

The Italian Renaissance

-Key Concepts-

I. Why in Italy at this Time?



- Revival of Commerce and Town Building was more intense in Italy
- Feudalism had less of a grip on Italy
- Two competing lords for control of Italy were losing influence
- Presence of antiquity was stronger in Italy than elsewhere in Europe

III. Renaissance Economics



- Profit-making became more important than Church doctrine
- To overcome guilt, profit-makers indulge in philanthropy
- Influence of guilds declining
- High profits led to economic diversification

III. Renaissance Economics (cont)



- "Cottage Industry"
- Art became the way to advertise economic success
- Intensified commercial competition created the need to be efficient

IV. Renaissance Society

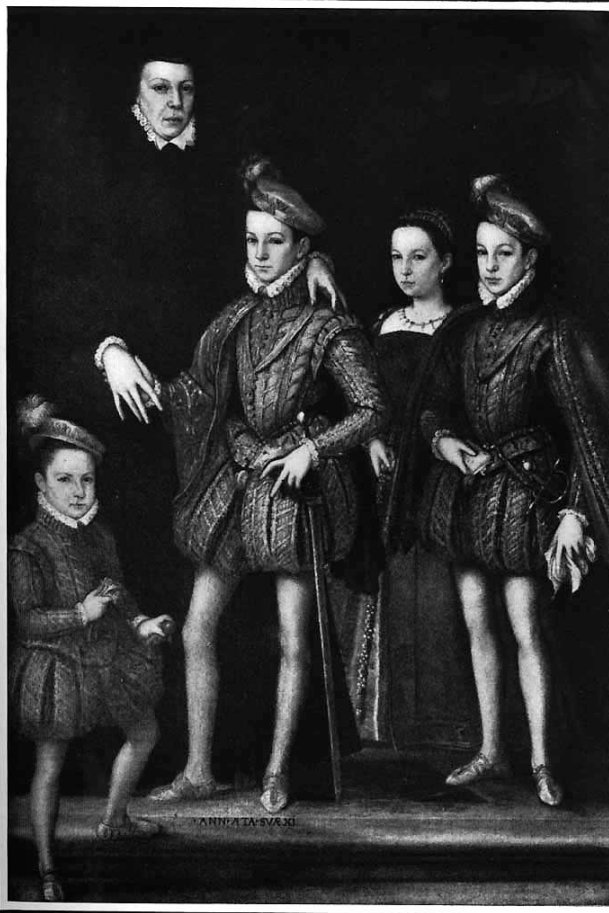


PLATE XXXV. CATHERINE DE' MEDICI AND HER FAMILY. 1561
Shottesbrooke Park. By kind permission of Miss Oswald-Smith

- Renaissance is an elitist historical phenomenon
- Northern Italy was urban and commercial while Southern Italy mostly was not
- Very family-oriented society
- Marriages were frequently arranged to strengthen business ties

IV. Renaissance Society (cont)



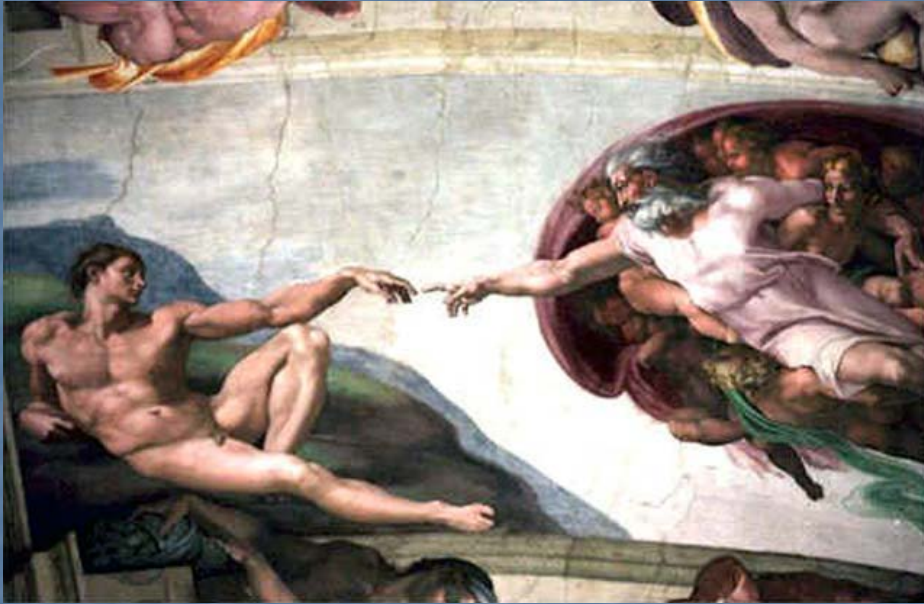
- Father's authority over his family
- Some wealthy women played an important role in Italian city-states
 - Isabella d'Este of Mantua
- Concentration of wealth among great families
 - "populo grosso"

