

The West & The World

Intro: The Middle Ages to
Renaissance &
Reformation

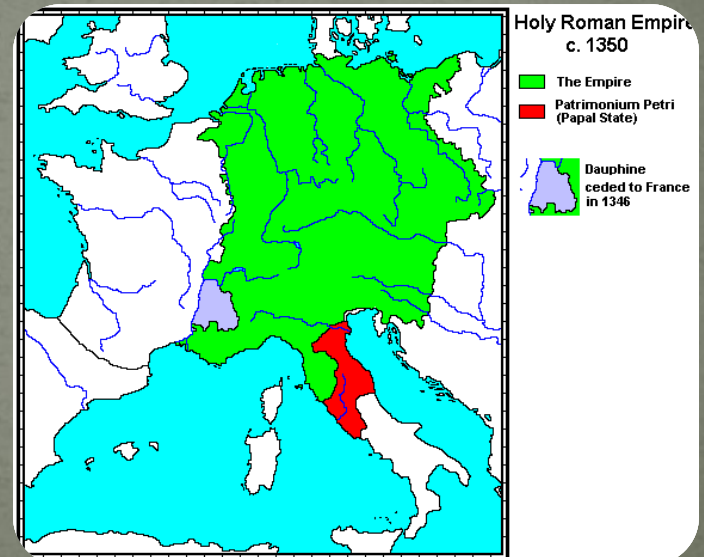
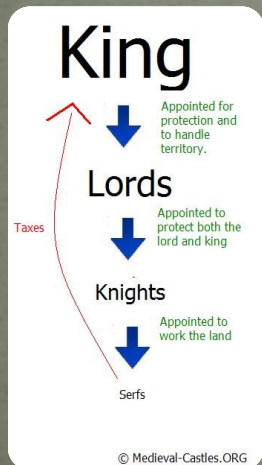
Place yourself in the Middle Ages

- A world without background noise: no factories, no engines, no traffic... nature in the countryside along with the church bells were the “noise makers”.



Christendom in Crisis

- C.1250–1493
The Holy Roman Empire could not control its own subjects, let alone exercise leadership over others.
- World was ruled by feudalism, superstition... and the plague.



The Course of the Black Death in Fourteenth-Century



The Black Death

- Began in Asia... spread with speed due to increasing trade and travel.
- Social impact in many cases was panic, to wild debauchery as the end neared.
- Church suffered from loss of their flock to death and disillusionment
- It is argued that 1 in 3 people died in Europe
- Blame ranged from God to Jews to lepers. Also cats.



Mortality

- Medieval interest in the human body was minimal. The internal organs were not differentiated.
- No time for scientific discovery, literature, art, poetry or philosophy with death so near.
- Challenged by: bandits, Viking raids, plague, famine, anarchy
- man was short-lived and vulnerable; one needed supernatural intervention to live a long, safe life.
- So, priests, saints, charms, talismans, horoscopes, homeopathy, fasts, prayers, chants and witches.

Gothic Architecture

- The Gothic way of speaking to this attitude was to create buildings that seemed to dwarf the man who entered.
- space, light, structure and the plastic effects of the masonry are organized to produce something higher and bigger and longer-lasting than mundane life.
- Church was not about bringing a friendly God down to the level of average folk. It was letting them visit him in his overwhelming house.
- God and priests and lawyers and mayors and so on were not expected to be “just like us,” but far above us.



Philosophy of Middle Ages

- Built on theology. Great scientists and philosophers were priests, because priests could read and write and few others could.
- One went to Church staff for knowledge and education.
- New ideas were quashed as “unorthodox.”
- New Thinkers: Duns Scotus (Jon ‘Dunce’ Duns), Saint Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham
- ‘Okham’s Razor’ – “the principle that facts should be interpreted with a minimum of explanatory causes”… separates reason from faith… opening the door to science
- Period of people being skeptical of the Church and science, and embracing witchcraft



Power Structure

- Everyone had a place in a power and status hierarchy. Everyone had people above and below him or her:
- The king or queen had God and the Pope above him or her, and everyone else below.
- A duchess had her husband above her, and her children, and then peasant men and women below her.
- The children of a duke and duchess had their parents and king or queen above, and all peasants below.
- A peasant man had all peasant wives and children below him.
- Peasant wives had all peasant children below them.
- Children had animals below them.
- Punishment of crimes: hanging, mutilation, amputation.
- Historiography was composed and recorded by males, generally priests or monks... most events explained by the “will of God”, which meant fatalism.

