoyed universal sovereignty so crucial?
2. Why were local conditions rather than abstract discussions of sovereignty in fact more important in determining a state’s allegiance to pope or emperor?
Lecture Three
The Crusades and Italian Wealth

Scope: The preaching of the First Crusade at Clermont by Pope Urban II in 1095 began a series of European interventions into those areas of the Near East ruled by Islam. These events were driven as much by a desire to promote long-distance trade and to engage the knights of Europe in foreign rather than domestic warfare as by religious zeal to capture Jerusalem. Regardless of motive, the beginning of the First Crusade initiated an expansion of seaborne trade and traffic across the Mediterranean. The maritime republics of Italy reaped enormous profits through transporting the Christian knights and their equipment to the Levant. And because the returning ships needed ballast to sail, trade with the East was expanded with the importation of luxury goods. Access to these highly prized wares stimulated expansion of the carrying and retail trades in Europe. In all of these transactions, the Italians benefited the most. Moreover, the complexity of this trade stimulated the development of more sophisticated mechanisms of business organization and credit, again to the profit of Italy.

Outline

I. After a period of fragmentation following the collapse of the Roman Empire, a number of states arose on the Italian Peninsula that were different in character and personality.
   A. As we’ve seen, Christianity was the glue that bonded the Italians together. The concept of a singular Christianity also provided a vocabulary for exploring different political structures and different forms of ambition in terms of religion.
   B. In many instances, these issues come together in the Crusades. The Crusades provide a moment that helps us understand exactly how Italy developed and why, as well as the role Italy played in Europe—how it became the intermediary force between East and West, the concentration of much of the continent’s wealth, and the place where experimentation could happen most easily.

II. The preaching of the First Crusade to the French nobility at Clermont by Pope Urban II in 1095 began a series of European interventions into those areas of the Near East ruled by Islam.
   A. The immediate motivation was to support the Byzantines against the Turks.
      1. The Byzantine emperor Alexius, having been catastrophically defeated at Manzikert, pleaded to the pope for help.
      2. Urban saw an opportunity to heal the recent schism between the Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Catholic) churches.
   B. Underlying this motivation was generally increasing fear and hostility toward Muslim expansion at the expense of Christian dominance.
      1. Muslim armies had conquered the Middle East and the coast of North Africa and spread into Europe.
      2. Muslim enclaves in mainland Europe were seen as dangerous and against God’s will.
      3. Muslim control of Jerusalem was a powerful source of religious resentment; for Christians, the only solution was to retake the city.
   C. By 1095, it was almost universally accepted that it was the duty of all Christians to recover the Holy Land and drive back the Muslims.

III. These events were driven as much by secular motivation as religious zeal.
   A. There was increasing pressure to engage the noble knights of Europe in foreign rather than domestic warfare.
      1. With threats from the Vikings and Magyars resolved, instability and warfare throughout Europe had been reduced. But with fewer external enemies, feudal knights began to fight one another.
      2. Moreover, stability in Europe had allowed for an expansion of trade and an increase in population, but with the rising population came a shortage of property to provide noble sons with fiefs. Europe looked to the East, to the lands controlled by Muslims, for expansion opportunities.
B. At the same time, maritime cities, such as Genoa, Pisa, and Venice, were expanding long-distance trade in the Mediterranean.
   1. With the increase in city life and population throughout the continent, these cities saw greater opportunities for selling goods, but there were also dangers: The Muslim states around the southern areas of the Mediterranean were hostile to Christian traders.
   2. Further, most of the lucrative long-distance trade with the East was managed by Muslim merchants who had no intention of permitting Christian Europeans to compete.

C. The pope saw a great Christian crusade as an opportunity to accomplish several goals at once.
   1. A crusade would further the expansion of Europe, Christianity, and trade; promote the conversion of infidels to Christianity; and export violence from Europe to an area where the violence could do some good.
   2. Military action would serve to protect and advance long-distance trade, bringing wealth back to Europe, much of which would ultimately find its way into ecclesiastical coffers.

IV. Regardless of motive, the beginning of the First Crusade initiated a significant expansion of seaborne trade and traffic across the Mediterranean.

A. The response to the First Crusade was enthusiastic.
   1. Knights, their retainers, and simple people without arms crossed the continent to embark for the Holy Land.
   2. The natural ports of departure were the Italian trading cities of Pisa, Venice, and Genoa.
   3. These cities had the ships, navigational skills, and experience to move tens of thousands of Europeans across the Mediterranean.

B. The Italian maritime republics reaped enormous profits from this venture.
   1. Secondary industry and services blossomed, including those engaged in warehousing, the provision of armor and harnessing, the sale of horses, and the provision of servants.
   2. The resultant increase in population and wealth changed the nature of the maritime states. Although these states had always been competitive, the competition was now greater because the stakes were higher. Distinctions and divisions among the states sharpened, turning them into enemies.
   3. The Italian cities also gained a great deal of knowledge from the experience of the Crusades. They learned elements of navigation and began to develop exchange rates and various laws that would help them expand their economic empire.

C. The constant contact with the Levant by Italian merchants greatly increased their wealth and opportunities.
   1. Knights and their retainers developed a taste for luxury goods they encountered in the Holy Land. The Italians had the advantage of knowing how these luxury goods could be supplied.
   2. After ferrying the knights and their equipment to the Holy Land, the ships needed cargo to serve as ballast for the return voyage.
   3. Some of this cargo consisted of religious “artifacts,” such as soil from Jerusalem, but most of it was luxury goods from the East, including spices, silks, fruit, slaves, and ceramics.

D. Another unintended consequence of the Crusades was the development of more sophisticated mechanisms of business organization and credit.
   1. Northern European knights and their followers were often forced to borrow money to travel from their estates to Jerusalem. Because the northern European economy worked largely on a manorial barter system, liquid capital was not commonly available.
   2. Those who did have available capital were Italian merchants; thus, the Italians added banking to the list of services they provided.
   3. The Italians also developed business practices and instruments to ensure that they would be able to collect loans and to enable the transfer of money to cities elsewhere in Europe.
   4. Among the innovations of Italian merchants and bankers were letters of credit, double-entry bookkeeping, and the commenda, a form of contract that allowed several investors to pool their capital.
E. Italy became a mercantile economy, based on the amassing of large amounts of wealth, which was, in many instances, simply funneled from the rest of Europe to help finance the Crusades.

1. This wealth was used to generate even greater wealth through the purchase of luxury goods that could be sold back to the Crusaders. In this way, the Italians became the economic middlemen of an entire continent.

2. Of course, the negative aspect of this activity was that it bred competition among the Italian cities that would ultimately end in warfare.

F. The Crusades also resulted in the enrichment of the church, particularly the Holy See in Rome.

1. Many knights who chose not to go on crusade felt guilty about the decision. To salve their consciences, they gave money to the church.

2. The church also saw in the Crusades an opportunity to tax the clergy in order to aid this great Christian endeavor.

V. The Crusades were not just adventures in the history of Christianity and Islam. They were, in fact, the beginning of the Italian Peninsula as we know it and the ultimate sources of wealth, competition, and diversity in Italy.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
J. Riley-Smith, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades.*

Questions to Consider:
1. Do you think the Crusades were motivated more by religious or economic interests?
2. Can the Crusades be seen to have defined how the West and Islam relate to each other up to the present day?
Lecture Four
Venice—A Maritime Republic

Scope: With the advent of the Crusades in 1095, Venice became increasingly rich and influential. By the early 13th century, it was a powerful maritime empire with fortified posts throughout the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Greek mainland. The enormous profits flowing into Venice made the wealthier citizens far richer and more influential than those not as fortunate. In 1297, the Venetian Great Council was closed to all families except those then in place. These were registered in an official genealogy called the Golden Book. Lesser citizens—not as wealthy or powerful but still important—were deemed “original citizens” and recorded in a Silver Book. They had their own privileges, but only patricians from Golden Book families could hold political office. The Venetian constitution was an elaborate structure, and elections were complex events to ensure that no group or family could subvert the republic. Because there was no land to purchase, no feudal nobility to deal with, and no mass of oppressed workers, members of the Venetian ruling elite were committed to similar goals. Trade expanded, and Venice became a stable republic, enormously rich, powerful, and densely populated.

Outline
I. With the advent of the Crusades in 1095, Venice became increasingly rich and influential. By the early 13th century, it was a powerful maritime empire with fortified posts throughout the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Greek mainland.
   A. Venice was an unusual Italian city, founded in the late 5th and 6th centuries.
      1. The original citizens of Venice chose the republic as their natural form of government. Their leader, the doge (“first duke”), was viewed as a primus inter pares (“first among equals”), someone who would provide some measure of government and leadership but could not transform the state into a monarchy.
      2. Those who founded Venice were trying to distance themselves from the chaos on the peninsula following the incursions of barbarian tribes at the end of the Roman imperial period. They realized that their protection would not come from the Italians in the west but from the Byzantines in the east.
      3. Initially, the city was protected by the Byzantine exarchate at Ravenna and by the Byzantine fleet stationed at nearby Classe.
      4. Hence, Venice identified with Constantinople and took its sovereignty from the Eastern Empire.
      5. The economy of Venice was originally based on fishing and local seaborne trading, but this trade soon expanded into the Adriatic and, eventually, deep into the Mediterranean.
   B. Although several Italian cities benefited greatly from the Crusades, Venice established a key advantage during the Fourth Crusade of 1204.
      1. Venice had been angered by the Byzantines’ seizure of the property of Venetian merchants in the city 30 years earlier.
      2. In retaliation, the Venetian doge convinced the leader of the Fourth Crusade to conquer the capital of the Byzantine Empire.
      3. The Venetians offered the Crusaders free ships and passage to the Holy Land in exchange for first capturing the Christian city of Zara in Dalmatia, then attacking Constantinople itself.
      4. The scheme worked, with the European Crusaders establishing the Latin Empire at Constantinople.
   C. The benefits to Venice of this initiative were enormous.
      1. Venice gained control of fortified trading posts and outposts in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean. Venetians were also given special privileges within Constantinople.
      2. Further, Venetians received a good part of the spoils of the Crusade and plundered rich treasures from the imperial city.
      3. Venice emerged from the Fourth Crusade as a maritime power that had the opportunity, foundation, and platform to become the dominant force in the Mediterranean.
II. The wealthy mercantile families of Venice that had been successful around the time of the Fourth Crusade realized that they could amass more wealth and focus more of their activity on increasing that wealth, as well as the power of the republic, by using the state itself as an instrument of their economic and personal ambitions.

A. In 1297, the wealthiest citizens closed the Venetian Great Council to all families except those then in place.
   1. This event, known as the Serrata, established a closed caste of merchant patricians (called “nobles”), whose members saw the state as an extension of their own mercantile and familial ambitions, as well as a clearinghouse for their own businesses.
   2. These powerful patrician families were registered in an official genealogy called the Golden Book and were accorded certain privileges and responsibilities.
   3. Lesser citizens—not as wealthy or powerful but still important—were deemed cittadini originari ("original citizens”) and recorded in a Silver Book. Members of this class filled the offices of the chancellery and, indeed, became chancellors, but they had no access to political office.

B. This separation of classes created one of the curiosities of the Venetian Republic.
   1. Both the Venetian patricians and the “original citizens” seemed to be content with their respective responsibilities.
   2. Nobles of the Great Council were not paid for their service and could not refuse to serve; thus, members of the cittadini originari were often relieved to be able to undertake paid employment.
   3. Below the level of the cittadini originari and the patricians, other inhabitants of the republic, such as the arsenalotti (“arsenal workers”), had some measure of responsibility to the state and to their jobs. Indeed, glassmakers who tried to take their craft outside of Venice were hunted down and killed by paid assassins of the republic.

III. Venice was extraordinarily stable, with an elaborate system of elections to ensure that the republic could never be subverted.

A. Up to 2,000 adult males had the privilege of sitting on the Great Council, but only those who were in the city, solvent, and not insane or felons attended.
   1. The council met in a room designed to hold 1,500 men, and the majority of its work was the election of officers, from the most minor up to the doge.
   2. The more powerful the office, the more elaborate the election and the shorter the period of appointment.
   3. The doge, whose office was largely ceremonial and without any real power, was elected for life, usually as a very old man.

B. As noted, Venice looked to the East for sovereignty.
   1. The question we investigated earlier of the difference between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines, those who sought sovereignty from the pope or the emperor, didn’t pertain in Venice, which saw its sovereignty as coming from the emperor in Constantinople.
   2. The Venetians took full advantage of their relationship with Constantinople after the Fourth Crusade, nearly monopolizing the trade between East and West and becoming one of the most powerful states in the Mediterranean.
   3. The structure of the republic helped to fulfill this ambition. Indeed, to ensure that the republic always gained from East-West trade, the trading ships were not owned by Venetian merchants. They were all made in the Venetian Arsenal in such a way that they could be transformed from cargo galleys to war galleys in just one day.
   4. The Venetians created a world that we might call omnicompetent, one in which all members of society were forced, by both custom and law, to participate. And the law, although harsh, applied equally to everyone.

IV. The myth of Venice as an ideal state with a perfect constitution was born out of the republic’s success. The reality, of course, as in all myths, was different, and there were, in fact, two attempts to overthrow the state.

A. The first attempt was made in 1310 by a group of young patricians, perhaps discontented with the period of apprenticeship required of them before they could enter service to the state.
   1. Although this rebellion quickly broke up, it terrified the Venetian patricians, who responded by establishing the much-feared Council of Ten.
2. This council was an extra-constitutional body of the most influential politicians in Venice. The council could remove any person from office, including the doge; could torture and try those it accused in secret; and could elicit information through the use of spies, all of which it did with some regularity.

3. The council established the infamous *bocche dei leoni*, “the lion’s mouth.” These were letterboxes spread throughout the city bearing the image of the lion of St. Mark. It was the obligation of every good Venetian who heard or saw something suspicious to write a declaration of the activity and place it in the *bocche dei leoni*.

B. The second attempt to overthrow the Venetian state was instigated by a wealthy, elderly doge, Marin Falier, who tried to establish himself as king in 1355. He may have believed that he could pursue the Venetian war against the Genoese much more vigorously if he did not have to negotiate his actions with the state. Falier was discovered and beheaded on the very spot where he had been crowned.

V. The Republic of Venice became an instrument of economic activity, with the success of its merchants as its primary goal, Venice owed its stability to the fact that all its inhabitants were directed toward the same purpose: the pursuit of wealth.

A. This goal allowed Venice to take on its competitors—the Genoese, the Pisans, and others—for the single purpose of ensuring that Venetian wealth would not be compromised. It was inevitable, then, that this stable, ambitious, warlike maritime state would run into conflict with its fellow maritime states in the peninsula.

B. Fundamental differences in the nature of these states would also become apparent.

1. Venice was the stable mercantile republic in which the merchants formed the government, used the state in their own interest, and saw themselves as a singular class with a singular ideology.

2. Genoa was a fractious state where the nobles fought amongst themselves to gain greater advantage and, ultimately, defeat others.

3. The differences in the social and political structure of Venice and its fellow maritime republics ultimately worked in favor of Venice, which became a model of the successful republican state. Its economic victory and, ultimately, its military victory can perhaps be traced precisely to its constitutional structure.

C. The Republic of Venice was not an accidental superpower in the Mediterranean; rather, it resulted from a series of decisions and structures that allowed it to fulfill its own ambitions and the ambitions of its most prominent citizens. But these policies put Venice on the frontline of the struggle with Islam.

1. As we will see in a future lecture, Venice would become the vanguard in the clash of Christian and Muslim civilizations.

2. Venetian interests in the Mediterranean were determined by economic power, long-distance trade, and maritime control. When these interests were challenged, by the Turks in particular, the Venetians had no choice but to resist.

3. Venice also became the power that protected much of southern Europe from the Turks for centuries. The Venetians sacrificed blood and treasure to protect not just Europe but their own civilization, which was predicated on control of the Mediterranean.

4. Ironically, Venice was also a tolerant city, in which Islam and variations of Christianity could be practiced as long as the adherents abided by certain rules. When the Venetians felt that they were losing this control and that the wealth of the republic and the power of its citizens were in jeopardy, they stood firm. Venice then became the frontline of Christian Europe against a powerful and resurgent Islam.

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

**Supplementary Reading:**

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Questions to Consider:
1. The Venetian Republic lasted for 1,100 years (697–1797). Why is such political longevity so rare in the West?
2. Venice harbored a Turkish warehouse and Orthodox churches and communities. Account for this anomaly in the age of the Crusades.
Scope: The great success of the Venetian Republic eventually changed its nature and policy: The city was so large that it could no longer feed itself, while it increasingly felt vulnerable on its landward frontier. After defeating Genoa in 1380, Venice pursued a policy of expansion, building a large state on the Italian Peninsula, the terraferma, by conquering such ancient cities as Verona, Vicenza, and Padua. Political crisis came in 1509 when the Venetians were crushed at Agnadello by an international alliance combined against them, and the conquered cities on the mainland reaffirmed their independence. A good deal of energy and resources were required for Venice to recapture these territories. Recognizing that the high return on their maritime investments was forever over and determined to avoid any future disintegration of the terraferma, the merchant nobles in the Venetian Great Council for the first time began to invest heavily in landed estates on the mainland, transforming themselves into rentier aristocrats. Venice remained the center of political life, but there came a marked shift in values and social mores, influenced by the pervasive Renaissance styles and Humanist principles of the mainland culture.

Outline

I. The great success of the Venetian Republic eventually changed its nature and policies, inducing the city to become Italian for the first time.
   A. Venice had become so densely populated that it was unable to feed itself.
   B. Although it could not be attacked easily by sea, Venice was vulnerable to land attack.
   C. Further, Venice was threatened by powerful states, such as Milan, that were expanding on the Lombard Plain toward the Adriatic, as well as the Holy Roman Empire, which claimed some of the territories that the Venetians had either taken or desired at the top of the Istrian Peninsula.
   D. What ultimately persuaded the Venetians to become Italians was their victory over Genoa in the War of Chioggia. This victory determined which state would control most of the Mediterranean trade.

II. After defeating Genoa in 1381, Venice pursued a policy of expansion onto the mainland (terraferma).
   A. The creation of a terraferma empire would protect the landward flank of the city, the passes through the Alps, and the trading routes that the Venetians desired to maintain. A land empire would also ensure a cheap and easily accessible food supply for the city.
   B. The Venetians recognized the growing importance of overland trade routes across the Alps and up the Rhine into northern Europe. If those trading routes should be cut or if a great power should impose taxes or fees for the movement of goods across their territories, then Venetian profits would be greatly curtailed.
   C. Thus, the Venetians realized that it was in their best interest to abandon the policy of staying aloof from Italian affairs and looking only to the sea as their source of wealth and protection.
   D. The first imperative was to build a large state on the Italian Peninsula by conquering the ancient cities of the Veneto. This was territory in northeastern Italy that stretched to the Lombard Plain in the west; its cities included Verona, Vicenza, and Padua.
      1. These cities had enjoyed rich cultures and powerful spheres of influence, especially Verona, where members of the Ghinelline Della Scala family were vassals of the Holy Roman Emperor.
      2. With the fall of Padua in 1405, Venice acquired not just another great city but also the University of Padua. This acquisition launched Venice into the Humanistic world of 15th-century Italy.
   E. Venetian control of these cities was characteristically high-handed.
      1. The Venetian attitude toward the republic’s outposts on the Greek Peninsula and the islands of the Aegean and Mediterranean had been that of a conquering power. Venetian governors and soldiers were used to suppress the local populations and authorities.
      2. In applying this model to the subject territories of the terraferma, the Venetians made a mistake. The territories in the Veneto, which had their own rich traditions and civic pride, saw the Venetians as oppressors and tyrants.
Moreover, the local nobles, who had been the courtiers and officers of powerful families, now found themselves cut off from political office. In turn, the nobles stirred up the peasants, who had seen their quality of life decline.

F. Other powers that were uncomfortable with Venetian expansion included Milan, the Holy Roman Empire, and the papacy.
   1. Milan saw its own future in creating a territorial state across the Lombard Plain but realized that the expansion of Venice could stand in its way.
   2. The Holy Roman Empire saw the creation of the terraferma empire as a threat to its own expansion and control of the passes through the Alps that led to the Rhine and central Germany. Further, the empire had already witnessed the Venetians taking the March of Treviso and the Istrian Peninsula.
   3. The papacy controlled a block of land from one side of the Italian Peninsula almost to the other. As the Venetians began to expand down the Adriatic coast from Venice, they took cities that the Holy See had claimed as well, such as Cervia.

III. The crisis arrived in 1509, when the Venetians were crushed by a significant international alliance combined against them.
   
   A. Angry at Venetian imperial ambition and annoyed with Venetian arrogance, the League of Cambrai (an alliance led by the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire but including many European and Italian powers) declared war on the republic. The Venetian armies were shattered at the Battle of Agnadello in 1509.
   
   B. The city of Venice itself was saved only by the change in policy of Pope Julius II.
      1. Julius realized that the complete destruction of Venice would remove the most powerful buffer state in northern Italy against northern invasion.
      2. He switched sides to become a defender of Venice, forming the Holy League against his former allies.
      3. Venice was saved as a result, but the trauma of the defeat and humiliation hung over the political classes of the republic.
   
   C. Agnadello was not the only lethal blow experienced by Venice.
      1. The economic preeminence of Venice was already threatened to the point that many merchants realized the period of easy wealth had forever passed.
      2. The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 and the Turkish assault on Venetian trading posts and outposts throughout the Mediterranean and Aegean had been sapping Venetian profits and confidence for half a century.
      3. The Venetians had lost the privileges they had gained in 1204 and now faced competition from other Italian and Islamic merchants, as well as harassment from Muslim pirates and the Turkish fleet.
   
   D. In some ways, the Portuguese were a greater threat to the Venetian economy than the Turks.
      1. The Portuguese realized that the Venetian monopoly of the Mediterranean would make it difficult for them to sustain long-distance trade.
      2. Led by Prince Henry the Navigator, Portugal was a crusading nation. Prince Henry formed a school to train seamen and began the movement of Christians further south down the African coast after colonizing parts of North Africa and establishing fortified trading posts.
      3. The Portuguese were motivated by a desire to link up with Prester John, a Christian emperor thought to be somewhere in Africa, to enable an attack against the Muslims on two fronts. Of course, the Portuguese also wanted to see if Africa could be circumnavigated, a goal that was accomplished by Vasco da Gama in 1497.
   
   E. Da Gama’s accomplishment was the final blow to the economic hegemony of Venice.
      1. Now, the powers on the Atlantic seaboard could sail from Lisbon or the ports of Spain directly to India or China, set up their own trading posts, and avoid the Mediterranean altogether.
      2. Ironically, the Venetian monopoly wasn’t destroyed only by the Turks but by their fellow Christians, who were also looking for a Crusaders’ victory.

IV. These threats fundamentally altered the Venetian character.
   
   A. The eastern Mediterranean was now a dangerous place because of the Turks, whose fleets were seemingly invincible and who, when they captured Venetian admirals, would skin them alive.
   
   B. In addition, Arabic and Saracen pirates were licensed by the Turks to prey on Christian shipping. These
pirates, including the feared Barbarossa, had their ports in what is now Albania and North Africa and attacked the Venetian mercantile fleets with seeming impunity.

C. Venetian patricians began to question the wisdom of sending their sons to sea. The *cursus honorum* of the Venetian nobility, the practice of giving patrician sons command of galleys as a sort of apprenticeship to authority, began to pass away.

D. The enormous profits to be made in shipping that had been virtually guaranteed to Venetians simply evaporated. Profits could be made, but now Venetian merchants had to question whether the potential for earnings was worth the risk.

E. The *terraferma* empire provided the opportunity for Venetian patricians to cease being merchants and to become *rentier* aristocrats, landowners who could buy vast estates and rely on the safe but low-yielding ground rents that came from them.

F. This flight of capital from trade into the Venetian *terraferma* empire was powerfully supported by the Venetian state.

1. Through intermarriage and social connections, the Venetian landlords and local nobility eventually fused.
2. Seats in the Great Council were sold for vast sums, many going to great families from the *terraferma*.
3. In this way, Venice became more than just a mercantile empire and truly an Italian state.

V. With this encouragement from the state, the *terraferma* empire began to grow and prosper and, in turn, influence the capital, the *città dominante*.

A. The rich connections with Italy of such cities as Padua, Verona, and Vicenza, as well as their involvement with Humanism and Italian Renaissance art, were now transmitted directly to Venice, a city that previously had looked to the East and much older traditions.

B. The Italian Renaissance came to Venice, which began to look more like an Italian city and less like an extension of Byzantine rule. The great buildings that we associate with the 16th century and Venice, the work of Jacopo Tatti (known as Sansovino) and Andrea Palladio, began to rise.

C. The Venetian personality changed as the city’s architecture and style changed. The Palladian villas reflected the new rentier mentality and offered a world of pleasure. The palaces on the Grand Canal continued to be built and decorated, and there was an element of trade in most of the families, but the future of Venice was now with Italy.

D. This movement toward the Italian mainland and the emergence of a rentier economy also changed the values of the Venetian nobility.

1. The sons of the nobility were no longer sent to sea but, instead, went to the University of Padua.
2. The achievement of Vasco da Gama and the experience of Agnadello taught the Venetians that their wealth and power would not last forever. Venice became a city of pleasure, its citizens bent on enjoying what they had while it lasted.

E. To be sure, the Venetians still saw their primary role as the vanguard of Christianity. Indeed, until 1797, when Napoleon ended the republic, Venice maintained its heroic stance, its wealth, and its beauty, but it wasn’t the Venice that had taken Constantinople in 1204 and it wasn’t the Venice that had defeated Genoa in the War of Chioggia.

**Essential Reading:**


**Supplementary Reading:**


**Questions to Consider:**

1. Did Venice make the right decision in seeking a territorial empire on the Italian mainland?
2. Are there any mechanisms that could confidently be said to reconcile a conquered people with a victorious imperial power?
Lecture Six

Genoa, La Superba

Scope: Genoa, the birthplace of Columbus, was an important port from ancient times because of its excellent harbor. It endured a long history of war against the Muslims, ultimately combining forces with Pisa to drive the enemy from Sardinia in 1016. Genoa was then free to establish trade routes throughout the Mediterranean, but it was the Crusades that ensured for Genoa spectacular wealth. Again allied with Pisa, Genoa assisted the papacy in its political and religious ambitions, and the pope gave the two cities joint control over Corsica and Sardinia. However, the division of Sardinia caused increasing tension that broke into open warfare when Genoa, in 1240, supported the pope over the emperor. Pisa, a Ghibelline state, used this as a pretext to attack the Genoese fleet, defeating it in 1241. Now mortal enemies, Genoa and Pisa continued their conflict until 1284, when Genoa conclusively defeated its former ally. That left just Genoa and Venice to struggle for complete control of Mediterranean maritime commerce. Both powers won major victories, but in 1298, Genoa decisively defeated Venice, although the long years of war had left Genoa weak and internally divided.

Outline

I. During the Middle Ages, Genoa established control over the Mediterranean, often in competition with Venice and other maritime powers.
   A. Genoa, the birthplace of Columbus, was the most significant seaport in Cisalpine Gaul among the Romans.
      1. The city had survived the collapse of Rome, the ensuing barbarian invasions, and sacking by the Carthaginians during the Punic War.
      2. After the collapse of Rome, Genoa, like Venice, recognized Orthodox Byzantium as one of its protectors.
      3. Charlemagne brought Genoa under the rule of Milan as part of the Frankish Empire in the 8th century. With the fall of this empire, however, and a second period of instability, Genoa had little protection and was sacked by Saracens in the 10th century.
      4. The Genoese were ultimately successful in driving the Muslims from the island of Sardinia. The two islands of Sardinia and Corsica, just off the coast of Italy and France in the western Mediterranean, were important as staging posts and as buffers to ensure that the continent of Europe was safe from Saracen power, which continually threatened to break out of the Iberian Peninsula.
   B. By 1052, Genoa emerged as an independent commune, a self-governing state separate from the authorities of emperor and pope but dependent in one way or another on both of them.
      1. Internal friction within the republic resulted in civic authority being divided between a podestà, that is, a military leader usually connected to the nobility, and a captain of the people who represented the general population, the popolani.
      2. Thus, the divisions between the nobles and the popular faction, as well as between Guelfs and Ghibellines, were formalized, sapping the energy and stability of the state for centuries to come.
      3. As in most states, the Ghibellines had closer connections with the nobility, while the Guelfs were seen as the faction of “new men.”

II. It was the Crusades and the conflict with Venice that ultimately determined the future of Genoa, much more so at this point than its own divided, unstable government.
   A. Genoa and Pisa were initially allied, taking common cause against the Saracens of the western Mediterranean. As the two great maritime powers on the west coast of Italy, they saw it as their responsibility to be at the forefront of Christian protection against the Saracens in Europe and in the western Mediterranean.
      1. Both powers recognized the strategic importance of the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. Genoa and Pisa had established trading posts and connections with the south of France around the port of Marseilles, with Barcelona in Spain, and elsewhere that required protection.
      2. The success of Genoa and Pisa in driving the Muslims from Sardinia prompted the papacy to give the two powers joint control over both Sardinia and Corsica. They were to rule these together as Christian
states and fortified outposts, not only against the Saracens, but in their own interests as trading republics.