IV. Renaissance Society (cont)



- Extreme social stratification divided into factions around the wealthiest families
- Poor increasingly attempting to improve their social status
 - The Ciompi Revolt (1378)
 - "populo minuto"
- "The Cult of the Individual"

IV. Renaissance Society (cont)



- Number of portraits painted during this era illustrates focus on the individual
- A true nobleman
- Growing humanism and secularism in a Christian context
- Focus on man's free will
- Rewards for living excellently came in this life

V. Renaissance Politics



- Same pattern and problems as those of the Greek city-states
- Inter-city warfare led to new advances in diplomacy
 - "balance of power"
- Northern Italian "communes"
- The Peace of Lodi (1454)

V. Renaissance Politics (cont)



- Rome, Venice, Milan, Florence, and the Kingdom of Naples
- Renaissance Venice
- Renaissance Florence
 - Lorenzo the Magnificent (1449-1492)
- 1300's republicanism became 1400's despotism—with the exception of Venice

V. Renaissance Politics (cont)



- Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527)
-- "The Prince"
- The goal of the prince must be power
- Cynical view of human nature
- Fear is a better motivator than affection
- Politics as the art of deception

V. Renaissance Politics (cont)



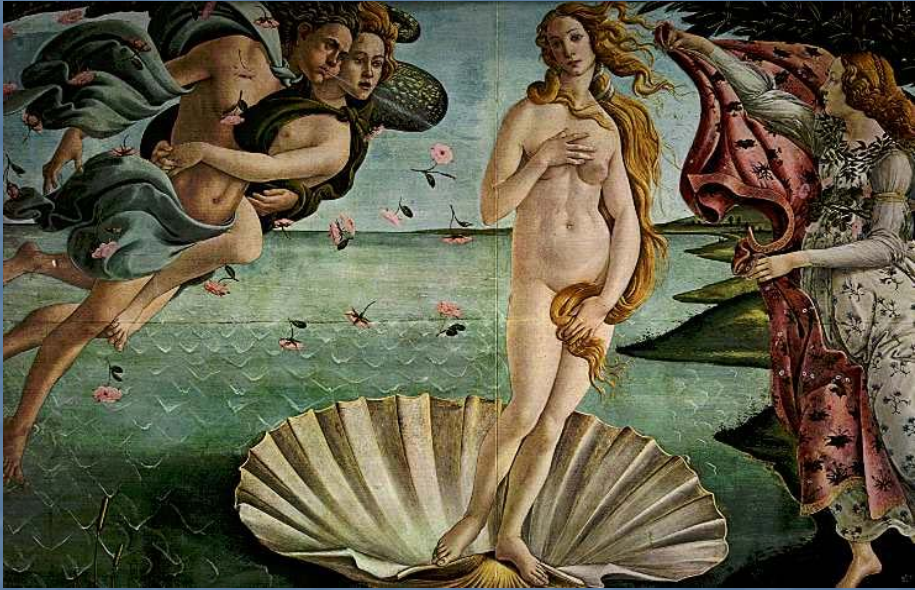
- Ancient and contemporary examples of effective political leaders
 - Cesare Borgia
- A new realism in political thought
- 1400's "Civic" humanism
- Leonardo Bruni's *The New Cicero*
- Henry VIII as a Renaissance prince

VI. Renaissance Art and Architecture



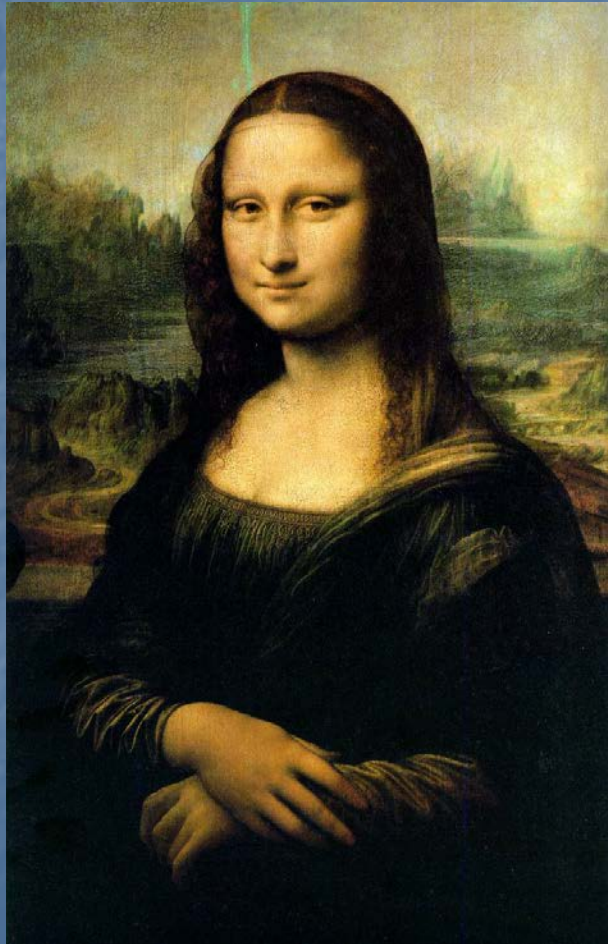
- The proliferation of portraiture and its significance
- The depiction of nudes
- Nudity in medieval art
- Imitation of nature was a primary goal
- Pagan scenes and myths were popular subjects with no apologies to the Church

