

TIMELINE

New Monarchies, Renaissance, and the Age of Exploration

Year(s)	Event	Significance
1308–1377	French kings keep several popes in the so-called Babylonian Captivity in Avignon.	The residence of several popes in Avignon undermines the authority of the papacy and helps national monarchs to grab more power over the church in their lands.
1340	Italy revives the honor of poet laureate.	Francesco Petrarch is crowned poet laureate in Rome, a symbolic milestone in Italian Renaissance as it marks the revival of an ancient Roman custom.
1347–1350	The Black Death decimates the population of Europe.	Europe loses roughly 40 percent of its population over three decades. Workers and peasants press for more freedom and higher wages, which leads to urban and rural riots (1378–1382) all over Europe.
1434	The Medici come to power in Florence.	Though Florence is a republic, the Medici family of bankers and wool merchants come to dominate politics in the fifteenth century. They are great art patrons.
1453	The sack of Constantinople occurs; the Hundred Years' War ends.	The loss of the capital of the Byzantine Empire makes the Turks the prime menace to Christian Europe. France's victory over England in the Hundred Years' War releases both countries to develop strong monarchies.
1450s	Johann Gutenberg and Johann Fust develop movable-type printing in Mainz, Germany (Holy Roman Empire).	The perfection of movable-type printing allows the printing and dissemination of cheaper books throughout Europe.
1454–1494	Milan and Venice sign Peace Treaty of Lodi; peace ends when French invade Italy in 1494.	The five powers of Italy enjoy forty years of peace, which according to some historians, makes the High Renaissance in the arts possible.
1480	Muscovy throws off the Tatar yoke.	Grand Duke of Muscovy stops paying tribute to the Mongol Tatars—a symbolic declaration of independence of the Russian states.
1494	Portugal and Spain sign the Treaty of Tordesillas.	Pope Alexander VI “divides the world” between Spain and Portugal with respect to further exploration (the line in the Atlantic is moved at one point to give Portugal Brazil).

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1487/ 1499	Bartolomeu Dias reaches the Cape of Good Hope; Vasco da Gama comes back from India with precious cargo.	Dias, a Portuguese explorer, is first to reach, then round the Cape of Good Hope on the way to India. Da Gama's load of spices nets investors 600 percent profit, thus spurring on further voyages.
1519/ 1533	Hernan Cortes conquers the Aztec empire in Mexico; Francisco Pizarro conquers the Inca empire in and near Peru.	Spanish exploitation of New World silver and gold begins.
1527	The Sack of Rome occurs.	The imperial troops of Charles V sack Rome, marking the symbolic end to the artistic Renaissance—and of Italy's independence in European affairs.