**B.** The First Crusade (1095–1099) saw the Genoese as leaders in the carrying trade between Europe and the Holy Land.

1. In compensation for their participation, the Genoese secured ports in Syria and Palestine to service their long-distance luxury trade with the East, in direct competition with Venice.
2. Genoa also received important commercial privileges from the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem.
3. Together with Venice and Pisa, Genoa became a great maritime and mercantile power, combining a lucrative carrying trade with naval supremacy and close economic ties with the Levant.

**C.** Genoa, still in alliance with Pisa, assisted the papacy in the suppression of heresy and in its political ambitions, and the pope reaffirmed the joint control of Genoa and Pisa over Corsica and Sardinia.

1. The Genoese were fortunate inasmuch as they also received recognition from the emperor.
2. In the complex world of Guelf and Ghibelline, Genoa seemed to have struck a balance between the pope and the emperor, winning recognition of its ambitions from both factions by the beginning of the 13th century.
3. Genoa was beginning to emerge as not just a competitor to Venice but a state that perhaps could even best the Venetians should warfare break out.

**III.** The division of Sardinia caused increasing tension with Pisa, and the competition between the two states erupted into open warfare in 1240.

**A.** Ghibelline Pisa, an ally of the imperial party, used the struggle between the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor as a pretext to attack the Genoese fleet. The war initially went badly for Genoa, with Pisa decisively defeating her rival in 1241 and destroying the Genoese fleet. Thereafter, Genoa and Pisa were mortal enemies.

**B.** The conflict with Pisa was not settled by the Pisan victory over the Genoese. The humiliation of Genoa fortified it in its resolve to defeat the Pisans and to restore its preeminence in the western Mediterranean. In 1284, the Genoese did just that.

1. The tables had turned dramatically because of the rise of Florence and Tuscany.
2. As long as Florence was divided between Guelf and Ghibelline, the Pisans could act freely. By 1284, however, Florence had grown in influence and needed a seaport for its international trade.
3. The defeat of Pisa in 1284 came at a time when the Pisans could not recover because they were fighting, in effect, on two fronts: defending themselves against Florence and Tuscany and against Genoa.

**C.** By this time, Amalfi had declined, leaving just Genoa and Venice to struggle for complete control of Mediterranean maritime commerce.

**IV.** Venice recognized that Genoa was not only a growing power but also that it was the only possible threat to Venetian control of long-distance trade.

**A.** Genoa had been so consumed with war against Pisa that it was unable to recover sufficiently to build a fleet that could challenge the Venetians. The Venetians took advantage of this situation, attacking and defeating the Genoese twice, in 1257 and 1258.

**B.** Genoa’s response was aggressive diplomacy.

1. The Fourth Crusade in 1204 had given rule of Byzantium to the family of Baldwin of Flanders, although the original Greek dynasty still made a claim to the throne.
2. The Genoese realized that the family of Baldwin of Flanders and the Latin Empire of Constantinople were wildly unpopular within the city and the remains of the Byzantine Empire. The most effective way of defeating Venice was to ensure that Genoa had some measure of control in the return of the Greek dynasty and the exile of the Latins.
3. The Genoese supported the Greek claimant, who was returned to the throne, and were greatly rewarded. The Eastern Empire granted to Genoa the same trading concessions and opportunities previously enjoyed by Venice alone.
4. Genoa was now competing directly with Venetian interests, making war inevitable.

**V.** The two great maritime states were approximately evenly matched.
A. Both powers won victories, but they were minor. Then, in 1298, under Admiral Doria, one of Genoa’s great heroes of the sea, the Genoese decisively defeated the Venetians at Curzola.

B. The cost of the struggle with Venice—the expense of rebuilding the fleet and protecting and maintaining Genoese trade routes and lines of communication with the East—proved to be particularly high. Once more, divisions emerged in Genoa along lines of class and occupation.
   1. Obviously, those who would benefit most from victory over Venice and the monopoly on trade would be the aristocratic, wealthy merchants. The popular party, the popolani, though, were the ones who would be sacrificed should Venice again grow strong.
   2. The city was divided between two factions, those who wanted to make any sacrifice necessary to pursue the war against Venice and those who did not.
   3. This class division and the resulting instability, to some extent, is the curse of Genoese history. The great strength of Venice, in contrast, was its ability to establish a policy that would work for all Venetian citizens simultaneously and a government that would speak for all members of the republic.
   4. The Venetians entered the war united and with confidence; the Genoese entered the war divided.

C. Direct naval and economic competition in the Aegean and the Greek mainland, but mostly at sea, from one end of the Mediterranean to the other, meant that compromise between the Venetians and the Genoese was impossible. The two great navies came together in the War of Chioggia of 1380–1381.
   1. The Genoese had sailed up the Adriatic coast as far as the fishing village of Chioggia, just down the coast from Venice.
   2. Initially, the Genoese were clearly winning the Battle of Chioggia, and it looked as though the Venetian fleet would be destroyed.
   3. At the very last moment, a fleet arrived to support the Venetians with reinforcements, turning the tide and allowing the Venetians to take the initiative and destroy the Genoese once and for all.

D. Although Genoa would remain an important mercantile center and maintain a fleet to service its now-reduced trade, the struggle for supremacy was lost. Venice had emerged as the dominant sea power in the Mediterranean.

E. The defeat by Venice didn’t end Genoa’s internal instability.
   1. Attempts to create a government modeled on that of Venice actually worked in Genoa in the 1330s, but the administration soon frayed as a result of class divisions in the city and internal divisions among the factions themselves.
   2. Families in the aristocratic faction fought one another for control of the government and control over the fleet and the carrying trade.
   3. Unlike the Venetians, who used the Great Council and the instrument of the republic to create a singular vision, the Genoese took defeat and ambition as a personal or a kin issue. The resulting feuds left the city chaotic and impossible to rule.
   4. Ultimately, the French, the Milanese, and other dynasties attempted to impose order in Genoa. The republic itself became relatively impotent, seriously divided, and greatly weakened.
   5. There would be no resurgence of Genoa before the 16th century. Genoa could not regain its position and challenge the Venetians simply because it was unable to focus its energy in one place.

F. The great opportunity of Genoa had been wasted in struggling against its fellow Christians and Italians.
   1. The possibility for Europe, Italy, and Christianity to sink deep roots into the Mediterranean to control the Turks was left to the Venetians alone, and the history of the Mediterranean becomes, then, the history of Venice.
   2. The history of Genoa becomes the history, not of a great mercantile power, but of a bank.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
K. Fleet, Europe and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State: The Merchants of Genoa and Turkey.
Questions to Consider:
1. Why was the lucrative trade with the East seen as a life-and-death competition between the maritime powers of the peninsula?
2. What weakened Genoa was its internal division, something the Venetian Republic did not experience. Are there lessons to be learned from this for modern states?
Lecture Seven
Bankers and Dukes

Scope: To restore unity, the constitution of Genoa was restructured as a republic, and in 1339, the first doge, Simon Boccanegra, was elected for life. Boccanegra revitalized Genoa, expanding the city and defeating the Turks, but factional strife returned, with some doges serving less than a single day before relinquishing power. This situation led to the constant intervention of foreign powers, particularly after 1380, when Venice decisively defeated the Genoese. The economic power of Genoa was sustained, however, through the creation of the Bank of St. George in 1408. The bank was almost a state within the state, funding the public debt, floating loans to foreign princes, issuing coins, raising armies, and even accrediting ambassadors. French influence in Genoa led to much conflict with the Habsburgs; as a consequence, the city was captured and sacked by the Spaniards in 1522. The Genoese hero Andrea Doria drove out the Habsburgs in 1527 and, by the next year, became, in effect, the uncrowned duke of Genoa. But the Genoese century, which followed Andrea Doria’s restoration of sovereignty, owed as much to the bank as to the admiral’s brilliant leadership.

Outline

I. To understand why Genoa could lose its place as the dominant maritime power in Europe to Venice, an enemy that the Genoese had crushed in 1298, it is necessary to examine the internal workings of Genoese politics.
   A. From the beginning, Genoa’s greatest weakness was its lack of internal stability and cohesion.
      1. Constitutional changes were introduced in the 14th century to try to address the situation, partly as a consequence of the wars with Venice. The state was restructured as a republic on the obviously successful Venetian model, and the office of doge was created.
      2. In 1339, the first doge, Simon Boccanegra (d. 1363), was elected for life. Boccanegra revitalized Genoa, expanding the city, reestablishing trade connections, defeating the Turks, and putting Genoa back into the Mediterranean as a powerful player.
      3. With Boccanegra’s death, however, factional strife returned, with some doges serving less than a single day before being forced to relinquish power.
   B. The political problems of Genoa seemed insurmountable.
      1. Two competing factions, led by two great noble families, were evenly matched but represented different interests.
      2. The aristocratic faction, led by the Adorno family, was loosely associated with the Italian Ghibellines.
      3. The popular party, led by the Fregoso family, was allied to the Guelfs.
      4. These two families and their supporters alternated in power, always ensuring that the policies of one would be overturned with the election of the other.
      5. The resulting political chaos made any kind of reasonable accommodation difficult if not impossible.

II. This instability, along with the importance of Genoa, led to the constant intervention of foreign powers.
   A. Genoa was the major seaport on the Ligurian coast of Italy and the point of entry for foreigners, who could then use it to expand at the expense of other Italian states close by. The geographical importance of Genoa, as well as the continuing division between Guelf and Ghibelline, ensured that Genoa would not be able to maintain its independence for long.
   B. As early as 1311, the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII demanded and was granted the right to rule Genoa for 20 years. After Henry’s death in 1313, the Guelf party in Genoa called in the support of the French House of Anjou to counter the Ghibelline claims of the ruler of Milan.
   C. The result was almost a complete factional breakdown over the question of who would rule Genoa—the Guelfs or the Ghibellines, the aristocrats or the popular party, the imperial party from Germany or the French party?
   D. Venice renewed its war with Genoa, and the defeat of the Genoese by the Venetians occasioned a Ghibelline victory. The House of Anjou had, to some extent, promised protection, but that protection was now seen as worthless. Victory in the city was handed back to the Ghibellines, the House of Visconti, and
the rule of Milan.

E. When Venice decisively defeated Genoa at Chioggia in 1380, the Genoese responded by surrendering to foreign rulers.
   2. The marquis of Monferrato, a small state between Lombardy and Liguria, was in command from 1409–1413.
   3. The duke of Milan held power from 1458–1461 and 1499–1512.
   4. Clearly, the ability of the Genoese to rule themselves had collapsed.

III. The economic power of Genoa was sustained, however, through the creation of the Banco di San Giorgio (Bank of St. George) in 1408 by a consortium of rich merchants.
   A. The bank was a mechanism that existed to obviate the instability and chaos of the republican government and to protect private wealth.
      1. The Bank of St. George became, essentially, a state within a state and the center of Genoese life.
      2. The bank minted its own coins, accredited its own ambassadors to foreign countries, and even raised armies in its own name. It provided an element of stability to Genoa with its singular policy directed toward making money for its investors and founders.
   B. Even the bank, however, could not control all the forces surrounding it, especially in a world of two opposing empires: the Christian empire of the West and the growing Turkish Empire of the East.
      1. The Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453 had as devastating an effect on Genoa as it had on Venice. Whatever protection the rich and important Genoese mercantile empire had enjoyed around the Black Sea now simply evaporated.
      2. Turkish expansionism eliminated the Genoese trading posts around the Black Sea and other mercantile privileges that had been protected by the Byzantines since 1261.
      3. The most painful blow was the fall of Caffa, Genoa’s most important trading post, to the Turks in 1475. This event marked the end of the maritime empire of Genoa.
   C. With Genoa’s decline, the Bank of St. George became extraordinarily important. The bank was also seen as a rich prize for other powers, which would be more interested in taking advantage of Genoa’s wealth and strategic location than in trying to solve Genoese problems.

IV. French influence in Genoa was particularly powerful. By the 16th century, this influence had taken on dangerous geopolitical implications.
   A. The king of France, Francis I, was anxious to impose Valois hegemony on the continent. He was, of course, confronted by Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, head of the House of Habsburg, and king of Spain.
   B. The duel between Habsburg and Valois was one of the recurring dramas of Italian history because the battle was fought in Italy.
      1. Both the French and the Habsburgs had competing claims, usually on such cities as Milan and Naples, but the conflict ran much deeper than that.
      2. The battle was, in some ways, the old ideological argument of Guelf versus Ghibelline, but it now took place in a world that had become much more dangerous because of the intervention of forces from beyond the Alps.
   C. Through the Spanish kingdom and the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V had designs on Italy that could be backed by great powers. He also knew that the question of Genoa would have to be confronted because of its strategic location.
      1. France had controlled Genoa from 1515, and as long as the French were in Genoa, they had an outpost from which they could supply their armies and provide additional troops, as well as a place to retreat in case of danger.
      2. Charles realized that to control north-central Italy, he would have to take Genoa. In 1522, the city fell to the House of Habsburg and was sacked. For the next five years, Genoa was garrisoned and became an extension of Habsburg rule.
   D. In 1527, Andrea Doria, with help from the French, succeeded in driving the Habsburgs out of Genoa.

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1. Doria was a former pirate, an admiral, and an aristocrat from one of the great families of Genoa.

2. Full Genoese sovereignty was restored under Doria, but he realized that the factional disputes within the city would always offer an opportunity for the intervention of one of the great powers.

3. Doria’s plan was to restructure the government of the republic so that it reflected much more realistically the power within the state. In accomplishing this goal, he became, essentially, a dictator.

4. Doria refused the doge’s crown and, in fact, abolished the office, realizing that it had been a source of factional maneuvering.

5. The admiral created a new ducal office that held power for only two years. This doge was to be elected only by the mercantile nobility of Genoa, who would sit in a Great Council styled after that of Venice.

6. The popular election of the doge thus ceased, with the common people no longer having a strong voice in the government. As we will see, this movement away from popular governments toward governments by oligarchy will become a recurring theme in Italy.

E. Despite his obligations to France, Doria saw that the future of Europe was with the Habsburg and their Spanish dominions. He broke his ties to France, made peace with the Habsburgs, and joined with them. In return, he was given the office of Supreme Admiral of the Habsburg fleets.

F. The Bank of St. George had succeeded under foreign intervention and was now recognized as the essence of a new Genoese empire that would be based on its enormous reserves, financial acumen, contacts, and political influence. Because of the Habsburg connection, the Bank of St. George became the essential banking instrument of the Habsburg Empire.

1. Keep in mind that the Habsburg Empire was also the empire of the New World, and the vast amounts of gold and silver flowing into Europe often passed through the Bank of St. George.

2. The bank also assumed the public debts of nations and transferred money across the Habsburg Empire.

G. The result of Doria’s statesmanship was the so-called Genoese century. This period encompassed the world of the Baroque, the world of the patrician palaces along the Via Garibaldi, the world in which Van Dyck and other artists painted luxurious portraits of members of the great families. These portraits reflect the Genoese century and the power and wealth of the families that commissioned them.

V. As mentioned earlier, Genoa is one of the most understudied of the Italian cities, partly because of its complexity, but Genoa must be recognized for its great contributions to Italian and European history and culture, as well as its links to North America.

A. Of course, Genoa was the city of Christopher Columbus, but it was also the city where Marco Polo was held as a prisoner and from which Giuseppe Garibaldi set sail to liberate Italy and begin the War of the Risorgimento. Garibaldi’s close collaborator and friend, the republican Giuseppe Mazzini, was a native of Genoa.

B. Genoa was the port from which millions of Italian immigrants sailed to Australia, the United States, Canada, and Argentina, contributing much to the creation of lands in the New World.

C. Genoa had begun as a great maritime empire, but because of its own internal confusion, had fallen into anarchy; it was saved by the financial institution of a bank and the creation of a new kind of state by Andrea Doria.

1. In some ways, Genoa becomes a cautionary tale: To what extent should freedom be limited for financial advantage and stability?

2. The wealth of a small group of citizens in Genoa was often made at the expense of large numbers of their fellows who had been frozen out of government and excluded from political and economic activity.

Essential Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Genoa lost its maritime empire and naval power but maintained its economic power through the Bank of St. George. Can you think of other examples where military power was lost but economic power remained?
2. Even in the face of complete catastrophe, the classes in Genoa could not cooperate. Why do political or social factions everywhere risk everything rather than compromise with their opponents?
Lecture Eight
Pisa

Scope: Pisa functioned as an important papal ally during the Crusades; however, when it was officially organized as a free, self-governing commune in 1162, it switched from Guelf to Ghibelline allegiance. After falling out with Genoa over shared control of the Mediterranean islands, Pisa was disastrously defeated at Meloria in 1284. Recovery was difficult because of the growing ambitions of Florence, the Guelf power located upstream. Florence ultimately captured Pisa in 1406, thereby acquiring its first secure seaport. Although circumstances allowed Pisa independence for a brief time after 1494, the Florentines starved the city into submission in 1509. Thereafter, the history of Pisa is that of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Still, the Medici rulers made significant contributions to the city by strengthening the university and reestablishing Pisa’s role as a sea power. At the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, the Pisans participated heroically in the Christian victory against the Turks. Notwithstanding these triumphs, the silting of the harbor and the Medici’s construction of the alternative port of Livorno turned this once great città marinara into a quiet, provincial university town.

Outline

I. Pisa was once one of the great maritime states of Italy, but by the end of the Middle Ages, Genoa and Venice had become triumphant, and Pisa had been left far behind.
   A. Pisa was a Roman foundation that enjoyed an excellent harbor at the mouth of the Arno River. Both Pisa and Genoa had ports on the Ligurian Sea, which faced the islands of Sardinia and Corsica and gave access to the southern coast of France and the coast of Spain.
   B. The Saracens had colonized the islands of the western Mediterranean and used them as the basis to attack Christian shipping. The Pisans and Genoese cooperated initially to drive out the Saracens at the request of the pope and to further their own economic interests.
   C. Allied with Genoa, the Pisans struggled throughout the Mediterranean against the Saracens. In 1016, the Saracens were driven off Sardinia, and the pope rewarded the two powers with joint control of the island.
      1. Rather than having the Pisans and Genoese fight each other, the pope saw the advantage for the papacy and for Christianity if the two states cooperated against the Islamic powers in the inland sea.
      2. In 1077, the Pisans and Genoese were given joint control over Corsica. Together, they were to control the seaward route into the southern coast of France and the coast of Spain.
   D. Although it switched from Guelf to Ghibelline allegiance when it was officially organized as a free, self-governing commune in 1162, Pisa continued as an important papal ally during the Crusades.
      1. The Pisans did extraordinarily well from the Crusades, bringing in wealth that allowed for the construction of the remarkable complex of ecclesiastical buildings around the Campo Santo.
      2. At this time, the Cathedral of Pisa, the Baptistery, and the campanile, or bell tower—the Leaning Tower of Pisa—were built.
      3. From the Levant, the Pisans brought back an architectural decoration—an alternating design of light and dark marble—that was applied to the cathedral complex around the Campo Santo and to other complexes elsewhere in Italy.

II. Events over the next century saw the extinction of Pisa’s attempt to become a great Mediterranean power on the model of its rivals, Genoa and Venice.
   A. Unlike Genoa and Venice, Pisa never established a network of trading posts in the eastern Mediterranean; instead, Pisa concentrated on the western Mediterranean, the coast of North Africa, and the southern part of Italy. Thus, the Pisans never had the opportunity to reap enormous profits by making connections with the East.
   B. This policy linked the Pisans too closely to the Holy Roman Empire.
      1. The emperors who came into Italy often needed maritime support, which the Pisans provided to gain some measure of advantage should the Ghibellines ultimately win in the battle with the Guelfs.
2. In 1137, this policy seemed to work. The Pisans gave their fleet to the Holy Roman Emperor Lothair II, who wanted to establish imperial power in the south of Italy. The Pisan fleet destroyed Amalfi, removing it from the competition of the maritime empires.

3. However, the removal of Amalfi was not to Pisa’s advantage alone; the Genoese and the Venetians had also lost a competitor.

4. This action cemented Pisa once and for all in the Ghibelline orbit at a time when the Guelfs were beginning to rise.

C. It was the terrible series of wars between Pisa and Genoa, though, that ultimately sapped the authority, wealth, and confidence of the Pisans.

1. As we’ve said, once Pisa and Genoa had driven the Saracens from the islands of Sardinia and Corsica, the two powers began to fight over the spoils and over joint rule.

2. The Genoese opened hostilities with a naval attack on Porto Pisano in 1126.

3. The bitter rivalry between Genoa and Pisa was finally determined at the Battle of Meloria in 1284, when the Pisans were decisively defeated by the Genoese fleet.

4. Pisa had been counting on Corsica and Sardinia to develop its western Mediterranean trade. Without these outposts, recovery for Pisa would be difficult.

D. Economic recovery was further hampered by the growing local ambitions of Florence, the Guelf power located upstream from Pisa.

1. The Florentines needed a port from which to ship their vast production of cloth to northern Europe, and Pisa’s location at the mouth of the Arno, Florence’s river, made it the obvious target.

2. Pisa had supported the Tuscan Ghibellines, led by Siena and Florentine exiles, against the Guelf faction, participating in the Battle of Montaperti (1260), at which the Florentines were disastrously defeated.

3. As a result, the Florentines began not just to covet Pisa as a port but to hate the Pisans as a people.

4. Pisa was forced to spend its accumulated wealth in landward defense against Florence, rather than in rebuilding its fleets.

III. The Florentine conquest of Pisa was, in many ways, inevitable.

A. Pisan commerce had already declined. After Meloria, Genoa picked up Pisa’s trade routes, and other cities, especially Barcelona, began to serve the markets that the Pisans had hoped to monopolize.

B. As it had in Genoa, the internal situation in Pisa became chaotic. Complete defeat in war, economic decline, and lack of confidence gave rise to factionalism and political instability.

C. Ultimately, a great aristocrat of Tuscany—Count Ugolino della Gherardesca—assumed the authority of capitano del popolo, although he bore the shame of having fled the Battle of Meloria with his fleet.

1. Ugolino is perhaps best known from Canto IX of the Inferno, in which Dante sustains the myth of Ugolino as the cannibal count.

2. Initially, Ugolino shared power with the Ghibelline leader in Pisa, who ironically, was the archbishop of Pisa. When tensions arose between the two, Ugolino lost the power struggle and was sentenced to be starved to death with his sons and grandsons.

3. According to the myth, Ugolino’s sons and grandsons requested that he eat them to maintain his strength in the hopes that the capitano would be released and could overthrow the archbishop.

4. In 2002, an Italian archaeologist/anthropologist discovered the bones of Ugolino, his children, and his grandchildren and found no evidence of cannibalism.

IV. As happens so often in the history of Italian city-states, a situation that seemed to be insupportable and tragic worsened.

A. Around 1327, the emperor Louis IV, also known as Louis the Bavarian, crossed the Alps in order to install himself in Rome and to launch a new age of imperial and Ghibelline power.

1. Despite their Ghibelline allegiance, the Pisans refused Louis admission to the city; they realized that in submitting to Louis, the city would become an enemy of the pope.
2. Louis besieged the city and, ultimately, starved it into submission. He entered the city and stayed there with his army for two years.

3. Pisa was finally forced to pay Louis an enormous tribute to induce him to leave. The city was left in such dire economic straits that it had no opportunity to recover from the series of disasters it had survived since 1284 and the Battle of Meloria.

4. The Pisan government raised taxes, import and export duties, and fees to the point of driving all capital from the city.

5. The Pisan economy, already damaged, was shattered, and the city fell into an economic decline from which recovery was impossible.

B. The poverty of the Pisans and the danger of the situation were made clear by 1400.

1. Giangaleazzo Visconti, the duke of Milan, had united the states in Lombardy and parts of Tuscany under Milanese rule; only Florence stood against him. At the same time, the situation in Pisa was so chaotic that a great noble, Gherardo Appiani, had assumed power.

2. Appiani established himself as signori (“lord”) of Pisa, but when Giangaleazzo Visconti and his armies began moving into Tuscany, Pisa realized that it would either have to yield to Giangaleazzo or be besieged and probably destroyed.

3. Appiani, recognizing in the situation a personal opportunity, sold the city to Giangaleazzo Visconti and kept the proceeds.

C. Once more, the situation then worsened.

1. In 1402, Giangaleazzo Visconti died unexpectedly. With his death, the Pisans, of course, wanted their independence back, but the heirs of Giangaleazzo had no intention of relinquishing Pisa.

2. Ultimately, the regents for the young sons of Giangaleazzo sold Pisa to the Florentines.

3. In 1405, the Florentines took possession of Pisa, having simply bought it, despite the objections of the Pisans themselves.

D. Thereafter, Pisa was integrated into the Florentine territorial state. To some extent, this development benefited Pisa. The Pisans lost their freedom and independence, but they also gained the protection of one of the five great states of Italy.

E. Pisa saw a short period of renewed independence after the French invasions of 1494.

1. During this period, the Medici were expelled from Florence, the Florentine Republic was resurgent, and the Pisans took the opportunity of this chaos and the support of the French army to renew their independence.

2. The Florentines were forced to turn Pisa over to the French as a garrisoned town, and when the French left, they permitted Pisa to maintain its independence, despite Florentine objections.

3. For the Florentines, the recovery of Pisa was the single greatest policy objective. In 1509, after a siege that starved the city, Florence took possession of Pisa once more.

V. The history of Pisa thereafter is part of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

A. The Medici rulers of Tuscany, after the establishment of a hereditary duchy under Cosimo I in 1537, treated Pisa remarkably well.

B. Cosimo’s ambitions and his desire to be raised to grand ducal status by the pope prompted him to create a new order of knighthood, the Knights of Santo Stefano, a crusading order at sea.

1. Galleys bearing the Tuscan flag of Florence sailed once more into the Mediterranean and served nobly against the Turks at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

2. Cosimo received his title, and the Pisans reclaimed some measure of honor and respect. Sadly, though, the harbor at Pisa began to silt, and Cosimo had to build a new port at Livorno.

3. Under Cosimo, the enemies that the Pisans hated most ultimately became their allies in the common Christian war against the Turks.

Essential Reading:

T. Bloomquist and M. Mazzaoui, The Other Tuscany: Essays in the History of Lucca, Pisa and Siena during the
Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. The three great maritime cities of Pisa, Genoa, and Venice began with similar opportunities, but by 1380, Venice was dominant. What factors gave Venice an advantage?
2. To this day, there is a popular Genoese saying: “Better a death in the house than a Pisan at the door.” Can nations ever reconcile with their past enemies, even after centuries?
Lecture Nine

Christians vs. Turks in the Mediterranean

Scope: Although the period of the Crusades generally gave Christian Europe the advantage over the Saracens, the rise of the Ottoman Turks changed this situation dramatically, the fall of Constantinople in 1453 heralding a period of relentless Turkish expansion. This threat stimulated the voyages of discovery begun by the Portuguese under Prince Henry the Navigator: His ambition to chart Africa was connected to his intention of attacking the Islamic states from behind. Similarly, the desire to avoid the dangers of the Mediterranean impelled the circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco da Gama in 1497–1498. This had the dramatic effect of shifting the economic center of Europe from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic seaboard. By 1550, the Ottoman Empire had trebled its territory, controlling an arc around the Mediterranean from the Balkans to Gibraltar. It was only with the great Christian victory in 1571 at Lepanto that the Turks were halted. But despite Lepanto, the economic advantage of Italy, a fact from ancient times, was superseded by the rise of the Ottomans, and the Italian city-states collectively were to confront a long period of economic decline.

Outline

I. The maritime powers of Italy all had to confront the resurgence of Islam under the Turkish Empire. Indeed, after the second half of the 15th century, the Mediterranean became the battleground between East and West, between Christianity and Islam.
   A. The period of the Crusades had given the Christians an advantage over the Saracens, despite the fact that the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem had not lasted long and the Saracens had recovered territory taken from them in the First Crusade.
   B. As we’ve seen, the Pisans and the Genoese had succeeded in driving the Saracens from Corsica and Sardinia. But Islamic pirates and fleets continued to prey upon Christian ships in the Mediterranean, and Christian settlements were endangered by Saracen raids.
   C. The period of the Crusades and the growing power of Venice, Pisa, Genoa, and Amalfi gave the Europeans an opportunity to try to curb the threat of the Saracens.
      1. The maritime might of these collective forces, combined with a Crusader mentality, was sufficient to ensure that Christianity would play an important role in the Mediterranean, despite the growth of Islamic power.
      2. Moreover, the Saracen kingdoms were divided, unable to come together to drive the Christians from the inland sea.

II. The rise of the Ottoman Turks changed this situation dramatically.
   A. The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 and the consequent elimination of the Byzantine Empire permitted Ottoman expansion into and around the Mediterranean.
      1. The Turkish assault on the Balkans, for example, had begun decades before Constantinople fell.
      2. Serbia became a vassal state of the Turkish Empire after the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, with the entire territory becoming a province of the Turkish Empire in 1459.
      3. In 1396, the Turks defeated the Bulgarians, and again, that territory became a Turkish province.
      4. The Turks assaulted both the Venetians and the Genoese, and with the fall of Caffa in 1475, the Genoese Empire was destined to be destroyed by Turkish expansion and Venetian victory.
      5. The final humiliation came when the Turks took Otranto in Italy in 1480, holding the city for a year before abandoning it.
      6. The triumphant Turks then sent their seemingly invincible armies against their Islamic neighbors, overcoming Persia in 1514, Syria in 1516, and Egypt in 1517.
   B. With an arc of Turkish control now inscribed around the Mediterranean, the sultan Selim II realized that he had a power base from which to expand his interests in Europe.
      1. He conquered Belgrade in 1521, using it as a base of operations for incursions deeper into the
European heartland.