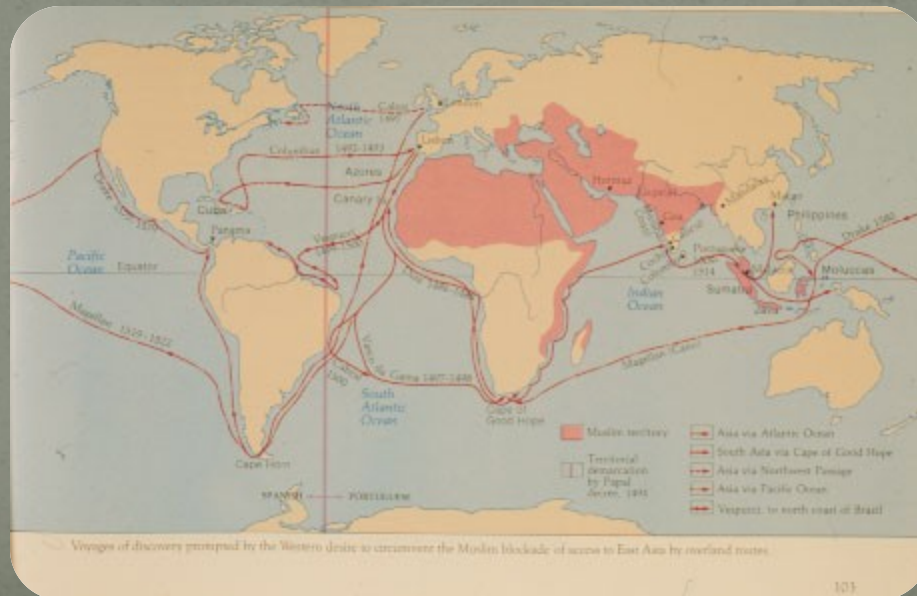
“Vlad the Impaler” or “Dracula”

- Vlad III, Prince of Wallachia (Romania) Son of Vlad Dracul.
- During the Crusade of Varna (1443-4) was captured and tortured by Ottoman Turks (Muslims)
- Also fought against the Transylvanian Saxons (Christians).
- The “palar” or pointed stake was often used as a form of torture and execution.
- For Vlad, it was an instrument of mass terror… in one expedition, approx 24000 impaled. Vlad enacted genocide.



Transition from Medieval to Renaissance

- 15th Century is considered the transition period
- Western Europe broke free of Muslim blockades keeping them “locked in” from trading with the rest of the world.
- Not necessarily a “rebirth” for everyone



Overview of West & World

- Renaissance (c15 - 16)
- Reformation (c16)
- Scientific Revolution (c16 - 17)
- Enlightenment (c18)
- Age of Revolution (c18 - 19)



What the Renaissance was Not

- “The essence of the Renaissance lay not in any sudden rediscovery of classical civilization but rather in the use which was made of classical models to test the authority underlying conventional taste and wisdom”
 - Europe, by Norman Davies
 - Greco-Roman ideas and methods were not so much lost as no one was using the old things. People were trying to survive, and if they knew any of these ancient things, saw them as lazy and decadent and weak, or impractical.

Renaissance c.1450-1670

- A period from the early 1300's to roughly 1600 when there was a renewed interest in history, philosophy, literature and art.
- Renaissance = “Rebirth”
- Europe's economic recovery
- Renewed study of ancient Greece and Rome



The Renaissance

- The term is used to describe a MOBILIZATION OF IDEAS which is primarily
- ARTISTIC
- LITERARY
- CULTURAL
- The Renaissance was an “INTELLECTUAL” reality, more than a “PHYSICAL” one
- It was fuelled by money and trade.
- Little changed for poor and illiterate folk.

Florence, Italy

- Money was here, so artists could make money doing art.
- The art made and sold here is incredibly valuable today.

