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Olga Savytska ¹, Olga Gnyp ², Anastasiia Iniakina ³, Nataliia Savchenko ⁴

¹ *Ph.D in Architecture, Profess*
olgavgrad@gmail.com,
orcid.org/0000-0003-0362-2502

² *Candidate of Technical Sciences, Profess,*
asp@odaba.edu.ua,
orcid.org/0009-0008-3779-4197

³ *senior lecturer*
anastasia_inyakina@odaba.edu.ua,
orcid.org/0000-0002-5200-9395

⁴ *Master of Architecture*
polarisn9@gmail.com,
orcid.org/0009-0008-6730-3272

*Odesa State Academy of Civil Engineering and Architecture
Didrikhson St., 4, Odesa, 65029, Ukraine*

HISTORY OF THE FORMATION OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CITIES

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This article analyzes the period of Italian city formation during the Renaissance, which became a crucial stage in the development of urban planning and architecture. It examines the social, economic, and political factors that contributed to the transformation of urban space in the 15th–16th centuries. Special attention is given to the influence of humanist ideas, which led to a rethinking of the city's role as a center of culture, science, and art. The study focuses on key cities such as Florence and Venice, demonstrating how their unique architecture and urban planning solutions reflected the spirit of the time. Changes in the social structure of cities are also considered, including the growing influence of the bourgeoisie and the shifting status of the patriciate, which, in turn, influenced urban practices. Italian cities of the Renaissance became not only centers of trade and craftsmanship but also hubs for cultural exchange, fostering the development of new artistic styles and architectural forms. The legacy of this period had a profound impact on the subsequent evolution of European urbanism. Thus, the article presents a comprehensive analysis of the formation of Italian cities, their cultural significance, and their role in the historical development of Europe.

Keywords: *Italian cities; Renaissance; urban planning; architecture; humanist ideas; Florence; Venice; artistic styles; European urbanism; historical development of Europe.*

Problem Statement. The process of the formation of Italian cities during the Renaissance is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon that requires thorough analysis to understand its impact on urban planning and architecture. The key question is how the social, economic, and political factors characteristic of the 15th–17th centuries contributed to the transformation of urban space and the change in its functional purpose. It is also important to examine how humanist ideas reshaped the perception of the city as a center of culture, science, and art, and how this influenced architectural and urban planning decisions in significant cities such as Florence and Venice.

Analyzing changes in the social structure of these cities, including the growing influence of the bourgeoisie and the shifting status of the patriciate, represents a crucial aspect, as such transformations had a significant impact on urban practices and the development of new artistic styles. Thus, the primary issue lies in the need for a comprehensive study of the formation of Italian cities, their architectural solutions, and their cultural significance in the context of Europe's historical development, as well as an assessment of the legacy left by this era and its influence on the further evolution of European urbanism.

A pressing issue is the rethinking of the Renaissance legacy in modern conditions. How can the principles embedded in the urban planning and architecture of that time be adapted to contemporary challenges such as globalization, environmental sustainability, and social justice?

Relevance of the Topic. The relevance of studying the history of the formation of Italian Renaissance cities in the modern context is multifaceted and significant. This period was foundational for the development of urbanism, architecture, and culture in Europe, making it an important subject of research for historians, architects, and sociologists. Italian Renaissance cities serve as a unique example of the harmonious coexistence of art and urban life. Their architectural achievements, such as the works of Brunelleschi, Michelangelo, and other masters, continue to inspire contemporary architects and designers.

The analysis of the socio-cultural changes that occurred during this period helps to understand the mechanisms of urban identity formation and social interaction, which is particularly relevant for modern megacities facing the challenges of globalization and urbanization. The study of Italian Renaissance cities contributes to the understanding of sustainable urban development today. The urban planning and governance models that emerged during this period can serve as a foundation for creating more adaptive and resilient urban spaces in response to contemporary challenges such as climate change and social inequalities.