2. The same year, Selim’s fleet took the island of Rhodes from the crusading order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

3. By the 1520s, it seemed as if the Mediterranean would become a Turkish lake.

III. This threat stimulated the European voyages of discovery.

A. The rise of the Turks had weakened the Venetian monopoly on long-distance trade and had driven the rulers of states on the Atlantic seaboard to search for other means of acquiring Eastern luxury goods.

1. The activities of Prince Henry the Navigator, Bartholomew Diaz, and Vasco da Gama had proved that Africa could be circumnavigated and that it was possible to sail from Lisbon or the coast of Spain directly to the markets of India and China.

2. Thus, the luxury goods that the Venetians and Genoese had sold at such enormous profit to their fellow Europeans now became the monopoly of those states that enjoyed harbors well away from Turkish power.

3. The decline of the Italian economy was inevitable, and the decline of European shipping and power in the Mediterranean was abrupt.

B. The ambitions of the Turks not only threatened the immediate powers of Italy but also changed the nature of policy in other states that bordered the Mediterranean, particularly Spain.

1. The dynastic union of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in 1479 created a new state, linked by religion.

2. Spain became a Crusader kingdom, with Ferdinand and Isabella directing their armies against the Moorish kingdom of Granada.

3. Granada had shared the Iberian Peninsula with the Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms since the 7th and 8th centuries. Because of the success of the Turks and the Saracens, however, the existence of Granada was now seen as a danger to the European economy and to Christendom.

4. The expulsion of the Moors in 1492 and the expulsion and forced conversion of the Jews came about as a desire to win battles for Christianity when it seemed as though God had abandoned Christendom and given favor to the infidels.

5. The creation of the kingdom of Spain introduced a new power in the Mediterranean that would ultimately prove to be dangerous to the Italian Peninsula. When Spain was inherited by the House of Habsburg in 1517, the freedom of Italy would be compromised.

C. The economic center of Europe had shifted, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic seacoast, and this shift complicated the relationship between Christians and Turks.

1. The Turkish Empire had become the most powerful state in the Western world by the middle of the 15th century.

2. By the middle of the 16th century, the Islamic power of Turkey controlled a region that spread from the Balkans around the eastern Mediterranean into the Straits of Gibraltar. This territory served as a base of power, authority, and opposition to the European economy and to European autonomy in the Mediterranean.

IV. The most powerful state in Europe faced one great opponent—Christendom—but Christendom was not united. The Turks, by force of arms, had largely united the territory under their rule. The Christians were fighting on several fronts and in the interest of individual principalities, city-states, or dynastic monarchies.

A. By 1526, the Turkish army broke out of the Balkans. An army of volunteers and soldiers from most Christian nations was raised to stop it, led by the king of Hungary. In 1526, these Christian forces were slaughtered by the Turks at the Battle of Mohacs.

B. There was now nothing to stop the Turks from crossing the Hungarian plain and besieging the imperial capitals, specifically, Vienna. The siege was unsuccessful, but Europe was in turmoil.

C. The Turks next turned to the fortified trading posts established by the Venetians and Genoese. One by one, these began to fall, including the Venetian outposts of Crete and Cyprus and Genoa’s center at Caffa on the Black Sea.
D. The Turks also commissioned Barbary pirates as admirals of the Turkish fleet, giving them full permission to prey on Christian shipping.

V. Circumstances for the Christian nations seemed to worsen.
A. In 1560, King Philip II of Spain, the son of the emperor Charles V, collected a great fleet to attack the coast of North Africa. This force was surprised and destroyed by the Turkish fleet at Djerba.
B. Just a decade later, Cyprus, perhaps the most important of all the Christian islands in the Mediterranean, fell to the Turks.
C. Europe had lost not only trading posts but also staging posts, bases from which Christian shipping could be protected and fleets could be assembled to attack the Turks.

VI. At this moment of almost complete desperation, an event took place that allowed Christians to believe that perhaps the Turks were not invincible.
A. The siege of Malta (1565−1566) is, of course, one of the great acts of heroism in Western history. The island had been given to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem by the emperor Charles V after the knights were driven from Rhodes.
B. The crusading knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem volunteered their lives to further the goals of Christianity everywhere. At Malta, these knights now found themselves facing one of the greatest invasion forces of all time.
C. The sultan had planned to conquer Malta because of its strategic location in the middle of the Mediterranean, south of the coast of Sicily. Thus, Malta protected not just the Mediterranean but also the southern coast of Italy and the island of Sicily. Had it fallen, Europe would have found itself in an extremely dangerous position.
D. Altogether, there were about 6,000 defenders on the island, facing at least 30,000 Turkish troops.
   1. Fortunately, the Grand Master Jean de la Valette knew that the assault was coming and had wisely fortified parts of the island. When the assault came, it was brutal, but the knights held out and ultimately succeeded in turning back the Turks.
   2. This victory gave a renewed confidence to Europe, proving that the Turks could be defeated. A few years later, this was proved again at the Battle of Lepanto.
E. Lepanto was the opportunity for Christianity to function together as a military unit for the first time since the success of the First Crusade.
   1. Under the command of Don John of Austria, the illegitimate son of the emperor Charles V and the half-brother of King Philip of Spain, a huge multinational fleet was assembled.
   2. This fleet routed the Turks off the coast of Greece at Lepanto. The Turks lost all but 30 of their ships and about 30,000 men.
   3. The Christians could have gone on to assault Constantinople, but the commanders fell out among themselves, giving the Turks the chance to reconstruct a fleet that would again challenge Christendom.
F. Nonetheless, Lepanto helped the Europeans regain some of their confidence. In addition, the world of the new Europe and the new Mediterranean was, to some extent, foretold at Lepanto.
   1. The House of Habsburg would now have hegemonic power in the peninsula, as it did on the continent.
   2. Lepanto, one of the most decisive battles of all time, protected Europe from a much more aggressive Turkish Empire.
   3. Nevertheless, Turkish control of the Mediterranean would, to a degree, remain, and as long as that was true, Christians would have to fight to maintain trade, the southern borders of Europe would always be at risk, and the ability of Christendom to withstand Islamic Turkish advance would always be in question.

Essential Reading:
Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Does the struggle between the Turks and Christians in the 15th and 16th centuries elucidate the current theory of a clash of civilizations?
2. The discovery of America was an unintended consequence of the need to avoid the Mediterranean. Can you identify other significant unintended consequences of these voyages?
Lecture Ten
Rome—Papal Authority

Scope: The story of Rome is, in essence, the story of its popes: They influenced the city not only through their responsibilities for international events, such as the Crusades, but also through the force of their own personalities. Like most Italian city-states in the Middle Ages, Rome was riven by the feuding of violent factions. In 1305, the pope sought protection outside the city in the papal territory of Avignon. This initiated a lengthy period known as the Babylonian Captivity, followed immediately by the Great Schism, which saw the reign of competing popes in Rome and Avignon. Ultimately, an international church council elected Martin V (1417–1431) as the only pope, on condition that he recognize conciliar authority. Of course, Martin had no intention of submitting once he had established himself. But his first concerns were to secure financial stability for the Church and to restore Rome to a splendor befitting the papacy. Indeed, it was a response to the fiscal, military, and political exigencies of Rome after the restoration that changed the nature of papal government and made the papacy a more aggressive participant in Italian political life.

Outline

I. Rome had a dual function during the Middle Ages and Renaissance as both a secular and a religious kingdom.

A. In one sense, Rome was an Italian city-state like any other, ruled by a prince who also happened to be the pope.
   1. Rome had political ambitions to expand at the expense of its neighbors, to consolidate territory, and to protect the papacy.
   2. It functioned not exactly as a secular power but as a state in which the operations of secular authority were just as visible as they were in any other of the Italian jurisdictions.

B. Rome’s other great role was as the spiritual center of European Catholic Christianity.
   1. By the Middle Ages, the primacy of the bishop of Rome was recognized throughout Western Christendom.
   2. This assumption of power was, in part, the cause of the schism with the Eastern, or Orthodox, Church in 1054.
   3. The pope’s absolute authority was attested by such evidence as the Donation of Constantine. This document, later identified as a forgery, purported to be a grant of the Western Roman Empire to Pope Silvester by Constantine the Great.

C. However, conflict with the Holy Roman Empire divided Catholic Europe into the two camps of Guelf and Ghibelline, each recognizing a different source of sovereignty and authority.
   1. The popes initially emerged as the victors in this conflict, symbolized by the humiliation of the emperor Henry IV by Pope Gregory VII at Canossa in 1077.
   2. The ambitions on the part of the pope reached their apogee by the early 13th century with the election of Pope Innocent III (d. 1216), whose claims of universal dominion and both secular and religious authority were almost universally accepted.

D. Events in some of the secular states of the Italian Peninsula assisted in translating the pope’s claims of universal authority into reality.
   1. Urban II’s call for the Crusades at Clermont in 1095 illustrated the pope’s ability to harness the forces of Europe to accomplish a significant goal from the perspective of the West and the Church.
   2. The marshaling of aid for the patriarch of Constantinople implied the pope’s authority and power above the patriarch.
   3. The flood of capital into Rome to support the Crusaders filled the papal coffers and necessitated the creation of the papal camera, or finance ministry, to manage the money.
   4. As a corollary, the sacred Rota, the highest court of appeal in canon or Church law, was established to ensure that the center of decision-making would be in Rome at the court of the pope.

II. The belief that the popes were the secular and spiritual authority in the West was challenged by the Babylonian
Captivity, a crisis that divided the Church and threw the position of the pope and the ambitions of papal government into confusion.

A. Like most Italian cities in the Middle Ages, Rome was riven by faction.
   1. Powerful noble families saw the papacy and the high offices of the Church as prizes to be added to their already significant authority.
   2. These nobles had fortified palaces in the city, and they fought what amounted to civil wars within the walls, creating chaos in Rome.
   3. Consequently, in 1305, the pope sought protection outside the city in Avignon, a small papal enclave attached to France.

B. Avignon was closely associated with French culture, and with the pope’s move there, the idea of the papacy as a French institution rather than a Roman one gained strength. This idea was reinforced as one pope died and another pope was elected in Avignon.

C. The papacy remained in Avignon until 1377. The division between the see of St. Peter in Rome and the successor to St. Peter at Avignon was such that the very nature of the Church and the complex and abstract concepts of sovereignty were thrown into question.
   1. Many saints, particularly females, such as St. Bridget of Sweden and St. Catherine of Siena, argued that the pope must return to Rome or the authority of the papacy would diminish.
   2. This theory was reinforced by the belief of France’s enemies that the papacy had become nothing but a pawn of the French king. The English and their allies in the Hundred Years War saw the papacy as choosing sides rather than offering the evenhanded support that should be given to all Christian princes.

III. International pressure was such that in 1377, Gregory XI decided to return the papacy to Rome.
   A. Rome had been the administrative center for a multinational ecclesiastical organization, but in the 70 years since that organization had been removed from the city, Rome had become depopulated and impoverished.
   B. A year after his return and before he was able to reestablish a centralized papacy in Rome, Gregory died. The people of Rome rioted, demanding that an Italian be chosen as his successor, despite the fact that the curia was dominated by French cardinals.
   C. The cardinals chose an Italian, the elderly archbishop of Bari, who took the name Urban VI. Urban sought to reconnect the papacy with Rome and to strengthen the moral authority of the papacy, which many believed had been weakened by a life of luxury in Avignon.
   D. When Urban VI tried to impose canonical living on the French cardinals, they assembled outside the city and declared Urban deposed, arguing that he had been elected under duress. In his place, a French cardinal was elected, and the papacy was returned to Avignon. Urban then excommunicated the cardinals and the French pope.
   E. Thus began the Great Schism, a scandal that saw two churches and two popes, both exercising plenitudo potestatis, the ultimate binding power on heaven and Earth; each excommunicating the other; and each calling the other the Antichrist.
      1. Both the pope in Rome and the pope in Avignon declared his superiority to the other, and all of Europe lined up behind one or the other.
      2. The French and their allies supported the pope in Avignon; the English and their allies supported the pope in Rome. This division was believed to endanger the spiritual hopes of European citizens, leading them to perdition rather than to salvation.
      3. The schism also resulted in the growth of heterodox groups, especially those that favored a more direct relationship between the individual believer and God. For example, in Bohemia, the Hussite movement challenged both the authority of the Church and the position of the German bishops, who had traditionally controlled the administrative and physical structure of the ecclesiastical establishment. This challenge was dangerous from the point of view of the emperor.
      4. Questions arose concerning both the political and the religious state of Europe: Where did sovereignty reside? Should there be a union of Church and state? And with two authorities to decide these issues, which one should be accepted?

IV. Finally, the Holy Roman Emperor, Sigismund, was forced to intervene.
A. An earlier attempt to end the schism had worsened the situation. In 1409, a group of cardinals from the two colleges—one in Rome and one in Avignon—had elected a third pope and declared the other two to be deposed. Of course, neither standing pope recognized the legitimacy of this decision, with the absurd result that there were now three popes.

B. In 1417, Sigismund called a Church council to meet at the city of Constance. There was precedent for the emperor calling a council, as the early councils of the Church, such as Nicea (325) had been summoned by Constantine.

C. The council was to address two pressing issues: the Hussite revolt in Bohemia and the division in the Church.
   1. The Hussite problem was solved quickly: John Hus and two of his leading followers were invited to Constance to explain their case under a guarantee of safe conduct. Once they arrived in Constance, they were arrested, tried, and burned as heretics.
   2. That problem taken care of, the Council of Constance ultimately reached a set of conclusions that ended the schism and established a singular papacy. The three standing popes were declared deposed and a single pope was elected in their place. This was Oddone Colonna, who took the name Martin V (1417–1431).
   3. In 1420, Martin returned to Rome, reuniting the bishop with his see and recreating a singular papacy.

V. The principle that had elected Martin was a dangerous one for the papacy: the idea that the Church, acting collectively through a council, had more authority than the pope.
   A. According to this principle, known as conciliarism, the Church was a collective entity in which the faithful participated through their representatives—the bishops, archbishops, and so on. Conciliarism, then, had ended the schism.
   B. Under the terms of his election, Martin V was required to sign and promulgate bulls, such as Frequens (“often”), that recognized the authority of councils over popes and called for the convening of regular councils to monitor papal actions.
   C. Of course, Martin had no intent of obeying these requirements. He believed that once the situation calmed down, the idea would be largely forgotten. Neither did the council enforce its authority aggressively during Martin’s pontificate.
   D. Further, Martin faced significant problems that rendered trivial the abstract concept of sovereignty within the Church. The pope had to rebuild the papal administration, the system for collecting papal taxes, and the churches and palaces of Rome. Martin was a skilled administrator and succeeded well at these tasks.
   E. By the time of Martin’s death in 1431, the pope paid lip service to the idea of conciliarism but was essentially left to act freely. At the same time, the power and structure of conciliarism was generally believed to be the new operating principle of the Church. Thus, a new conflict was established between papal monarchy and conciliar authority.
   F. This conflict would be reflected in many ways in the coming decades.
      1. It would be seen in the tension between the papacy and the collective body of the Church and in the ambitions of secular princes who saw conciliarism as an instrument to weaken the authority and sovereign claims of papal power.
      2. The conflict was also seen in the states of the Church itself: If the pope was not an absolute monarch in terms of ecclesiastical authority within the Church, was he an absolute monarch in terms of secular authority?
      3. The confusion of jurisdictions that we’ve seen operating so often in the Church, and even in secular powers, was brought into relief. The history of Rome, the history of the Church, and the history of the states of Italy came together over these issues of sovereignty and the exercise of authority in the Church and state.

Essential Reading:
Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Why was the residence of the pope in Avignon so disastrous for the city of Rome?
2. Can you explain why so many successful and attractive heretical groups developed in Europe during the period of the Great Schism?
Lecture Eleven
Papal Ambition

Scope: Because the papacy determined both the policy and the character that was Rome, there was little consistency in its conduct: The ambitions and weaknesses of individual popes had a determining influence on the perception and function of the city itself. Martin’s successors were equally prey to the larger international situation; Pius II (1458–1464) was particularly affected because his papacy was dominated by the great tragedy of the conquest of Constantinople. But Pius’s immediate successors were self-indulgent men, more interested in promoting their own personal interests than those of the Church. This was particularly true of the Borgia pope Alexander VI (1492–1503). Morally and spiritually corrupt, he directed his administrative skills toward his dream of creating a wealthy Borgia kingdom in Italy. Alexander was succeeded by Pope Julius II (1503–1513), who had all the single-minded energy and imagination of the Borgias but a greater commitment to the Church and culture in Rome. Julius’s successors, however, were increasingly vulnerable to events in Europe, particularly the Protestant revolt and the rivalry between Emperor Charles V and Francis I of France. The horrific result was the sack of Rome in 1527. Once peace returned, attempts were made to restore the authority of the pope and the dignity of the city, but little was accomplished until the election of Paul III (1534–1549). He summoned the Council of Trent, which reinforced the ideal of an imperial papacy. Rome became an imperial capital, and the Church survived—indeed, thrived.

Outline

I. The tension between conciliarism and papal monarchy came into high relief with the election of Martin V’s successor, Eugene IV (1431–1447).
   A. Eugene lacked the diplomatic skills necessary to address these diametrically opposed principles and ran into difficulty almost from the beginning of his career.
   B. Many of the princes of Europe saw the tension between conciliarism and papal monarchy as an opportunity to assert their authority over the jurisdiction of the Church. Indeed, one prince realized that the Church could be brought under secular control if the schism could be sustained or if conciliarism could be enforced to weaken the papacy.
   C. A council was called to depose Eugene, and an anti-pope, Felix V (1439–1449), was elected on the basis of conciliar theory. Once more, the Church was divided, with both Felix and Eugene standing as popes.
   D. With Eugene’s death in 1447, Nicholas V Parentucelli (1447–1455) was elected, who succeeded in restoring the dignity of the Holy See and was able to end the schism that seemed to be growing once more.
      1. The anti-pope, Felix V, was convinced to resign, and the issue of conciliarism didn’t arise, largely because of Nicholas’s irenic quality and his desire to do good.
      2. Nicholas was one of the great Renaissance popes and is credited with bringing the Florentine Renaissance to the Holy City.
      3. Nicholas also moved the headquarters of the Church from St. John Lateran to the Vatican, next to the Basilica of St. Peter, in recognition of the burial place of the first pope and the apostle on whom Christ had decided to build his Church.
      4. The idea of connecting the papacy with the apostolic succession and with Christ’s charge to Peter belonged to Nicholas. In many ways, this connection addressed the conciliar issue head on without seeming to have addressed it at all.
      5. Nicholas had three ambitions when he became pope: to be a good man, to restore learning, and to rebuild Rome. In all three goals, he was largely successful.

II. Nicholas was succeeded by a series of lesser men who contributed little to the glory of Rome or Christianity.
   A. Of these, the best known and, to some extent, one of the saddest examples was Pius II (1458–1464).
      1. Pius had been a conciliarist, as well as a great Humanist and scholar, a diplomat, and a man of substance.
      2. When Pius was elected pope, all those ideals evaporated; he came to see papal monarchy as much
more appropriate to his new role.

3. His pontificate was dedicated to leading a crusade to reconquer Constantinople, which had been lost to the Turks in 1453.

4. In 1464, just as the fleets of the participating states arrived at the coastal city of Ancona to carry the crusaders to the Bosphorus, Pius died. The fleets went home, and no crusade was mounted.

B. The successors of Pius saw the Church as an instrument for their own advantage and that of their families. The prime example here is Sixtus IV Della Rovere (1471–1484).

1. Sixtus was a learned man who had all the makings of a great pope, but he used the authority of the papacy to benefit his own family.

2. Sixtus made significant contributions to Rome, constructing the first bridge across the Tiber since antiquity, enlarging the Vatican Library, and building the Sistine Chapel.

3. Unfortunately, Sixtus was attracted by the opportunity to establish a princely line in the papacy. Because he wanted to give his nephew a state on the borders of Tuscany, for example, Sixtus supported the Pazzi conspiracy, which saw the attempted assassination of Lorenzo de’Medici and the successful attempt on Lorenzo’s brother.

4. This policy of nepotism reflected not so much the weakness in character of a man but the tension and internal contradiction in an office that was at once spiritual and secular.

C. Innocent VIII (1484–1492) was ambitious for his family but not in the same way as Sixtus.

1. Innocent had a number of children, all of whom he recognized. He was immensely rich personally and was more interested in living well himself than in dispossessing others.

2. It was with Innocent that the moral position of the papacy began to decline dramatically.

III. If Innocent VIII began the moral slide of the papacy, it was accelerated by Alexander VI Borgia (1492–1503).

A. Alexander VI’s wealth had allowed him, in effect, to purchase the papacy. He had a long-time mistress, known as the “queen of Rome,” and four children, who were often entertained in the papal palace.

B. Alexander sought to use the papacy as a platform on which to build a Borgia kingdom out of the states of the Church. His eldest son, Juan, was to be the initial instrument of this policy, but he was found murdered, almost certainly assassinated by his brother Cesare.

C. Cesare Borgia (1475/76–1507), one of the psychopaths of history, became Alexander’s instrument for creating a Borgia kingdom. With the death of Alexander in 1503, however, while Cesare himself was ill with malaria, Borgia power collapsed.

D. The elective nature of the papacy indicated why individual papal policy could not be sustained over long periods of time.

IV. An elderly nephew of Pius II reigned briefly following the death of Alexander VI. The papal throne then fell to the Borgias’ worst enemy, Cardinal Della Rovere, who took the name Julius II (1503–1513).

A. Julius II had no intention of sustaining Borgia policy, nor was he guilty of nepotism, although he was ambitious for the papacy and the Church, more as a political entity than a spiritual one.

B. Julius II stressed the secular role of the papacy, seeing himself as an emperor and a prince. His ambition was to destroy the power of the great Roman families, which he succeeded in doing, and to unite the Papal States so that they could be passed down to succeeding popes.

C. Julius II was successful to a degree, although he came into conflict with other powers that challenged the Italians for rule of their own nation, including the French and the Habsburgs.

D. Julius II was a remarkable man, a great patron of art and culture, a soldier who loved battle and warfare, and a skilled administrator. He brought in Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and commissioned Raphael to paint the papal apartments. When Julius died in 1513, neither of these projects was completed.

V. Julius was succeeded by another pope who saw the advantage of patronage as a means of achieving grandeur for the papacy and immortality for the man who served as pope. This was the second son of Lorenzo de’Medici, Giovanni, who took the title Leo X (1513–1521).

A. Leo, elected when he was only 37, was highly educated and cultivated, and his ambitions for the papacy
were essentially good. He was, however, limited by his own personality. He intended to enjoy the papacy, and did so, in ways from which we still benefit today.

1. Leo continued Raphael’s work in the papal apartments, expanded the Sistine Choir, and had Raphael make the tapestries that are still hung for high liturgical events in the Sistine Chapel.

2. The Protestant Reformation that began with Martin Luther during Leo’s reign, however, would ultimately split the Church forever.

B. The Reformation was, to some extent, an unintended consequence of events that can be traced back to the Babylonian Captivity. The Reformation was also a response to the creation of dynastic territorial monarchies in Europe.

1. We’ve already seen princes playing papal authority against royal authority and setting their own ability to rule their territories against the traditions of an independent ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

2. The Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges in 1438, which resulted in the French king gaining control over the Church, and similar actions were part of a process that reached completion and was fulfilled by Martin Luther.

C. Leo underestimated the Lutheran revolt, misreading it as an argument among monks rather than an assault on the idea of papal monarchy and the concept of a singular Church ruled by a priest-king.

D. The political divisions in the German empire and the hostility to the ambitions of the emperor, Charles V, prompted German princes to fulfill their ambitions of taking possession of the property of the Church and of the jurisdiction of canon law and ecclesiastical authority.

E. Leo was not a successful pope, but the crisis didn’t truly arrive until after his death, when the events that would change Europe so dramatically became focused on the Italian Peninsula.

VI. The cousin of Leo X, Clement VII de’Medici (1523–1534), had to face the crisis.

A. In 1525, the French king, Francis I, was humiliated and captured at the Battle of Pavia by the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V of Habsburg. Afterward, Charles allowed his army in the peninsula to languish.

B. The leader of this force, the constable of Bourbon, was unable to control the soldiers. The army ravaged its way through the peninsula until it ultimately, in the spring of 1527, stood before the gates of Rome. The gates and the wall were breached, and the city was sacked over the next eight months in the most horrific way imaginable.

1. The sack of Rome destroyed the Renaissance Humanist belief in human dignity and the idea of the pope as omnipotent on Earth and in heaven. Clement VII was forced to flee from the Vatican Palace to seek protection in Castel Sant’Angelo.

2. The sack of Rome was seen by the Lutherans as God’s righteous anger, the chastisement of the Antichrist. It was seen by Catholics as evidence that God had somehow abandoned Europe.

3. The sack took place at a time when Christendom was threatened by Turks; it appeared that the apocalypse was at hand.

C. Of course, there was no apocalypse; indeed, this crisis brought forth the ability of the papacy to restructure and redefine itself. In 1534, a new pope was elected, Paul III Farnese (1534–1549), who called the Council of Trent to restructure and revitalize the Church.

1. The council met between 1545 and 1563, and it specifically addressed the issues that the Protestants had used to assault the position of Roman Christianity.

2. The Council of Trent recognized that in this war with the Protestants, there had to be just one leader, and that was the pope, who emerged as more powerful than ever. The council also recognized the need for overwhelming glory, beauty, power, and authority in the Church. The age of the Baroque was born.

**Essential Reading:**


**Supplementary Reading:**


Questions to Consider:
1. Why is it so important up to the present for the papacy to enjoy the rule of an independent state?
2. The papacy illustrates the belief that high office ennobles some while corrupting others. Can you identify other examples of this phenomenon?
Scope: The Council of Trent reinforced the idea of papal monarchy, with the pope emerging as a potent example of a priest-king, ruling both as vicar of Christ and as an Italian prince in control of a substantial state. The events of the Protestant Reformation and the Turkish advance had put the Roman Church on the defensive. Thus, the environment of Rome in the later 16th and early 17th centuries was dynamic but conflicted. The decrees of the Council of Trent had resulted in powerful new agencies, such as the Society of Jesus, and a renewed emphasis on Catholic spiritual awareness. Equally, however, the image of an imperial papacy, reflecting the grandeur and authority of both the Church and the ancient Roman imperium, promoted ecclesiastical splendor and rich living. Nepotism became endemic, with members of the popes’ families enjoying spectacular wealth and power at the expense of the Church, building huge palaces and villas. Rome emerged in the age of the Baroque, then, as a much more beautiful city, but one in which the competing ambitions of holiness and power were in dramatic contrast.

Outline

I. The 25 sessions of the Council of Trent held in the period from 1545 to 1563 had profound effects on the Church, the papacy, and Rome.
   A. A new spirituality was stimulated by the decrees of Trent and by papal and curial emphasis on clerical education, episcopal guidance, and spiritual regeneration.
   B. The council also reaffirmed the principle of papal monarchy, seeing a single ruler—armed with a divine office and unlimited power—as the best response to the Protestant revolt.
   C. As we’ve seen, there were dangers inherent in the idea of papal monarchy, dangers that the conciliar movement had begun to question. One of the popes who ruled during the Council of Trent, Paul IV Carafa (1476–1559), illustrates how dangerous this reenergized faith could be in concert with omnipotent power.
      1. In his younger years, Cardinal Carafa was known for his learning and piety, as demonstrated by his membership in the Oratory of Divine Love. When elected pope, however, Paul became a bigoted tyrant.
      2. He instituted the Index of Prohibited Books to control what Catholics could read—and know.
      3. The Roman Inquisition (established under Paul III in 1542) became a dreaded instrument of control under Paul IV, enforcing a strict adherence to the pope’s narrow interpretation of the faith.
      4. Paul IV persecuted his former friends and associates and had some of them tried for heresy. By the time of his death, he had filled the prisons of the Inquisition with many whose only crime was a vague suspicion of heterodox belief.
      5. On the day of the pope’s death, the angry people of Rome rioted and freed the prisoners out of hatred for the pope’s tyranny.

II. Other popes, such as Gregory XIII (1572–1585), used their monarchical status to inject a positive element into the restructuring of Roman and ecclesiastical life in order to benefit not just the city and the Church but the community of the faithful and Europeans altogether.
   A. Gregory, whose personal piety and probity were beyond reproach, took the advice of Trent seriously, believing that it was the pope’s responsibility to reinforce the faith and to bring the faithful into more active and engaged communion with the established authority of ecclesiastical power.
   B. To this end, Gregory built and rebuilt churches, particularly those associated with martyrs, which he believed would connect the contemporary Church—beset as it was by the Protestant schism—with the ancient apostolic Church—itself beset by pagan persecution.
   C. Gregory also sought to ensure that the intellectual world of Europe was reflected in the authority of the papacy and the institution of the Church itself.
   D. Gregory realized the need to stress the act of baptism, of joining the Church. He thus rebuilt the baptistery at St. John Lateran, connecting the site where Constantine was thought to have been baptized to the seat of the pope as bishop of Rome.
E. Gregory is perhaps best remembered for his reform of the Julian calendar to ensure that the liturgical year would be consonant with the solar year. The commission established by Gregory to address this issue unveiled its new calendar in 1582, which is essentially the calendar that we use today.