VI. Renaissance Art and Architecture (cont)



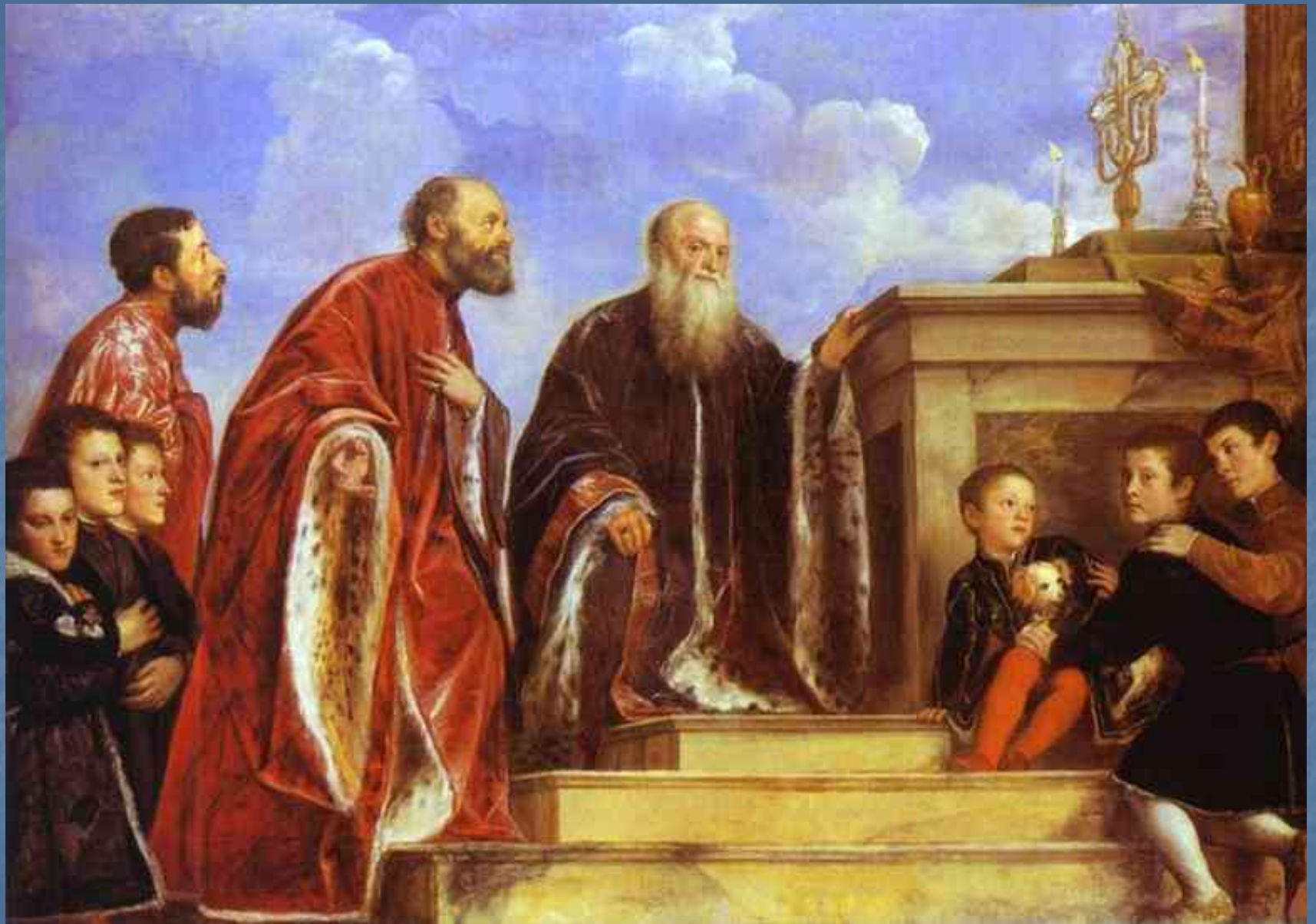
- Botticelli's "Birth of Venus"
- Giotto's admiration for Saint Francis
- Status of artist is elevated to cultural hero
- Renaissance art stressed proportion, balance and harmony—and was not otherworldly
- Artistic problems of perspective and composition addressed