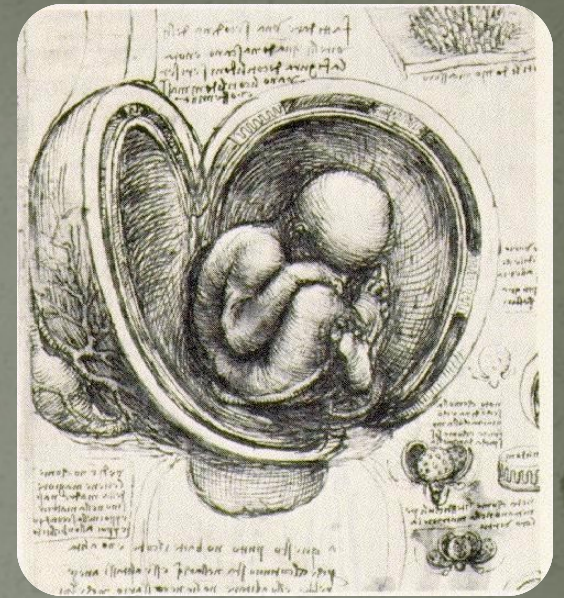
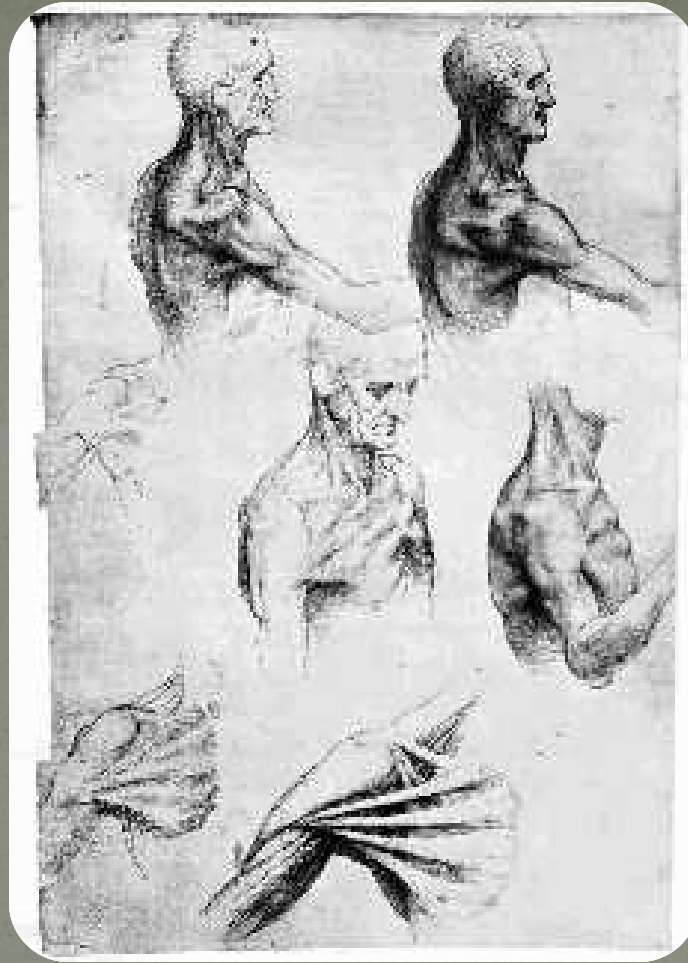
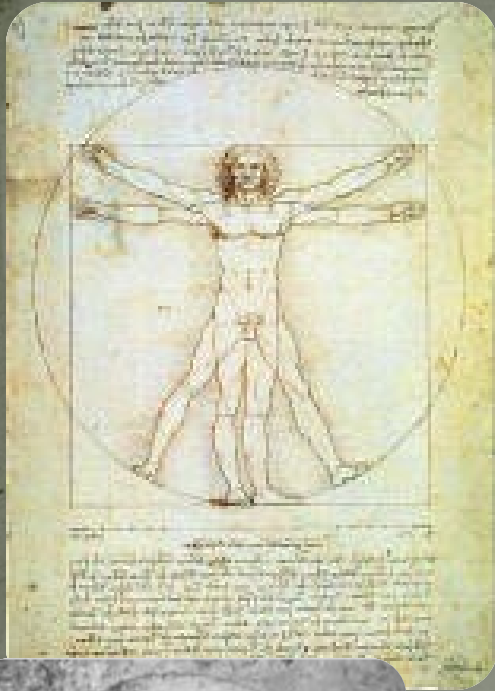


Renaissance Man

- ‘independence of mind’
- A person who mastered all areas of arts and thought… becoming a “complete man”.
- The opposite of a specialist.
- Humanity was mastering the world it lived in.
- “man’s fate could be controlled and improved”





