

Monday, September 19, 2011
HST111
2-hour Lecture

- Psychological fallout after the Black Death
- Beyond the psychological fallout, there were larger issues that grows out of this incredibly tragic period
- People looking for answers
 - blaming people and themselves and society
 - others were more specific with blaming
- there were many groups who were pin pointed as being responsible for the Black Death
 - included the Jews
 - although Europe was primarily Christian, there were some Jews scattered throughout Europe
 - live in small, urban communities
 - because in most countries Jews were forbidden to own land
 - were persecuted throughout the Medieval period
 - kicked out of England in the 13th century
- During the plague, people began to look for scapegoats
 - wasn't always just Jews, could be any groups that one party did not like
 - many blamed the Jews
 - was often spread by flagellants
 - stories began to circulate in Europe that the Jews had poisoned the wells
 - organized killings of Jews took place all over Europe
 - particularly strong in German and Swiss states
 - thousands died, revenge killings
 - wiped out many Jewish communities
- Plague stopped because those who were infected were pretty much already killed
 - few were immune
 - by 1350 the worst was over, plague subsided
 - wasn't over for Europe in a number of ways
- Fallout from the Black Death (long-term)
 - not the last time the Europeans would suffer from the plague
 - plagues would keep reoccurring
 - the ones that followed would tend to be more localized (never as vast as the 1st)
 - would go on until the 17th century
 - had the effect of keeping population levels pretty low
 - doesn't really recover until after 1500
 - population decrease impacted economy
 - cities recovered faster
 - the people from the countryside moved to the cities
 - the countryside for a long period afterwards was far less populated
 - means fewer workers
 - results in less food production
 - less goods and services available
 - Lords making less revenue

- peasants start to notice that the landlords are desperate for workers on their estate
- peasants are beginning to understand that they can take advantage of the situation for their own benefits
- Landlords have political power which they can use against the peasants
 - not long before the kings and the nobility get together and pass laws to restrict the peasants, to tell them they can't move and that all wages have to remain at pre-Black Death rates
 - peasants revolt
 - in 1351 in England, there is a law passed by the English nobility called The Statute of Labourers
 - peasants can't move without permission and all wages and rents remain the same as they were before the black death
 - the nobility and landlords didn't present a unifying front, and actually undermined the Statute of Labourers
 - some ignored the provisions of the statute
 - enough of the law was still being enforced to upset the peasants
 - in 1361 there is a massive Peasants Revolt
 - serious challenge to the elites
 - England wasn't the only place where this occurred
 - Political Unrest
- Cities and peasants rebounded faster
 - peasants migrated in
 - population recovered quicker, but there was still tension
 - immigrants were looking to get work
 - need to be a guild member to get work
 - guilds were not happy to see big influx of people
 - not keen to open up guilds, and they're worried that if they flood their guilds with too many members, there would be too much production of their product
 - we see frustration and tension, and it boils over into violent revolts
 - huge workers rebellion in Florence in 1378
- Europe is going into a period of tension, uncertainty, and economic fallout
 - it recovers into a whole new era of European history
 - around the same time of the Black Death, we see the beginnings on a very small scale, that would begin the end of the medieval age
- The Renaissance
 - means re-birth
 - coined the term of Middle Age, not a term of endearment
 - looked on the Medieval age as a bad period in European history
 - often called it the dark ages
 - people in the Renaissance believed that the best European society was that which preceded the Middle Ages, the Classical Age (Ancient Greece and Rome)
 - believed they achieved great things in terms of the intellectual world, literature, science (natural philosophy)

