

Date: 21st April-2026

FROM THE HISTORY OF THE FORMATION OF ITALIAN CULTURE DURING THE EARLY RENAISSANCE

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Annotation: By the High Middle Ages, the political and economic situation in the Italian city-republics had improved considerably. As a result of trade with the Middle East and North Africa, Italian merchants had enriched their wealth in the city-republics. As a result, economic prosperity paved the way for the development of cultural life in the Italian city-republics. This article analyzes the emergence of the early Renaissance in Italy and the factors that influenced it.

Keywords. Renaissance, Italy, Europe, Pisa, Florence, Siena, Proto-Renaissance, Humanism.

Introduction. The Renaissance was a period of global importance in the history of European culture, occurring after the Middle Ages and before the Enlightenment and the New Age. The Renaissance originated in Italy, with its first signs appearing in the 13th and 14th centuries. However, it became firmly established in the 1420s and reached its peak by the end of the 15th century.[2] In other countries, the Renaissance began much later. In the 16th century, there was a crisis of Renaissance ideas, which led to the emergence of Mannerism and Baroque.

Periods of the Renaissance

➤ *Periods in the history of Italian culture are usually designated by the names of centuries:*

➤ *Proto-Renaissance (Ducento) — from the second half of the 13th century to the 14th century*

➤ *Early Renaissance (Trecento) — from the beginning of the 15th century to the end of the 15th century*

➤ *High Renaissance (Quattrocento) — from the end of the 15th century to the first 20 years of the 16th century*

➤ *Late Renaissance (Cinquecento) — from the middle of the 15th century to the 1590s[1]*

Main part. The history of the Italian Renaissance was marked by a profound change in consciousness, worldview, and human relations that occurred during the period of collective revolutions in the second half of the 13th century.

It was this change that marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Western European culture. The radically new trends associated with it found their most radical expression in Italian culture and art during the period called the “age of Dante and Giotto” - the last third of the 13th century and the first two decades of the 14th century[2].



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The collapse of the Byzantine Empire played an important role in the rise of the Renaissance. The Byzantines, who migrated to Europe, brought with them libraries and works of art unknown to medieval Europe. The Byzantines themselves were never cut off from classical culture.

The growth of city-republics led to the strengthening of the influence of classes not associated with feudal relations: artisans, merchants, and bankers. All of them were alien to the hierarchical value system created by the medieval, mainly church culture, and its ascetic, modest spirit. This led to the emergence of humanism, a socio-philosophical movement that saw the individual, his personality, freedom, and active, creative activity as the highest value and criterion for evaluating social institutions.

Secular centers of science and art, not under church control, began to appear in cities. In the middle of the 15th century, the printing press was invented, which played a significant role in the spread of new views throughout Europe.

Renaissance man is sharply different from medieval man. He is distinguished by faith in the power and strength of reason and respect for the incomprehensible gift of creativity.

Humanism focuses on human wisdom and its achievements as the highest blessing for intelligent beings. This, in fact, leads to the rapid flourishing of science.

Humanists consider it their duty to actively disseminate the literature of antiquity, because they see true happiness in knowledge. And reason plays a key role in this transformation. Therefore, various anti-clerical ideas arose, often unjustifiably hostile to religion and the church.

The Proto-Renaissance is considered the predecessor of the Renaissance. It was still closely connected with the medieval, Byzantine, Romanesque and Gothic traditions.

It is divided into two sub-periods: before and after the death of Giotto di Bondone (1337).[1] The most important discoveries and the most brilliant masters lived and created in the first period. The second period was associated with the plague epidemic that devastated Italy.

Proto-Renaissance art is characterized by the emergence of tendencies for emotional, visual reflection of reality, a secular approach (in contrast to medieval art) and an increased interest in the ancient heritage (characteristic of Renaissance art). The origins of the Italian Proto-Renaissance can be attributed to the master Niccolo, who worked in Pisa in the second half of the 13th century. He founded a school of sculpture that lasted until the middle of the 14th century and spread throughout Italy.

Of course, much of the sculpture of the Pisan school still tended towards the past. It retained old allegories and symbols. Reliefs lacked space, and figures occupied the background. Nevertheless, Niccolo's reforms were significant[5].

The use of classical traditions, an emphasis on the volume, materiality and weight of figures and objects, and the desire to introduce elements of real, secular events into the depiction of religious scenes created the basis for a broad renewal of art.



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In the 1260s and 1270s, the workshop of Niccolò Pisano fulfilled many orders in the central cities of Italy.[3]

New trends also permeated Italian painting.

Just as Niccolò Pisano reformed Italian sculpture, Cavallini founded a new direction in painting. His works used the late antique and early Christian monuments that were still abundant in Rome in his time.

Cavallini's achievement lies in his desire to overcome the flatness of forms and compositional construction characteristic of the "Byzantine" or "Greek" style that dominated Italian painting at that time. He introduced chiaroscuro modeling, borrowed from ancient artists, and achieved a rounded and plastic form.

However, from the second decade of the 14th century, artistic life in Rome came to a standstill. The leading role in Italian painting passed to the Florentine school.

For two centuries, Florence was a kind of artistic capital of Italy, determining the main direction of its artistic development.

But the most radical reformer of painting was Giotto di Bondone (1266/67–1337). In his works, Giotto sometimes achieves such a powerful juxtaposition of contradictions and the awakening of human feelings that he is considered a reformer of the greatest masters of the Renaissance.

Interpreting biblical episodes as events in human life, Giotto places them in a real-life setting, while refusing to combine moments from different eras into a single composition. Giotto's compositions are always spatial, although the scene on which the action takes place is usually superficial. The architecture and landscape in Giotto's frescoes are always subordinated to movement. Every detail in his compositions draws the viewer's attention to the central theme.

Siena was another important center of Italian art in the late 13th and first half of the 14th centuries.[4] Siennese art is characterized by its refined elegance and decorativeness. French illuminated manuscripts and works of artistic craftsmanship were valued in Siena. In the 13th and 14th centuries, one of the most elegant cathedrals of Italian Gothic architecture was built here, on the facade of which Giovanni Pisano worked from 1284 to 1297.

Proto-Renaissance architecture is characterized by balance and serenity. The sculpture of this period is distinguished by its plastic power and the influence of late antique art.

In short, the Renaissance man seeks to develop and improve the "quality" of the individual by studying the ancient heritage as the only foundation.

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