

## PART VI

## RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION: FUSION OF THE ROOTS

### Chapter 18

#### The End of the Florentine Renaissance: Machiavelli, Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael

1. Shortly after the death of Lorenzo (Medici) the Magnificent, the French invaded Italy in 1494, the first in a series of foreign invasions over the next 50 years.
2. The French toppled the Medici in Florence, but their power on the Italian peninsula waned in just a decade, and the Medici returned to power.
3. By the end of the fifteenth century, Florence was sharing its position of cultural dominance with Rome.
4. The confidence of the fourteenth century was transformed into the doubt of the fifteenth century.
5. Four individuals represent aspects of this transformation. They are Niccolò Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti, and Raffaello Sanzio.

#### I. Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527)

1. The ease with which the Italians succumbed to the Spanish and French invasions shocked Italian thinkers.
2. The chaotic political structure of the peninsula was seen as a major factor.
3. From this age of questioning and uncertainty came one of the greatest political theorists of all time, Machiavelli.
4. At heart a republican, Machiavelli took on the problem that faces any political thinker, the conflict between liberty and order.
5. Machiavelli concluded that on a peninsula divided into fifty to a hundred power centers, strong authority had to take precedence.
6. Machiavelli's most famous work, *The Prince*, was written in 1513.
7. *The Prince* provided lessons in statecraft to a prince for achieving the objective of driving out the invaders and bringing peace.
8. One of the most important premises in *The Prince* is that the conduct required of a prince would frequently be morally reprehensible in a private individual.

#### II. The Renaissance Artist

1. The Renaissance helped define the status of the artist within Western culture.
2. The West's concept of the artist and architect and the inclusion of these arts in the "fine" or "liberal" category rather than the "mechanical" one is a concept that originated with the Renaissance.

#### A. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519)

1. Da Vinci was an architect, engineer, musician, and scientist, as well as an artist.
2. Above all he was an observer of nature through investigation and practice.
3. He did not look to either antiquity or the church for guidance but relied on his own powers of reason and observation.
4. Leonardo completed few paintings; the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper are perhaps his best known.

5. The Madonna of the Rocks is one of his most significant masterpieces.

B. Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564)

1. The sculptor Michelangelo populated Florence and Rome with giants like his *David*.
2. Michelangelo was antisocial and difficult.
3. The 13-foot marble nude figure of David is beautiful without being idealized.
4. Much of *David's* power and charm are derived from its ambiguity.
5. Michelangelo's greatest vehicle of expression was the human body, a fact that conflicted with his personal religious values.
6. Michelangelo's works over a sixty-year career reflect not only changes in his art but also in his worldview.

C. Raphael (1483–1520)

1. Raphael's works seem to seek out an ideal and harmonious moment in which time and change are suspended.
2. In *The School of Athens*, Raphael painted the great philosophers of antiquity, an idealization of subject as well as presentation.
3. Where Raphael was interested in a harmonious scene, Michelangelo was interested in human drama.
4. Despite his reputation for idealizations, Raphael's portrait of Pope Leo X captures the reality of earthly power.