Northern Renaissance Humanism

The ideas of the Italian Renaissance gradually moved north to the rest of Europe. The penetration of Renaissance ideas to the rest of Europe came to be called the Northern European Renaissance. The Northern Renaissance's high point took place between 1490 and 1520. After 1520, there was a rapid decline in the Northern Renaissance due to the events of the Reformation.

When the ideas of the Italian Renaissance were carried into Northern Europe, they were being brought into a world that was very different from the one that had produced them. There was very little urban development in Northern Europe and its political structure was different from that of Italy. The dominant Italian political unit was the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The dominant Northern European political institution was the nation state. The nation state was larger than the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, had different problems, and was based on different theories of government. These differences affected how Renaissance ideas were received and what was done with the ideas afterwards. They also help to explain why we distinguish between the Renaissance experiences of Italy and Northern Europe. Another factor that makes the distinction even more clear was religion.

How did the ideas of the Italian Renaissance move northward? The most obvious explanation for cultural spread is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. You have read references to the extensive \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ conducted by the Italian city-states, especially that of Florence and Venice. Ideas follow \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and Renaissance ideas were no exception. Italian \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, such as the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Bologna, also served as intellectual conduits. Students from all over Europe attended universities in Italy and were exposed to Renaissance ideas. When they completed their studies and returned home, they took the ideas with them.

Even war had an effect on the transfer of ideas. Italy became a battlefield for some of the major European powers after 1494. At least some of the men of foreign armies took ideas home with them, as well. New technology also spread Renaissance ideas. The development of movable type and a printing press (whether by the German, Johann Gutenberg, or other printers in Holland or Italy) had a major impact on the spread of ideas. Finally, the Italian aristocracy interacted with other European aristocrats, for the bonds of aristocracy transcended national boundaries. (A point to remember is that the aristocracy was the last group in Europe to surrender class loyalty for national loyalty.)

The Northern Renaissance is also referred to as the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Renaissance. It is safe to assume from this title alone that religion played a more significant and overt role in the Northern Renaissance than it did in the Italian Renaissance. The Christianity of Northern Europe was affected by an upsurge in the popularity of mysticism during this period. Mysticism emphasizes personal communication with God through contemplation. Not all mystics achieved the supreme happiness that resulted from this personal communication, but that achievement was their goal.