VI. Renaissance Art and Architecture (cont)



- These problems were solved by emphasizing the mathematical side of painting
 - Brunelleschi's "linear perspective"
- Innovations in Renaissance painting
 - "chiaroscuro"
 - "sfumato"





VI. Renaissance Art and Architecture (cont)

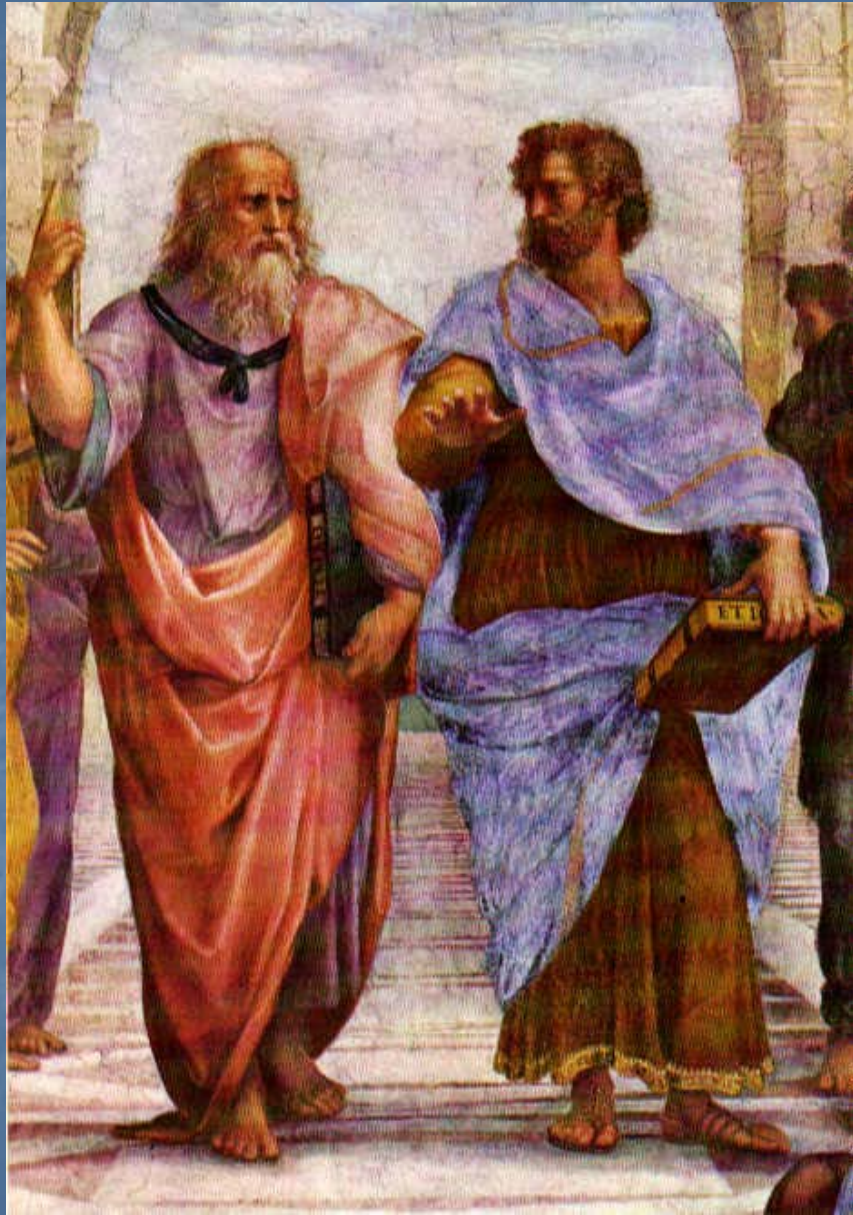


- Differences between Italian and Northern European painting
--Italian frescoes vs. Northern European altar pieces
- Van Eyck's oil paintings
- Rome became the center of the High Renaissance (1480-1520)

VI. Renaissance Art and Architecture (cont)



- Raphael (1483-1520)
- Man of great sensitivity and kindness
- Died at the age of 37
- "The School of Athens"
- Famous for frescoes in the Vatican Palace