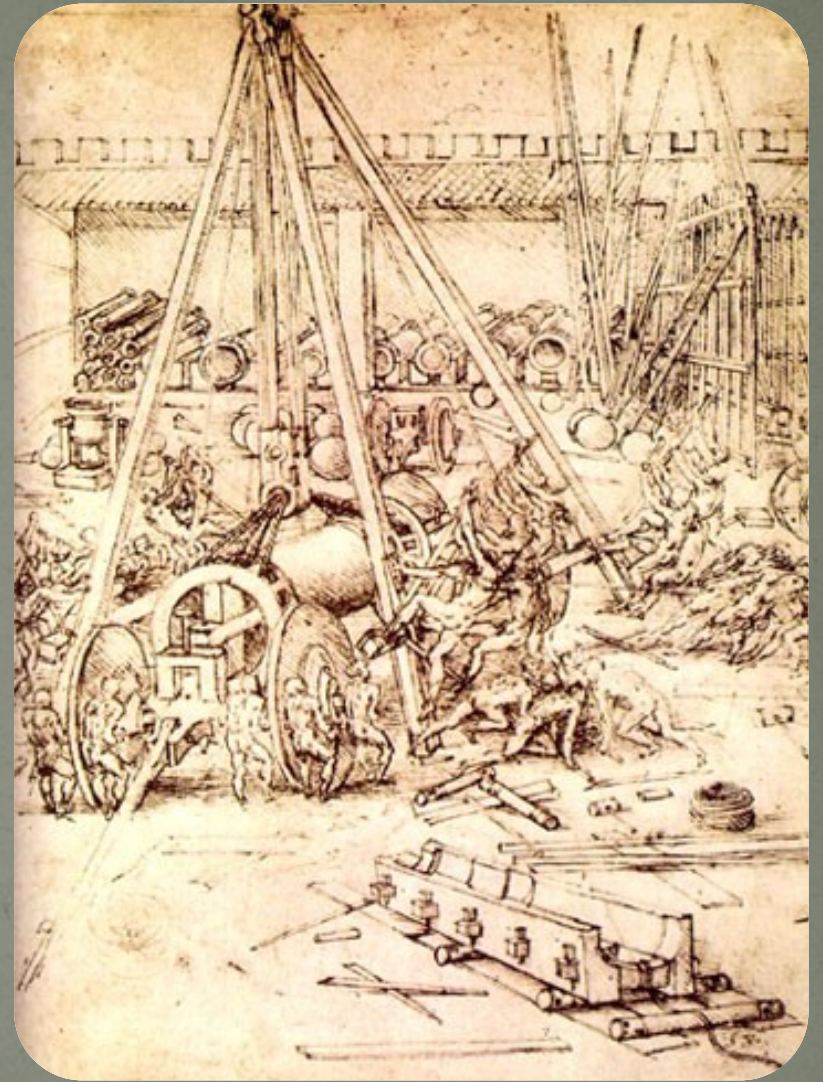


- Leonardo da Vinci had a deep interest in anatomy. But cutting up corpses was illegal and viewed as barbaric.
- Doctors learned on the job.



Frescos were basically what we'd call "murals,"

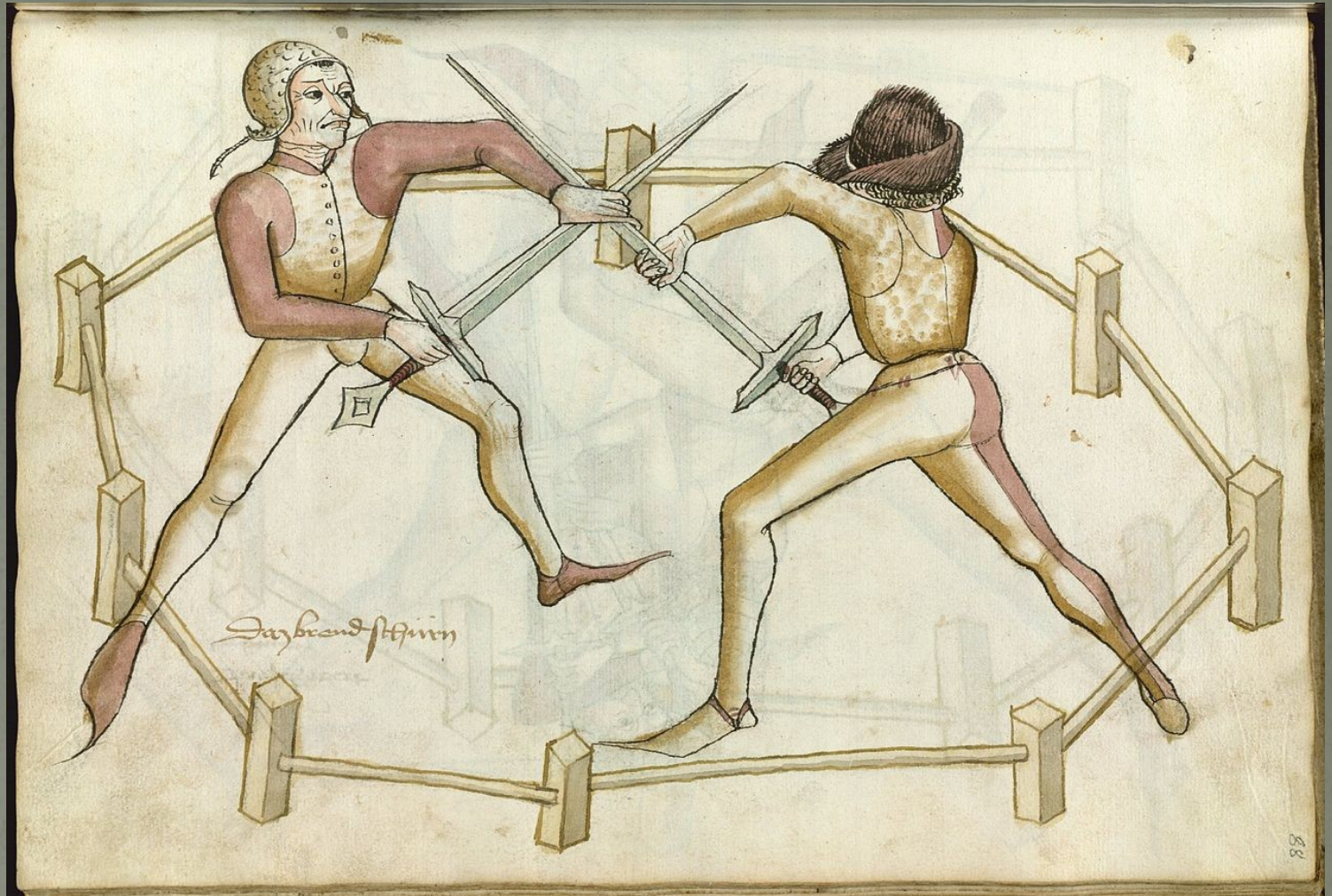
(from the French word for "wall," rather than the Italian word for "fresh" plaster which was painted on as it was applied.)



