



Speaker: The Renaissance was characterized by an interest in the individual. There was a philosophical trend which developed during the Renaissance called Humanism which believed in the worth and dignity of the individual. It came out of Florence and eventually spread throughout Europe. An intense interest in Ancient Greek and Roman civilizations had a profound effect on creating the rebirth of scholarly pursuit, as well as the arts and letters. This was to impart to the preservation of Greek scholarship by Arab scholars that were encountered during the crusades of the middle ages. This created increased opportunities for trade.

The discovery of the Bahamas by Christopher Columbus and the subsequent discoveries in the west made by Columbus and other explorers expanded the opportunity for trade. The improvement of roads connecting Italy to the north also strengthened trade and lead to the development of credit banking. The growing power of the merchant middle classes cannot be underestimated. With the expansion of commerce, there were more opportunities for jobs. At the dawn of the Renaissance, the city of Florence was ruled by seven major guilds which include bankers, lawyers, and exporters.

There was a growing interest in the arts and philosophy. Again, with the renewed interest in the Greek and Italian past, came a renewed interest in the architectural ruins as well as the remaining statues and artworks and writing that came from the Italian past. One family in particular, the Medicis of Florence supported some of the best artists, architects, and philosophers of the day which lead Florence to its enviable position as the cultural center of Renaissance in Europe.

[00:02:08] [END OF AUDIO]