III. Another pope of the post-Tridentine era that re-created Rome and provided a new focus and energy for the city was Sixtus V (1520–1590).
   A. In his five-year reign, this indomitable personality created much of the Roman landscape we see today. Sixtus also fostered learning by commissioning the construction of a wing to house the ever-expanding Vatican Library. This remarkable work, including the interior decoration, was completed in just 13 months.
   B. Sixtus engaged scholars to discover the locations of ancient obelisks, which symbolized the connection between heaven and Earth of ancient rulers, a union now claimed by the papacy. These obelisks brought to Rome from Egypt by ancient emperors were set up as guideposts around the city, especially near pilgrimage sites.
      1. The only standing obelisk from ancient times, the needle beside the old Basilica of St. Peter, was moved with great difficulty to the huge piazza in front of the new church, a task even Michelangelo thought impossible, and the story of the raising of the obelisk is still popular in Rome today.
      2. Sixtus saw the erection of the obelisks and the restoration of Rome as both a rebuilding of the ancient city by the papacy and as a re-creation of a new kind of imperial symbol.
      3. The restoration was also closely linked to the populace, now reenergized by the forces of antiquity and Humanist knowledge and by the faith through the results of the Council of Trent.
   C. Sixtus V also knew that the creation of sacred spaces was important so that the Council of Trent would not be viewed as just a series of decrees but could be seen and felt. The obelisks represented one element of this approach.
      1. Another aspect of this perspective can be seen in the statues of St. Peter and St. Paul mounted on the two surviving Roman columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius.
      2. These statues symbolized the victory of the apostles of the Church and the martyrs of Rome over the emperors but still linked them physically and metaphorically.
   D. The re-creation of the chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore that housed the traditional devotional relic of the crib of Christ was another of these acts. The construction of a new and dramatic chapel to house this relic again symbolized the sophistication and sensitivity of Sixtus V.
   E. Yet another example is the Scala Santa (“Holy Staircase”), brought to Rome by the mother of Constantine, St. Helena, and by tradition, thought to be the stairs that Christ had walked at the palace of Pontius Pilate to be judged. Sixtus constructed a separate building across the piazza from the Cathedral of St. John Lateran to house these stairs.
   F. Sixtus V had all of the genius of a minister of propaganda, and the five years of his pontificate fundamentally changed the nature of the Church. But Sixtus also knew that as the prince of Rome and the king of the Papal States, he had to make contributions to the lives of his subjects.
      1. For example, he rebuilt a large aqueduct to bring water for the first time in more than 1,000 years to some of the highest places in Rome, especially around the Esquiline Hill.
      2. Sixtus also rebuilt the hospital of Santo Spirito, used particularly for pilgrims.

IV. The spiritual regeneration of the Church was apparent in the actions and devotion of Catholics outside the papacy and curia. Three saints, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Philip Neri, and St. Ignatius of Loyola, made contributions that changed the nature of the Roman Church.
   A. San Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584) came to represent both the ideal bishop and a good man.
      1. Despite being the nephew of Pope Pius V and a member of a wealthy Milanese family, he lived simply according to his motto of *humilitas*, or “humility.”
      2. St. Charles risked his life by aiding plague victims and refused to give up the religious life, despite pressure from his family. He devoted his life to the Tridentine decrees of clerical education and the improvement of education and faith in general.
      3. Charles was canonized in 1610, less than 30 years after his death; he had become a model bishop, the “poster boy” for a reenergized Church.
   B. Another example of reformed piety was St. Philip Neri (1515–1595), known as the Apostle of Rome.
1. Philip came to Rome from Florence in 1533, cutting himself off from his wealthy family to live a simple life as a tutor for a modest family.
2. He lived on bread and water and had no possessions, even selling his books when he had finished with them and giving the proceeds to the poor.
3. In 1548, still a layman, Philip founded a confraternity to aid pilgrims in the city and worked hard to salvage the dissolute lives of young Roman nobles.
4. In 1551, Philip took priest’s orders, and in 1575, Pope Gregory XIII recognized his group as the Congregation of the Oratory. Gregory also gave this congregation a church, which would become the Chiesa Nuova. The congregation gave its name to the musical form oratorio.
5. Although Philip had wished to be a missionary in India, he was convinced “to make Rome his desert” and devoted his life there to the poor, the dissolute, and pilgrims. He died as one of Rome’s most honored citizens and was canonized in 1622.

C. New orders were formed as a result of Trent that attempted to fulfill the council’s decrees. The Jesuits are perhaps the most famous of these, founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556).
   1. Ignatius used his military background as the model for a new kind of religious order based on his book, The Spiritual Exercises. The exercises constitute almost military discipline, in which the will is to be made subservient to the needs of the Church and the demands of the papacy.
   2. Ignatius built his new order around three functions: teaching, preaching, and conducting missionary activity. His intent was both to win back souls from the Protestants in Europe and to convert newly contacted people in the New World to the Catholic faith.
   3. Jesuits gained influence as well by controlling the educational apparatus of the continent. They provided the best schools, became the advisors of kings and princes, and engaged in clandestine activities to try to undermine the Protestants.
   4. By the time Loyola was canonized in 1622, the Jesuit order had achieved worldwide influence. It, too, was a reflection of the new Rome and the new Church as a consequence of Trent.

V. Although the spiritual renewal represented by both Counter-Reformation popes and saints changed the perception and character of Rome on one level, the conflicts remained, especially in the ranks of the higher curial officials and even the papacy itself.

A. The pope remained a powerful secular prince, ruling both a large state and an ecclesiastical order. The needs of defense, political and military alliance, and diplomacy compromised the intentions of even the holiest of popes.
   1. Members of the pope’s family also believed they should have some of the perks associated with princely lineage, such as titles, wealth, and authority.
   2. The cardinal-nephews, in particular, enjoyed influence and wealth. Some, such as Scipione Borghese, the cardinal-nephew of Paul V Borghese, used their influence to patronize artists and architects, including Bernini. Others used that wealth for their own benefit.
   3. The princely families of Rome to this day—the Borghese, Chigi, Pamphilij, Ludovisi, Barberini—owe their positions to nephews of popes raised by their uncles.
   4. Indeed, it was not until the end of the 18th century, with the humiliation of Pope Pius VI Braschi (1717–1799) by Napoleon, that the tradition of establishing a great palace and a princely line at the expense of the Church was brought to an end.

B. Papal Rome was the last independent jurisdiction on the Italian Peninsula to fall to the united kingdom of Victor Emmanuel II in 1870.
   1. On September 20, 1870, the armies of Victor Emmanuel broke through the Porta Pia, Michelangelo’s last completed work, and joined Rome and what was left of the Papal States to the Italian kingdom.
   2. The pope, Pius IX, refused to recognize the authority or the legitimacy of the kingdom of Italy over his former territories. He shut himself up in the Vatican, claiming that good Catholics should not participate in politics.

C. It was not until Mussolini’s Lateran Treaty of 1929 that peace was made with the Church. Part of this peace involved the return of secular jurisdiction, as well as ecclesiastical authority, to the pope.
   1. Vatican City was created as an independent state to be ruled absolutely by a priest-king.
   2. Ironically, this tiny sovereign state exists in the world of the European Union, which can be seen as the re-creation of a new kind of secular empire.
3. The world of the papacy of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is still very much with us. The memories are long, and the practice remains tense to this very day.

Essential Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did it take the crisis of the Protestant revolt to generate a movement of fundamental reform in the Roman Church?
2. Can sincere piety and humility coexist with unlimited power?
Timeline

313 .................................................. Edict of Milan: Constantine declares Christianity to be the official religion of the Roman Empire.
476 .................................................. Deposition of the last Roman emperor.
552 .................................................. The Byzantine exarchate established at Ravenna.
c. 750 .............................................. The Donation of Constantine forged.
800 .................................................. Charlemagne crowned as the first Holy Roman Emperor.
1016 ................................................ Pisa and Genoa combined drive the Saracens from Sardinia.
1052 ................................................ Genoa is organized as a self-governing commune.
1077 ................................................ Pope Gregory VII humiliates Emperor Henry IV at Canossa; Pisa given authority over Corsica.
1095 ................................................ Preaching of the First Crusade by Pope Urban II at Clermont.
1137 ................................................ Pisa shatters its maritime rival, Amalfi.
1167 ................................................ Siena establishes an independent communal government of nobles.
1190 ................................................ Death of Frederick I Barbarossa, under whom the division between Guelf and Ghibelline was crystallized.
1195 ................................................ Pisa officially organized as a free, self-governing commune.
1204 ................................................ Europeans in the Fourth Crusade establish the Latin Empire at Constantinople.
1241 ................................................ Pisa defeats the Genoese fleet.
1260 ................................................ The Sienese defeat Florence at the Battle of Montaperti.
1264 ................................................ Obizzo d’Este seizes control of Ferrara.
1266 ................................................ Charles of Anjou establishes the French Angevin dynasty in Naples.
1282 ................................................ The Sicilian Vespers: Sicily revolts against the crown of Naples and attaches itself to the royal House of Aragon.
1284 ................................................ Genoa conclusively defeats Pisa at Meloria.
1287 ................................................ Siena institutes a communal government called The Nine.
1293 ................................................ Florentine Ordinances of Justice promulgated.
1297 ................................................ Closing of the Great Council in Venice (Serrata).
1298 ................................................ Genoa, under Admiral Doria, defeats the Venetians at sea at Curzola.
1309 ................................................ Pope Clement V takes up permanent residence in Avignon: beginning of the Babylonian Captivity.
1311 ................................................ The Peace of Constance, a treaty between the Holy Roman Emperor and the Lombard cities; the Visconti establish hereditary control of Milan as signori.
1315 ................................................ Council of Ten established in Venice.
1327 ................................................ Emperor Louis IV captures Pisa.
1328 ................................................ Luigi Gonzaga seizes control of Mantua.
1339 ................................................ Simon Boccanegra elected as the first doge of Genoa.
1343 ................................................ Walter of Brienne expelled from Florence; the Monte is established.
1345................................................ Bankruptcy of Bardi and Peruzzi banks.
1348................................................ The Black Death appears in Italy, killing significant portions of the population.
1355................................................ Beheading of Venetian doge Marin Falier for treason; fall of The Nine in Siena.
1371................................................ Revolt of the Sienese woolworkers.
1377................................................ The papacy returns to Rome from Avignon.
1378................................................ The Great Schism begins; Ciompi revolt in Florence.
1380–1381...................................... War of Chioggia; Venice defeats Genoa and begins a policy of expansion onto the mainland.
1382................................................ Joanna I of Anjou dies without heirs, resulting in competing French and papal interests in the throne of Naples.
1385................................................ Giangaleazzo Visconti consolidates power in Milan.
1402................................................ Giangaleazzo Visconti, duke of Milan, dies, removing the threat to Florence for control of all north-central Italy.
1405................................................ Venice conquers Padua.
1406................................................ Florence conquers Pisa.
1408................................................ Creation of the Bank of St. George in Genoa.
1409................................................ Council of Pisa.
1412................................................ Galeazzo Maria Visconti murdered.
1414................................................ Council of Constance: Pope Martin V elected to end the Great Schism.
1420................................................ Martin V officially returns to Rome.
1425................................................ Monte delle doti (state dower fund) established in Florence.
1434................................................ Cosimo de'Medici returns from exile to take control of Florence.
1442................................................ Naples falls to an Aragonese siege under Alfonso, king of Aragon and Sicily.
1444................................................ Federigo da Montefeltro becomes the duke of Urbino.
1447................................................ Francesco Sforza assumes control in Milan.
1453................................................ Fall of Constantinople to the Turks.
1454................................................ The Peace of Lodi.
1455................................................ The formation of the Italian League by Francesco Sforza and Cosimo de'Medici.
1474................................................ Ercole I of Ferrara marries Eleonora of Aragon, daughter of Alfonso the Magnanimous.
1475................................................ Fall of Caffa to the Turks.
1478................................................ Pazzi conspiracy: death of Giuliano de'Medici.
1479................................................ The dynastic union of Spain under Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile.
1480................................................ Turks capture the Italian city of Otranto, holding it for a year.
1488................................................ Guidobaldo da Montefeltro of Urbino marries Elisabetta Gonzaga of Mantua.
1490................................................ Francesco il Gonzago of Mantua marries Isabella d’Este.
1491................................................ Lodovico il Moro of Milan marries Beatrice d’Este.
1494................................................ Charles VIII of France invades Italy; the Medici are driven from Florence.
1495................................................ Savonarola’s constitution proclaimed in Florence; Charles VIII captures Naples.
1495................................................ Creation of the League of Venice.
1496................................................ Restoration of the Aragonese dynasty in Naples under Frederick III.
1497–1498...................................... Vasco da Gama circumnavigates the Cape of Good Hope.
1498................................................ Savonarola is executed.
1499................................................ France, under Louis XII, captures Milan.
1500................................................ Pandolfo Petrucci consolidates his power as II Magnifico, tyrant of Siena.
1503................................................ Naples is placed under a Spanish viceroy.
1505................................................ The Treaty of Blois establishes Spanish sovereignty in Naples.
1509................................................ Florentines starve Pisa into submission; the League of Cambrai defeats Venice at Agnadello.
1511................................................ The Holy League formed by Pope Julius II.
1512................................................ The Medici resume power in Florence; France defeats the combined papal/Spanish powers at Ravenna.
1515................................................ Francis I of France wins the Battle of Marignano.
1516................................................ The Treaty of Noyon acknowledges French sovereignty over Milan; Charles V becomes king of Spain.
1517................................................ Martin Luther initiates the Protestant revolts; Turks consolidate control of Persia, Syria, and Egypt.
1519................................................ Charles V elected Holy Roman Emperor.
1521................................................ Pope Leo X excommunicates Martin Luther; Sultan Selim II of Turkey captures Belgrade and Rhodes.
1522................................................ The Spaniards sack Genoa.
1524................................................ France captures Milan.
1525................................................ Battle of Pavia: Francis I of France is imprisoned by the emperor’s forces.
1527................................................ Sack of Rome; Medici expelled from Florence.
1527................................................ Habsburgs driven from Genoa by Andrea Doria.
1529................................................ Charles V crowned Holy Roman Emperor at Bologna; Treaty of Cambrai, in which France renounces all claims to Italian territories.
1530................................................ The end of the Florentine Republic.
1537................................................ Cosimo I de’ Medici (later, grand duke of Tuscany) assumes control in Florence.
1545................................................ Council of Trent called by Paul III.
1552................................................ Spaniards expelled from Siena.
1555................................................ Siena capitulates to Florence.
1559................................................ Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis establishing the shape of the European state system under the victorious Habsburgs.
1565................................................ Siege of Malta.
1569................................................ Cosimo I elevated as grand duke of Tuscany.
1570 ................................................ Ottoman conquest of Cyprus.

1571 ................................................ Christians defeat the Turks at the Battle of Lepanto, halting Turkish expansion in the west.
### Popes Following the Great Schism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Papal Name</th>
<th>Baptismal Name</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Oddone Colonna</td>
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<td>Eugene IV (1431–1447)</td>
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<td>Nicholas V (1447–1455)</td>
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<td>Calixtus III (1455–1458)</td>
<td>Alfonso de Borgia</td>
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<td>Pius II (1458–1464)</td>
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<td>Paul II (1464–1471)</td>
<td>Pietro Barbo</td>
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<td>Sixtus IV (1471–1484)</td>
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<td>Innocent VIII (1484–1492)</td>
<td>Giovanni Battista Cibò</td>
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<td>Alexander VI (1492–1503)</td>
<td>Rodrigo Borgia</td>
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<td>Pius III (1503)</td>
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<td>Julius II (1503–1513)</td>
<td>Giuliano della Rovere</td>
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<td>Leo X (1513–1521)</td>
<td>Giovanni de’Medici</td>
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<td>Adrian VI (1522–1523)</td>
<td>Adrian Dedel</td>
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<td>Clement VII (1523–1534)</td>
<td>Giulio de’Medici</td>
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<td>Paul III (1534–1549)</td>
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<td>Julius III (1550–1555)</td>
<td>Giammaria Ciocchi del Monte</td>
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### Holy Roman Emperors from 1046 to 1576

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<td>Salian (Frankish)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry V (1111–1125)</td>
<td>Salian (Frankish)</td>
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<td>Lothair III (1133–1137)</td>
<td>Supplinburger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frederick I Barbarossa (1155–1190)</td>
<td>Hohenstaufen (Staufen)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry VI (1191–1197)</td>
<td>Hohenstaufen (Staufen)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otto IV of Brunswick (1209–1215)</td>
<td>House of Welf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frederick II (1220–1250)</td>
<td>Hohenstaufen (Staufen)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry VII (1312–1313)</td>
<td>House of Luxembourg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louis IV the Bavarian (1328–1347)</td>
<td>House of Wittelsbach</td>
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<td>Charles IV (1355–1378)</td>
<td>House of Luxembourg</td>
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<td>Sigismund (1410–1437)</td>
<td>House of Luxembourg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frederick III (1452–1493)</td>
<td>House of Habsburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maximilian I (1508–1519) (emperor-elect)</td>
<td>House of Habsburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles V (1530–1556) (emperor-elect, 1519–1530)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ferdinand I (1556–1564) (emperor-elect)</td>
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<td>Maximilian II (1564–1576) (emperor-elect)</td>
<td>House of Habsburg</td>
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Glossary

**accoppiatori**: The committee charged with determining which citizens were eligible for election to public office in Florence.

**Arsenal, the**: The state-controlled munitions and shipbuilding factory in Venice.

**Babylonian Captivity (1305–1377)**: The residence of the popes in Avignon.

**botteghe**: The workshops of artisans and artists.

**Byzantine exarchate**: A province of the Byzantine emperor.

**campanilismo**: The belief that all that matters is the territory from which the bell tower—*campanile*—of one’s local church is visible.

**cantucci**: Tuscan almond biscotti or biscuits.

**capitano del popolo**: The official head of the common people in Italian cities.

**certosa**: Literally, in Italian, “charterhouse,” a Carthusian monastery.

**ciambello**: A sweet, cake-like bread traditionally made at festivals.

**città marinara**: Literally “a maritime city” in Italian.

**cittadini originari**: Wealthy, influential citizens who did not qualify for admission to the Great Council of Venice after the Serrata of 1297 but who still enjoyed certain legal privileges and whose genealogies were maintained in the Silver Book.

**commenda**: A mercantile contract lasting for just one voyage in which the risk and profits of the voyage are shared among several investors.

**conciliarism**: The principle that general church councils were superior to popes and exercised authority over them.

**condottiere**: A mercenary captain.

**Council of Ten**: A powerful committee of 10 men established in 1315 with responsibility for state security in Venice.

**Council of Trent (1545–1563)**: Called by Pope Paul III Farnese to address the reform of the church in the face of the Protestant Reformation.

**Donation of Constantine**: A forged document in which Constantine, the first Christian emperor, purported to give the rule of the Western empire to the papacy in 337.

**Edict of Milan (313)**: Constantine’s recognition of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

**episcopal see**: The territory and authority of a bishop.

**gattopardismo**: A term from Giuseppi di Lampadusa’s novel *The Leopard* (in Italian, *Il Gattopardo*), which states that for everything to remain the same, everything must seem to change.

**Ghibelline**: A supporter of the authority of the Holy Roman Emperor.

**Golden Book**: The official genealogy of the Venetian nobility.

**grandi**: Old mercantile families who adopted the traditions of the feudal nobility.

**Great Schism (1378–1417)**: The period of the divided papacy, during which there were two, and after 1409, three competing popes.

**Guelf**: A supporter of papal power.

**Holy See**: The jurisdiction of the pope as bishop of Rome.

**latifundia**: The vast agricultural estates held by landlords.
monte (plural: monti): The name given to the parties or factions instituted in Siena in the second half of the 14th century.

Monte, the: The single fund into which the public debt of Florence was consolidated after 1343.

parlamento: A gathering of the adult male heads of households called to decide constitutional questions.

Peace of Lodi (1454): This treaty recognized the spheres of influence of the five great states of Italy—Venice, Milan, Florence, the papacy, and Naples.

plenitudo potestatis: Literally, in Latin, “the fullness of power,” referring to the absolute authority of the pope to determine both political and theological policy.

podestà: A military leader, usually a foreigner, hired to oversee the military security of a state.

Regno: Italian for “kingdom”; usually refers to the Kingdom of Naples.

Risorgimento: Literally, in Italian, a “resurgence”; the Italian unification movement in the 19th century.

Rota: The highest canon law judicial body in Rome.

scuole: Religious confraternities in Venice.


signori: In Italian, “lords”; territorial rulers who exercised authority in a state.

terraferma: The portion of the Venetian Republic on the Italian mainland.

trulli: Curious rounded habitations indigenous to Puglia, made out of whitewashed limestone and topped with cone-shaped, grey stone roofs.

Veneto: The modern region of Italy with its capital at Venice.

Via Francigena: The overland route taken by pilgrims and merchants in the Middle Ages from France to Rome.

vin santo: A sweet, fortified Tuscan wine reminiscent of sherry.
The Italians before Italy: Conflict and Competition in the Mediterranean

Part II

Kenneth R. Bartlett, Ph.D.
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 the journal 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 first Director of the Office of Teaching Advancement.

Much of Dr. Bartlett’s career has been devoted to bringing Italian 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, and he has been the recipient of numerous teaching awards, most notably, the 3M Teaching Fellowship, awarded by the Canadian Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, and the inaugural President’s Teaching Award for the University of Toronto. In 2007, Dr. Bartlett was one of the 10 finalists in TVOntario’s Best Lecturer competition, which pits students’ favorite instructors against one another in a battle of charisma, clarity, passion, and conviction; that same year he was recognized by an inaugural Leadership in Faculty Teaching award by the government of Ontario.

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The Italians before Italy:
Conflict and Competition in the Mediterranean

Scope:

This course discusses the political, economic, and social worlds of the Italian city-states in the period from the Middle Ages to the loss of their autonomy in the later 16th century. The course includes some references to the status of certain Italian cities in antiquity and brief mention of their subsequent development from 1559 until the Risorgimento, the movement of Italian national unification in the 19th century. The focus is on the development of the institutions and structures that gave each independent state its essential character. Thus, Florence will be discussed in the context of the rise of the bourgeois republic and its concomitant mercantile economy, until the hegemony of the Medici family gradually transformed the commune into a monarchy in the 16th century. Siena, that other great Tuscan republic, which once rivaled Florence, will be shown to have declined over our period as a consequence of factional and class division, until it was incorporated into the Medici duchy of Florence in 1557. Venice will be investigated not only as a state that managed to sustain republican patrician rule until its extinction at the end of the 18th century but also as a city-state that built, over time, a great empire on Italian soil and in the Mediterranean. Genoa and Pisa were also great mercantile republics but wracked by internal dissent and external threats. These cities once rivaled Venice for control of the luxury trade routes to the East and established maritime empires of their own until they were eclipsed by the Venetians. The complex history of Rome will emerge as the seat of an imperial papacy, building on ancient memories and responding to contemporary challenges, such as the Reformation, to create a state whose power rested more on confessional allegiance and artistic grandeur than on military force. Milan, despite suffering from many incompetent rulers, had the resources to create the most powerful state in the north, one that came close to uniting the peninsula while creating a vibrant courtly culture. The principalities of Mantua, Urbino, and Ferrara reflect simultaneously the exquisite culture and the brutal military power of their rulers, many of whom financed their states by serving as condottieri, that is, mercenary captains. Naples, that feudal kingdom to the south of the Italian peninsula, must be seen as a world apart from the republics and petty principalities to the north.

The introductory lectures in the course bring together the common threads of a history shared by the independent states of Italy. Various attempts were conceived to unite the peninsula, beginning with Dante’s hope that the Holy Roman Emperor would impose his rule and reduce the power of the pope. This Ghibelline vision remained strong, despite the continued authority of Rome and the papacy on the peninsula to sustain the Guelph cause. These almost ideological calls for unity accompanied the real ambitions of such princes as Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan to assemble the vast wealth and military power of his state to build a single kingdom from the mosaic of independent states. Equally, the Holy See attempted to use the authority of the Church to cement the allegiance of the entire Italian nation, both through faith and through force of arms. Cesare Borgia’s campaigns on behalf of his father, Pope Alexander VI, came close to success at the turn of the 16th century; and Pope Julius II’s campaigns restored papal rule in the states of the Church after the disintegration of Borgia power.

Finally, this course argues that the richness of the culture of Italy resulted from its lack of political unity. The various constitutional, cultural, and economic experiments among the patchwork of states, together with their competition with one another and their jealousy and ambition, all made such an efflorescence of culture possible.
Lecture Thirteen
Naples—A Matter of Wills

**Scope:** Naples was a feudal kingdom, an essentially agricultural state, with poor soil and inefficient means of cultivation, ravaged by brigands, rapacious landlords, and ambitious ecclesiastics. The early history of the kingdom saw the ascendancy of the French when, in 1266, the pope requested their aid for the Italian Guelfs in their struggle against the Ghibelline Hohenstaufen. Consequently, Charles of Anjou, younger brother of St. Louis IX, entered Naples and established the French Angevin dynasty. Unfortunately, the French officials sent throughout the kingdom caused great resentment among all classes, especially in Sicily. The result was the revolt against the Angevins in 1282, which separated Sicily from the crown of Naples and attached it to the royal House of Aragon. Thus were created two kingdoms where there had been one: Naples, ruled by the French Angevins, and Sicily, ruled from Palermo by the Aragonese. But even this unhappy situation was soon compounded by the death of Naples’s Queen Joanna I in 1382. Complications in her will and tension with Pope Urban VI meant that the crown eventually went to her cousin, Charles of Durazzo.

**Outline**

I. Naples, a feudal kingdom, was completely different from the city-states of northern and central Italy.
   A. The mass of Naples spread from the tip of the island of Sicily, for much of its history, to just south of the borders of the Papal States.
   B. Feudalism had been imposed in Naples by waves of invaders, beginning with the Normans in the middle of the 11th century. The state developed in an almost northern European manner, with a feudal system of government and royal rule impressed upon the people.
   C. Naples was essentially an agricultural kingdom made up of large *latifundia*, agricultural estates, controlled by the feudal nobility.
      1. The quality of the soil varied, but much of it was rocky and not well suited to agriculture.
      2. The land of Naples had been ravaged by brigands because the kingdom went long periods without central authority.
      3. Ambitious ecclesiastics, as well as great nobles, sought their wealth from the people of the southern part of the peninsula, who often suffered terribly at the hands of the government.
   D. The capital city of Naples, one of the largest cities in Europe, was the only major international center in the state. The city’s economy was heavily dependent on serving the royal court and agricultural markets. Outside the capital, there was little commerce.
   E. The south had almost a singular social and economic structure based on vast estates, aristocratic and ecclesiastical depredation, and a central government that varied between ruthless oppression and total incompetence.
      1. The owners of the estates and, often, the officials of the central administration had little respect for the rights or property of the subjects in the kingdom of Naples.
      2. Indeed, the *regno* (“kingdom”), as the south of Italy is called, had a reputation for being not only lawless but difficult to govern.
   F. The history of Naples in our period, then, is largely told by the dynastic ambitions of its monarchs.
      1. Naples was ruled by a series of foreign dynasties, rather than dynasties from among the powerful families of the *regno* itself.
      2. This situation caused a natural degree of instability in the southern part of the peninsula and would sow the seeds of the loss of Italian liberty and the beginning of oppression for the entire peninsula.

II. The early history of Naples saw the ascendancy of the French.
   A. In 1266, the pope requested Charles of Anjou, brother of the French king, to aid the Italian Guelfs in their struggle against the Ghibelline House of Hohenstaufen.
      1. The Hohenstaufen had, for generations, based their authority in the south of Italy and saw themselves as both an Italian and an imperial power.
2. The Guelfs, however, were victorious, and Charles of Anjou—the younger brother of King St. Louis IX of France—entered Naples, where he established the French Angevin dynasty.

3. This event ensured the victory of the Italian Guelfs everywhere on the peninsula, dissolving support for the imperial monarchy.

B. Charles of Anjou’s Angevin dynasty soon came into conflict with the traditional powers in Naples itself.

C. Sicily, an island separated from the mainland by the Straits of Messina, was a further complication. Sicily’s rich and complex history resulted in a strong sense of separateness and particularism on the island.
   1. Initially, the peasants and lesser property owners looked to the French to intervene between them and their abusive landlords.
   2. Charles legitimized his authority in Sicily by submitting to election as king of Sicily in the capital city of Palermo.

D. The idea of Charles of Anjou as the king of both Naples and Sicily was established by an attempt on his part to include Sicily in his own form of government, but this proved impossible.
   1. The French wanted a centralized regime, in which the laws promulgated by royal authority would be accepted and recognized throughout the Angevin kingdom of Naples and Sicily.
   2. This approach was in direct opposition to the traditions of the great local feudatories and ecclesiastics in the south of Italy.

E. When Charles began to centralize his government in Naples, he acted without consulting Palermo. Moreover, he dispossessed some of the powerful feudal families on the island of Sicily to distribute their land to his followers and, in doing so, alienated the aristocratic class.

F. Charles and his army of plundering adventurers were identified by the pope as Crusaders against the imperial Hohenstaufen.
   1. The French took full advantage of this recognition to enrich themselves at the expense of the nobles and commoners of Sicily and the south of Italy.
   2. The French also encouraged local magnates, towns, and families to settle scores against those who had supported the Hohenstaufen.
   3. The Hohenstaufen taxation policies were changed, as well, to encourage urban commerce at the expense of agriculture and the landed magnates.
   4. Higher taxes in cities and attempts to transmit money earned through increased commerce to Naples alienated the town councils and urban governments on Sicily and in southern Italy. The towns that had originally welcomed the French increasingly saw the House of Anjou as an oppressive foreign power.
   5. At the same time, Charles’s expenses and the demands of his court continued to grow, and he began to simply take money where he saw it available, regardless of the legality of his actions or his own policies of taxation.

