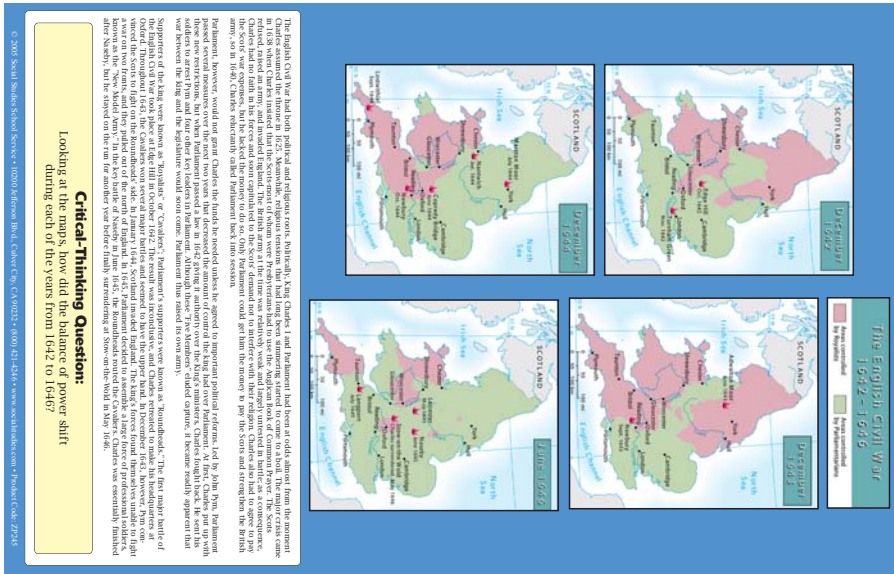


A widespread and devastating epidemic of bubonic and pneumonic plague ravaged Europe in the middle of the 14th century. Known as the "Black Death," the disease got its name from the black spots (caused by hemorrhaging under the skin) it produced on a person's body. The disease first appeared in Europe in 1347, brought to Sicily by Genoese ships returning from the Near East. Over the next few years, the plague quickly spread throughout Western Europe.

Humans initially contracted the disease from flea bites, and the fleas that carried the bacteria often lived in the fur of black rats. These rats liked to travel and would hitch rides on ships, which helps explain both how the plague first arrived in Europe and how it spread so rapidly. Bites from bacterially-laden fleas caused bubonic plague; however, the disease could also spread from human to human, a form of the disease known as pneumonic plague. Poor hygiene in many European cities, towns, and rural villages also contributed to the spread of the plague. In addition, many poor and even middle-class families tended to live together in a single crowded house; often, the whole family would even sleep together in just one bed. Such close quarters made it easier for one family member to contract the disease from another. At the time, medicine had no means to deal with the plague, and all doctors could really do was slightly alleviate a victim's suffering.

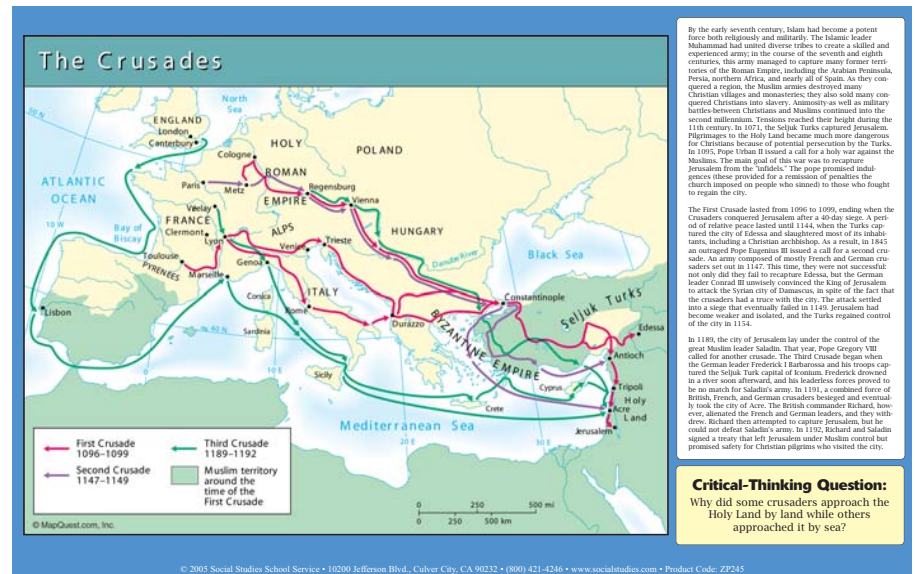
The plague hit cities the hardest. London lost about a third of its population, and many Italian cities were hit hard as well. Florence alone lost somewhere between one half and two-thirds of its citizens. Before the plague, however, many of these cities had begun to suffer from overpopulation. By killing off so many people, the plague actually ended up contributing to a better distribution of both lands and goods. In addition, so much of the working class had died that demand for labor rose significantly as did the wages for laborers. Though prosperity did eventually return in the years after the plague, the horrors of living through the time of the plague left many people feeling scared and pessimistic. The material effects of the plague disappeared fairly quickly, but its psychological effects lingered long afterward.