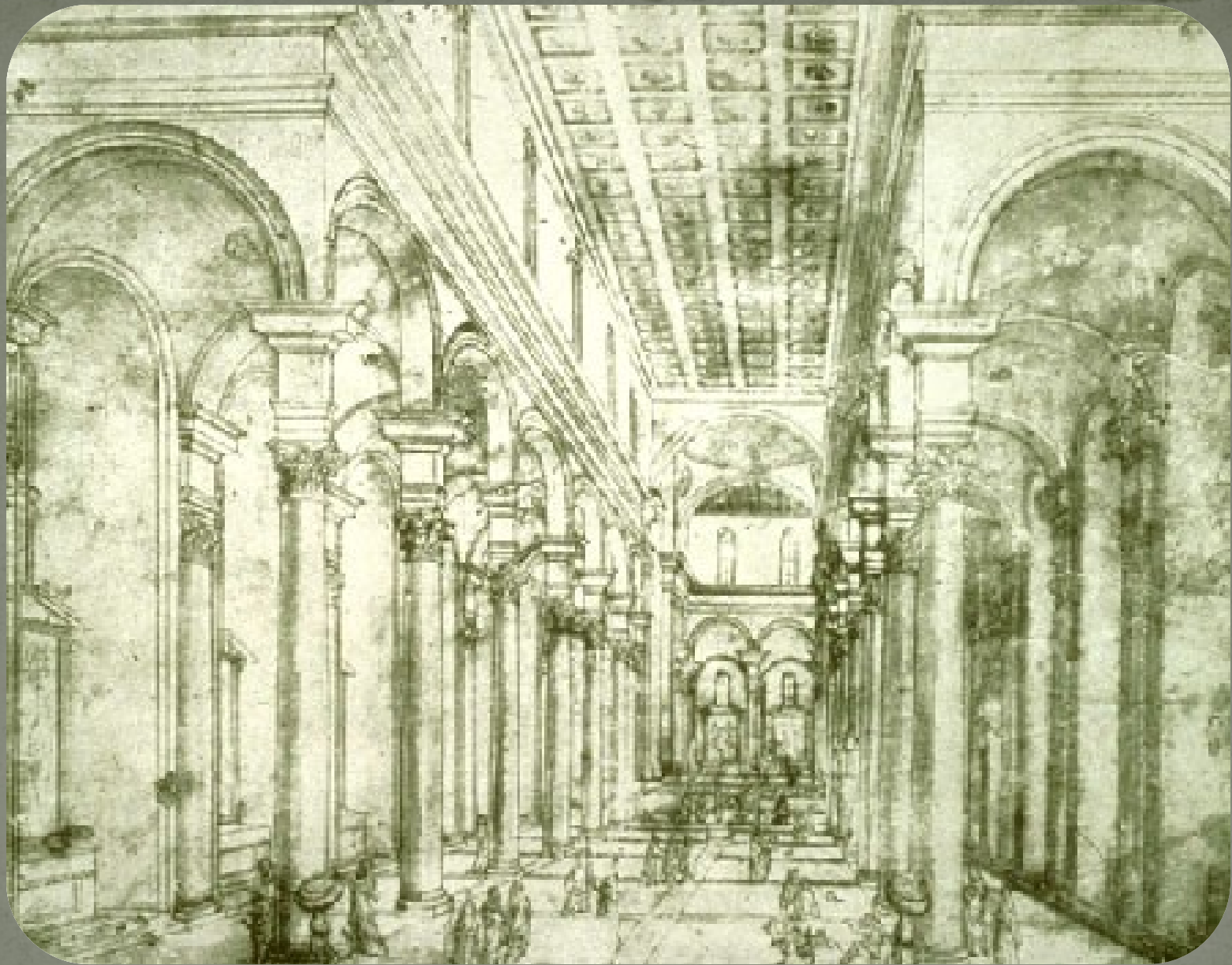
Da Vinci did many drawings of planned sculptures and also of things like tanks and submarines and helicopter-like ideas. He was a designer more than a guy who worked out the kinks until a thing was practical, though.