VI. Renaissance Art and Architecture (cont)

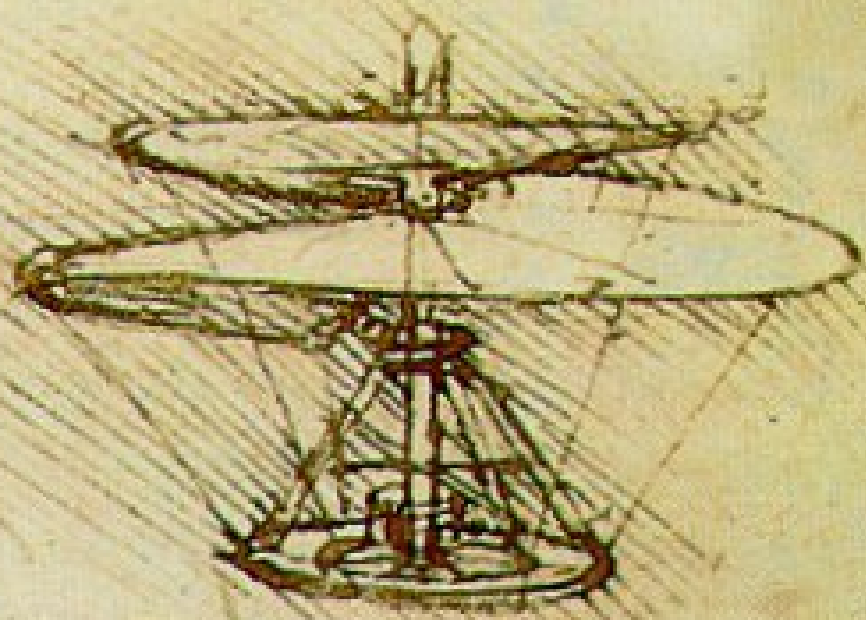


- Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519)
- True Renaissance Man
- Scientist, inventor, engineer and naturalist
- Dissected Corpses
- Short attention span