- also believed that the Ancient Greece and Rome had achieved great political success
- Rome had been conquered by Germanic barbarian tribes
 - had no literature (didn't value the written word) whereas Ancient Rome and Greece did
 - most literature was destroyed, some of it was saved
 - some migrated east to what was left of the Roman empire (Constantinople)
 - some were saved and preserved by the Christian church
 - the church preserved literature and literacy
 - in the Medieval world, very few people outside the church valued the ancient literature
 - it largely just sat in libraries of monasteries
 - sometimes monks read and copied books
 - throughout the Medieval world, we see the loss of the knowledge contained in those books
 - it isn't until the end of the Middle Ages that it begins to be rediscovered
 - the new universities that were looking for texts to teach their students, in the 13th century we see the introduction of a very interesting route by Aristotle
- Aristotle's works survived by the Arabics
 - Arabic philosophers liked his work, and translated and studied them in their schools
 - through the Arabic copies of Aristotle that the western universities got a hold of Aristotle's work for the first time
- We see some of the works to become known in universities
 - most of the ancient writers we know today were not known during the Medieval Age
 - in the 14th century, in what is now known as Italy (northern states more specifically), there emerged a new interest in the ancient world
- One of the reasons the northern Italian states gained this interest was that the distinctive features of the high middle ages were not particularly strong in northern Italy
- Northern Italy also had a high degree of urban culture
 - prior to the black death, northern Italy had 3 premier cities with populations of over 100,000, only two other cities could match – Paris and London
 - municipal governments were also a lot stronger
 - developed city states, began to take over and control all the areas around the cities (unique to Italy)
 - not really a Medieval model eventually changes Europe
 - Government and education in these city states were more likely to be dominated by secular institutions rather than the church
 - somewhat more secular than other European states
 - they were also more civilian than military
 - a key feature of medieval Europe was feudalism
 - feudalism was not in operation in these states
 - elites in these cities were not warriors, they were merchants

- they still needed protection, hired mercenaries which they could afford
- were not military states, only hired forces for protection
- unusual urban, secular and lack of feudalism gave them a certain connection to the Ancient civilizations
- more of an interest amongst the educated to find out about Ancient Rome, not to mention they were very close in proximity to the ruins of the empire
- by the early 14th century, some of the educated began to ask questions about the Roman culture
 - a group of lawyers who became fascinated with the literature in ancient Rome found that ancient Roman literature was far more useful than Medieval literature
 - beginning to feel an affinity with the Ancient Roman world, and began to search out Ancient literature from Ancient Rome
 - one of these lawyers was Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374)
 - most recognized of these Italians who became fascinated with Ancient Rome
 - he was passionate about the ancient world, personal hero was Cicero
 - he owned some actual manuscripts of Cicero and a few letters
 - he began to collect manuscripts of ancient writers
 - when he got a hold of manuscripts, he would copy them and was also captivated by the ruins of Ancient Rome all around him
 - collected ancient coins
 - was so fascinated by the ancient world that he decided he was going to write letters the same
 - begins to copy the style of the ancient writers
 - changed his handwriting
 - believed the ancient world was superior to the current age
 - believed that the ancient world was the model to which society should be structured
 - wrote biographies of some ancient figures for personal interest and as examples to follow
 - coined the phrase dark ages
 - said the Medieval Age had been a bad period in European history because it separated the good period from the current world
 - represents a real change, what made him so influential was his gift inspiring others to follow his leads
- Petrarch inspired a whole new educational program of study relating to the ancient world called Humanism
 - Humanism can be traced back to the Renaissance
 - humanism came to be a defined set of subjects (5 subjects in curriculum)
 - 1) Ethics – key subject
 - 2) Poetry – (read Homer)
 - 3) History – (read Livy or Herodotus)
 - 4) Rhetoric – (read Cicero)
 - 5) Grammar
 - ethics was key to humanity because it was what distinguished humans from the animal kingdom

- ethics formed the basis of the humanist education because it is uniquely human
- poetry and history were considered to be practical ethics or applied ethics
- rhetoric and grammar were language studies
 - rhetoric was the style
 - grammar was the structure
- language to be mastered was Latin
- textbooks to be used for Humanist education were the manuscripts of the ancient world
- one of the most important tasks of the Humanists was to get more of the texts
 - scour through monasteries and libraries to find and copy texts
 - in doing so they discovered some important ancient works that had been unknown in the Medieval period
 - Humanists also uncovered older and better manuscripts from known authors from incomplete versions of works
 - later on, by the 15th century, there is a very important innovation – the printing press (1450s in Germany where it is invented and makes its way to other countries)
 - Humanists now have machines to develop many copies of manuscripts and books
- Another important development in the Renaissance is the translation of the text into vernacular languages
 - humanists decided amongst themselves to choose a dialect as a standard Italian language to translate the text into (northern dialects)
 - in doing so, they essentially standardized the Italian language and made it a written language