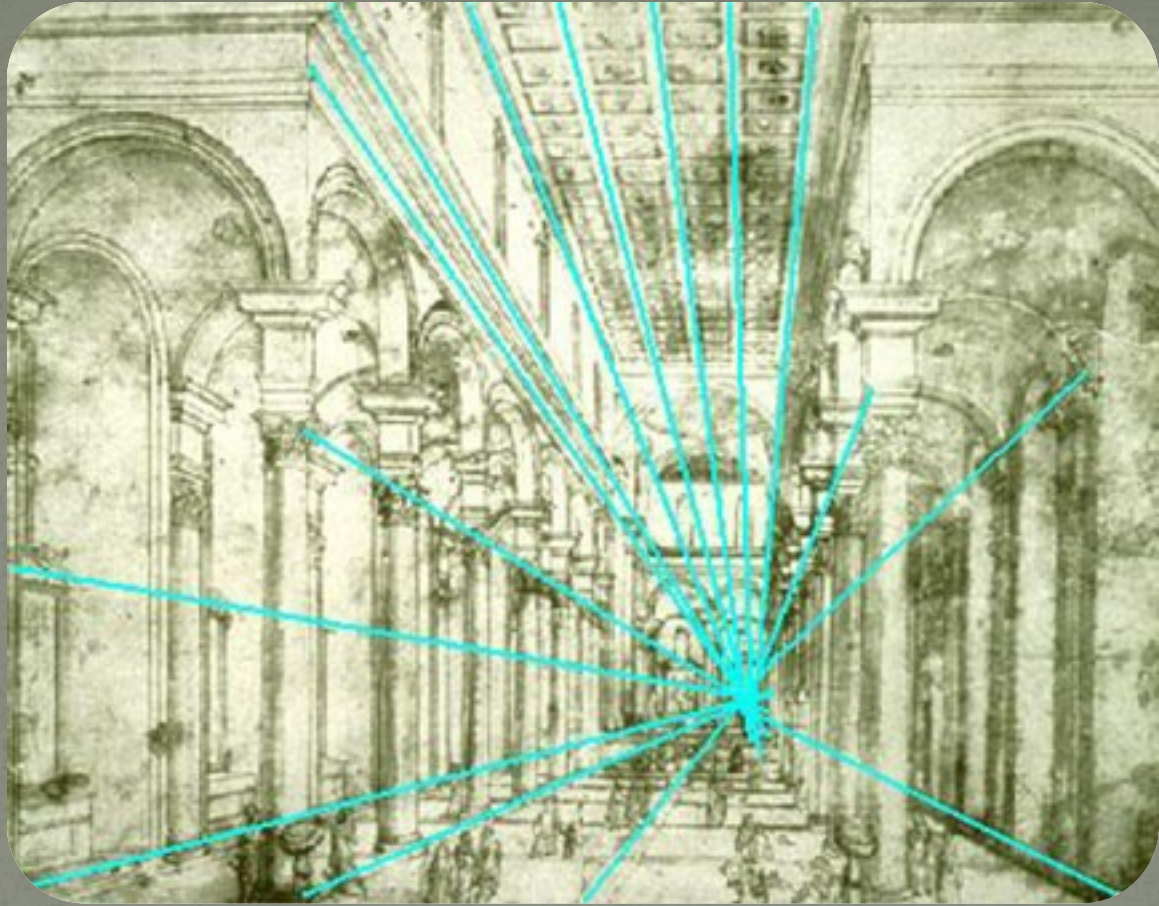
Renaissance Art & Baroque

- The work that distinguishes the later Baroque period is stylistically complex, even contradictory. In general, however, the desire to evoke emotional states by appealing to the senses, often in dramatic ways, underlies its manifestations.
- Some of the qualities most frequently associated with the Baroque are grandeur, sensuous richness, drama, vitality, movement, tension, emotional exuberance, and a tendency to blur distinctions between the various arts.