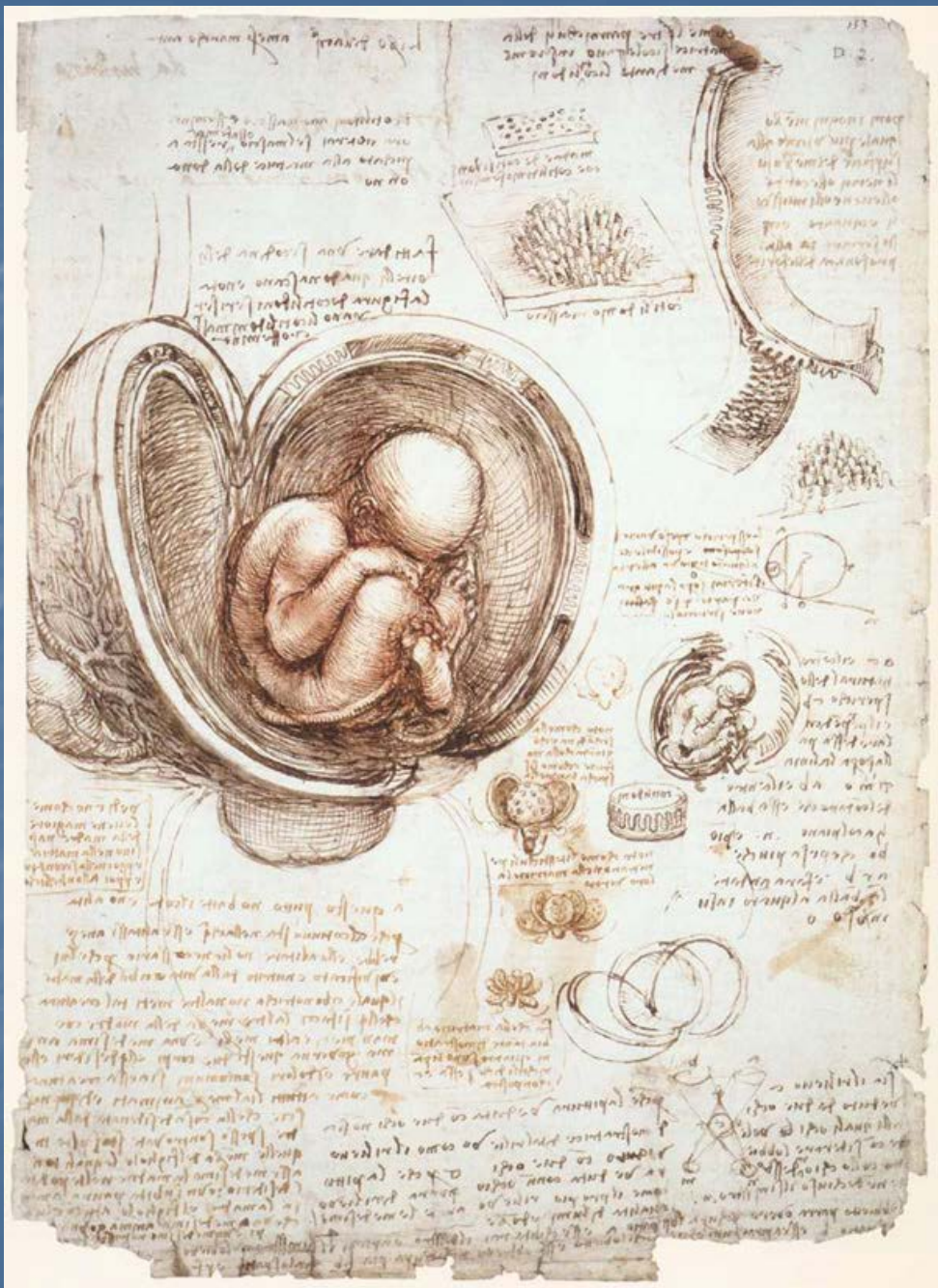




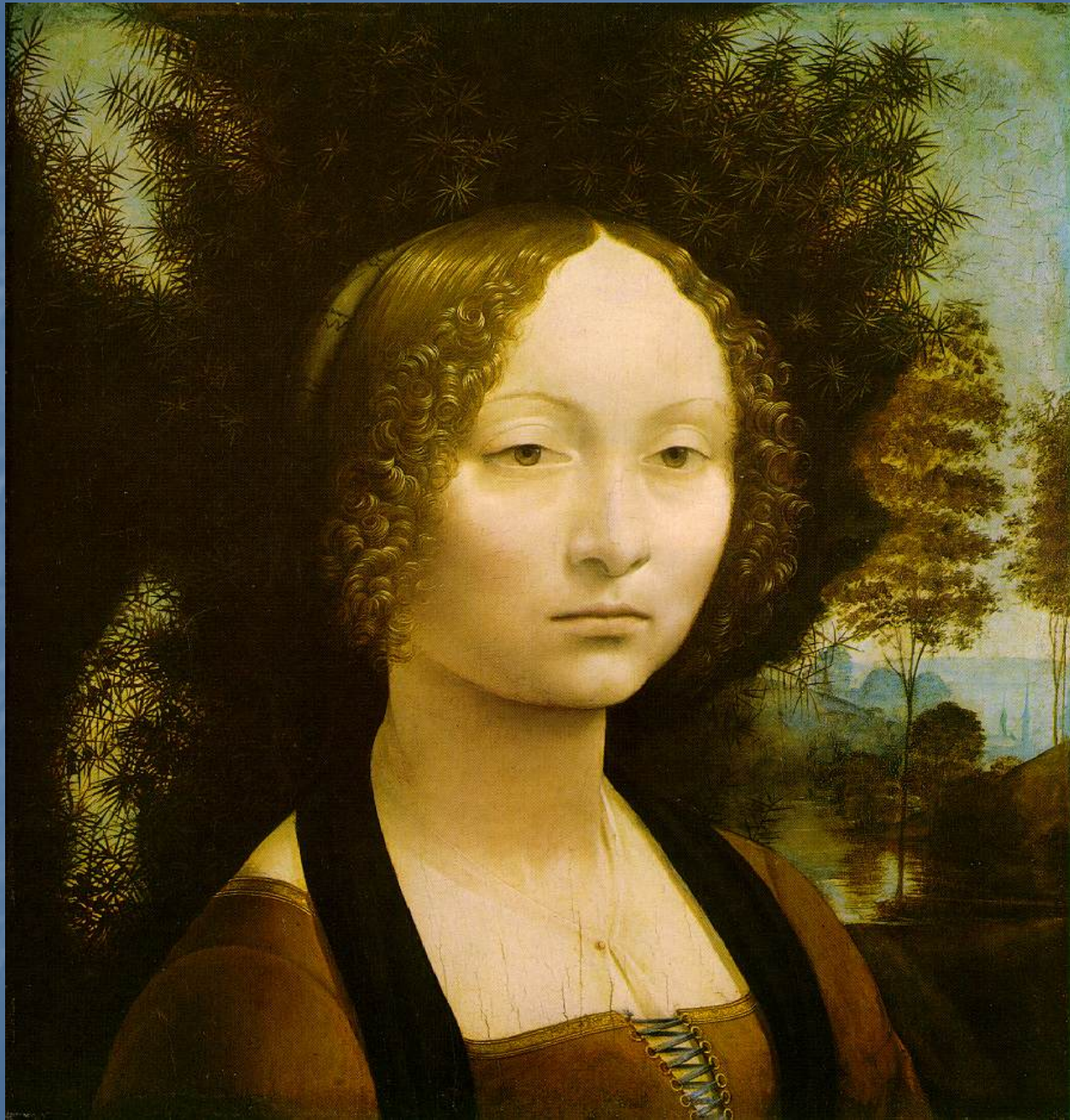