**Critical-Thinking Question:**  
What did the cities hit by the plague in 1347 have in common?



The English Civil War was a series of battles and conflicts from 1642 to 1649. The war was fought between the king, Charles I, and a group of people called Parliament. Charles I wanted to have more control over the country, but Parliament wanted to have more say. The war started in 1642 when Charles I raised an army and moved against Parliament. The British army at the time was relatively weak and easily defeated. In a consequence, the king's army was forced to retreat. In 1645, the king's army was defeated at the Battle of Marston. In 1646, Charles I fled to Scotland. In 1647, Charles I fled to Holland. In 1648, Charles I fled to France. In 1649, Charles I was executed.

Supporters of the king were known as "Royalists" or "Cavaliers." Parliament's supporters were known as "Roundheads." The first major battle of the English Civil War took place at Edgehill in October 1642. The result was inconclusive, as Charles's army was defeated. The king's army was forced to retreat. In January 1644, Scotland invaded England. The king's forces had to fight a battle at the "Battle of Marston" in May 1645. The Roundheads won that battle. Charles I was eventually forced to flee to France. He stayed on the farm for another year before finally surrendering in 1646. He was then held in the Tower of London. In 1649, Charles I was executed.

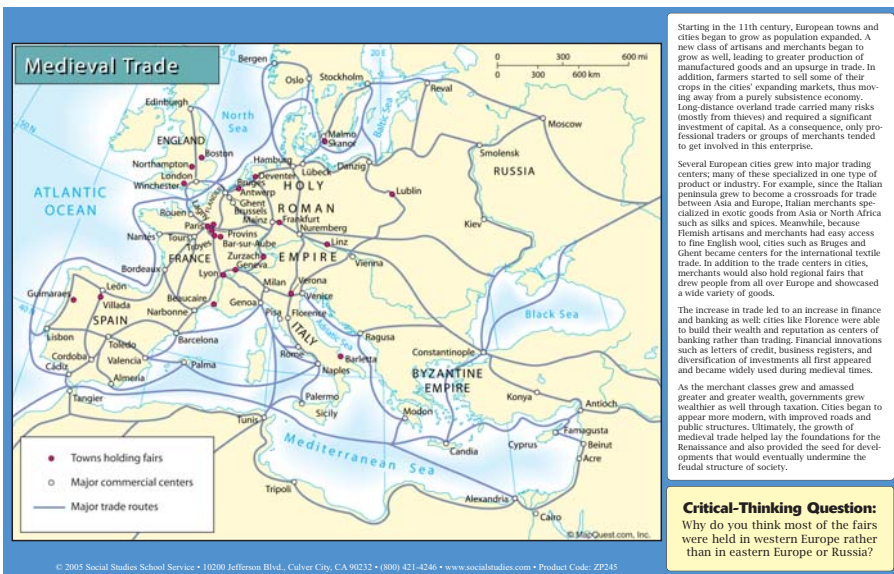


By the early seventh century, Islam had become a potent force both religiously and militarily. The Islamic leader Muhammad had united diverse tribes to create a unified and experienced army; in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries, this army managed to capture many former territories of the Roman Empire, including the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, northern Africa, and nearly all of Spain. As they conquered a region, the Muslim armies destroyed many Christian villages and monasteries; they also sold many conquered Christians into slavery. Animosity as well as military battles between Christians and Muslims continued into the second millennium. Tensions reached their height during the 11th century. In 1071, the Seljuk Turks captured Jerusalem. Pilgrimages to the Holy Land became much more dangerous for Christians because of potential persecution by the Turks. In 1095, Pope Urban II issued a call for a holy war against the Muslims. The main goal of this war was to recapture Jerusalem from the "infidels." The pope promised indulgences (pardon for a remission of penalties the church imposed on people who sinned) to those who fought to regain the city.