Thus, the study of the history of Italian Renaissance cities not only enriches our understanding of the past but also provides valuable lessons for the future. [3]

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The study of Renaissance culture has attracted numerous art historians and scholars, both in the past and in modern times. Some of the most notable figures include:

- Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) – an Italian painter and art historian, author of the famous work *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, which is considered one of the first comprehensive art history texts and a foundational work for modern art history.
- Ernst Gombrich (1909–2001) – an Austrian art historian, author of *The Story of Art*, in which he examines Renaissance art as a crucial stage in the development of European artistic traditions.
- Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378–1455) – an Italian sculptor and artist, whose *Commentaries* describe the art of his time, including the Renaissance.
- Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) – an architect whose influence on Renaissance architecture was profound. His works, such as *The Four Books of Architecture*, became the foundation for further studies of architecture from this period.
- Kenneth Clark (1903–1983) – a British art historian, author of *Art and Society*, in which he analyzes the impact of the Renaissance on European culture.
- Lilian Zurlme – a contemporary art historian studying the influence of the Renaissance on modern art and architecture.
- Vincenzo Scamozzi (1552–1616) – an architect and theorist who analyzed urban planning and architectural practices of the Renaissance in his works.

One of the most significant and extensive studies of Venetian architecture, *The Stones of Venice*, was published between 1851 and 1853 by the renowned English art historian, theorist, writer, poet, painter, literary and art critic John Ruskin. The book explores the centuries-long architectural development of Venice, from the early Middle Ages to the late Renaissance, providing a brilliant analysis of its major architectural styles.

These and many other scholars have made significant contributions to the study of Renaissance culture and its impact on art and architecture.

Objective of the Study. The primary goal of this article is to conduct a detailed examination of the formation of Italian cities during the Renaissance, focusing on how social, economic, and political factors

influenced urban transformations in the 15th–16th centuries. This study explores how humanist ideas reshaped the perception of cities as centers of culture, science, and the arts and how these ideas influenced architectural and urban planning decisions, particularly in key cities such as Florence and Venice.

The research aims to analyze changes in the social structure of cities, including the growing influence of the bourgeoisie and shifts in the status of the patriciate, as well as how these changes affected urban practices and the development of new artistic movements. Ultimately, this study seeks to assess the cultural significance of Italian Renaissance cities in the context of European historical development and to explore the legacy of this period and its influence on the further evolution of European urbanism.

A relevant contemporary issue is the reinterpretation of the Renaissance legacy in today's world. How can the principles established in urban planning and architecture during that era be adapted to contemporary challenges such as globalization, environmental sustainability, and social justice?

Research Methods. To conduct this study on the historical and architectural-urbanistic formation of Renaissance cities, the following research methods are proposed:

- Historical-Descriptive Method – This method will allow for a thorough description of the formation of Italian Renaissance cities based on primary and secondary sources, including key architectural and urban planning solutions.
- Comparative Analysis – A comparison of different Italian cities, such as Florence and Venice, to identify both unique and common features in their urban planning and architectural styles.
- Contextual Analysis – An examination of the socio-economic and cultural conditions that contributed to the development of Renaissance cities, as well as the influence of humanist ideas on urban planning and architecture.
- Archival Research – The analysis of historical documents, drawings, maps, and other archival materials to gain insights into the urban planning practices and architectural decisions of the time.
- Geographic Information System (GIS) Analysis – The use of GIS technologies for the visualization and analysis of spatial data on Renaissance cities, helping to identify patterns in their layout and architectural structures.
- Case Studies – A detailed examination of specific cities or architectural objects to gain deeper insights into their formation and historical context.
- Expert Interviews – Conducting interviews with architectural historians and art scholars to gather additional knowledge and perspectives on urban development during the Renaissance.
- Aesthetic Analysis – An evaluation of the artistic and aesthetic aspects of architecture and urban planning, including the use of forms, proportions, and materials characteristic of the Renaissance.
- Sociological Approach – The study of changes in the social structure of cities, including the rise of the bourgeoisie and the shifting status of the patriciate, and their impact on urban practices.