G. The consequences of Charles’s policies were an impoverishment of the economy and the fracturing of the social structure of Sicily and much of the south of Italy.

III. The political result and the manifestation of this alienation of the south from the kingdom of Naples and its ruler, Charles of Anjou, was the revolt against the Angevins in 1282 known as the Sicilian Vespers.

A. The Sicilian Vespers represented a popular revolt against the Angevin monarchy in Naples. The revolt ultimately separated Sicily from the crown of Naples and attached it to the royal House of Aragon.

B. Peter of Aragon had united his kingdom with Catalonia, giving him the Mediterranean port of Barcelona, with its trade connection to Sicily. Moreover, Peter had married the last heir of the imperial House of Hohenstaufen, Constance, the daughter of King Manfred. Thus, he had both an economic interest in the acquisition of Sicily and powerful dynastic claims to the island.

C. Peter raised himself as the leader of a revived Ghibelline faction, in contrast to the House of Anjou, which had ruled through the grace of the pope. The House of Anjou was seen as the great Guelf power in Italy, and Naples was its base of support.

D. The revolt began as a reaction to a particular event, but tensions had been building for some time.
   1. A contingent of French soldiers had been sent to Palermo to search all those entering the city for weapons or contraband.
   2. A French soldier was accused of inappropriately touching a Sicilian woman, and a brawl broke out.
The soldier was murdered, setting off a chain reaction in which all of the soldiers at the gate were slaughtered.

3. Once word of the revolt spread through Palermo, the popular hatred that had been rising for so long exploded. The mob slaughtered anyone who had any association with the French.

4. The Sicilian Vespers set in motion events that would ultimately divide the regno between the Neapolitan kingdom, with its authority on the peninsula, and the island of Sicily.

**E.** The entire island soon slipped into anarchy as the French government and officials fled. Towns tried to capitalize on the situation by claiming communal independence from royal and feudal authorities.

1. Not willing to lose their traditional powers, the local nobles tried to assume leadership of the popular revolt.

2. At this point, Charles of Anjou and the pope panicked. They tried to salvage the situation by offering to respect Sicilian traditions and laws, but of course, it was far too late.

**F.** Five months after the slaughter had begun, Peter of Aragon landed at Trapani. His first act was to negotiate with the feudal barons of Sicily to formally request his intervention.

1. Peter was proclaimed king in Palermo by the political powers that had brought him to Sicily and promised to protect the island from the Neapolitans and the pope. In other words, he became, de facto, the leader of the Ghibelline faction in southern Italy once more.

2. Naples and Sicily were now separate kingdoms, opposed to each other militarily, diplomatically, and ideologically.

3. This division was cemented by the establishment of a separate Sicilian branch of the House of Aragon under Peter’s younger brother, Frederick, in 1295.

**IV.** The unhappy situation of a divided Italian south was complicated once more by the recurring crisis of dynastic continuity.

**A.** Joanna I of Anjou (1326–1382) had ruled Naples since 1343 but had no legitimate heir. With no indication of who would take the crown that the Angevins had established in Naples, political instability began to grow.

1. Joanna had supported the Angevin popes during the Great Schism, and she had sustained her alliance with her cousins, the rulers of France. She was, thus, very much in the Angevin Guelf tradition.

2. In her will, she named Louis, duke of Anjou, younger brother of King Charles V of France, as her heir, but the Roman Pope Urban VI refused to permit the French to control the kingdom of Naples.

**B.** Relying on his feudal authority as the theoretical overlord of Naples, Urban declared the will invalid and identified his own candidate to succeed Joanna. This candidate was Charles of Durazzo, Joanna’s cousin and her niece’s husband.

**C.** In theory, Naples would revert to the pope if the legitimate dynasty became extinct. Moreover, the papacy had influenced the affairs of the kingdom from the time of Charles of Anjou. Urban, therefore, declared Joanna deposed and invited Charles to claim his crown.

**D.** Charles of Durazzo came to Naples with an army, captured Joanna, and had her strangled with a silken cord before he was crowned king. The House of Anjou never recognized the intervention of the pope in disregarding the original will of Joanna.

1. In the short term, the conflicting claims would ensure that the history of Naples and, indeed, Sicily would remain confused.

2. The dynastic claims of various houses and families, with the constant intervention of the pope and powers outside of Italy, would also ensure that Naples would never fulfill its desire to become a centralized kingdom that could play an appropriate role in the affairs of Europe.

3. The disregard for Joanna’s will and the unfulfilled hopes of the House of Anjou would ultimately lead to the intervention of the French at the end of the 15th century. With the arrival of the army of Charles VIII, the independence of the kingdom of Naples and the Italian Peninsula would be, first, compromised, then lost.

**Essential Reading:**

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Should the rule of entire nations be dependent upon dynastic inheritance?
2. How does the history of Naples reflect the Italian problem of sovereignty?
Scope: The dynastic resolution that promoted Charles of Durazzo to the crown failed to provide long-term stability, as this branch of the Neapolitan Angevins became extinct with the death of another Queen Joanna (Joanna II) in 1435. The situation was only resolved in 1442, when Alfonso the Magnanimous of Sicily crossed the Straits of Messina with an army and took Naples, the two portions of the old kingdom again becoming one. Alfonso proved to be one of the kingdom’s few great rulers, providing good government, introducing Humanist ideas, and containing the ambitious self-interest of Naples’s feudal barons. Alfonso’s heir, his illegitimate son Ferrante (1458−1494), had a less stable rule. The House of Anjou had succeeded to the French throne, which was, in the person of Charles VIII, determined to exercise its two unrealized claims to Naples. Charles immediately launched his massive invasion of Italy, and the tragedy of Naples thus became the tragedy of all Italy, beginning a series of events that would result in rule of the peninsula by foreign monarchs and the reduction of its history to one of domination by external powers.

Outline

I. The dynastic resolution that promoted Charles of Durazzo to the crown failed to provide long-term stability because this branch of the Neapolitan Angevins became extinct, as well.
   A. Another Queen Joanna (r. 1414−1435) also had a turbulent reign and lacked an heir.
      1. Joanna was threatened by her French cousin, Louis of Anjou, who had the traditional Angevin claim to Naples of the main house of the French branch of the Anjou family.
      2. To protect her crown, Joanna requested military aid from Alfonso of Aragon, the ruler of Sicily, adopting him as her heir to reunite the parts of the old regno and to ensure that there would be some element of dynastic succession in this southern kingdom.
   B. Alfonso, however, chose not to wait until Joanna died. He attempted to seize the throne in 1423. This act drove Joanna to switch allegiance back to the House of Anjou, repudiating her will that had named Alfonso as heir and, in his place, adopting Louis.
   C. Louis entered the kingdom and succeeded in securing much of it based on both the legitimate power that was the gift of Joanna and his military authority. But when Louis predeceased Joanna, dying in 1434, she adopted his son, René of Anjou, as her heir.

II. Alfonso refused to accept the repudiation of the first will naming him king.
   A. Alfonso had ruled as king of both Aragon in the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily from 1416.
      1. He thus had a substantial power base and wealth. Moreover, his kingdom was very close to Naples, just across the narrow Straits of Messina, from which he could easily launch an invasion of the southern portion of the Italian Peninsula.
      2. Rather than accept the continuation of the Angevin dynasty in Naples, he plotted to conquer the mainland kingdom.
   B. Alfonso crossed the Straits of Messina with an army in 1435.
      1. In a sea battle with the Genoese, who had intervened at the request of the duke of Milan, René of Anjou’s ally, Alfonso was defeated and taken captive by the Milanese.
      2. Nevertheless, armed as he was with a firm grasp of the effects of international politics on the smaller states of the Italian Peninsula, Alfonso convinced the Milanese that Aragonese power in southern Italy was less dangerous to them than that of the French.
   C. Alfonso was freed and continued the battle for Naples.
      1. The conquest was not easy, however; the pope, intent on opposing potential challenges to papal authority from the House of Aragon and its Ghibelline sympathizers, supported the French and sent a mercenary army in René’s defense.
      2. But after sustained warfare, Naples finally fell to the Aragonese siege in 1442.
3. By 1443, Alfonso had pacified the entire kingdom and had established Aragonese rule, which ultimately extended as far as Sardinia, conquered in 1446.

III. Alfonso proved to be one of the regno’s few great rulers.

A. Alfonso united the administration of all the Aragonese dominions, imposing a harsh but effective regime, one that was centralized but also flexible when circumstances required it.
   1. Realizing that he had to improve the economic position of both Sicily and southern Italy, he engaged in important public works, such as draining marshes and providing supplies of fresh water.
   2. His infrastructure programs would allow for towns and cities to grow.
   3. But many of his high officials were Spanish and cut off from the local powers of the Neapolitan barons, who retained their xenophobic particularist traditions.
   4. Thus, Alfonso resorted to using mercenary soldiers and his own Spanish troops to enforce his will.
   5. The locals saw Alfonso as an oppressor in the same way that the locals of Sicily and the south of Italy viewed most of the foreign dynasties that imposed their rule upon them.

B. Alfonso gained wide renown as a patron of arts and culture.
   1. He was devoted to Classical literature, carrying the works of the ancient Roman authors Livy and Tacitus with him on campaign to ensure that he would be able to live up to their examples.
   2. To celebrate his capture of Naples, he had Francesco Laurana build the glorious triumphal gate of the Castel Nuovo (1443). The wonderful Renaissance gate reflects the entry of Humanism and the values of the Italian Renaissance into Naples, which had been cut off from the rest of Italy by its dynastic struggles and poverty.
   3. Alfonso supported Lorenzo Valla, the remarkable philologist who worked against the papacy and who proved that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery of the 8th century. Valla’s exposure of the forgery was a powerful weapon in the battle between rulers who supported the papal hegemony and those who opposed it.
   4. Alfonso welcomed to his court Humanist scholars, poets, and artists at a time when there seemed to be a union once more of the ideas of the Italian Peninsula, extending from one tip to the other.

C. Nevertheless, the fundamental problems, the problems of the south of the kingdom, the Mezzogiorno, remained.
   1. Lawless barons mired in their own narrow self-interests opposed the foreign dynasty. They saw Alfonso as just another foreign ruler.
   2. Given that Alfonso had no legitimate heir, the dynastic crisis that had caused Naples so much grief was not solved by his victory.
   3. Without a legitimate heir, the papacy believed that the crown should revert to the pope, but Alfonso had to ensure this would not happen.

IV. Alfonso’s heir was his illegitimate son Ferdinand I, known as Ferrante (1423–1494).

A. Despite inheriting the regno, Ferrante had a less stable reign than his father.
   1. The feudatories stayed outside the law, working against central authority, irate that the king was not only foreign but also a bastard.
   2. Indeed, many believed, because of the rumor that Alfonso’s queen had a number of lovers, that Ferdinand was not even Alfonso’s son.

B. The Angevins had not in any way become reconciled with the loss of Naples, mounting, through René of Anjou, a campaign against Ferrante, which he brutally repelled.

C. Furthermore, the papacy disputed Ferrante’s ascendancy, believing that with Alfonso’s death, sovereignty returned to the pope in his role as Naples’s feudal overlord.
   1. In order to maintain some element of security within the regno, Ferrante had to do the pope’s bidding. This circumstance resulted in his leading his armies against Lorenzo de’Medici in the War of the Pazzi Conspiracy (1478–1480).
   2. Despite Naples’s obligations to the pope, Lorenzo was able, during his dramatic visit to Ferrante’s
court in the darkest days of the war, to convince the king to make a separate peace and save Florence, leaving Sixtus furious at both Ferrante and Lorenzo because the diplomacy and intelligence of Lorenzo had gotten the better of him.

V. Ferrante’s death in 1494 allowed for the last act of the tragedy of Naples to begin.
   A. The French king, Charles VIII, had come to the throne with an almost messianic ambition to conquer Naples. He believed that prophecies had foretold his rule as the coming of a new Charlemagne.
      1. His legal claims, resulting from the disputed wills of the two Queen Joannas, and the urgings of both Lodovico il Moro of Milan and Savonarola in Florence encouraged Charles to cross the Alps in 1494 with his army, the largest assembled since ancient times and the first to use mobile field artillery in Italy on a large scale.
      2. Lodovico, who had feared Neapolitan interference in his own ambition to turn his regency into a hereditary rule, celebrated Charles’s arrival in Milan.
      3. Florence capitulated to his harsh demands, leading to the exile of the Medici and elevating the influence of Savonarola, who provided ideological support for the messianic vision of Charles.
      4. The indecisive Pope Alexander VI, who wished to create a Borgia kingdom out of the states of the Church and who would use his son Cesare to accomplish this goal, saw no alternative to permitting Charles safe passage through the Papal States.
      5. Thus, Charles marched in triumph and unopposed into Naples in February 1495.
   B. Although all classes initially welcomed Charles, he soon found himself opposed by the great feudatories, who realized that the French would not honor the tradition of lawlessness they exercised in the south.
      1. The fractious magnates became increasingly rebellious with the change from Aragonese to French influence.
      2. Again, the French soldiers’ disrespect for the traditional chastity of the Neapolitan women infuriated the population.
      3. Even more dangerously, Pope Alexander, Venice, and Lodovico of Milan (who now regretted his earlier support of Charles) allied to drive out the French.
      4. Rather than wait for battle, Charles led much of his army out of Italy, fighting only one disputed encounter at Fornovo and leaving his cousin to rule Naples.
      5. It was not difficult, then, for the Aragonese general Gonzalo de Cordoba, whom Machiavelli describes in The Prince, to drive out the remaining French in the regno and restore the Aragonese dynasty in 1496 under Frederick III (1496–1501).
   C. Charles VIII died in 1498 without issue; his cousin, the duke of Orleans, succeeded him as Louis XII.
      1. Louis pressed his claim in Milan, capturing it in 1499, but Ferdinand of Aragon, jealous of French success, entered into a treaty with Louis to conquer and partition Italy south of the Papal States.
      2. The pope, allied with France, approved this arrangement and declared Frederick of Naples deposed and the kingdom to be partitioned.
      3. The French attacked Naples, which King Frederick abandoned.
      4. The Spanish, again under Gonzalo de Cordoba, captured the southern provinces.
   D. The two powers could not agree on how to share the regno, and war between them ensued.
      1. Despite victories on both sides, the leadership of Gonzalo de Cordoba drove the French from Naples.
      2. By the Treaty of Blois in 1505, Louis recognized Ferdinand of Aragon as king of Naples and Sicily.
      3. From that point until the extinction of the Spanish Habsburgs in 1707, Naples existed as a province of Spain, a symbol of the loss of Italian liberty.

Essential Reading:
J. Bentley, Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples.

Questions to Consider:
1. Given its history, society, and economic structure, could the Kingdom of Naples have expected to develop in
parallel with the Italian states of northern or central Italy during the Renaissance?

2. Why did royal patronage in Naples never expand much beyond the capital?
Lecture Fifteen  
Milan and the Visconti

Scope: Milan began its history as a principality with sovereignty derived from the Holy Roman Emperors. By 1311, the Visconti family had managed to defeat all other challengers and establish a true monarchical dynasty. The family was eager for acceptance into the fraternity of European dynasties; hence, the practice began of marrying Visconti princesses into foreign ruling houses, setting the stage for the loss of Italian liberty through foreign intervention. Beginning in 1378, Giangaleazzo Visconti, who purchased the ducal title from the emperor, moved swiftly to consolidate his territory, using his absolute authority to render Milan one of the most celebrated and wealthy cities of Europe. Unfortunately, Giangaleazzo’s heirs, first, Gianmario and, later, Filippo Maria, were troubled and vicious. With the death of Filippo in 1447 came the end of the legitimate Visconti line. The people of Milan rose in revolt and declared the formation of a republic. They hired the condottiere Francesco Sforza to protect their city against the emperor, who claimed the city as his fief. But in the end, Sforza used his military strength and links by marriage with the Visconti family to secure Milan in his own right.

Outline

I. French invasions of the Italian Peninsula focused first on Naples, but Milan soon appeared as an equally attractive dynastic prize.
   A. Reflecting the traditional conflict between Guelf and Ghibelline, between the classes, and among dynasties, Milan developed in a fundamentally different way from Naples but in no way was this development less tortured.
      1. Milan had been an important city from imperial times, functioning as capital of the late Roman Empire.
      2. It enjoyed the luster of having St. Ambrose, a father of the Church and the bishop who baptized St. Augustine, as its spiritual leader.
      3. Milan had always been a rich city, situated as it is on the fertile, flat Lombard plain and the River Po, the longest river in Italy.
      4. After the collapse of Roman Empire, the city and territory were invaded by barbarian tribes, but in the 6th century, the Lombards (Longobardi, a largely Romanized Germanic tribe) assumed control, giving the region its name.
   B. Milan began its history as an imperial vicariate, with sovereignty coming from the Holy Roman Emperors.
      1. As one of the most powerful of the northern Italian cities, Milan had enjoyed communal government since the 11th century.
      2. This de facto independence had provided some measure of relief from the Guelf and Ghibelline tensions that surrounded the city and from economic factors that might have restricted the growth of the Milanese state.
   C. By 1311, one family, the Visconti, had managed to establish a dynasty that would last until 1447.
      1. Ottone Visconti, archbishop of Milan (d. 1295), established the dynastic tradition that would pave the way for the expansion of the city.
      2. In 1311, under Matteo Visconti, the hereditary role of the signori (“lord”) was recognized, and the Visconti became hereditary rulers.
      3. Matteo acquired his title from the emperor. He then ruled as an imperial vicar, recognized by the emperor as acting in his name.
      4. Milan thus was a Ghibelline city, and the Visconti moved to exile Guelf supporters, thereby eliminating the ideological and class differences they represented.
II. The Visconti subsequently worked to increase Milan’s territory. Even as signori, they were able to wield absolute power.
   A. Under Giovanni Visconti (1290–1354), who was again both archbishop and lord of Milan, the city grew in power and stature.
      1. Giovanni at one time extended his state to include Bologna and Genoa, seeking to acquire a large
territorial state in north-central Italy and greater riches for the dynasty.

2. He was also interested in culture and was the patron of the poet Petrarch, who spent eight years in Milan.

3. Giovanni’s successors would fulfill the policies he set in motion, helping to make Milan the most powerful state in northern Italy.

B. With Giovanni’s death, his three nephews, Bernabo, Matteo, and Galeazzo, divided the Visconti dominions among themselves.

1. This division and their largely unpopular rule, characterized by high taxation and cruelty, drove Pope Urban V to attempt to restore the city of St. Ambrose to papal and Guelph allegiance in 1367.

2. Given that Milan controlled the passes through the Alps, Florence, Mantua, and Ferrara—all of whom feared Milanese expansion—were eager to support the pope in such an attempt.

3. The war failed, as did the pope’s higher goal of ejecting the rival Ghibelline factions from the Italian Peninsula; consequently, the Visconti family remained in control of Milan. These events added to the hostility of Milan to some of the other states on the peninsula and underscored the importance of the Visconti policy of preemptive assault.

C. In part because of their precarious position, the Visconti were anxious for acceptance into the fraternity of European dynasties.

1. A conscious attempt was made to connect the family of the Visconti through marriage with the great ruling houses of France, England, and other nations.

2. As a consequence of this policy to aggrandize the House of Visconti, the stage was set for the invasions of the late 15th and early 16th centuries and the ultimate loss of Italian liberty through foreign intervention.

III. Galeazzo’s death in 1378 left the Visconti dominions divided between his brother, Bernabo, and his son, Giangaleazzo.

A. Bernabo, despising his lettered young nephew’s monkish ways, decided to kill him and unite all the Visconti patrimony under his own authority.

1. Giangaleazzo, whose court was at Pavia, caught wind of the plot, however, and realizing that he had an opportunity to unite the territory of the Visconti, he initiated a plot of his own.

2. Bernabo, a tyrant, ruled without restriction, tortured his enemies, and extracted their wealth; thus, he had little support left.

3. Giangaleazzo invited Bernabo and his sons to Pavia. He then arrested them, and they died in prison, probably by poison.

B. Giangaleazzo moved swiftly to consolidate his territory, purchasing the title of duke from the emperor. He used his absolute authority to turn Milan into one of the most celebrated and wealthy cities of Europe.

1. He created critical infrastructure, such as an irrigation system. He also improved communications and took steps to check the spread of disease, and he instituted a system of justice that was harsh but fair to all. The same was true of the system of taxation, which required the nobility and the Church to pay their share.

2. He encouraged economic expansion and particularly supported the armaments industry, which soon produced the best weapons and armor in Europe, known for both their quality and their elegance.

3. He also was a patron of art, commissioning both the great cathedral of Milan and the Certosa of Pavia.

C. But Giangaleazzo’s real intent was to rule much, if not all, of the peninsula.

1. Giangaleazzo began by gaining control of the independent city-states in a wide circle around Lombardy.

2. Then, in 1400, he moved south into Umbria, where he took Perugia and, subsequently, Siena.

3. Only Florence stood between Giangaleazzo and control of all north-central Italy.

D. Had Giangaleazzo not died in 1402 before he could conquer Florence, the history of Italy might have been very different, and even though he fell short of accomplishing all he intended, students of history do not always sufficiently recognize his achievement.

IV. Unfortunately, Giangaleazzo’s heirs, first, Gianmaria and, later, Filippo Maria, were troubled and vicious.

A. Giangaleazzo’s son Gianmaria was only 13 when his father died. The territory of Milan was ruled by
regents, who proved to be ineffectual.

1. Gianmaria was an odd young man, rumored to hunt with his dogs for citizens out past curfew. As a young adult, he treated his people with extraordinary cruelty and contempt.

2. Consequently, he was murdered at the age of 23 by his own nobles.

B. Gianmaria's equally strange brother, Filippo Maria, succeeded him.

1. Filippo Maria paid large sums to those who purported to predict the future or to change it so that he could rule in comfort.

2. Perhaps understandably, given his older brother, Filippo Maria was also extremely paranoid. He seldom left his palace, eating until he was enormously fat.

C. Filippo Maria had no legitimate heir, but he did have a natural daughter, Bianca, whom he deeply loved.

1. The duke had given Bianca in marriage to the most celebrated condottiere of his generation, Francesco di Muzio, called Sforza.

2. As a dowry, Filippo Maria gave Sforza the rule of several cities in Milanese territories, thereby affording the condottiere a power base in Lombardy, as well as a dynastic interest in the ducal crown.

V. With Filippo Maria's death and the extinction of the main line of the Visconti, the people of Milan, hoping to renew the freedom they had lost with the rise of the Visconti, rose in revolt against the monarchy.

A. The population declared the formation of the reborn Ambrosian Republic, which had become part of their mythology. The people would govern themselves as a free commune, without a duke or prince.

1. The Holy Roman Emperor, however, demanded the right to name the next ruler. After all, Milan was a powerful Ghibelline state that had provided support to the imperial cause. The emperor declared the republic illegitimate.

2. Expecting war, the people of Milan hired the condottiere Francesco Sforza to protect their city.

B. Sforza was successful, and the security of the city was assured.

1. Once his services were no longer needed, however, the republic summarily dismissed him.

2. Angry about his dismissal, Sforza turned against his former employers and besieged the city until it capitulated in 1447.

C. Sforza entered the starving city as a conqueror, distributing bread as an indication of his munificence and reconciliation with the city.

1. He then summoned a parlamento, a gathering of all adult heads of household, as a way of circumventing the authority and sovereignty of the emperor. The parlamento, rather than an extension of the Ambrosian Republic, acted as the general will of the people.

2. With the soldiers of Sforza's army surrounding the Piazza Duomo as a precaution, the people of Milan proclaimed him their duke.

D. Sforza's rule in Milan resembled that of the Visconti, given that it was absolute and without restraint. To some extent, it was also illegitimate, and thus, he ruled through his own military might, establishing diplomatic ties that would ensure the stability of his sphere of influence.

1. Because warfare was unpredictable, Sforza and Cosimo de' Medici, both illegitimate rulers without a constitutional right to rule, established the Peace of Lodi in 1454, which acknowledged spheres of influence for the five states of Italy: Milan, Florence, Venice, the states of the Church, and Naples. In 1455, the Peace of Lodi became the Italian League, which would ensure support if another state attacked one of the members.

2. Sforza added luster to his rule in Milan by establishing his own authority and power, while Bianca secured their union by murdering Francesco's mistresses herself.

3. Even though some of the Visconti tradition remained, Milan represented an experiment in a new kind of rule, based both on sovereignty and force of arms.

4. Sforza, neither Guelf nor Ghibelline, represented the exercise of political reality, a world of realpolitik in which neither the Peace of Lodi nor the Italian League would have come about had he not needed the stability they provided.

5. There was no broad experience in Italy at the time for the reasonable and rational ways in which Milan was developing; thus, Sforza's mode of ruling would not continue without competition from the forces of powerful ideology and challenges to sovereignty.
Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
S. Bertelli, *Italian Renaissance Courts*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Can you identify factors that caused Milan to develop into a despotic state while Florence was establishing republican institutions?
2. The Visconti are usually described as tyrants, but is rule under a tyrant necessarily a negative experience?
Lecture Sixteen
The Sforza Dynasty

Scope: Francesco Sforza was a splendid leader, but his death in 1466 brought uncertainty to the principality because his heir, Galeazzo Maria, was a reflection of the worst of the Visconti tyranny and cruelty. Galeazzo was so thoroughly hated that he was assassinated by a conspiracy of nobles. A power struggle ensued among Sforza’s other sons as to who would be regent in the name of Galeazzo’s seven-year-old heir. The eventual winner, Lodovico il Moro, together with his wife, Beatrice d’Este, made Milan one of the cultural and intellectual capitals of Europe. However, the rightful heir was married to the daughter of the king of Naples, an ambitious young woman who wanted her father to sweep Lodovico away. Lodovico displayed crafty resolve, playing a brilliant if dangerous game in supporting the 1494 invasion by Charles VIII of France to claim Naples. But Charles’s unanticipated death led to the ascension of Louis XII, who himself had a strong claim to Milan. The French subsequently attacked and captured the city in 1498, and Lodovico was incarcerated in a French dungeon, where he died in 1508. The ensuing history of Milan until the Risorgimento is one of brutal foreign domination.

Outline

I. Francesco Sforza was a splendid leader, but his death in 1466 brought uncertainty to the principality of Milan.
   A. His heir, Galeazzo Maria (d.1476), was a reflection of the worst of the Visconti tyranny.
      1. His cruelty to those who opposed him and his uncontrolled lechery alienated powerful nobles and court officials.
      2. A group of nobles conspired to assassinate him, inspired by a mixture of personal vengeance and Humanist republicanism and taking as their examples Brutus and Cassius, among others from antiquity.
      3. They attacked the duke in church at Mass the day after Christmas, killing him instantly; one of the assassins, dying after subsequent torture, uttered with his last breath, “My death may be short, but my fame shall be everlasting.”
      4. The murder of the duke, necessary as it was if sanity was to return to the rule of the city, once more brought Milan into danger; a power struggle ensured among Sforza’s other sons as to who would be regent in the name of Galeazzo’s seven-year-old heir.
   B. With the duke a child, the broader perils implicit in Francesco Sforza’s coup became clear.
      1. The French had never relinquished their dynastic claim to Milan through the Visconti. Because their claim was through the female line, as was that of the Sforza family, to them, it was just as legitimate.
      2. Nor had the emperor ever recognized the legitimacy of Sforza’s assumption of power, which he acquired by force.
      3. True, the Peace of Lodi (1454) and the military Italian League that followed (1455), negotiated by Francesco Sforza and Cosimo de’Medici, provided some measure of security to the peninsula. But this diplomatic initiative had been arranged partly to safeguard the new—and unconstitutional—regimes of Francesco and Cosimo.
      4. With Francesco and his heir dead and the duke a child, the danger of foreign intervention or civil unrest reemerged.
      5. It was, thus, imperative that a regent be installed who was powerful enough to keep the Milanese territory intact and to protect the dynasty.

II. In the struggle among the assassinated duke’s brothers for the regency, the eventual winner was Lodovico il Moro (“the Moor”).
   A. Lodovico was everything his eldest brother had not been: kind, generous, intelligent, and a skilled ruler.
      1. He married the teenage daughter of the duke of Ferrara, Beatrice d’Este, in 1491. Beatrice, a classics scholar, was the perfect complement to Lodovico, having personal qualities that he lacked.
      2. Together, Lodovico and Beatrice transformed Milan into one of the cultural and intellectual capitals of
Europe. Most notably, the court attracted Leonardo da Vinci, who spent more than a decade there.

3. Their court became a magnet for the best families of Italy, and scholars, poets, artists, and architects came to decorate the palace and praise the regent, Lodovico; in this world of thinkers, he shone.

B. However, Galeazzo’s son, the rightful heir, was a constant threat to Lodovico’s ambition. This threat increased when the young duke was married to the daughter of the king of Naples, Isabella of Aragon.

1. Isabella was an ambitious young woman who wanted her father to sweep Lodovico away to restore the now-mature, legitimate duke.

2. Lodovico, however, was intent on remaining ruler of Milan. His situation and that of his family became more precarious when his wife, Beatrice, gave birth to a son in 1493.

