

The Renaissance (and printing, and gunpowder too)

- a movement and period which started as conscious attempt to rediscover and assimilate classical knowledge and art
- the beginnings go back to northern Italy and the city-state of Florence in particular

es Dante Alighieri - poet, composed the Divine Comedy
 (1265-1321) - codified the vernacular Italian language
 - melds classical and medieval

Giotto di Bondone - painter & architect
 (1267-1337) - tried to draw realistically (faces, especially) - tried to reuse classical models

Francesco Petrarca - poet, invented sonnets
 (1304-1374)

- spread through Europe (at varying rates) in the 1300's - 1500's:

Northern Italy at the time was "politically decentralized" - a lot of city states of various sizes - and quite wealthy from being a centre of trade and commerce. These combined to generate a lot of patronage for the arts and humanities and sciences.

Contributing to the later spread of the Renaissance was ②
the introduction of the movable block printing press c. 1450.

Block printing

[carve a reverse image into a block, cover it with ink, pressing the ink-covered block onto a surface] [used to decorate cloth at first]

- invented in China by c. 200 A.D. - earliest surviving examples are silks from about 220 A.D.
- spread to or independently developed in Muslim Egypt in the 800s
 - used to print some books
- became common in Europe [to decorate cloth] by 1300

Movable type printing

[carve individual reverse images into small blocks, assemble the blocks using a matrix or frame, then print; allows individual figures to be reused later on]

- invented in China c. 1040 but it didn't displace block printing for text because the fact the language had thousands of ideograms made moveable less competitive.

Printing Press

- movable type printing combined with a press was introduced by Johannes Gutenberg c. 1450
 - Printed the Gutenberg Bible c. 1459 and it really caught on for its low cost and high quality
 - spread very rapidly in Europe in the 1400's

The spread of gunpowder and the development of practical gunpowder artillery

(3)

- had been invented in China, spread to Europe by 1200s
- improvements in metallurgy made much more effective cannons possible by the 1400s and this made a lot of fortification (high curtain walls especially) obsolete

- eg Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 because the fortifications could not stand up to large cannons (refugee Greek scholars arrived in Italy with knowledge of Greek and copies of various Greek texts)

- eg Charles VIII of France ("The Affable")
[c. 1470 - 1498]
[king 1483 - 1498]

- entered Italy with his army in 1494 to go the Holy Land for a Crusade (and to secure the Kingdom of Naples in southern Italy, to which he had a claim)

- this set off the first of the Italian Wars [lasted on & off until 1559]
- his artillery made short work of all the Italian fortifications he attacked
- this set off a frantic effort to devise more effective fortifications that could stand up to cannons [military engineers included Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo]

Marquisate of Saluzzo

Marquisate of Montferrat

Bishopric of Trent

Marquisate of Mantua

Republic of Lucca

Duchies of Modena & Ferrara