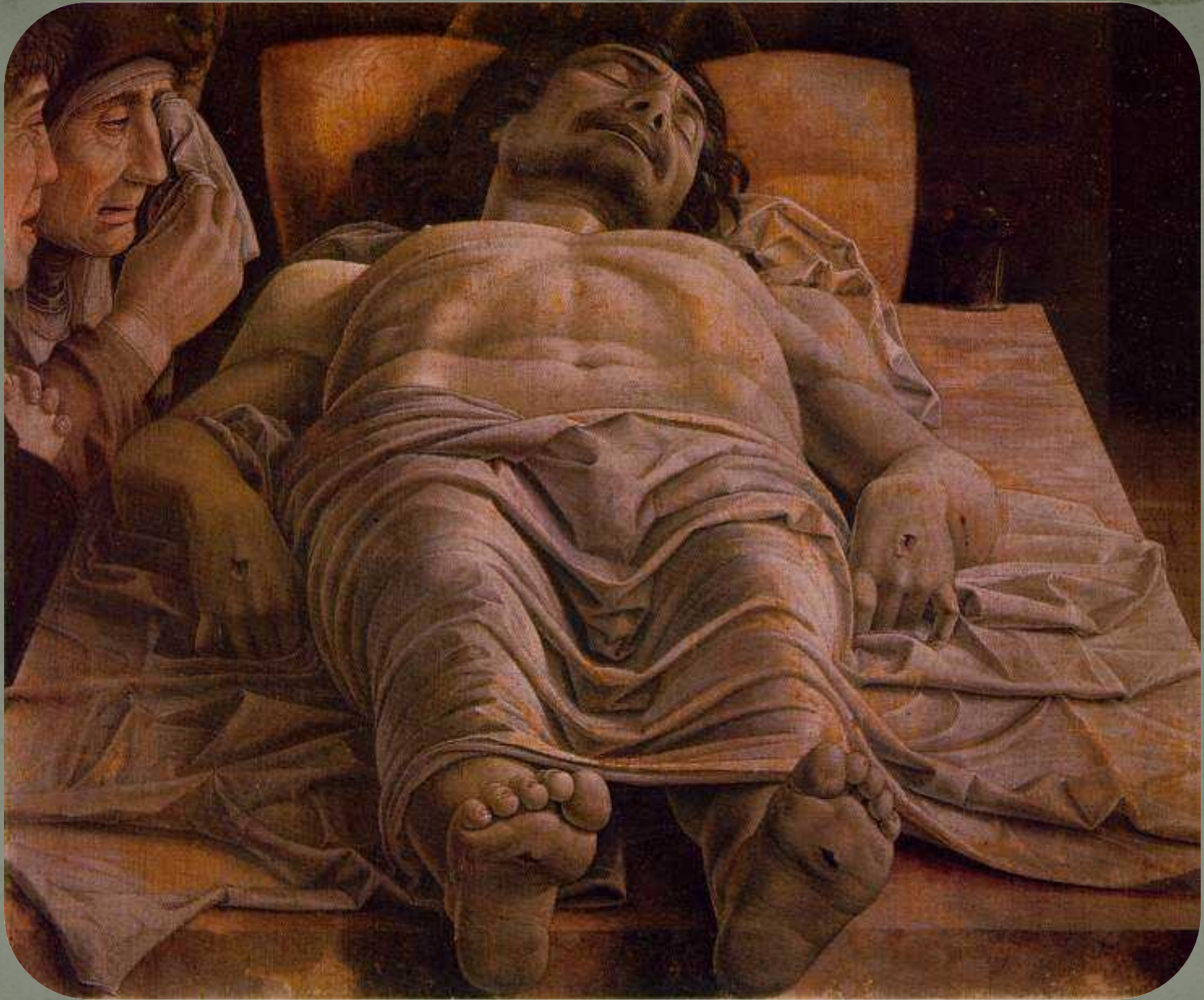


In the 1400s, perspective was approximated and not meant to be a literal representation. This makes interpreting the correct placement of limbs and weapons in sword manuals difficult, as things are kind of “flat.”





Leonardo da Vinci: using geometry to create the illusion of depth in a two dimensional work of art!





Doctors study a (likely illegally-obtained) corpse.



Imaginations of the transcendent.

Is there a better world with better people than just you and I? Is it in a different time, place or dimension? Gods, saints or superheroes?

Philosophy: Humanism



- Salutati

- Man is responsible for his own good or bad deeds, not society or devils and angels
- Man is figuring it all out and will be fine.
- God does not control a man's will or morality
- It is better to benefit others by living an active public life than to live as a monk, which does not benefit anyone other than the monk
- Faith in the decency and sense of human beings rather than of God.

Humanism



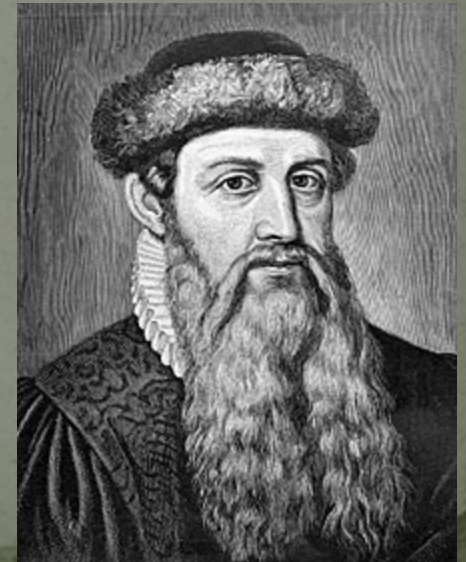
- Bruni
 - Medieval values of piety, humility, and poverty being healthy are not important
 - Attitudes about wealth, credit finances, and usury (money-lending with interest) are modified to accommodate them.
 - Pagan elements (re)introduced into a nominally Christian culture

Bruni cont.