3. Lodovico realized the mortal danger he and his son would encounter should the rightful young duke assume his authority.

4. In 1494, Lodovico took advantage of the Milanese tradition of the city as an imperial fief and bribed the Emperor Maximilian to declare him the rightful duke.

5. The legitimate duke died under suspicious circumstances, probably by poison, although the truth can never be known.

C. Lodovico displayed a crafty resolve, playing a brilliant if dangerous game in supporting the 1494 invasion by Charles VIII of France to claim Naples.

1. Lodovico knew that the Italian state system would be thrown into disarray by Charles’s invasion; further, the invasion would offer an opportunity to use the French army to depose the king of Naples, thereby eliminating whatever threat might exist from Isabella’s father to Lodovico’s rule.

2. Initially, Lodovico welcomed Charles’s invasion, providing cash for the enterprise and greeting him extravagantly.

3. He hoped that Charles would drive the Aragonese from Naples and align a French dynasty with Milan, thereby securing the throne for Lodovico.

4. With Charles’s successful march to Naples, indeed, a promenade militaire, all seemed secure for Lodovico; the close alliance between Milan and the French would be no threat to his rule.

5. But to cement his support in Italy and, in hindsight, fearing the French claims to his throne, Lodovico joined the Italian League armies, betraying his ally, the king of France; harrying the French out of the peninsula; and inflicting a minor defeat upon them at Fornovo in 1495.

6. Lodovico seemed to have played this game with finesse, securing his place as ruler of Milan.

III. As we have seen, Charles’s unanticipated death at the age of 28 without issue led to the ascendence of the duke of Orleans as Louis XII, who himself had a strong claim to Milan as the grandson of Giangaleazzo Visconti’s daughter. The House of France now had a claim not only to Naples but to Milan as well, and Lodovico realized that his kingdom would be on the frontline of this renewed French invasion.

A. This threat emerged just as Lodovico was paralyzed by remorse over the death of his beloved wife, Beatrice, in childbirth in 1497. The rumor at court was that Beatrice had become melancholy about her husband’s infidelities during her pregnancy.

1. During the time of Lodovico’s depression over Beatrice’s death, he locked himself in his chapel and prayed while he should have been strengthening his allies; consequently, the French marched unchecked to Milan.

2. The impregnable Castello Sforzesco, built by Lodovico’s father, was betrayed to the French by its captain.

3. Lodovico and his young son fled, seeking refuge with Lodovico’s nephew, the Emperor Maximilian, in hopes that the European situation would eventually permit his return.

B. With the support of Maximilian, Lodovico mounted an initially successful attack on Milan in 1500.

1. Their army succeeded in breaching the city walls and entered Milan, but this time, the Castello Sforzesco proved impregnable.

2. And Lodovico was betrayed once again, this time, by his own brother-in-law, the marquis of Mantua, whose motives appear to have been primarily greed and ambition.
C. The French took Lodovico to a subterranean dungeon in the castle of Lorches in 1500.
   1. As an act of chivalry, the French permitted him to take any of his treasures that he wished into captivity.
   2. Lodovico asked only for his copy of Dante, underscoring not only his humility but also the role of the poet in the Italian imagination.
   3. In his underground cell, Lodovico il Moro died in 1508.

IV. The ensuing history of Milan until the Risorgimento is one of brutal foreign domination.
   A. The French managed to keep control of Milan for some time, and by the Treaty of Blois, the same treaty that gave rule of Naples to Spain in 1504–1505, Milan was recognized as part of French territory.
      1. The dueling forces of Habsburg and Valois, the forces of Spain and France, couldn’t permit the centering of so much power in two different places, with the Spanish to the south in Naples and the French to the north in Milan.
      2. The Holy League, formed by Pope Julius II after the Battle of Agnadello (1509), in which the allied army had shattered Venice, again destabilized northern Italy. The pope hoped to undo the shattering of Venice and drive out the foreigners.
      3. The Swiss, who functioned as international mercenaries, defeated the French in 1513 at Novara and at Milan, restoring Lodovico’s son, Massimiliano, as duke.
      4. However, the new French king, Francis I, renewed French claims to Milan and defeated the Swiss at Marignano in 1515. The defeat of the Swiss was a turning point in Italian history and shifted the balance of power once more to the French.
      5. The subsequent Treaty of Noyon (1516) acknowledged French sovereignty over Milan.
   B. The young king of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V of Habsburg refused to abandon imperial claims to Milan.
      1. Seeing the French as a threat to Habsburg ambitions in Italy, Charles reopened hostilities in Milan in 1521.
      2. In 1525, at the Battle of Pavia, just outside of Milan, the imperials routed the French, captured Francis I, and sent him to Spain.
      3. The Habsburgs reduced Milan to a territory under their rule, helping to make Charles V the most powerful ruler since Charlemagne. The Treaty of Cambrai in 1529, in which Francis renounced his Italian claims, recognized the Habsburg authority to rule the city and territory. When the pope crowned Charles V at Bologna, this symbolic act indicated the victory of the Ghibelline position, of the Habsburgs, and of the Germanic empire.
      4. A series of events would occur, not in Milan, but in Italy, as a recognition of the city’s fall: the sack of Rome in 1527, the humiliation of Clement VII, and the complete victory of the Emperor Charles over all his enemies on the peninsula. These events represented the working out of the last chapter in the Guelf-Ghibelline divide.
      5. The comprehensive Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) reinforced the total victory of the Habsburgs. The treaty, in fact, determined the shape of the European state system for decades.
      6. Milan would suffer under the Habsburgs, separated from the Italian desire for freedom until the Risorgimento three centuries later.

Essential Reading:
G. Lubkin, A Renaissance Court: Milan Under Galeazzo Maria Sforza.

Supplementary Reading:
S. Bertelli, Italian Renaissance Courts.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why was Lodovico il Moro unable to maintain his rule in the face of foreign intervention?
2. Monarchies are appreciated because of the seeming stability inherent in dynastic succession. How does Milan disprove this assumption?
Lecture Seventeen
Mantua and the Gonzaga

Scope: The story of Mantua is the story of the Gonzaga family who, in the person of Luigi Gonzaga (1328-60), overthrew the ruling Bonacolsi family in a bloody coup in 1328. Mantua’s natural protection and its strategic location between Venice and Milan, as well its imperial allegiance, permitted succeeding generations of the Gonzaga to hold power until 1708. Mantua reached its greatest splendor in the court of Francesco II (1484-1519) who married the incomparable Isabella d’Este (1474-1539) in 1490. She served as regent for Mantua during Francesco’s frequent absences as a condottiere general and then, after his early death, as representative of her young son, Federico II (1519-40). Federico entered into a dynastic marriage with the heiress of the marquisate of Monferrato in 1531, and as a result this territory was annexed to Mantua. During the reign of his younger son, Gulglielmo (d. 1587), the territory of Monferrato was raised to the dignity of a duchy, adding further luster to the Gonzaga dominions. But it was Vincenzo Gonzaga (d. 1612) who capitalized on these advantages and turned Mantua into one of the cultural capitals of Europe.

Outline

I. The other great principality of Lombardy was the duchy of Mantua.
   
   A. Mantua survived despite its ambitious and powerful neighbors—in particular, Milan and Venice—because it served as a buffer between these states and as a defense against incursions from the north.
      1. This was possible because of Mantua’s strategic location—it was surrounded on three sides by water—and the reputation and skill of its condottiere Gonzaga princes.
      2. Consequently, the story of Mantua is the story of both its location, which, in part, controls passage through the Alps, and its princely dynasty, the family of the Gonzaga.
   
   B. Although Mantua was an ancient foundation, it achieved regional prominence after the fall of Rome.
      1. During the barbarian invasions, the town fell to several tribes, in particular, the Lombards, until it became part of the enormous inheritance of Countess Mathilda of Tuscany in the 11th century.
      2. After her death, there was a struggle between the government, which had declared itself a free commune, and the Holy Roman Emperor.
   
   C. Mantua saw dynastic and factional struggle equal to any of the other northern Italian medieval communes during this period, when they were all deciding on the ultimate element of sovereignty.
      1. A noble family, the Bonacolsi, assumed power in 1273, ruling the Ghibelline city until 1328 as signori, under the protection of the Holy Roman Empire.
      2. The Gonzaga, another noble family, held office, first, as captains of the people, then as signori of Mantua.
      3. Luigi Gonzaga, who was podestà, overthrew the Bonacolsi in a bloody coup in 1328. To get the attention of the populace, Luigi cut out the hearts of the members of the Bonacolsi family and nailed them to the doors of their palaces.
      4. The coup was possible in the first place because the ruler of Verona lent Gonzaga an army to overthrow the Bonacolsi.
      5. Mantua’s history would thereafter be associated with succeeding generations of the Gonzaga, who were clever diplomats and, in many ways, ruthless as military captains, until 1708 when the family became extinct.

II. Mantua’s natural protection, its strategic location, and its imperial allegiance permitted the Gonzaga to acquire significant wealth and power and to construct a brilliant court.
   
   A. The ambitious and wealthy Gonzaga desired the legitimacy and recognition that came with an official imperial title, rather than merely ruling as signori. In 1433, Gianfrancesco Gonzaga purchased from the Holy Roman Emperor the title of marquis.
   
   B. Under Gianfrancesco, Mantua developed into a celebrated center of culture.
      1. The Gonzaga became famous throughout Italy for their love of art and their patronage of such great
artists as Mantegna, who painted the images of the Gonzaga on the walls of the Camera Picta; Alberti, who built the Church of Sant’Andrea to hold the relic of the Sacred Blood; and Pisanello, who painted, on the walls of the ducal palace, the last images of a chivalric culture still imbued with the traditions of the Arthurian romances.

2. The Gonzaga also fostered the literary reputation of Mantua, considered by tradition to be the city of Virgil’s birth.

C. Finally, there was the military tradition among the Gonzaga, who were condottieri and mercenary captains.
   1. Although rich from trade and agriculture, they saw the profession of arms as the most appropriate one for princes.
   2. As condottieri and generals, they became sought after and successful, and they participated in most of the military conflicts in the peninsula and even beyond the Alps.
   3. This military tradition and the fear it instilled helped protect the small principality, surrounded as it was by more powerful states, such as Venice and Milan.

III. Mantua reached its greatest splendor in the court of Marquis Francesco II Gonzaga (1484–1519) and his consort, Isabella d’Este.

A. Francesco married the incomparable Isabella d’Este (d. 1539), the daughter of the duke of Ferrara, in 1490 when she was 16.
   1. Despite her youth, she was already an accomplished classical scholar, musician, and discerning patron.
   2. She served as regent for Mantua during Francesco’s frequent absences as a condottiere general.
   3. After her husband’s early death, Isabella ruled as regent for her young son Federico II (1519–1540).

B. During Isabella’s regency, Mantua became one of the cultural centers of Italy.
   1. The poet Lodovico Ariosto and the painter and architect Giulio Romano, as well as many musicians, adorned her court.
   2. Titian painted her twice, and Leonardo da Vinci drew her likeness.

C. Isabella, in addition to being a great patron of literature and art, was also a brilliant diplomat.
   1. She used her great intelligence, strength of character, and charm both to protect and advance the status and power of Mantua.
   2. During the dangerous years of Cesare Borgia’s campaign of expansion, designed to create a kingdom within the states of the Church, she kept Mantua secure, avoiding the fate of her relative by marriage, Elisabetta Gonzaga, duchess of Urbino.
   3. She convinced the Emperor Charles V to raise her son Federico II from marquis to duke of Mantua (1530).
   4. She ensured that her younger son, Ercole, would enter the Sacred College as a cardinal, thereby establishing the Gonzaga role in the Church and the Holy See and producing some of the great reformers of the 16th century.

IV. Mantua’s reputation for cultural preeminence, which had reached across Europe under Isabella’s patronage, continued under Federico II.

A. Federico had entered into a dynastic marriage with the Paleologus heiress of the marquisate of Monferrato in 1531.
   1. As a result, this territory was annexed to Mantua, adding both to the size of the territory and the dignity of the family.
   2. But Federico became somewhat estranged from his strong-willed mother, Isabella, after this arranged dynastic marriage. His real love was his mistress, Isabella Boschetti, and it was in Palazzo Tè that they celebrated their amours.

B. The Palazzo Tè was one of the most famous buildings of Renaissance Europe.
   1. Designed and decorated by the great pupil of Raphael, Giulio Romano, it was built as pleasure palace
for Federico.

2. Giulio Romano frescoed the halls with the story of Amor and Psyche to reflect and stimulate the passion of Federico and Isabella.

3. In the Room of the Horses, portraits of the duke’s favorite horses adorn the walls, along with images of the Labors of Hercules.

4. The Room of the Giants in the little palace is one of the great Mannerist programs in Italy, illustrating how the Gonzago used their authority, wealth, and imagination to put Mantua on the cultural map of the entire continent.

V. During the reign of the later Gonzaga, the city and its court sustained the reputation of wealth, power, and culture established in the years of Isabella d’Este’s leadership.

A. Federico’s younger son, Guglielmo (d. 1587), succeeded his brother, Francesco III (d. 1550), who had died without issue.

1. During Guglielmo’s reign, the territory of Monferrato was raised to a duchy, adding further luster to the Gonzaga dominions because now the Gonzaga were dukes of both Monferrato and Mantua.

2. Guglielmo married the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor, Eleonora of Habsburg, connecting the family ever closer to the imperial party and the Ghibelline creed that provided protection from the ambitions of the Papal States close by.

B. But it was Vincenzo Gonzaga (d. 1612) who capitalized on these advantages and ensured the place of the Mantua of his time as one of the cultural capitals of Europe.

1. He maintained the tradition of patronage by having his family portrait painted by Rubens.

2. Under his leadership, Mantua became the center for music in the peninsula, in particular, through his patronage of Claudio Monteverdi. *Orfeo*, the first surviving opera, was written and first performed in Mantua.

3. Torquato Tasso, the epic poet, was a youthful friend of Vincenzo, who was equally interested in science. He invited Galileo to his court in 1604 and supported the work of other scientists.

C. However, Vincenzo’s wanton spending on music, art, and culture diminished a treasury already poorer as a result of the general economic decline of Italy.

VI. The main line of the Gonzaga became extinct in 1627, leaving two collateral branches to struggle for dominance in the city and territory, which had become strategic prizes once more as a consequence of the Thirty Years’ War.

A. Because Mantua commanded access to the passes through the Alps and across the Lombard plain to Milan, both the imperials and the French wished to control the city.

1. Each supported a rival candidate of the Gonzaga clan, which eventually led to the War of the Mantuan Succession of 1630.

2. The besieging imperial army brought plague to the city; the effects of the war were so devastating that the city never recovered.

3. Another terrible loss was the selling off of the large art collection that generations of Gonzagas had purchased.

B. Although the French-backed cadet branch of the Gonzaga was permitted to rule, the city was no longer an important site.

1. The last Gonzaga, Ferdinando, ruled until 1708, when he fled into exile as a consequence of the War of the Spanish Succession.

2. The territory then passed to the Habsburgs, who ruled it (with the exception of a brief period under Napoleon) until the *Risorgimento*.

Essential Reading:
Supplementary Reading:
M. Bellonci, *A Prince of Mantua: The Life and Times of Vincenzo Gonzaga*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why was the patronage of culture so important to princes like the Gonzaga?
2. Was it reasonable and ethical for a prince to use his subjects as a mercenary army?
Lecture Eighteen
Urbino and the Montefeltro

Scope: Urbino’s history reflects the unstable world of Guelf-Ghibelline struggle. Emperor Frederick Barbarossa gave it to the Montefeltro family in the mid-12th century. However, Count Antonio of Montefeltro (d. 1404) definitively turned Urbino’s waning imperial allegiance into recognition of the sovereignty of the pope. Urbino became one of the most influential centers in Italy during the long rule of Federigo da Montefeltro (1444–1482). Tragically, Frederigo’s heir, Guidobaldo (1472–1508), was afflicted with a disease that left him increasingly weak. The crisis came in 1502, when Cesare Borgia ravaged the city. Even though Guidobaldo returned to power in 1503, Urbino had changed forever. Guidobaldo’s death signaled the extinction of the Montefeltro line and the rise of his adopted nephew, Francesco Maria della Rovere (1508–1538). Francesco enjoyed the protection of Pope Julius II, also his uncle; but with Julius’s death, Urbino became vulnerable once again, and he was expelled, replaced by the new pope’s nephew Lorenzo de’ Medici. Lorenzo’s early death returned Francesco, whose descendents would rule Urbino until 1631, at which time Urbino was incorporated into the Papal States, where it languished as an isolated backwater.

Outline

I. Urbino, like Mantua, with which it was allied through marriage, was another of those small condottiere principalities in the north whose ruling dynasties relied on a mercenary army and cultural patronage to establish its wealth and reputation.

A. Like Mantua, Urbino suffered from the factional instability of the Middle Ages.
   1. During the apogee of imperial power in Italy, Urbino was a major Ghibelline fortress. Although it was relatively small, its position, close to the Adriatic, provided a measure of protection in the passes through the Apennines that would be of importance to both imperial and Guelf supporters.
   2. The celebrated emperor Frederick Barbarossa (Hohenstaufen) gave Urbino to the Montefeltro family as lords in the mid-12th century.
   3. The original gift consisted of territory in both the Romagna and San Marino, the territory that allowed the Montefeltro to rule Urbino as counts rather than dukes.

B. Because Urbino was relatively close to the states of the Church, Count Antonio da Montefeltro (d. 1404) definitively turned Urbino’s waning imperial allegiance into recognition of the sovereignty of the pope.
   1. The first duke of Urbino was the condottiere Oddantonio (d. 1444).
   2. Like almost all members of his family and his class, Oddantonio had to accept the role of mercenary captain because the rocky soil of Urbino could produce almost nothing by the labors of peace.
   3. The difficult living conditions of the Apennines did provide tough, devoted soldiers for the duke’s armies, and they were sought after by clients for their military prowess.

II. Urbino became one of the most influential centers in Italy during the long rule of Federigo da Montefeltro (1444–1482), who transformed this isolated mountaintop duchy into one of the most celebrated courts of the peninsula.

A. Federigo was a remarkable man, whom Baldassare Catiglione described as “the light of Italy” and who helped create in Urbino, according to historian Kenneth Clark, perhaps the “most civilized place on earth.”
   1. Despite his preordained career in the military, Federigo was superbly educated in Humanist studies. He absorbed the Humanist classics and cultivated the new interest in the place of the active individual in the world.
   2. As a general, Federigo was the finest of his age, never losing a battle and, unlike most condottieri, never succumbing to bribes or changing allegiance for higher pay.
   3. As a duke, he presided benevolently over his beloved Urbino, mingling freely with his citizens as he sought to solve problems and dispense justice.

B. Federigo commissioned Francesco Laurana, a renowned Dalmatian builder of fortresses, to construct the
edifice that housed his court, at once a condottiere fortress and a pleasure palace.

1. The palace was so beautifully finished that no less a critic than Lorenzo de’Medici sent artists to record its architectural details, so that he could match them.

2. The magnificent library, filled with beautiful editions of classical texts, especially reflects Federigo.

C. The court also served as a finishing school for young aristocrats from the peninsula.

1. The greatest Italian families sent their sons to stay in Urbino to learn the skills and polish required by their rank.

2. Not only the practice of arms but also statecraft and politics were taught in this informal gathering of young aristocrats.

III. But the Montefeltro dynasty was threatened by the same danger that occurs so regularly in the Italian principalities, the difficulty in producing male heirs, resulting in civil war and claims of sovereignty by emperor or pope.

A. In a move calculated to cement his relationship with the more powerful Milanese condottiere Francesco Sforza, Federigo had taken the hand of Francesco’s niece, Battista Sforza.

1. Unfortunately, only one of Battista’s eight pregnancies produced a son and this at the cost of her life.

2. The boy, Guidobaldo, began as a wonderful child, extraordinarily intelligent, as promising as his father.

3. But soon he began to exhibit the symptoms of the disease that would waste his body in adult life, and it was clear that he would be a military captain.

B. After his father’s death in 1482, Guidobaldo grew increasingly weak and feeble.

1. After his marriage to Elisabetta Gonzaga of Mantua in 1488, a union calculated to reinforce both the Montefeltro and Gonzaga dynasties, he proved impotent, and the marriage was never consummated, which made it invalid in canon law.

2. Nevertheless, Guidobaldo’s young wife did not use this inadequacy to annul the marriage.

3. Rather, she and Guidobaldo lived as brother and sister, with Elisabetta increasingly exercising the responsibilities of rule during her husband’s illness.

4. Indeed, Elisabetta Gonzaga assumed many roles that would have been impossible for a woman to perform in a republic but, in a principality, were almost thrust upon her: She served as diplomat and prince, giving instructions to administrators, ambassadors, and even military captains.

5. Elisabetta Gonzaga, like Isabella and Beatrice d’Este, achieved a level of recognition that reflected her abilities, because those abilities were often put to the test.

IV. The crisis in Urbino, which was, in fact, a fief of the Church, arrived with the ambitions of the Borgias.

A. Cesare Borgia, the son of Pope Alexander VI, desired to bring together the various papal territories in central Italy into a unified state. Reasonably enough, given that Urbino was surrounded by the Papal States, the Montefeltro family had recognized the sovereignty of the pope. Now, however, the family felt threatened.

1. In 1502, Cesare swore friendship to Guidobaldo and promised that he would protect the integrity of the state.

2. Yet Cesare was simultaneously plotting to deprive Guidobaldo of power, beseeching the Montefeltro to provide him with artillery from Urbino’s mercenary army.

3. Cesare then declared the Montefeltro deposed and lay siege to the city, and Guidobaldo, rather than see Urbino destroyed, fled the city, leaving it to the papal armies of Cesare Borgia.

B. Cesare treated Urbino like a conquered subject territory during his occupation.

1. He dispersed the great library, billeted soldiers and horses in the palace, and sold off the art collected by Federigo.

2. But the death of Pope Alexander VI from malaria and Cesare’s illness with the same disease resulted in the disintegration of Borgia power.

3. Alexander was ultimately replaced with one of the greatest enemies of the Borgia, Julius II, the warrior...
C. Guidobaldo and Elisabetta returned to Urbino to attempt to recover the world they had lost, but Urbino had changed forever.
   1. Even so, some of the great names started to return to the court, among them, Baldassare Castiglione, author of *The Book of the Courtier*, which would describe for all time the experience of the court of Urbino.
   2. In the book, Castiglione described a place where heroes talked about the perfectibility of man, of the ideal courtier or lady.
   3. But the world of Cesare Borgia had replaced the world of Federigo, and Castiglione captures a fleeting moment of time.
   4. Castiglione provided a measure of hope on an individual or abstract level, but the reality of Italian politics made a return to the past impossible, and Urbino again became a symbol of what happened to Italian states as a result of foreign intervention, the ambition of such individuals as Cesare Borgia, and the collapse of the state system.
   5. Guidobaldo, childless and aware of the shifts in power in the peninsula, needed to ensure the survival of Urbino. He determined to ally the duchy, a Guelf state, more closely to the Papal States.

V. Guidobaldo’s death in 1508 signaled the extinction of the Montefeltro line.
   A. He had adopted his nephew Francesco Maria della Rovere (1508–1538), who was also the nephew of Pope Julius II, as his heir.
      1. Consequently, Francesco enjoyed the protection of Pope Julius II, his uncle, whose territory Urbino technically was.
      2. But this protection of the city and the della Rovere dynasty depended on the person of the pope.
   B. With Julius’s death in 1513 and the succession of Leo X de’Medici, Urbino became vulnerable once again.
      1. Francesco della Rovere was expelled, replaced by the new pope’s nephew Lorenzo de’Medici in 1516.
      2. Lorenzo’s early death—from syphilis in 1519—returned Francesco della Rovere to the rule of Urbino.
   C. The death of Lorenzo without male heirs and the death of Leo X in 1521 ensured the restoration of the della Rovere dynasty under Francesco Maria.
      1. Realizing that the future of Italy did not reside on the mountaintops of the Apennines, Francesco moved the capital to Pesaro, resulting in the decline of Urbino as a center of government and patronage.
      2. Duke Francesco Maria della Rovere died in 1538 in Pesaro, believed to be the victim of poisoning.
   D. The decline of Urbino was reversed temporarily by the election of the Urbinese cardinal Albani as Pope Clement XI in 1700. Clement XI added to the former luster of the city by building a beautiful Baroque cathedral attached to the great palace of Federigo.
   E. The last member of the della Rovere family died in 1626, and Urbino reverted to the papacy. Under Pope Urban VIII Barberini, the state lost its independence and was integrated into the states of the Church.
      1. Urbino became a place of memory, a city with no future. Only in relatively recent times has Urbino recovered. It now attracts visitors from all over the peninsula as a university, a military camp, and the home of Raphael.
      2. The light of Italy may have gone out, but only briefly; it returned because of what Federigo, and even Guidobaldo, had bequeathed to posterity.

**Essential Reading:**

**Supplementary Reading:**
Questions to Consider:

1. Can you think of another ruler who combined military success and cultural patronage to the degree of Federigo da Montefeltro?

2. Ironically, Guidobaldo’s court became even more famous than his father’s. What factors made Urbino a center of Italian culture during his reign?
Lecture Nineteen
Ferrara and the Este Family

Scope: Ferrara prospered because of its location, but it also suffered as Guelfs and Ghibellines battled to control its strategic position. The long reign of Niccolò III (1393–1441) began a period of Ferrarese ascendancy. Borso d’Este, Niccolò’s son, was granted the title of duke of Modena and Reggio in 1452 by the emperor and named duke of Ferrara by the pope in 1471. But it was his son, Ercole I (1431–1505), who became one of Ferrara’s greatest rulers. A patron of architecture and music, Ercole attracted the most famous composers of Europe to his court. This allegiance heralded a rich period of cultural sponsorship that reached its apogee with Alfonso’s grandson, Alfonso II. Unfortunately, this extravagant if wonderful patronage had depleted the city’s wealth. When Alfonso died without an heir in 1597, Pope Clement VIII claimed that Ferrara had reverted to the Holy See. Thereafter, it became a poor and neglected territory of the Church until 1859 when it was incorporated into the united Kingdom of Italy.

Outline

I. Ferrara, like Mantua and Urbino, was a principality whose policy and development were determined by the character and interests of its ruling princes, by dynastic union, and by competition, as well as by the larger forces endemic to all of Italy, particularly the Guelf-Ghibelline struggle, in which Ferrara was a supporter of the papal cause.

A. Ferrara both prospered and suffered because of its strategic location near the Po River, commanding strategic communication routes through Italy and into northern Europe.

1. In 1146, Ferrara passed to Azzo d’Este as a dowry from his bride, whose family had ruled the city in the name of Countess Mathilda of Tuscany.

2. The Este were closely allied to the Guelf faction, being originally a Germanic family descended from the House of Welf itself.

3. The Este did not exercise complete authority over Ferrara until Obizzo d’Este (d. 1293) managed to seize the city with the support of Venice in 1264, a victory that was ratified by the population.

4. By 1289, Obizzo had increased his territory with the additions of Modena and Reggio.

B. Under the rule of the Este family, Ferrara was influenced by the ambitions of the princely dynasty, which sought to participate in the peninsula’s power politics and mercenary warfare.

1. Like the Montefeltro of Urbino and the Gonzaga of Mantua, the Este of Ferrara used the patronage of the arts to aggrandize their rule and celebrate their court.

2. Indeed, Ferrara is associated as much—or more—with the epic poetry tradition of Boiardo, Tasso, and Ariosto as with the military prowess of its dukes.

II. The Renaissance witnessed an extraordinary period of Ferrarese ascendancy in both political and cultural influence in northern Italy.

A. The long reign of Niccolò III (r. 1393–1441) began a period of heightened Ferrarese influence that transformed Ferrara into one of the intellectual and cultural centers of the peninsula.

1. Ferrara was the initial host of the great council intended to heal the schism between the Eastern and Western Churches.

2. An outbreak of plague forced the council to move, but its initial meeting in Ferrara cemented the place in the mental geography of Italians.

B. At the same time, Ferrara had to struggle against the expansionist ambitions of the Visconti of Milan.

1. Realizing the threat of the Visconti, Niccolò served as a general in the league formed against the Milanese.

2. He thus found himself in the position of having to defeat his own relation, Azzo d’Este, a condottiere fighting for Giangaleazzo Visconti who attempted to seize the Este territory by force.
3. Unfortunately, Niccolò had no legitimate heirs; with the permission of the pope, he was succeeded by his illegitimate son, Lionello, in 1441.

C. In his short life, Lionello (1407–1450) exemplified the ideal of a Renaissance prince.
   1. He was a skilled general, trained in arms and strategy by leading condottieri of the time.
   2. Like his contemporary Federigo da Montefeltro, he was equally well educated in the humanities and understood the pleasure of power as something to be shared and somehow reduced in violence by cultural patronage.
   3. As marquis of Ferrara, Lionello patronized Leon Battista Alberti, who wrote his treatise on architecture for Lionello.
   4. Lionello also patronized the painter Pisanello and invited to his court the leading artists of Italy.
   5. He constructed the great hospital of Ferrara and richly endowed and expanded the university, turning it into one of the more important centers of learning in the Italian peninsula.