The First Crusade lasted from 1096 to 1099, ending when the Crusaders conquered Jerusalem after a six-year siege. A period of relative peace lasted until 1144, when the Turks captured the city of Edessa and slaughtered most of its inhabitants, including a Christian archbishop. As a result, in 1145, a second Pope issued a call for a holy war against the Muslims. An army composed of mostly French and German crusaders set out for the Holy Land. They were not met with success; not only did they fail to recapture Edessa, but the German leader Conrad III ultimately crowned the King of Jerusalem as the ruler of the city. In 1147, the attack settled into a siege that eventually ended in 1149. Jerusalem had been under Muslim control since 1099, and the Turks regained control of the city in 1154.

In 1188, the city of Jerusalem lay under the control of the great Muslim leader Saladin. The Pope Pope Gregory VIII called for another crusade. The Third Crusade began when King Richard I of England and King Philip II of France captured the Seljuk Turk capital of Acre. Frederick II, who was in a bitter feud with Saladin, eventually agreed to provide a march for Saladin's army. In 1191, a combined force of British, French, and German crusaders and their well-trained, battle-hardened knights, led by King Richard I, took the city of Acre. The British commander Richard, however, could not afford to stay in Acre. In 1192, the British king signed a treaty that left Jerusalem under Muslim control but promised safety for Christian pilgrims who visited the city.

**Critical-Thinking Question:**  
Why did some crusaders approach the Holy Land by land while others approached it by sea?



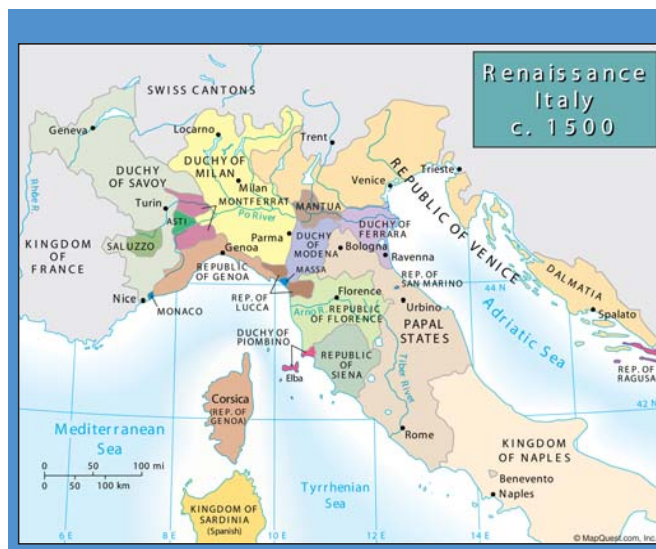


The Ottomans were a Turkish people who began to build an empire after the decline of the Seljuk Turks in the 13th century. In the 14th century, they began to expand from their home base in Asia Minor, moving across the Bosphorus straits into Europe. They suffered a temporary setback when the Mongol leader Tamerlane defeated the Ottoman sultan Bayazid at Angora in 1402. A period of civil war lasting almost a decade ensued after the defeat; it ended when the forces of Mehmed I emerged victorious and reunited the warring factions.

The Ottomans avoided confrontation with the Byzantine Empire until the mid-15th century, when a massive army under Mehmed II besieged and captured the Byzantine capital of Constantinople, an event that greatly alarmed Christian Europe. The Ottomans then turned their attention to the Balkans, taking most of the territory in Morea, Rumelia, and Bulgaria while advancing northwest towards Serbia and Hungary. Over the next 70 years or so, the Ottomans consolidated their control over Asia Minor while also extending their empire to include Syria, Egypt, and the Crimea.

Under the famous ruler Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), the Ottomans expanded their empire even further, gaining control of Mesopotamia and much of northern Africa. They also defeated the forces of Hungarian leader Louis II at the battle of Mohacs in 1526, ending the once formidable Hungarian Empire. Under Suleiman, the Ottoman Empire reached a peak both in terms of military might and territory controlled. The Ottoman armies owed much of their success to their powerful cavalry and to an elite infantry known as Janissaries, who were extremely skilled in the use of artillery and firearms. The Ottomans also developed a strong navy that helped capture the islands of Cyprus, Crete, and Rhodes in the Mediterranean. Although they were no longer able to add to their empire after the 17th century, the Ottomans continued to rule into the early 20th century—a reign lasting more than 600 years.