Collectively, these methods will allow for a comprehensive analysis of the formation of Italian Renaissance cities, their architectural heritage, and their cultural significance.

Presentation of the Main Material. A special place in the development of culture and art on the European continent, starting from the 13th century and particularly in the 14th–17th centuries, belongs to the cities located in what is now modern Italy. In the 15th century, these cities became the birthplace and dissemination centers of the first artistic style of the Modern Age—the Renaissance.

During the 13th and 14th centuries, as a result of intermediary trade between the East and Central Europe, the largest cities of Northern and Central Italy—led by Venice, Florence, Genoa, and Milan—experienced rapid development. The culture that emerged in the 15th century became known as Renaissance culture. The accumulated capital was concentrated in the hands of the wealthiest merchants and the upper echelon of craftsmen, forming a new class—the so-called bourgeoisie.

Italy preserved the ruins of magnificent ancient monuments, which became a source of creative inspiration for Renaissance artists. The great architects of the era studied these ancient monuments, excavating them and taking detailed measurements. However, this research did not lead to the restoration of ancient Roman architecture. Instead, Renaissance masters creatively assimilated antiquity, producing art that

continued and developed classical principles based on new construction techniques and evolving socio-economic conditions.

Leon Battista Alberti – an Italian scholar, humanist, writer, and one of the founders of new European architecture, was a leading theorist of Renaissance art. Alberti was the first to systematically outline the mathematical foundations of perspective theory.

Giorgio Vasari – an Italian painter, architect, and writer, was the author of the famous *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* and is considered the founder of modern art history. He introduced the term "Renaissance."

Vincenzo Scamozzi (1552–1616) – the chief architect of Venice at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, was a student and successor of Sansovino. He authored the treatise *Idea of a Universal Architecture* and was responsible for constructing the fortress of Palma Nova, working in Rome, Bologna, Padua, Prague, and other cities. In Venice, he completed the reconstruction of St. Mark's Square by constructing the new Procuratie building.

Without exception, Renaissance theorists viewed the city as a socio-economic and architectural entity. Each of them began their treatises by discussing the selection of a suitable location for a city, recommending that it be built in a climatically favorable area—near the sea, a lake, or a river with clean water. Architects paid particular attention to urban military defense, as the introduction of firearms posed highly complex challenges for city planning. To enhance defense capabilities, Alberti and Scamozzi suggested designing cities with circular or polygonal outer forms to achieve the most economical perimeter. The fortifications surrounding the city were to include forward-projecting bastions for flanking enemy fire. In the projects of Lorini, Scamozzi, and other masters, the outer ring of defensive walls and embankments became so powerful that it influenced the entire city layout.

All bastions were connected by streets, and if the city's outer shape was polygonal or circular, the urban plan often took on a radial structure. Scamozzi's ideal city was located on a river that divided its territory into two parts. Along the entire river ran the main (commercial) street, which also crossed the city and connected two major gates. At the very center of the city, in front of the prince's palace and the cathedral, was the main square, intended for public gatherings. On the primary city avenue, on either side of the central square, two square market squares were located. Behind the palace, there was an exchange square, as well as designated areas for selling firewood and forage.

The city's commercial character was particularly pronounced, as trade played a crucial role in the development of all Renaissance cities. Scamozzi's plan included residential quarters, parish churches, barracks, and public buildings of various functions, incorporating urban zoning principles that are still used today in city planning. His project is particularly notable for addressing the problem of architectural composition at the scale of an entire city. The city center was distinctly emphasized with the largest square and was reinforced by the most prominent buildings. The main street, serving as the compositional axis of the entire city, was also highlighted.

Had Scamozzi's city been fully realized, its skyline would have featured eight churches, uniquely shaping the urban silhouette. The city center in that era often represented a grand architectural ensemble, frequently consisting of multiple squares surrounded by churches, palaces, and loggias. When the center was located at the geographic midpoint of the city, it was perceived as a static core of urban life.