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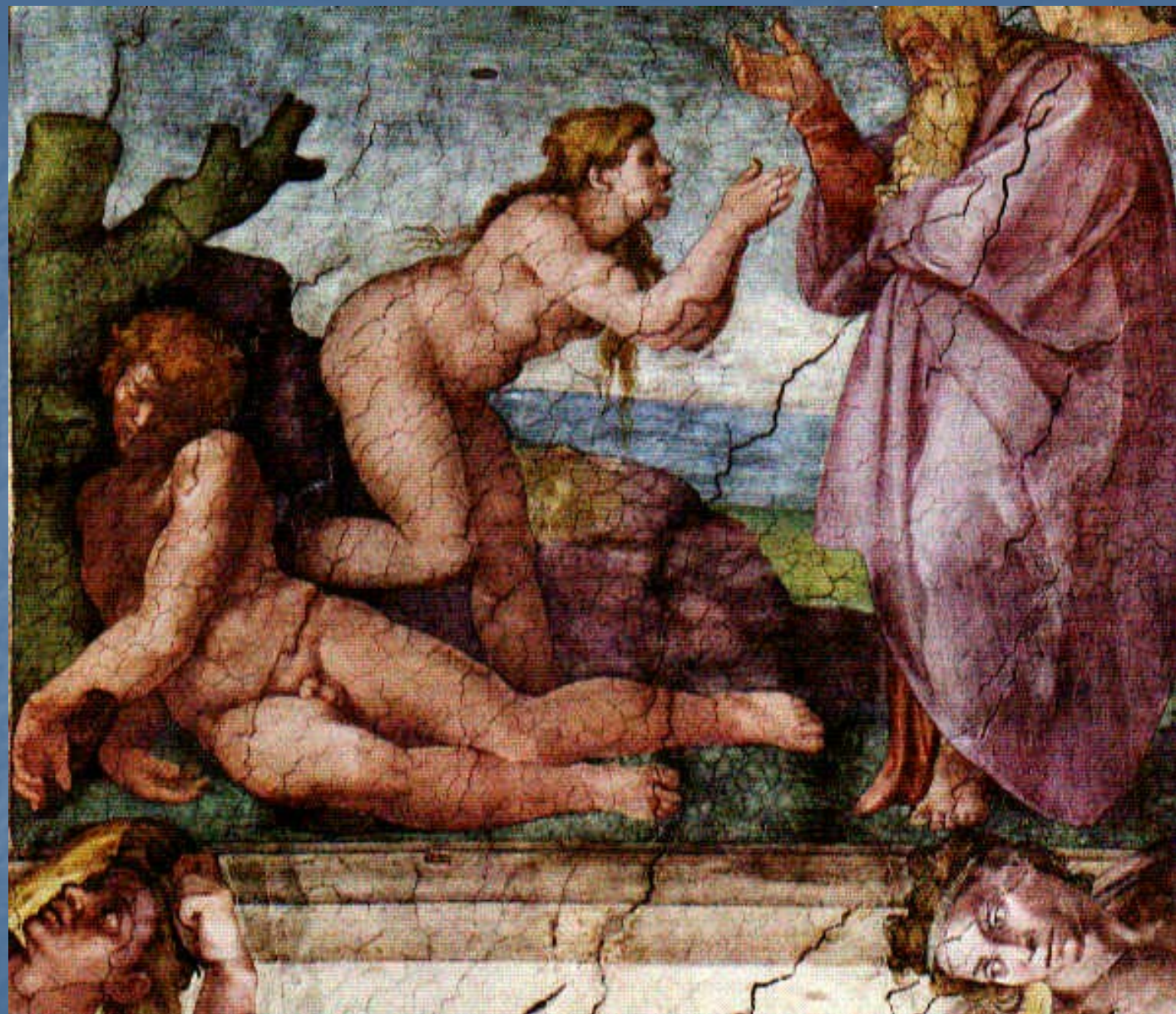


