Johnson, P. The Renaissance. 2000.

Printing and gunpowder did the work, in all probability, more effectively than anything else. We have already noted the extraordinarily rapid spread of printing in Europe. And printing brought with it comparatively cheap engravings, which disseminated Italian notions of the human form and perspective, and the delights of classical mythology, throughout European society, and especially to the workshops of craftsmen and artists. From the early years of the sixteenth century, Renaissance visual techniques and patterns are to be found in pottery and silverware, in elaborate goldsmiths' work, in tapestry, silks, rich cloths, even in furniture, all over Europe.

Gunpowder encouraged campaigning over long distances, and in the wake of armies came curious princes eager to collect. The French were in Italy from the mid-1490s, ravaging and looting, but also learning and acquiring. They were followed by the imperial Germans, who marched up and down the peninsula, knocking over duchies and principalities, but also keeping their eyes open for the new. States were growing more powerful, with access to more money to spend on self-glorification, so architecture, as the most visible of the arts to all, led the way in using Italian Renaissance forms and decorative features to enhance the splendor of foreign princes. Between the 1490s and the 1550s, the French crown grew rapidly in strength and flexed its muscles not only in war but in building. François I was one of the most extravagant builders of all time, and along the banks of the Loire he imported Renaissance ideas in profusion and transformed them into French castle-palaces of great size and elaboration. Chambord in particular became one of the most remarkable buildings in Europe. These palaces had to be adorned and filled with beauty. So in the wake of the builders came the decorators and painters, the furniture makers and *tapissiers*.

The rise of the Habsburgs was also a prime factor in the spread of the Renaissance. Charles V, ruler of Austria and the Netherlands, emperor of Germany and king of Spain and its dependencies, was something approaching a world ruler and an art patron on a magnificent scale. To him, art had no frontiers, Europe was a cultural unity, and artists of all kinds were recruited wherever they lived, and sped at his bidding. In the heart of the old Moorish palace of Granada, acquired by Spain in 1492 when the Moors were expelled, he set the stamp of the Italian Renaissance by erecting an incongruous classical building, a columned circle within a square, to show he was master. And, later, in the Palace of the Escorial outside Madrid, he created an enormous complex in which ideas imported from Renaissance Italy were transmuted into dramatic Spanish forms.

Italian ideas penetrated central and eastern Europe, in some cases well before the sixteenth century. It was in Hungary, for instance, that buildings in the style of the Renaissance made their first appearance outside Italy. King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary (reigned 1458–90) was a warrior and conqueror and an enthusiast for the antique. He looked back to the Roman Empire for inspiration and to Italians to serve him in re-creating some of its aspects. In 1467 he imported Rodolfo Fioravanti, known as "Aristotle," who had worked on the Vatican obelisk with Alberti and was "skilled in moving heavy objects." He was an engineer and military architect, and he built a bridge in Buda, the Hungarian capital. Corvinus got Pollaiuolo to design the drapes for his throne room, Caradosso to produce gold altarpieces for the cathedral at Esztergom, and Filippo Lippi to supply two beautiful panels, according to Vasari. Many Italian artist-craftsmen were active in Hungary in the years after Corvinus's death. Thus the Bakócz Chapel at Esztergom Cathedral (built from 1506) is

one of the most dazzling examples of High Renaissance architecture outside Italy.

The expatriate Italian artists, who were immensely adaptable, proved able to work successfully in alien vernaculars, adapting them to Renaissance models. Thus Fioravanti went on from Buda to Russia in 1474, and began work on the Dormition Cathedral inside the Kremlin. Earlier efforts by local craftsmen to erect this building had failed. Fioravanti produced a mason's level, a compass and drawing tools, and by superior science, as well as art—he used brick and cement instead of sand and gravel for wall filling, as well as modern stonecutting techniques and hoisting machines—he had completed the building by 1479. A generation later, another Italian, Alessio Novi, built the church of St. Michael the Archangel, also within the Kremlin walls (1505–9). The Jagiellonian dynasty of Poland likewise imported Italians, and had local artists trained in the Renaissance manner. Thus in the cathedral of Wawel Castle in Kraków, the splendid Renaissance tomb of Jan Olbracht (1502–5) is the joint work of Francesco Fiorentino and Stanislas Stoss, and the grand courtyard of the castle, built a little later, is also by Francesco working with a local "Master Benedikt." These are only some of many examples of the early penetration by the Renaissance of eastern central Europe collected in a recent study.*

By the end of the 1520s, of course, Renaissance ideas and forms of art were being re-created or adapted in most parts of Europe and even in the New World. Titian, coming to the height of his powers, was not just an Italian but a European artist. As we have seen, by 1500 literary humanism was a pan-European movement, and where humanist books penetrated, Renaissance art was sure to follow soon. However, by this date

*Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister and City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe, 1450–1800* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), chapter 1.

in history, the Renaissance was being affected not only by its own internal modulations but by external events. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Italy had not exactly been tranquil—on the contrary, there had been periodic and often highly destructive fighting between the leading cities for local and regional hegemony—but there had been comparatively little interference from abroad. It was during this period of Italian independence that urban life flourished and prospered and the Renaissance took hold. However, in September 1494, Charles VIII of France, at the invitation of the duke of Milan, entered Italy with an army to conquer the Kingdom of Naples, and brought Italy's political isolation to an end. Thereafter, Italy was rent by two ravenous foreign dogs, Valois France and Habsburg Germany, until the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis of 1559. The fighting was periodic rather than continuous and it did not affect the whole of Italy. But it was on a scale the country had never known before, involving massive use of cannon and the consequent need to build expensive walls and forts round the towns.

Charles VIII's expedition had an immediate effect on Florence, for it led to the flight of the Medici, the "liberation" of Pisa from Florence by Charles and his triumphant entry into Florence itself. He did not stay long, hurrying on to Naples and failure, but his inruption introduced a period of turmoil that produced the iconoclastic mission of Savonarola and his unseemly trial and incineration. Florence continued to produce great art and artists, but it was "never glad confident morning again." From the perspective of history, we can now see that the Florentine Renaissance came to a climax in the quarter century before the French invasion, when it truly was a city made for artists.*

*Patricia Lee Rubin and Alison Wright, *Renaissance Florence: The Art of the 1470s* (London: National Gallery Co., 1999).