Why in Italy?

Why then?

The factors unique in their confluence on the Italian Peninsula that supported a re-birth of Classical civilization
Continuity Factors
Geographic, Socio-Economic, and Political Conditions
- Barbarian tribes’ choice to bypass the Italian peninsula following “the fall of Rome”
• Italian peninsula’s geographical position in middle of Mediterranean
• Growth in size and wealth of a merchant class

Above: Francesco Datini, merchant of Prato 1335-1410, developer of new partnership organizations
Left: a group of merchants in late 1400s
Silk merchant’s manual
• Feudalism and manorialism not the norm on the Italian peninsula except in parts of the south

• Rural aristocrats in the north and center disarmed by militias of nearby cities or towns, forced to take up residence in the urban centers, becoming “urbanized”
• Presence on the peninsula of a number of independent and highly competitive city-states
• Development of a variety of political organizations, including oligarchic republics and duchies (many of them despotisms)
Cultural and Religious Realities
Evidence of both classical Greek and Roman cultures still obviously physically present.
Laocoön, Agesander of Rhodes, Athenodoros of Rhodes and Polydorus of Rhodes, probably Pergamon, Hellenistic period (ca. 200)
• Religious connection with the Greek East (Byzantium) where scholars of Classical texts and many texts themselves were found

• Cultural connections with and remnants of Byzantium artistic culture in areas of the peninsula once a part of the Byzantine empire
Rome, as the lead city of the western Christian faith, a repository of much of Western learning and a center for scholars.
• Italian as a spoken language evolved directly from Latin.
Specific Conditions and Causal Events Occurring in the 1300s and 1400s
Conditions outside the Italian Peninsula
• Disunity, turmoil and weakness within and among the Western European states
- No “Spain” – The continuing Reconquista and multiple competitive kingdoms
• Holy Roman Empire
Hundred Years War
Ottoman Empire expansion and the fall of Constantinople under Mehmed II
Singular Events of the 1300s
The so-called (by Petrarch) “Babylonian Captivity” of the pope (1309-1376)
The “Great Schism” occurring between 1378 and 1415
• The Black Death—a pandemic of three forms of plague