The Main Object of Urban Planning in the Renaissance: Public Squares. The primary focus of urban planning during the Renaissance was the public square. The significance of squares was primarily determined by the fact that the market was the heart of life in a commercial city. Wherever a market emerged, an exchange was established, and buildings for guilds, churches, and town halls were constructed.

In the 14th century, trade squares were predominant, serving as venues for large public gatherings, carnivals, and tournaments. In the 15th and 16th centuries, in addition to trade squares, multipurpose squares began to appear. These became the main public squares of the city, maintained in good condition, cleaned, adorned with fountains and sculptures, and used for announcing official decrees.

From the late 16th century, the public function of squares began to decline, leading to the emergence of a new type of urban square—the decorative square. However, decorative squares only flourished during the

Baroque period. Influenced by ancient models, Renaissance squares were characterized by regular layouts. A rectangular plan with proportions of 4:5, 2:3, or 1:2 became typical. Alongside rectangular squares, trapezoidal squares also appeared, such as Piazza San Marco and Piazzetta in Venice.

The orderly layout of squares was always accompanied by harmonious perimeter development. One façade was designated as the main one; however, the principal building, despite its ornate decorations, did not dominate the square to the same extent as a cathedral or town hall did in medieval squares. Since Renaissance squares served similar functions to ancient forums, their central space was left open. Up until the late 16th century, sculptures were placed outside the center of the square to avoid obstructing mass processions and performances.

Florence: The Center of Renaissance Art. Florence is considered the center of Renaissance art. Ancient Florence occupied the central area of the modern city, where a regular layout can still be observed, corresponding to the type of a Roman military camp. Florence's urban plan was primarily shaped during the Middle Ages, characterized by the emergence of narrow, winding alleys and cul-de-sacs. However, Florence's territorial expansion occurred concentrically around the old center.

As the city grew, streets adopted an irregular, fan-like pattern, and by the 13th and 14th centuries, new squares appeared. The late 13th century was a decisive period in shaping Florence's architectural identity, as rapid commercial development led to large-scale construction projects.

Between 1560 and 1574, the scholar Giorgio Vasari implemented Florence's only planned street—the Uffizi Street. This street is approximately 130 meters long and 18 meters wide, and including sidewalks, its total width reaches 31 meters—three to four times wider than the average Florentine street. The Uffizi Street runs between the river and the Palazzo Vecchio, which served as the venue for official receptions of the Florentine dukes.

Venice: A Unique Urban and Architectural Phenomenon. Venice is situated on the northwestern coast of the Adriatic Sea, within a lagoon, on low-lying sandy islands. The origins of Venice date back to the mid-5th century BCE, when the Veneti, fleeing conflicts with barbarians, settled on the islands of the Venetian Lagoon. Venice was founded in the 5th century CE and reached its peak economic power and prestige in the 14th–16th centuries.

Its strategic location along a major trade route between the East and Central Europe fostered its development. By 466 CE, the city was governed by elected tribunes, and by 697 CE, the doges had assumed leadership. Due to its insular nature, Venice's residents were compelled to construct numerous canals. The city's connection to the mainland and neighboring islands was possible only by boats—oared galleys, gondolas, and sailing vessels. Venice possessed a vast fleet, making it practical to use boats for urban transportation as well.

At the same time, construction in Venice required raising the ground level directly beneath buildings. This necessitated sourcing earth on-site. Under the influence of these two conditions—the reliance on waterways and the need for land reclamation—Venice's canal system was developed. With the exception of the Grand Canal, which was the city's main thoroughfare and the only natural waterway, all other Venetian canals were artificially created. A total of 395 bridges span the city's 134 canals, creating an unparalleled landscape of water and bridges that defines Venice's unique character.