**Critical-Thinking Question:**  
What obstacle(s) might have prevented the Ottomans from expanding their empire further to the east? To the north? To the south?



During the first few centuries of the second millennium, many Italian cities grew to become major centers of finance and trade. Venice and Genoa emerged as important seaports and hubs for international trade. Florentine merchants leveraged their position as tax collectors for the Vatican to transform Florence into the premier European city for banking. As the Italian peninsula gradually became the crossroads for international trade and commerce, the cities also began to amass great wealth; residents of these cities were also exposed to peoples and goods from many different countries. By the 15th century, Italian cities had become some of the most cosmopolitan in the world.

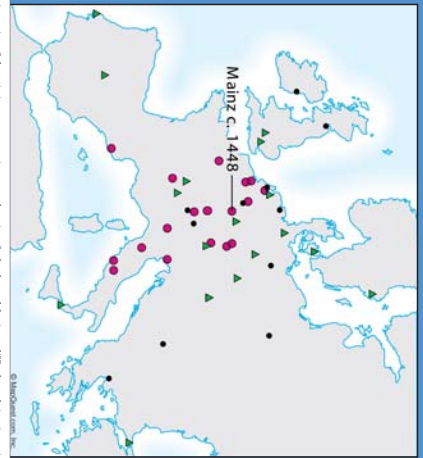
Renaissance Italians were often fiercely loyal to their local city. In addition, neither the Vatican nor the Holy Roman Empire was strong enough at the time to enforce any kind of unity on the Italian peninsula. As a result, Renaissance Italy was composed of several city-states-urban centers that essentially functioned as independent polities. By 1500, the major city-states in Italy included the Republic of Venice, the Republic of Milan, the Kingdom of Naples, the Republic of Florence, and the Papal States. These major city-states tended to wield great influence over smaller, nearby city-states. The men who ruled these city-states exercised king-like power, commanding governmental functions such as levying taxes and amassing an army. They also competed strenuously with one another to become the preeminent force in Italy. They not only focused on military power and political intrigue, but also competed to make their city-states premier cultural centers. Leaders in the Renaissance commissioned both grand architectural projects and master works of art. As the Renaissance progressed, wealthy individuals also began to sponsor artists as a means to increase their social standing and notoriety.

The lack of centralized power on the Italian peninsula and the continual squabbling between city-states made them a ripe target for conquest. The French king Charles VIII invaded Italy in 1494, subjugating many of the city-states. In the 16th century, Italy became the main battleground in the struggle for dominance between France and the Holy Roman Empire.

**Critical-Thinking Question:**  
As self-governing entities, the Italian city-states remained relatively isolated from one another. What geographic features contributed to their isolation from the rest of Europe?

## The Spread of Printing in Europe

- 1448-1475
- ▲ 1476-1500
- After 1500



Before the invention of the printing press, creating several copies of a book was laborious, difficult, and time-consuming. The books either had to be copied by hand, or each individual page had to be carved into a wooden block, which was then used as a template for printing. The work of copying by hand had been done for centuries by monks, and had given monasteries that were rich in books a reputation for scholarship. The printing press, however, was a new technology that allowed for the mass production of books. A goldsmith and gem cutter named Johann Gensfleisch created a printing press that combined elements of earlier inventors' more primitive printing methods. The printing press greatly simplified the printing process and made it easier to produce books. It also had a profound effect on European culture and learning. The widespread availability of books led to a general increase in literacy. The printing press presented the first printed text, and it also led to the development of an early form of mass communication. The printing press also led to a standardization of writing, spelling and grammar, because more uniform and styles of writing, called Renaissance, were used. The printing press also led to a standardization of writing, spelling and grammar, because more uniform and styles of writing, called Renaissance, were used. The printing press also led to a standardization of writing, spelling and grammar, because more uniform and styles of writing, called Renaissance, were used.

**Critical-Thinking Question:**  
During the period 1448-1475, did printing spread more to the east and west of Mainz or to the north and south? Why do you think this was?