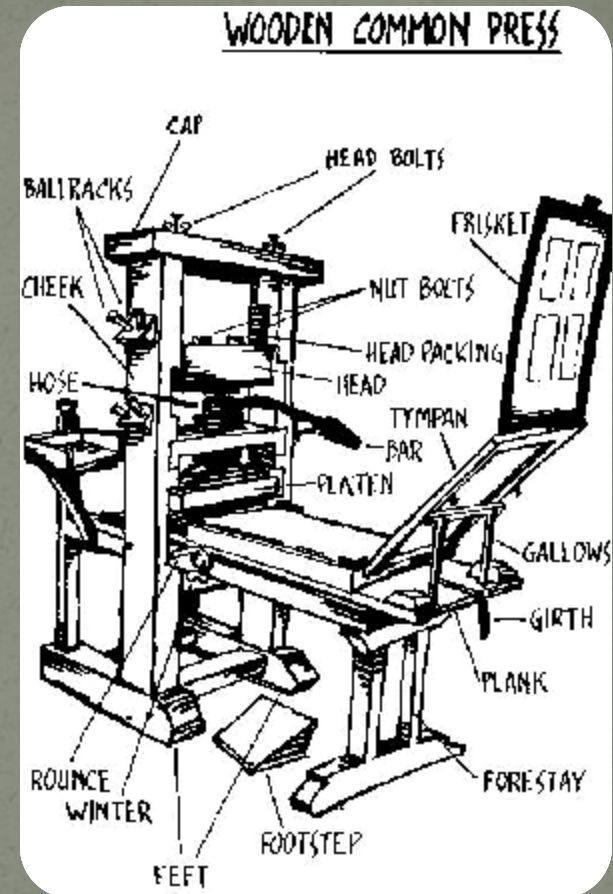
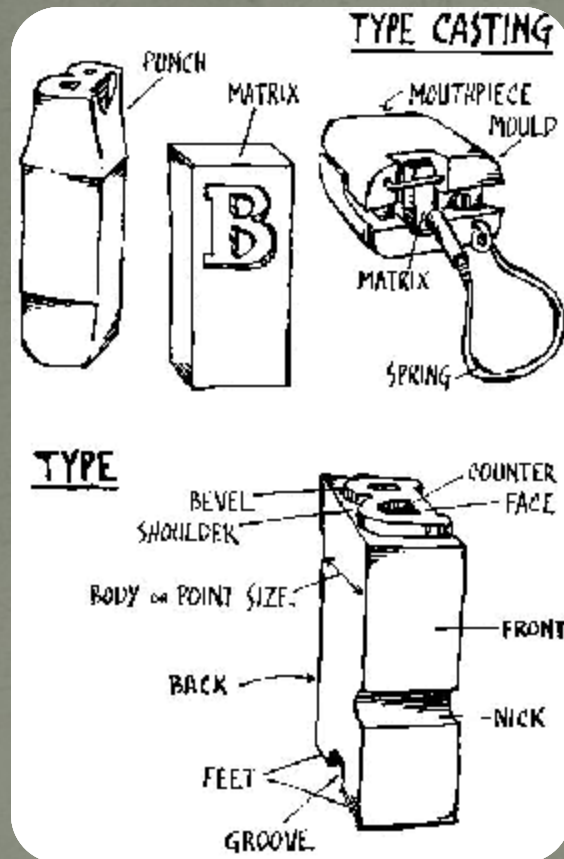
- Emphasized the dignity and worth of the individual
- People are rational beings who possess within themselves the capacity for truth and goodness
- Emphasized the value of the Greek and Latin classics for their own sake, rather than for their relevance to Christianity
- Collection and translation of classical manuscripts
- Inspired by Plato (Aristotle inspired medieval scholarship)
- Centered around education. Be smart and it will make you good. You don't need laws and priests.
- Attempted to develop the character and intelligence of pupils by a general literary study of the ancient classics

Movable Type

- Invented in 1440 By Johannes Gutenberg
- Led to a great demand for books in the mid 15th century because they cost less than ones done by hand for years of a priest's life.
- Printers met the high demand by printing an over-abundance of books.
- Prices plummeted (20% less than a hand-scripted manuscript)



Gutenberg's Printing Press



Printing Press

- Aided in political and religious revolution
- Humanist movement fueled its success.
 - The bible first, then Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* were some of the first printed
- Led to the rise of the vernacular (non-Latin) literary text
- Suddenly people could see if priests were saying the same thing as Jesus, or the opposite.

The Protestant and the Catholic Reformations



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