III. Lionello’s succession was complicated by provisions in his father’s will that saw his half-brothers pitted against his own son in the claim to rule.
   A. Ultimately, Borso d’Este (d. 1471), the younger of Niccolò’s illegitimate sons, was granted the title of duke of Modena and Reggio in 1452.
      1. These titles were the gift of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III, but it was not until 1471 that the pope agreed to grant Borso the title of duke of Ferrara.
      2. This disjunction in the granting of superior titles reflected both the competing jurisdictions of empire and papacy in northern Italy and the skill of the Este in negotiating through them.
   B. Borso’s court was one of Italy’s most splendid; he was both a great ruler and patron of culture.
      1. The Ferrarese school of painting thrived under Borso’s patronage, with local artists, such as Cosme Tura and Francesco del Cossa, flourishing.
      2. Borso was, in addition, the patron of one of the Renaissance’s most beautiful books: the Bible he had decorated with miniatures. Such objects reflected the competition among princes that took place not only on the battlefield but also in artistic patronage.
   C. Like so many of his predecessors, Borso had no legitimate heirs and was succeeded, on his death in 1471, by his half-brother Ercole.

IV. Ercole I (1431–1505), motivated, perhaps, to overcome the stigma of illegitimacy, became one of Ferrara’s greatest rulers.
   A. Ercole had been educated in Naples at the brilliant court of Alfonso the Magnanimous.
      1. There, he had acquired an interest in Classical learning, discerning taste, and a desire to patronize culture.
      2. As well, he received military training that would sustain him in the future when he would be forced to lead his principality in war.
      3. Finally, in 1474, Ercole made a successful dynastic marriage to Alfonso’s granddaughter, Eleonora of Aragon.
   B. To be sure, Ercole, unlike many of his relations and fellow princes, was not a military genius.
      1. He lost an important war against Venice in 1482–1484.
      2. He narrowly avoiding the annexation of Ferrara by Pope Sixtus IV, who saw the possibility of creating a della Rovere state in Ferrara.
   C. There is no denying, however, Ercole’s place as one of Italy’s greatest patrons.
      1. His court attracted the most famous composers and musicians of Europe and was favorable to such poets as Boiardo and the young Torquato Tasso.
      2. Ercole adorned his capital with elegant new buildings, constructing the beautiful Addizione Erculea (later destroyed in an earthquake) and extending the city walls to encompass the thriving capital that had grown considerably under his long reign.
V. Ercole’s death in 1505 left the duchy to his son, the equally cultivated Alfonso d’Este (1505–1534). Alfonso maintained his father’s cultural legacy but faced serious military and political dangers from the Borgia, Julius II, and others who sought to create territorial states at the expense of the independent jurisdiction of the peninsula.

A. Alfonso attached Ferrara to the League of Cambrai against Venice, a traditional enemy.

B. Alfonso had married the daughter of Pope Alexander VI, Lucrezia Borgia. Pope Julius II, the sworn enemy of the Borgia, alienated Ferrara as a result, and the traditional bond between Guelf prince and the papacy was sundered.

C. After Agnadello (1509), when Pope Julius II changed his policy and created the Holy League, Alfonso remained hostile to the papacy and allied to Louis XII of France.

1. Ferrara fought and won battles against the papal forces. Alfonso captured Bologna from the papacy and fought with the French at Ravenna (1512).

2. As a consequence, the pope not only excommunicated Alfonso but also declared him deposed, on the grounds that Ferrara was a papal fief and Alfonso a rebellious vassal. There was little the pope could do, however, to execute his deposition.

3. Later, Alfonso fought for the Habsburgs against the papacy and supported the imperial army of 1526–1527 that humiliated Pope Clement VII and sacked Rome.

4. Alfonso made a significant contribution, then, to the loss of Italian liberty by his support of the Habsburgs, which he did through his personal hatred of Julius II.

5. Alfonso’s hostility to the papacy serves as another example of the dangers of personal rule and family interests on the level of principalities.

6. Alfonso’s imperial loyalty was rewarded when, in 1530, the victorious Habsburgs required that Alfonso be reconfirmed in his ducal territories.

D. Alfonso’s heir, Ercole II (d. 1559), returned Ferrara to its papal allegiance, fighting on the side of the pope against the Habsburgs.

E. This was a curious circumstance, given that Ercole II was married to Renée de France, daughter of King Louis XII, who brought her Protestant beliefs to the court.

1. The Inquisition moved against the duchess of Ferrara, leaving Ercole in the embarrassing position of being a papal condottiere and a subject of the Church but married to a woman who was recognized as a Calvinist heretic.

2. As a consequence, the Este territory and the family’s connection to the papacy began to unravel, creating a tension that would ultimately result in the loss of Este rule.

F. The son of Ercole II, Alfonso II (d. 1597), died without issue, and the pope declared the House of Este to be extinct. As a papal fief, it would then revert to the Holy See, and so it did.

1. Ultimately, the Este took control again of the cities of Modena and Reggio, but Ferrara was incorporated into the Papal States, where it would languish.

2. It wasn’t until 1859—again, during the period of Italian unification—that the city of Ferrara would emerge from its status as a papal backwater.

VI. We see in Ferrara the model of a Guelf state and the model of princes who used art and culture to increase their fame, but who ultimately faced the greatest danger of princely rule, loss of dynastic continuation.

Essential Reading:
W. L. Gundersheimer, Ferrara: The Style of a Renaissance Despotism.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:

1. Explain how two of the most remarkable women of the Renaissance, Isabelle and Beatrice d'Este, were produced by this small and relatively provincial court.

2. The Este succeeded in maintaining their independence by playing powerful neighbors off against one another. Can you identify other examples of states for which this has also been a successful policy?
Lecture Twenty
Siena and the Struggle for Liberty

Scope: Siena prospered from its strategic location along the route taken by pilgrims and merchants from France to Rome. Although initially ruled by a bishop, the city established an independent communal government of nobles in 1167. This began a period of increasing growth with the foundation of Siena’s celebrated university (1203) and the construction of major civic and religious buildings. But this expansion, together with its Ghibelline allegiance, inevitably brought Siena into conflict with its Guelf neighbor, Florence. Although it did not end their struggles, Siena’s triumph against Florence in 1260 at Montaperti allowed for a period of stable and harmonious rule. Sadly, the Black Death of 1348 virtually destroyed the city, killing three-quarters of its inhabitants and leaving its economy vulnerable to Florentine domination. Florentine political ascendancy was finalized in the 16th century when Siena became a pawn in the international rivalry of France and the Habsburgs. Aided by a Spanish army in 1557, Florence captured the city, driving out its French and noble Sienese defenders. An attempt to keep the republic of Siena alive at Montalcino ended in 1559. Siena thereafter existed merely as part of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

Outline

I. Leaving the principalities of north-central Italy, we encounter a different social and political world: the inland republican states of Tuscany, a world that is reminiscent of the independent city-states of the Etruscan Federation.
   A. Tuscany is dominated by republics.
   B. During the Middle Ages, Siena was as large, rich, and celebrated as Florence, but it was also known for its chronic instability.

II. Siena was a critical stopping point along the Via Francigena, the overland route taken by pilgrims and merchants from France to Rome.
   A. In 1167, the city established an independent communal government which came to be dominated by the great feudal families.
      1. This began a period of increasing growth and confidence, with the founding of Siena’s celebrated university (1203) and the construction of its massive cathedral (1179) and civic buildings.
      2. Politically, Siena had become committed to the Ghibelline cause, giving unquestioned support to the emperor, exiling local Guelfs, and even, on one occasion, turning out the bishop for having too sympathetic a position to the papacy.
   B. The Ghibellines were unable to impose a singular perspective that would allow them to rule in a stable and coherent manner.
      1. The greatest tensions revolved around class as the noble families came into conflict with the rising class of wealthy merchants.
      2. The nobles saw warfare as the natural state of government, while the merchants and bankers sought political power to facilitate trade.
      3. As Siena expanded in size and influence, it came into conflict with the Florentines, who were equally ambitious to expand in Tuscany.
   C. Crisis came in 1260 with a great battle fought between Siena and Florence at Montaperti.
      1. The imperial cause was in decline and the Guelf in ascendance throughout much of the peninsula, especially in Tuscany.
      2. The Florentines were widely expected to win.
      3. Yet in a victory commemorated even to this day in Siena, the city triumphed against its arch enemy. Still, this did not precipitate a period of stable and harmonious rule.
      4. Siena would be punished for its anti-papal position, its papal banking contracts going to the Florentines, thus securing Florence’s long-term economic interests and leaving Siena’s under threat.
III. A period of class and factional divisions ensued until 1287, when order returned with the victory of the bourgeois merchants over the council of nobles and the institution of a communal government known as The Nine.

A. The Nine, named for the number of merchants who sat on the collective executive committee, represented the cooperative rule of merchants, who were largely Guelf and hostile to the Ghibelline clans.

B. The Nine gave Siena coherent and effective government for nearly 70 years, proving sufficiently powerful to stop the feuding between the five great noble clans in the city. The city was thus able to address the circumstances of economic change and Florentine aggression.

C. This success was given a concrete reality in the construction and decoration of the Palazzo Pubblico—the great town hall that still dominates the Piazza del Campo, with its Mangia Tower, the symbol of Sienese collective government and communal authority. At the same time, Sienese painting became the prominent style of Italian art.
   1. The great Sienese master Simone Martini painted towns the Sienese had captured, a famous image of the Virgin Mary, and Guidoriccio da Fogliano, a great condottiere.
   2. Duccio di Buoninsegna, one of the primi lumi, “first lights,” of Italian Renaissance art also painted his greatest works in this period. Duccio’s famous altarpiece, the Maestà, helped make Sienese painting the most celebrated in Europe.
   3. The Lorenzetti brothers completed a fresco, The Allegory of Good and Bad Government, to symbolize the principles of The Nine, the first secular political allegory to be painted since antiquity.
   4. These and other notable works by the Sienese masters of the 14th century reflected the leadership that Siena enjoyed culturally in Tuscany, eclipsing at that time even the Florentines.

IV. The arrival of the Black Death in 1348 virtually destroyed the city.

A. Siena suffered terribly from the plague, both demographically and economically, with catastrophic political consequences, as well.
   1. A full three-quarters of Siena’s inhabitants died—three out of every four citizens—reducing its population to fewer than 14,000.
   2. Major civic projects, including the expansion of the cathedral, came to a halt, never to be completed.
   3. The economy was completely dislocated by the loss of skilled workers, markets, and capital.
   4. Even pilgrims passed through Siena in far smaller numbers out of fear of the plague.

B. Unable to restore the economy or rebuild the city, The Nine fell in 1355, returning Siena to its chronic political instability.
   1. In 1371, the revolt of the woolworkers, desperate for work and pay, succeeded briefly in overthrowing the communal government.
   2. The result was the creation of a coalition of factions to attempt to obviate the fractious class divisions.

C. All politically advantaged citizens were required to join political groups, called monti, that represented factions, determined by class, clan allegiance, urban geography, family, economic interest, or guild.
   1. This handed authority back to the noble families.
   2. These clans had the power to provide protection and patronage and, as a corollary, to exert intimidation.
   3. The subject territories were becoming restless with the instability of Sienese rule.
   4. The 15th century was, thus, a period of aristocratic dominance, with Siena again reduced to factional and clan warfare.

V. Civic chaos in Siena eventually resulted in the rise of a tyrant, Pandolfo Petrucci (d. 1512).

A. Petrucci was a member of the influential Noveschi Monte.
   1. He assumed a number of important offices and took those of his brother at his death, becoming captain of the city in 1495.
   2. His wealthy and influential father-in-law provided money. Petrucci put his supporters in charge of those offices he did not hold.
3. By 1500, he was tyrant of Siena, with the title Il Magnifico.

4. Like so many other princes of Italy, Petrucci chose to use art to aggrandize his rule, building and opulently decorating a huge palace in a manner suitable to a prince. The Palazzo del Magnifico still exists, at least in its outer shell.

B. Petrucci was crafty, vicious, and cruel.
   1. He had his father-in-law, who had made Petrucci’s rise to power possible, murdered when he objected to Petrucci’s actions.
   2. Petrucci was clever enough to avoid Cesare Borgia’s attempt to murder him and other political rivals at a banquet, prompting Machiavelli to recognize him as an ideal tyrant prince.

C. Petrucci’s death in 1512 left his authority to his sons, who were not of their father’s ability, and as factional struggles reemerged between 1512 and 1524, the situation became desperate.
   1. Petrucci’s sons managed to sustain the family’s power until 1524, when they were overthrown.
   2. Between 1524 and 1526, Siena experienced political turmoil as a reaction to Petrucci’s attempt to impose order, and the result was almost constant factional warfare.
   3. But it was external threats, especially from Florence, that imposed unity once more on the city. Siena was forced to make a decision about which of the two dueling forces in Italian politics at the time to support, the House of Valois or the House of Habsburg.

VI. For the next 25 years, Siena was compelled to defend itself from foreign attack.
   A. Supported by the Medici pope Clement VII, Florence attempted to take advantage of the internal instability in Siena to capture its old enemy.
      1. In 1526, the Florentine army, under the influence of Clement, laid siege to the city.
      2. But the Siene hate[r] the Florentines more than they did each other, and a government of national reconciliation emerged to fight for Sienese independence.
      3. Through heroic defense and daring assaults, the siege was broken and Siena was saved.
   B. In the struggle between Habsburg and Valois, Siena strongly supported Charles V and admitted a Spanish garrison into the city, in effect, to protect it against Florence.
      1. This Spanish army behaved like an army of occupation, building a fortress against the Sienese and assuming all responsibility for important decisions.
      2. Finally, in 1552, the people of Siena rose, the Spaniards were expelled, and the fortress was destroyed.
   C. Because the hereditary duke of Florence, Cosimo I de’Medici, was closely allied with the Habsburgs, the Sienese knew they needed assistance.
      1. They sought help from the French, who sent an army to the city for its protection.
      2. In addition, anti-Medicean republican exiles had fled to Siena to use it as a base against Cosimo.
      3. This situation gave Cosimo the perfect excuse to attack Siena, using a Habsburg army to besiege the city.
   D. Despite a heroic defense, the Sienese were starved into submission and forced to capitulate in 1555.
      1. But the surrender allowed the French allies and the Sienese republican leaders to leave the city with their weapons.
      2. The Sienese republicans, having carried their insignia, coining equipment, and civic symbols from the city, established a Siena-in-exile in the southern Tuscan town of Montalcino.
      3. Although this Sienese republic-in-exile fought and recaptured some territory from the Habsburgs, it had no hope of survival.
      4. The future of Siena was formally decided at Cateau-Cambresis in 1559 by the treaty between Henry II of France and Charles V.
      5. The history of Siena was thereafter as an integral part of the Medici monarchy.

Essential Reading:
J. Hook, *Siena: A City and Its History.*
Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Siena began as a richer, more advantaged city than Florence. Yet Florence would soon eclipse Siena. Can you account for this reversal of fortune?
2. By the 16th century, the age of small, independent states had passed in Italy. Can you identify other critical periods in history when small jurisdictions have fallen under the hegemony of more powerful neighbors?
Lecture Twenty-One
Florence and the Guild Republic

Scope: Although unimportant in ancient times, Florence became large and wealthy during the Middle Ages as a consequence of its production of high-quality woolen cloth. Profits from this international enterprise allowed for the accumulation of huge amounts of capital, which gave rise to a powerful banking economy, promoting the growth of a rich, cosmopolitan, and educated mercantile class that challenged the political supremacy enjoyed by the established magnate families. In 1293, the guildsmen succeeded in taking control of the government and turned the city into a guild republic by disenfranchising the magnate clans. A collective executive of nine priors held office for terms of only two months to ensure that the commune would not be subverted by powerful families, individuals, or interests. Nevertheless, instability remained. Moreover, some of these political upheavals took place in a period of severe economic dislocation. The collapse of the Bardi and Peruzzi banks in the 1340s, the Black Death of 1348–1349, a war against the papacy in 1375, and the Ciompi regime of 1378–1381 sapped confidence and profits. An oligarchic regime emerged in 1381, one that increasingly governed the city in its own interests.

Outline

I. Although unimportant in ancient times, Florence became large and wealthy during the Middle Ages as a result of its production of high-quality woolen cloth. Before slipping into the rule of the Medici by the 16th century, it became a republic that achieved financial success and territorial expansion.
   A. The profits from the wool industry allowed for the accumulation of huge amounts of capital, which gave rise to a powerful banking economy.
      1. In turn, there resulted a rich, cosmopolitan, and educated mercantile class that had substantial amounts of disposable capital.
      2. These new men challenged the political supremacy enjoyed by the old magnate families who had traditionally ruled Florence.
   B. The magnates were descended from feudal families with vast estates in the countryside and believed they had a monopoly on political and military authority.
      1. The nobles built fortified palaces with tall towers in the city of Florence; from these strongholds, they engaged in lawless brawling in the streets with those families that were their political or factional opponents.
      2. The resulting disunity and chaos in the city was diametrically opposed to the needs of the new mercantile class.
      3. The newly rich merchants sought an alternative form of rule, one encompassing the ideas of public responsibility and cooperative action to achieve common goals.
   C. Using the guilds—mercantile cartels—as a means of organization, the merchants began to assume authority on the part of the city.
      1. The nobles permitted the merchants to take responsibility for economic matters, especially for accounting functions.
      2. By the 1280s, the seven greater guilds were given the authority to send representatives, or priors, to deal with fiscal and mercantile matters of the city.
      3. Using this power base, the merchants took control of the podestà, always a foreigner, who was responsible for defense and the organization of militias.
      4. Then, to simultaneously generate cheap labor and weaken the private armies of the nobles, the merchants abolished servitude in Florentine territory.
      5. The abolition of servitude meant that the nobles could not count on large numbers of their tenants to fight for them on demand. It also expanded the pool of cheap labor available in the city for the wool industry.
      6. The merchants’ increasing acquisition of economic and military power enraged the nobles, who began acting even more lawlessly.
II. In 1293, the guildsmen had sufficient power to effect a bourgeois coup and take over the city.
   A. This was accomplished by promulgating the constitution of Florence that would guide it through the Renaissance, the Ordinances of Justice.
      1. Under the Ordinances, the 7 greater guilds and 14 lesser guilds worked together to establish a kind of guild democracy.
      2. Now, membership in a guild, ownership of property, and the payment of taxes became the ticket of admission to Florentine political activity.
      3. The government would consist of a committee of nine priors, who would rule in the best interests of the community, who had to reach decisions by consensus, and who had to live together to ensure that they would not use their influence to benefit their private affairs or their families. These priors held office for only two months.
      4. The result was that power was broadly distributed among the political class, and the new mercantile group was able to use government in its own interests, providing secure communications, stable coinage and weights and measures, and equitable application of the law.
      5. Further, the Ordinances of Justice disenfranchised the magnati, the magnate clans, and the grandi, the newly enriched mercantile families who had thrown in their lot with the great feudatories. These groups were required to pull down their tower fortresses in the city and to post bonds for good behavior. No magnate could hold any office in the city, even if he matriculated in a guild.
   B. The Palazzo della Signoria (now the Palazzo Vecchio), designed by Alfonso di Cambio, was built to house the nine priors. Its tower represented the idea of public power in communal, responsible hands.

III. The Ordinances, however, did not bring stability.
   A. Factional struggles continued, often along economic and personal lines. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to bring in signori to restore stability and solve the problems of factional division.
   B. After 1343, the various factions realized that they had to cooperate among themselves. The result was the most collegial and successful republican government yet seen in the peninsula.
      1. The public debt was consolidated into a single fund, the Monte (not to be confused with the Sienese factions of the same name), and shares were sold to service it.
      2. Anyone in the city, then, who had disposable income could have a financial stake in the community. This provided the ingredient that allowed for Florence’s experimentation in republican government.
   C. Unfortunately, economic and demographic catastrophe struck in quick succession.
      1. In 1345, the huge Bardi and Peruzzi banks collapsed when Edward I of England repudiated the massive loans he had received to finance the Hundred Years’ War against France.
      2. The failure of the banks brought down hundreds of smaller firms and thousands of individuals who had their capital on deposit; to some extent, the entire economy of Europe collapsed, as well.
      3. Then, in 1348–1349, the Black Death struck. The plague was perhaps more devastating than it might have been because of the collapse of the Bardi and Peruzzi banks. Their failure meant that cities and towns were unable to move grain efficiently, to impose quarantines, or to restrict the movement of merchants who had already become infected.
   D. This devastating economic dislocation was exacerbated by a war against the papacy in 1375.
      1. Because the Florentines were now rebels against the Church, the pope declared that Florentine property could be confiscated.
      2. By the late 1370s, the situation in Florence had become unstable, almost to the point of disintegration.

IV. In 1378, the Ciompi, unskilled woolworkers, revolted after having endured years of poor pay and harsh treatment.
   A. The success of the insurrection resulted in the creation of Ciompi guilds.
      1. Unskilled workers without property now had access to elected office, a situation that was intolerable to property-owning members of the patrician class.
      2. The fact that workers could demand higher wages and some element of protection in their jobs
reduced the ability of the industry owners to compete in the market.

B. By 1381, the Ciompi guilds were dissolved, their leaders were publicly executed, and a harsh regime was imposed that treated the Ciompi even worse than they had been treated before the revolt.

C. The belief that the Florentines could govern themselves equitably died with the Ciompi Revolt.
   1. In place of the broadly based government, there grew an oligarchic regime dominated by a few wealthy and influential old families.
   2. The lesser guildsmen, realizing they would be yielding political and economic influence, threw in their lot with the greater guilds, thereby gaining protection provided by the patricians.

V. The oligarchy ruled in its own interests and at the expense of those who were excluded. At the same time, it grew ever smaller, excluding all but the most influential citizens.

A. The powerful families instructed the elected officials of the republic as to what measures would benefit them most, which then became the law or policy of the communal government. Despite laws to the contrary, in particular, the divieto, several members of the same powerful families held office simultaneously.

B. An expensive and unsuccessful war against Lucca began to seriously damage the economy.
   1. The oligarchs found ways to avoid paying higher taxes, the burden for which then fell on lesser property holders.
   2. By the 1430s, many members of the political class felt alienated from the oligarchic regime.

C. The leader of the opposition to the oligarchs was the wealthiest man in Europe: the banker Cosimo de’Medici.
   1. Seeing the rising power of the opposition—fueled by Cosimo’s wealth and intelligence—the oligarchs tried to preempt any coup by trumping up charges against Cosimo for treason.
   2. He was unjustly found guilty and sent to Milan in exile in 1433.

D. This act served to highlight the illegal and irresponsible behavior of the oligarchs and precipitated the coup they feared. The oligarchs were overthrown and exiled by a popular insurrection in 1434, and Cosimo was recalled.

E. The next 60 years would see the domination of the Medici in the Florentine Republic.
   1. The Medici, representing the popular faction, were supported by the 14 lesser guilds and many members of the greater guilds. Because of Cosimo’s immense wealth, they had the wherewithal to make Florence reflect the ambitions of those who still saw it as the leader of republican liberty.
   2. The overthrow of the oligarchy revealed that the republican constitution could still be made to work and that the republic could not be as easily manipulated as the oligarchs believed.
   3. The overthrow also revealed the flexibility of the Florentine constitution; it permitted Cosimo de’Medici to enter the republican arena and control it not only in his own interest but in the interest of the entire community, knowing, as he did, that what was good for the Medici bank would be good for Florence as a whole.
   4. The republican constitution in Florence had survived many dangers, for which credit can largely be given to Cosimo; he was able to link wealth and patrician power with the popular desire for successful government.

Essential Reading:
G. A. Brucker, Renaissance Florence.

Supplementary Reading:
R. A. Goldthwaite, The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History.

Questions to Consider:
1. Can you explain why Florence developed into such an effective model of a guild republic?
2. The Florentine republican constitution sacrificed stability for broad participation. Is such a compromise worth the risks involved?
Lecture Twenty-Two
Florence and the Medici

Scope: The leader of the opposition faction to the oligarchs was an influential banker, Cosimo de’Medici, whom they exiled in 1433 on spurious charges of treason. His followers rose in response, expelled the oligarchs, and recalled Cosimo to preside as the chief citizen of Florence. On his death in 1464, Cosimo was briefly succeeded by his son, Piero, who died unnaturally early and largely unlamented in 1469. Piero’s successor, his son Lorenzo, was, in contrast, a respected statesman and significant patron of the arts who nurtured the flowering of Florentine Renaissance genius. But an attempt on his life, illness, and a devastating war with the papacy diminished the glory of his last years. Moreover, the fiery Dominican preacher Savonarola stirred up the population against the Medici. When Lorenzo died in 1492, control of the city fell to his foolish son, Piero. In the crisis of the French invasion, Piero acquiesced totally to French demands. But the Medici were driven from the city, leaving power in the hands of Savonarola’s followers. The Medici returned only in 1512 when a Spanish army restored the family to power, eventually establishing a hereditary monarchy as grand dukes of Tuscany.

Outline

I. Although he was in a powerful position, Cosimo de’ Medici did not rule Florence as a prince. Instead, he honored the traditions and laws of the republic, merely using his influence to ensure that the old republican institutions functioned efficiently and, thereby, providing a foundation for the development of Florentine culture and politics in the second half of the 15th century.

A. Cosimo didn’t make any fundamental changes in the Ordinances of Justice; to maintain his faction’s control of the city, however, he restructured the office of the accoppiatori, the officials responsible for determining who was eligible for election.
   1. Cosimo simply ensured that a majority of Medici supporters sat as accoppiatori.
   2. Thus, after 1434, Cosimo’s control of the city was invisible: The elected offices rotated with the same frequency as before, and on occasion, even Cosimo’s opponents held posts.
   3. He made sure that his control of the city would not in any way offend the sensibilities of the Florentine patricians. Still, there was no doubt that Cosimo was the dominant political power in the city.

B. Like so many other rulers in the peninsula whom we have discussed, Cosimo also used his wealth to patronize art and civic building.
   1. He realized that public largesse was both a responsibility and a means of binding the citizens to his family.
   2. His only contribution based almost purely on ego was the building of the enormous Palazzo Medici, designed by Michelozzo.

C. Cosimo was also a brilliant diplomat, albeit with no deep roots in society that he could rely on if challenged. He was a parvenu and, as such, came to be a skilled manipulator of the constitution.
   1. Cosimo realized that the instability of the peninsula threatened Florence and his family’s influence.
   2. He worked with Francesco Sforza of Milan to negotiate the Peace of Lodi in 1454, cemented by the Italian League the next year.
   3. This treaty recognized the spheres of influence of the five great states of Italy—Venice, Milan, Florence, the Church, and Naples—and established collective security, whereby if one state were attacked, all the others would come to its defense.
   4. Italy thus entered a period of relative stability and peace unknown since the collapse of the Roman Empire.
   5. It was a time when the Medici established themselves in the republic and engaged in elements of patronage that would associate their name with peace, largesse, beauty, and good government.

D. On his death in 1464, Cosimo was briefly succeeded by his son, Piero, who died young and largely unlamented in 1469. There was no clearer indication of the general recognition of Medici rule than the completely peaceful and expected succession of Piero de’ Medici.
II. Piero’s successor, his son Lorenzo (known as the Magnificent), was, in contrast, a respected statesman and significant patron of the arts.

A. Lorenzo nurtured the flowering of Florentine Renaissance genius.
   1. He discovered Michelangelo and patronized Botticelli, who very nearly assumed the role of exclusive court painter for the Medici during the years of Lorenzo’s ascendancy.
   2. Lorenzo was also a great patron of literature and philosophy, as well as being a talented poet himself.
   3. His rule in the city was widely respected, and his skill as a diplomat was such that he was able to sustain that element of stability and peace that his grandfather had put in place with the Peace of Lodi.

B. But an attempt on Lorenzo’s life and the murder of his brother changed his rule and the complexion of his time.
   1. Lorenzo had tried to stop Pope Sixtus IV from acquiring the state of Imola for his nephew, because Lorenzo saw this move as a threat to Florence.
   2. In fury, Sixtus transferred the papal banking account to the Medici’s enemies, the Pazzi family, an old and wealthy clan, able to withstand the Medici influence in the city.
   3. The Pazzi had long resented the Medici and wished to remove them from the city; receiving the papal banking contract was a great economic advantage to this family.
   4. In 1478, a plot was hatched to murder Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano at Easter mass in the cathedral.
   5. The murder plot (initially to be carried out by a professional but later imposed on less-than-enthusiastic priests) was not successful; Lorenzo was only wounded, but Giuliano was killed.
   6. The aftermath reflected the fury of the Florentines as they found and slaughtered all the conspirators, including the archbishop of Pisa, who was hanged in full pontifical robes from the walls of the Palazzo della Signoria.

C. Angry over the failure of the conspiracy and murder of the archbishop, Sixtus declared war—not on Florence, however, but on Lorenzo.
   1. The Florentines rallied to the Medici in Lorenzo’s defense, refusing to hand over their hero to the pope.
   2. But the armies of Ferrante of Naples, the pope’s general, ravaged Florentine territory and promised to besiege the city.
   3. In 1480, in a great act of courage and statesmanship, Lorenzo stole to Naples and convinced Ferrante to abandon the war because only the pope would benefit and Naples would then be under threat of papal ambition.
   4. The War of the Pazzi Conspiracy ended, and Lorenzo returned to his city as a hero, having secured the freedom and protection of the city despite the danger that an unstable, nepotistic, and ambitious papacy had imposed on Tuscany.

D. After 1480, even though Lorenzo was permitted, to some extent, to assume his previous position, the mood in Florence was not the same.
   1. Lorenzo himself was melancholy and even fearful; he had greatly loved his younger brother and never managed to get over his loss.
   2. To control the city even more tightly, he changed the constitution to create a Council of Seventy, appointed by himself personally and with new appointments made from within.
   3. Thus, for the first time, Lorenzo altered the basic Florentine republican constitution; there would be a Medici rubberstamp council that represented not only the major clans of the city but also the principal Medici supporters.

