Introduction



Click each marker on the map to learn about important city-states in Northern Italy. Exit the interactivity when you are done exploring the content.



Genoa



After the events of the Fourth Crusade and the degradation of the relationship between Venice and the Byzantine Empire, Genoa became a Byzantine ally and prospered from trade. Trade, shipbuilding, and banking helped Genoa build one of the largest and most powerful navies in the Mediterranean. It was an independent city-state, initially ruled as a republic.



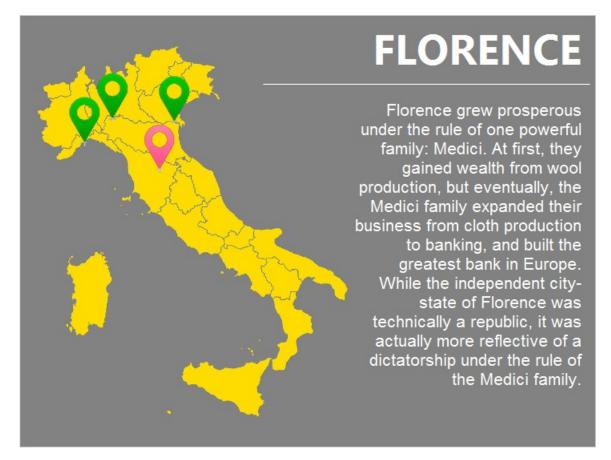
Milan



Milan was one of the wealthiest city-states in Italy. Its location placed it along trade routes from cities like Genoa and Venice. In addition, Milan was based near Alpine passes, which were used by traders. This city-state was briefly governed as a republic, but eventually was taken over by Francesco Sforza, who ruled like a king and employed paid soldiers for protection.



Florence



Florence grew prosperous under the rule of one powerful family: the Medici. At first, they gained wealth from wool production, but eventually, the Medici family expanded their business from cloth production to banking, and built the greatest bank in Europe. While the independent city-state of Florence was technically a republic, it was actually more reflective of a dictatorship under the rule of the Medici family.



Venice



Venice was located at a crossroads of trade between Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Eventually, Venice controlled the sale of spices and luxury goods coming from Asia and the Middle East, and entering into northern Europe. Venice was ruled by a group of wealthy merchants who passed power to their male descendants. These men served on a council to help make decisions for the city-state, and thus initially resembled a republic style of government.

