WORDS, IMAGES, AND SOUNDS

"Every thing that exists in the present has come out of the past, and no matter how new and unique it seems to be, it carries some of the past with it."

Jules Benjamin

Introduction

In our previous meeting we discussed how historical knowledge is constructed. We established that historians reconstruct the past through evidence that has survived to the present. This evidence is referred to as primary sources and comes in many forms. Today we will practice reconstructing the past using a variety of primary sources. After completing this section you should be able to do the following:

- Define the term analyze and explain its relation to the study of history.
- Identify some of the sources used by historians to reconstruct the past.
- Explain what historians can learn about the past by analyzing written text, images, and music.

I. Analyze? What does it have to do with the study of History?

A. According to Webster' New World Dictionary, the term analyze has the following definition: "To separate a thing/idea into its parts so as to find out their nature, proportion, function, interrelationship, etc . . . ."

B. Throughout this semester students will be reconstructing the past by analyzing primary sources and artifacts. In analyzing primary sources, students should strive to answer the following questions:

1. Who wrote/produced the primary source?
2. When and where was the primary source written/produced?
3. For whom was the primary source written/produced?
4. Why was the primary source written/produced?

C. By answering these questions, students can gain a better understanding of the source’s perspective. This in turn, facilitates the process of interpreting primary sources and understanding their historical meaning. Let us test some of these observations by examining a written source, images, and music.

II. What does plowing have to do with an economic revival?

A. Not a bad question! Before Europe could experience an economic revival it needed to go through an agricultural revolution.

1. Innovations in agricultural techniques and technology stimulated an increase in food production.
2. The availability of surplus stimulated population growth and gave rise to urban centers.

B. The move from a light plow to a heavy plow was one of the technological innovations that facilitated food production and increased surplus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparing Medieval Plows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image 313i01:</strong> Light Plow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image 312i02:</strong> Heavy Plow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questions for analysis:** What are some of the differences between the light plow and the heavy plow? How did the innovations introduced in the heavy plow help agriculturists produce more food? How might these innovations contribute to Europe’s economic revival?

### III. What kind of relative is a Florin?

A. By the 13th century, Europe’s economic revival was in full swing and had been facilitated by innovations in agriculture, the political stability brought to Europe by the Church and secular rulers, and Europe's re-establishment of international trade.

1. As a merchant estate grew in Europe’s urban centers, so too grew a "revolution in attitudes toward money."

B. *Florins the Best of Kin*, a poem written by Cecco Angiolieri Siena (c. 1260-1312), provides historians with insights on the impact of this new attitude toward money had on society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cecco Angiolieri (1260-1312), <em>Florins the Best of Kin</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preach what you will, Florins are the best of kin: Blood brothers and cousins true, Father, mother, sons, and daughters too; Kinfolk of the sort no one regrets, Also horses, mules and beautiful dress. The French and the Italians bow to them, So do noblemen, knights, and learned men. Florins clear your eyes and give you fires, Turn to facts all your desires, And into all the world's vast possibilities. So no man say, I'm nobly born, if He have not money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questions for analysis:** What is a Florin? What can Florins do for those who possess them? Based on this poem, what impact did Europe's economic revival have on social values?

### IV. What kind of rap is this?

A. In Medieval Europe, the Church regulated all facets of life. This even included music.

1. Gregorian Chants, performed by monks, dominated the "Top Ten" hit list in Europe.

2. In contrast, by the 18th century music had gone through some major changes. Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750) *Brandenburg Concertos* exemplifies some of these changes.
B. Take a moment to compare and contrast these two pieces of music.

Music 313s01: Gregorian chant *Magnificat*; Bach’s Allegro, *Concerto No.1 in F*

**Questions for analysis:** What images and feelings did the Gregorian chant instill in you? What images and feelings did Bach's musical piece instill in you? From listening to these two pieces of music, what can we learn about the worlds that produced them?