III. Even more disquieting was the threat from the fiery Dominican preacher from Ferrara, Girolamo Savonarola, who stirred up the population against the Medici.

A. Savonarola was prior of the Dominican house of San Marco in Florence.
   1. He preached against the papacy and the Church, but in his sermons, he also stressed that the sins of the Florentines and the tyranny of the Medici would interfere with God’s plan for Florence: to make the
city the site of the second coming once the Church had been cleansed.

2. This apocalyptic message found wide appeal among all social classes but particularly the poor and women, groups largely excluded from Florentine public life.

B. When Lorenzo died in 1492, control of the city fell to his foolish son, Piero.
   1. In the crisis of the French invasion of 1494, Piero acquiesced totally to French demands, including the one for Florence’s port at Pisa, which the Florentines had struggled so long to acquire.
   2. The Medici were driven from the city, leaving power in the hands of Savonarola’s followers.
   3. In the political vacuum after the Medici were gone, Savonarola became the center of a fanatical regime that allied the city with France while he attacked the papacy in sermons.
   4. In 1498, with the city in economic and political chaos, Savonarola was arrested, tried, and burned. His followers, the piagnoni (“snivelers”), went underground. In place of the regime arose a republic based on a constitution that Savonarola had first proffered, modeled on the Venetian Great Council.
   5. This was a popular democratic form of government (in 15th-century terms), but it was weak because of factional fighting. Some in Florence supported the return of the Medici; others wanted to restore the oligarchy or the broadly based republic.
   6. It was into this world of tension and instability that Machiavelli arose as second chancellor. This atmosphere provided him with the experience that was to be the background of his diplomatic and political writing.

IV. The renewed republic was unable to survive the circumstances of the peninsula, driven by the ambitions of the French, the Spanish, and the Habsburgs. In 1512, the Medici were returned to power.
   A. When Lorenzo’s second son, Giovanni, was elected pope as Leo X in 1513, Medici power moved to Rome, and Florence became a kind of colony of the papacy. This was reinforced when Leo’s cousin Giulio, the illegitimate son of the murdered Giuliano, became Clement VII in 1523.
   B. The republic returned briefly between 1527–1529 as a result of the sack of Rome and the loss of papal power.
      1. But after a terrible siege by the Spanish at the request of Clement VII, the city surrendered in 1530.
      2. Starving, defeated, and having sacrificed a generation of young men in the city’s defense, the population yielded to a monarchy.
   C. The monarch chosen, Alessandro de’Medici, Pope Clement’s son by a Moorish slave, was insane and irresponsible. In 1537, he was murdered by his cousin and intimate, Lorenzaccio.
   D. Although many Florentines wanted a return to the republic, the 17-year-old Cosimo de’Medici was acclaimed ruler.
      1. He succeeded in establishing his power through a connection with Charles V, marrying the daughter of the Spanish viceroy of Naples.
      2. Cosimo destroyed what was left of the republic, creating an absolute monarchy in its place.
      3. He gave titles to the members of the patrician families, encouraged them to invest in landed estates, and even restored feudalism.
      4. In 1569, Pope Pius V bestowed upon Cosimo and his heirs the grand ducal title. The Medici would then rule Florence until their extinction in 1737, at which time the Grand Duchy of Tuscany fell to the Habsburgs, who would rule the territory until the Risorgimento.

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

Supplementary Reading:
J. Hook, Lorenzo de’Medici: An Historical Biography.

Questions to Consider:
1. Is it fair to suggest that Cosimo de’Medici destroyed the republic?
2. Savonarola filled the power vacuum after the expulsion of the Medici. What is the appeal of fanatical religious leaders in times of crisis?
Lecture Twenty-Three

The Italian Mosaic—*E Pluribus Gloria*

**Scope:** What emerges from this discussion of the city-states of the Italian Renaissance is their variety in political structure, social organization, economic activity, and character. Although all shared a relatively restricted geographical context, the worlds of Florence and Milan, Rome and Naples, Venice and Genoa, Urbino and Ferrara, Pisa and Mantua, and Siena could not have been more disparate. Yet this was, in many ways, the genius of the period and the engine of Renaissance culture. As Machiavelli wisely observed, states exhibit the dual needs of ensuring their own security while seeking expansion at the expense of their neighbors, with the natural consequence of continuous warfare or preparation for war. This competition was readily apparent in the circumstances of the peninsula and equally manifested in the pursuit of economic advantage by each of these states. This, in turn, contributed to the efflorescence of the Italian Renaissance, as well as constitutional experimentation, providing models for various kinds of political structures, often tested under extreme conditions. The fragmentation of the peninsula, then, was not altogether an unfortunate situation.

**Outline**

I. What emerges from these lectures is the variety in political structure, social organization, economic activity, and character of these states of Italy.
   
   A. The dynastic principalities, such as Naples, Ferrara, Mantua, Milan, and Urbino, shared certain characteristics.
      1. They were all ruled by monarchs who were largely unrestrained by other forces in the state.
      2. Consequently, the nature of each of these states is reflected in the personality of the prince and the character of his family.
   
   B. It is inappropriate to make modern value judgments about the exercise of unrestrained power in these principalities.
      1. Although there was often extreme instability in the transition periods within these dynastic states, many enjoyed long intervals of remarkable stability and cohesion.
      2. The centralization of power permitted a degree of focus that republics, for example, had great difficulty achieving because of the continual change of government.
      3. Nonetheless, families that ruled the principalities always had to face the danger of interdynastic or intradynastic struggle.
   
   C. Economic activity that allowed participation in politics played a significant part in determining the nature of certain Italian states.
      1. The maritime states of Pisa, Genoa, and Venice all grew powerful and rich at about the same time and for many of the same reasons.
      2. Their ascendancy grew as a consequence of their long-distance trade and the opportunities presented by the Crusades.
      3. These elements, in turn, influenced both the constitution and the social complexion of the states, with some measure of pluralism becoming embedded in the government.
      4. The idea of change, too, was very important in the maritime states, where merchants had to deal with a world continually in flux.
      5. Given the cooperative nature of mercantile activity, all merchants shared a need for certain services from the state, such as uniform weights and measures, reliable coinage, protection from assault, and regularized forms of taxation.
      6. Although competition might exist among the various mercantile families or cartels, there was still a sense of cooperation.
      7. We see this system working best in Venice, where stability reigned despite tensions between merchants. We see it working least well in Genoa, where class conflict and the very nature of government itself resulted in internal tension and turbulence.

II. History played a role in building and sustaining diversity in the peninsula.
A. Large historical issues, such as the Guelf-Ghibelline divide, played significant roles.
   1. The conflict between empire and papacy was one of the most significant issues of the Middle Ages.
   2. It became, in Italy, a political struggle on the ground, often defined by class or even personal interests.
   3. In particular, during the years under the Hohenstaufen, when imperial power was centered in the peninsula, as was the papacy, this division was extremely acute and helped clarify the ideological concerns of most Italian communes.
   4. Ultimately, though, with a few major exceptions, such as Milan, the evaporation of medieval imperial power gave the papal position greater appeal and continuity.
   5. It is ironic, then, that the dynastic successors to the imperial claims in Europe—the House of Habsburg—would, by 1530, enjoy hegemony in the peninsula that would last until the Risorgimento.

B. History also worked in opposite ways as well, as a glue binding the states of the peninsula.
   1. All Italian states recognized either imperial or papal authority which served as an element in the definition of what it meant to be Italian.
   2. All Italians also shared one religion, which provided a common vocabulary for discussing the nature of life and government.
   3. The coming of Renaissance Humanism provided another element of common culture that made the reinterpretation of Roman heritage the shared culture of all cultivated Italians.

C. Still, despite these factors of common or divisive experience, there remained some states that did not fit easily into any category.
   1. Venice, for example, was not involved in the Guelf-Ghibelline disputes and developed as a cohesive and united mercantile republic.
   2. Rome was both a theocratic principality and a kind of republic: its prince being elected for life with no right of succession and its aristocracy the product in part of merit and social mobility.

D. Thus, the mosaic of states in the peninsula grew from complex factors that associate certain states at certain times with certain common characteristics, but these cannot be imposed uniformly over time.

III. Regardless of the categories of states and regardless of their differing experiences and structures, all Italian states at some time during our period saw their neighbors in the peninsula as threats.
A. Machiavelli’s observation that states exhibit the dual needs of ensuring their own security while seeking expansion at the expense of their neighbors was manifestly the case in Italy.
   1. Italy was a dangerous place.
   2. The principalities were often simultaneously the talent pools for mercenary armies, led by local princes.
   3. This situation led to military competition.
   4. The availability of mercenaries meant that even small city-states could engage in expansion and diplomatic activity backed by force.
   5. The very mosaic of Italian life contributed to instability: Dynastic claims were often unclear; borders often shifted; and traditional enmities made making peace difficult.
B. In spite of the tendencies on the peninsula to use the instruments of violence, there were periods of relative peace and cooperation.
   1. The Peace of Lodi of 1454, negotiated by Cosimo de’Medici and Francesco Sforza, recognized spheres of influence for the five major states.
   2. This resulted in a long period of quiet, broken only by the inability of later Medici and Sforza to sustain the peace.

IV. Modern perspectives on the general instability, lack of unity, and incessant warfare in the peninsula are usually negative.
A. We must, however, view this situation in proper perspective, remembering how wars were fought in Italy at the time.
   1. Before the French invasions, small professional mercenary armies led by condottieri engaged in what were more like ballets than large armed conflicts in which thousands of people were killed.
   2. And the tensions that led to war often provided collateral benefits, such as resident ambassadors, the creation of alliances, and the posturing through building or art to intimidate possible opponents.
3. This competition-by-diplomacy or competition-by-culture resulted in the spread of ideas; the cross-fertilization of economic, political, and cultural models; and a strong sense of Italian identity.

B. More importantly, we must see the competition among states as one of the most powerful engines that drove cultural experimentation.
   1. Competition was not only economic and military but cultural:
   2. Such competition increased the opportunities for artists and established a meritocracy in which the best flourished.
   3. We can say with confidence that the explosion of art, architecture, literature, and scholarship across the peninsula was parallel to the endemic warfare; indeed, it was war by other means.

V. The competition in Italy resulted in a level of experimentation and brilliance not seen before in Europe, except perhaps in Classical Greece.
   A. The competition among states encouraged artists to take chances and experiment, just as states experimented economically and politically.
      1. The artist developed into a kind of cultural condottiere.
      2. The best of these, like the best mercenaries, were greatly sought after for the eminence and power they bestowed on their patrons.
   B. Thus the divisions in Italy and the competition among the states were not altogether negative factors.

Essential Reading:
N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What is the relationship between competition and crisis? Between genius and beauty?
2. Can you identify other places and other times when political fragmentation resulted in an efflorescence of culture and imagination?
Lecture Twenty-Four

Campanilismo—The Italian Sense of Place

Scope: Campanilismo is the Italian belief that all that matters in life is the territory from which the bell tower—campanile—of one’s local church is visible. It reflects a deep sense of local loyalty and identification with the traditions, customs, cuisine, wines, and dialect of a region. The positive element in this close identification with one’s native town or city is a strong sense of place, rooted in family, language, and comfort. The negative side is to keep Italy in some ways still burdened by its divisions, which were only politically overcome in the 1860s. Outsiders can be instantly identified in this culture of localism, and many are never fully admitted into the social, political, or economic structures of their adopted towns. Still, on balance, Italy is a richer mosaic as a consequence of campanilismo, that vestige of its history of fragmentation. It is unlikely that what we understand as the Renaissance would have, in fact, occurred had Italy enjoyed what so many Italians had dreamed of since the collapse of Rome: a united nation.

Outline

I. Campanilismo is the Italian belief that all that matters in life is the territory from which the bell tower—campanile—of one’s local church is visible.
   A. Campanilismo reflects a deep sense of local loyalty and identification.
      1. This localism in modern Italian culture is, in some ways, a continuation of the fragmentation of the peninsula.
      2. The idea of Italy being defined by its political history, its economic experiments, and its geography remains very much a part of any assessment of the development of Italy.
   B. The constant instability and warfare of the peninsula made Italy what it was and still makes locals distrustful of foreigners.
      1. Those from outside did not have the deep family and social roots enjoyed by the indigenous inhabitants.
      2. Moreover, they might be in competition for local employment, trade, or even the young men or women in marriage.
      3. Thus, Italy experiences a traditional tension between locals and outsiders.
   C. Italians love words, and, to some extent, even the creation of Italy itself was a consequence of language. Italians abstracted these divisions between locals and outsiders into literary and popular characters.
      1. The Three Crowns—Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio—created a sense of Italian-ness that superseded regional differences.
      2. Even so, Italian literature still contains echoes of the divisions in the political structure of the peninsula: Men from Bergamo, for example, were portrayed as churlish oafs in popular comedy; Florentines were crafty; Neapolitans, untrustworthy and given to theft; and Venetians, grave and haughty.
      3. The Sienese, known for their courtesy, believed that they spoke the purist Tuscan and, hence, the best Italian.
      4. Every contemporary Italian would recognize these cultural references; they are part of the division and part of the theater that constitutes Italian cultural life.

II. The history we have traced contributed to—and still influences—popular images of Italian regions.
   A. The lengthy and dramatic conflicts between important states contributed a collection of local folklore and an abiding sense of self and “other.”
      1. For example, the long and desperate hatred between Pisa and Genoa gave root to the still popular phrase “Better a death in the house than a Pisan at the door.”
      2. The Sienese continue their hatred of the Florentines, shouting at soccer matches between the two cities “Montaperti!” to remind the Florentines of the Sienese victory in 1260.
      3. There is the powerful movement of northern Italian particularism, originally taking the name of the Northern League (Lega Nord), seeking to partition Italy again by separating the poorer south and creating a rich new state of Padania around the River Po.

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B. In other words, some of these regional jealousies, memories and feuds remain an active part of contemporary Italian life.

III. But campanilismo is also an extremely positive force.

A. Italy is such a culturally exciting and attractive country for the very reason that there is no single unitary opinion an anything

1. Each small locality prides itself on its bread, wine, and cheese, the taste, composition, and means of production of which vary dramatically sometimes just a mile along the road.
2. The seemingly constant political turmoil is the consequence of the historical divisions and the ability of Italians to play with ideas and to look for different forms of political, economic, and cultural models in order to solve the immediate problems of their localities.
3. For Italians, these are elements of popular identification with their town, region, or even neighborhood: These things define them and link them to their past and their community.

B. Similarly, architectural traditions are maintained, and the differences even of relatively modern parts of old towns and cities suit their environment.

1. The trulli are still built around Alberobello in Puglia, often on a very large scale. These are circular houses with conical roofs, on which both Christian and pagan symbols are painted.
2. Milan, always associated with northern thinking in the Italian imagination, has skyscrapers, inappropriate to Italians from more traditional cities, who see these as somehow un-Italian, even as something of a Trojan horse for bringing northern European—or worse, American—ideas into Italy.

IV. Modern politics sustains some memories of the differing characters of the formerly independent states, as well.

A. Campanilismo in politics, positive as it is in so many ways, gives way too often to gattopardismo, defined in the great novel The Leopard by Giuseppe di Lampedusa

1. The central character, Don Fabrizio, remarks, “For everything to remain the same, everything must change.”
2. This theater of politics allows the same members of the same political parties to hold revolving-door positions in revolving-door administrations. The result is that fundamental elements of change seem to be occurring in the economy, social structure, or tax system, when, in fact, little change actually takes place at all.

B. The tension between the center and the individual parts of the Italian Peninsula remains an important element of Italian culture to this day and one of the driving forces of Italian politics.

1. The recognition of this, in fact, has begun to change the nature of the Italian state, reintroducing local autonomy and activity in such areas as culture and education.
2. Some of the traditions and memories, then, that were historically part of the divided mosaic of the peninsula are returning to contemporary Italian life.

C. But in these elements, so different from the newer social, political, and cultural traditions of North America, there has emerged great strength.

1. The stress on excellence in handicraft and design has contributed significantly to the Italian postwar economic miracle.
2. This can be traced directly back to the guilds of the medieval communes.
3. The brilliant and elegant design for which Italy remains so celebrated can be seen to have arisen from the workshops (botteghe) of the artists, goldsmiths, and architects that gave the Renaissance its luster.
4. There remains a sense of national competition for design and innovation in style that drives even the production of business machines and scooters.
5. There is, in many ways, a direct line between the workshops of the great artists, such as the Ghirlandaio or Perugino, and the workshops of Prada and Ferragamo today.
6. Campanilismo, then, gives strength to the various regions of Italy by providing a sense of identification with a locality. Sharing the wine and cheese from one’s region with a visitor becomes an act of praise for that place and its traditions.

D. There is another reason that the campanilismo of the past has given strength to an Italy of diverse regions.

1. Italians prefer, if possible, to remain close to home, close to family, local produce, traditions, and their roots.
2. Those who stay have a very different attitude to success and mobility from that of North Americans.
3. It is often remarked that an Italian businessman would prefer to be an important local individual than to move production overseas, putting his neighbors out of work and losing their respect thereby, even if his fortune grew.
4. This is the tradition of the locality and city-state, the world that is bordered if not by the shadow of the campanile then by the recognition of one’s name and contribution to the community.

E. A modern, dynamic nation, member of the G7 and founding participant in the European Union, Italy nevertheless has an indissoluble link with the history, myth, and memory of the Renaissance city-state to this day.

Essential Reading:
L. Barzini, *The Italians*.

Supplementary Reading:
J. White, *Italy: The Enduring Culture*.

Questions to Consider:
1. How do supranational structures, such as the European Union, challenge the ability of countries like Italy to sustain their unique cultures?
2. To what do you personally relate most closely: your hometown, your region, your nation, or to a larger unit? What, in your personal experience, has determined this?
Biographical Notes

Frederick II, Barbarossa (1194–1250). Frederick of Hohenstaufen was born in Sicily, the son of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI and Constance, daughter of King Roger of Sicily and queen of Sicily in her own right. Frederick was crowned king in 1198; his mother acted as his regent first, followed by the pope. Frederick’s claims to the imperial throne were contested by the German princes, but after military victory, he was crowned king of the Romans by the pope in 1215 and, in 1220 in Rome, Holy Roman Emperor. Most of his life was spent in Italy or on crusade, because he had married the heiress of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Frederick negotiated his claims to rule with the Muslims in control of the city, resulting in his coronation as king of Jerusalem in 1229.

In Italy, the Lombard League, led by one of Frederick’s sons, revolted against imperial authority but was defeated by Frederick in 1237; he then made another son, Conrad, king of Jerusalem, his heir. He continued his war against the cities of Lombardy, further angering an already exasperated pope. Pope Gregory IX excommunicated the emperor, driving him to attack the Papal States and set his sights on Rome. The war between the imperial (Ghibelline) power of Frederick and the papal (Guelf) power of Gregory continued after the pope’s death. Gregory’s successor, Innocent IV, although initially less hostile to Frederick, soon renewed the war, excommunicating him once more and declaring him deposed as Holy Roman Emperor in 1245. Frederick’s position in Italy, however, remained strong until he was defeated at Parma in 1248 by the Guelf faction, and his camp was taken. Later, his son Enzo was captured by the Bolognese and locked in prison for the rest of his life. Still, the Ghibellines were able to recapture much lost territory and Frederick was able to return to southern Italy, where he died in 1250, leaving as his heirs Conrad, Holy Roman Emperor and king of Sicily, and Manfred, prince of Taranto.

Charles of Anjou (1227–1285; king of Sicily, 1262–1282; and king of Naples, 1282–1285). Charles was born the posthumous son of King Louis VIII of France. After an adventurous youth as a Crusader, he was offered the throne of Sicily by Pope Urban IV as a consequence of the usurpation of that dignity by Manfred of Sicily in 1258, whose Hohenstaufen dynasty threatened the authority of the papacy in Italy. King Manfred invaded the papal dominions, forcing the pope to flee; Charles arrived in Rome in 1265 and was crowned king of Sicily in 1266. Manfred, in the interim, was losing the initiative in his war against the Church. At Benevento, Charles defeated and killed him, thereby becoming undisputed king of Sicily. Conradin, the young Hohenstaufen king earlier deposed by Manfred, collected another imperial army and marched south. He was defeated by Charles, captured, and beheaded in Naples (1268).

Charles’s policies in Naples and his foreign ambitions galvanized the Ghibelline opposition, which identified Peter of Aragon as its champion. Peter had a claim to Naples through his marriage to Manfred’s daughter and the Hohenstaufen heiress, Constance. The result was the Revolt of the Sicilian Vespers, which broke out in Palermo but soon spread across the island. The French were massacred, and Charles fled to Calabria. Peter of Aragon landed in Sicily and was proclaimed king, beginning the Aragonese dynasty. The French king and the pope continued to support Charles, and Charles’s intent was the reconquest of Naples; however, in 1285, he died without restoring the Angevins to Sicily.

Andrea Doria (1468–1560). Born into a noble Genoese family, Andrea Doria lived the life of a soldier of fortune in his youth as a consequence of his father’s early death. He served in the papal guard, then joined the armies of Naples before entering the order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Having committed himself to the French cause in Italy, he was able to return to Genoa, which was under French control at the time. His military and naval skills recommended him to the Genoese, who commissioned him to lead their navy. In addition, he used his personal wealth to acquire galleys for a private fleet, which he used effectively to subdue the Muslim pirates in the Mediterranean.

The internal discord in Genoa resulted in Doria’s crews recognizing his leadership rather than obeying the unstable republic; consequently, he took his galleys and entered the service of Francis I of France as an admiral. It was Doria who rescued the survivors of the French army after its defeat at Pavia (1525). Nevertheless, in 1528, Francis I reneged on his agreement to pay Doria for his service, driving him to switch allegiance to the emperor Charles V. With imperial support, he reentered Genoa, abolished the ancient republic, and established an aristocratic republic, in which the nobles ruled without the plebeians. Charles V rewarded Doria further by appointing him grand admiral of the imperial fleets, an office he used effectively against the Turks. Near the end of his life, he retired to his palace, dying in Genoa in 1560.
Ercole d'Este (1431–1505, r. 1471–1505). The son of Niccolò III d'Este of Ferrara, Ercole enjoyed an excellent Humanist education at the court of Alfonso the Magnanimous of Naples. He would later marry Alfonso’s granddaughter, Eleonora. With his brother Borso’s death in 1471, Ercole became duke and began his celebrated patronage of music, literature, and building. His interest in music, particularly the new Netherlandish style, made him one of Italy’s most important patrons, and his support of Boiardo and Ariosto resulted in the establishment of the Italian epic tradition for which Ferrara is justly renowned. Ercole died in 1505 and was succeeded by his son, Alfonso.

Isabella d’Este (1474–1539). Born in 1474 to the duke of Ferrara, Ercole I, and his wife, Eleonora 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 marquess Francesco Gonzaga (1466–1519) at the age of 16. As marchioness, she had a great impact both on 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 again after his death.

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. Because 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 monarchs” 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).

Lodovico III Gonzaga (1412–1478, r. 1444–1478). Lodovico was the son of Marquis Gianfrancesco Gonzaga of Mantua and inherited the title in 1444. He sustained the imperial allegiance of the city by marrying the niece of the emperor. His skills as a condottiere prince and the reputation of his mercenary army were such that he fought for the dukes of Milan, the Republic of Venice, and the king of Naples. The Peace of Lodi (1454) not only ended many of Lodovico’s commissions as condottiere but required him to yield some of the territory he had incorporated into his state. After 1466, however, he recovered his influence by enjoying almost continuous employment by the dukes of Milan.

Despite his military calling, Lodovico was a great patron of culture. Andrea Mantegna was his court painter, and the family of the marquis has been lovingly represented in the Camera degli Sposi (Camera Picta) of Mantegna in the ducal palace. Lodovico also patronized the great Florentine architect and theorist Leon Battista Alberti, whose church of Sant’Andrea was built at the marquis’ request to house the relic of the sacred blood of Christ collected by St. Longinus.

Lodovico died in 1478 and was succeeded by his son Federigo I (d. 1484) as marquis of Mantua.

Joanna I of Naples (1328–1382, r. 1343–1382). The daughter of Charles of Calabria of the Neapolitan House of Anjou, Joanna was married as a child to her cousin Andrew, a prince of the Hungarian branch of the Angevins. The intent of King Robert of Naples, Joanna’s grandfather, was that on his death, the crown of Naples should be shared between Andrew and Joanna. With the support of the pope, whose fief Naples was, Joanna resisted, and in 1344, she was crowned as sole ruler in Rome; the following year, Joanna had her husband killed.

Joanna then married Louis of Taranto, who ruled jointly with her from 1353 until his death in 1362 and with whom she repelled an invasion from Louis of Hungary, who wished to restore his branch of the family’s claims to Naples and avenge the murder of Andrew. Despite another marriage after Louis of Taranto’s death, Joanna had no living direct heirs. She supported the papacy in Avignon during the Great Schism and adopted as her heir Louis of Anjou. However, the Roman pope, Urban VI, was unwilling to see a French king on his southern frontier; thus, he declared Joanna deposed and granted the crown to Charles of Durazzo, her nephew by marriage, whose claim was equally supported by the Hungarian Angevins, Joanna’s enemies. Charles captured Naples and Joanna in 1381 and ordered the queen to be strangled with a silken cord in 1382.
**Joanna II of Naples** (1371–1435, r. 1414–1435). The daughter of Charles III, Joanna II succeeded to the throne in 1414. She was known for her dissolute life, which was reflected in her assuming, as a widow of 45, a 26-year-old lover, to whom she granted considerable authority. Pressured by the feudal baronage of Naples to remarry after her accession as a means of controlling her favorite, Joanna chose James de Bourbon, a relation of the king of France. Against Joanna’s wishes, he had himself declared king and ordered the murder of his wife’s lover and her imprisonment. But his own insensitivity to the Neapolitan feudatories and his highhanded actions prompted the nobles and people to revolt, driving James from his throne and Naples in 1418.

Joanna chose another lover, Giovanni Caracciolo, whose influence proved equally disastrous. He advised her not to agree to the requests from Pope Martin V—the feudal overlord of Naples—for money and soldiers. Martin declared Joanna deposed and offered the crown to Louis of Anjou. When Louis invaded the regno, Joanna countered by inviting the help of King Alfonso V of Aragon, whom she would adopt as her heir. In 1421, Alfonso entered Naples, but he ordered the imprisonment of the queen’s favorite, Caracciolo, and Alfonso moved against Joanna herself, intent on taking the crown before her death. Joanna and Caracciolo escaped and sought refuge with Louis of Anjou. Joanna reversed her offer to Alfonso and adopted her former enemy, Louis, as her heir.

Alfonso left Naples to return to Aragon, and Louis and Joanna, supported by the Genoese, were able to recapture Naples from the Aragonese in 1424. Chaos returned when another revolt broke out in 1432 after Caracciolo broke with Joanna, only to be murdered, an event that gave rise to general unrest. Louis of Anjou died while fighting the rebels in 1434, and Joanna adopted his son, Rene of Anjou, as her heir. Joanna II died in 1435.

**Cosimo de’Medici, il Vecchio** (1389–1464). Cosimo, the son of the wealthiest banker in Italy, Giovanni di Averrardo 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 Humanists; 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 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 to ensure the promotion of his policies and the election of his supporters. In 1454, Cosimo helped to negotiate the Peace of Lodi with Milan, which established a balance of power in Italy.

**Lorenzo “il Magnifico” de’Medici** (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 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.

**Piero de’Medici (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 lacked his father’s diplomacy and 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.

**Guidobaldo da Montefeltro** (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, Guidobaldo and his wife, Elisabetta Gonzaga, supported the arts and culture of Urbino. The unique court culture established there 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 Guidobaldo’s reign, and Baldassare Castiglione served under him. Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier* is set in Urbino and relates a discussion among members of Italy’s leading families at the palace of Guidobaldo and Elisabetta. Guidobaldo is the absent character in this work, confined to bed, with Elisabetta acting as host.

**Pandolfo Petrucci** (1425–1512). Born into a noble Sienese family, Petrucci suffered exile with his faction, the
noveschi, until they were triumphantly returned in 1487. He married the daughter of the powerful and rich noble Niccolo Borghese, and Pandolfo benefited from his influential brother’s offices on the latter’s death in 1497. By this time, he was, in effect, master of Siena, using his power to reward his supporters and punish any dissidents, including his father-in-law, whom he had murdered. His clever foreign policy managed to keep Siena away from the ambitions of Cesare Borgia and the Florentines, although at some cost to Sienese territorial claims. Near the end of his life, Petrucci retired to the small town of San Quirico, leaving the rule of Siena to his sons. It was there he died in 1512.

Francesco Sforza (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 conquered Milan in 1450, taking the title of duke. He persuaded 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.

Lodovico “il Moro” Sforza (1451/52–1508). Known as “il Moro” for his swarthy complexion, Ludovico Sforza, son of Francesco, served as the duke of Milan from 1494–1499. To protect Milan, he entered into an alliance with Charles VIII before the 1494 invasion of Italy but, by 1495, had turned against the French. He was expelled from Milan in 1499 by Louis XII, who had a hereditary claim to the duchy. Overall, Ludovico 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.

Giangaleazzo Visconti (d.1402). After murdering his uncle Bernabo, 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.
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