Venetian Architecture and Urban Development in the Renaissance. The late 15th and entire 16th centuries marked an extraordinary architectural flourishing in Venice. During this period, the Venetian architectural school emerged, led by Pietro Lombardo and his followers, known as the "Great Venetians," including Palladio, Scamozzi, and the bridge builder Antonio da Ponte.

Venice is distinguished by its prominently defined architectural center, which has always been Piazza San Marco, forming a vast complex together with the Piazzetta. Initially, Piazza San Marco served as a marketplace. However, as Venice grew, the market was relocated to the Rialto district, and the square became a venue for public assemblies.

Mass theatrical performances, carnivals, and processions—celebrated in Venice with extraordinary splendor—were always held at Piazza San Marco, further reinforcing its role as the city's cultural and social heart.

Conclusions. The architecture and urban planning of the Italian Renaissance represent a unique synthesis of artistic innovation, scientific discoveries, and philosophical ideas that had a profound impact on the development of European architecture as a whole. This era, spanning the 14th–16th centuries, was a period of profound transformation when humanity rediscovered ancient traditions, seeking harmony and order in its creations.

Italian architects such as Filippo Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti, and Andrea Palladio not only created outstanding works of art but also developed theoretical foundations that became the basis of modern architectural thought. Their ideas on symmetry, proportion, and spatial organization continue to inspire architects and urban planners worldwide.

Urban planning during the Renaissance also underwent significant changes. The city was no longer merely a place of residence but became a space reflecting the social, cultural, and political trends of the time. Concepts such as the ideal city continued to evolve, contributing to the creation of more functional and aesthetically appealing urban environments.

The study of Italian Renaissance architecture and urban planning not only deepens our understanding of historical processes but also opens new directions for contemporary urban and architectural practice. The magnificent buildings created during the Renaissance, with their exquisite details and harmonious design, evoke a sense of timelessness and enduring grandeur.

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Савицька О.С.¹, Гнип О. П.², Інякіна А. А.³, Савченко Н. М.⁴

¹ к. арх., проф.

olgasavgrad@gmail.com, orcid.org/0000-0003-0362-2502

² к. т. н., проф.,

asp@odaba.edu.ua, orcid.org/0009-0008-3779-4197

³ ст. викл.

anastasia_inyakina@odaba.edu.ua, orcid.org/0000-0002-5200-9395

⁴ Магістр арх.

polarisn9@gmail.com, orcid.org/0009-0008-6730-3272

Одеська Державна Академія Будівництва та Архітектури

вул Дідріхсона 4, Одеса, 65029, Україна

ІСТОРІЯ ФОРМУВАННЯ ІТАЛІЙСЬКИХ МІСТ ЕПОХИ ВІДРОДЖЕННЯ

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У даній статті аналізується період формування італійських міст в епоху Відродження, який став важливим етапом у розвитку містобудування та архітектури. Розглядаються соціальні, економічні та політичні чинники, що сприяли трансформації міського простору в XV-XVI століттях.

Особлива увага приділяється впливу гуманістичних ідей, що сприяли переосмисленню ролі міста як центру культури, науки та мистецтва. Дослідження охоплює ключові міста, такі як Флоренція та Венеція, і демонструє, як їхня унікальна архітектура та містобудівні рішення відображали дух часу. Розглядаються зміни в соціальній структурі міст, включно зі зростанням впливу буржуазії та зміною статусу патриціїв, що, своєю чергою, позначилося на урбаністичних практиках. Італійські міста епохи Відродження стали не тільки центрами торгівлі та ремесел, а й майданчиками для культурного обміну, що сприяло розвитку нових художніх стилів та архітектурних форм. Спадщина, залишена цим періодом, справила значний вплив на подальший розвиток європейської урбаністики. Таким чином, представлено комплексний аналіз формування італійських міст, їхнього культурного значення та ролі в контексті історичного розвитку Європи.

Ключові слова: італійські міста; епоха Відродження; містобудування; архітектура; гуманістичні ідеї; Флоренція; Венеція; художні стилі; Європейська урбаністика; історичний розвиток Європи.