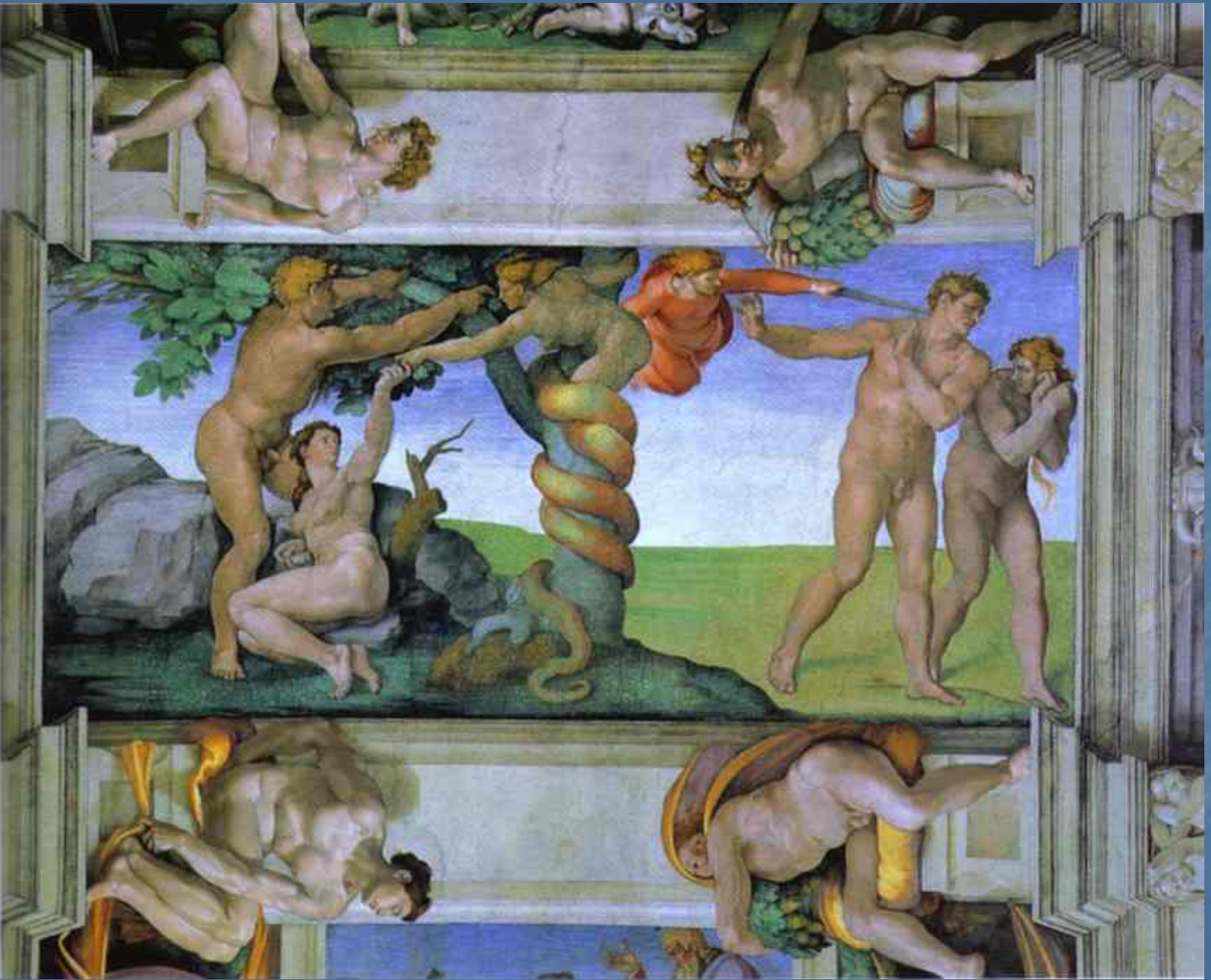
VI. Renaissance Art and Architecture (cont)



- Michelangelo
- Neo-Platonist
- Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel
- Conflict with Pope Julius II
- Incredible energy and endurance
- "Mannerism"











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VI. Renaissance Art and Architecture (cont)



- Mannerism's greatest representative: El Greco (1541-1614)
- Romanesque architecture was revived in Renaissance building projects
- Brunelleschi's Church of San Lorenzo

VII. Renaissance Education and Philosophy



- Humanistic age
- Various types of humanism
- Great fervor displayed in finding and collecting old documents
- Leads to critical examination of documents
 - Lorenzo Valla
- Education produces moral uplift

VII. Renaissance Education and Philosophy (cont)



- A true liberal education
- Humanist education for women
- Love for the study of history most of all
- A Greek language fad after 1454
- Petrarch (1304-1374): the Father of Italian Renaissance humanism
- Focus on the individual and his dignity

VII. Renaissance Education and Philosophy (cont)



- First influenced secondary education
- Extreme vanity of Renaissance scholars
- The importance of law and rhetoric in Renaissance education
- Classical political ideals were cultivated
- Knowledge needed to be useful

VII. Renaissance Philosophy (cont)



- Renaissance philosophy flourishes during Greek revival after 1450
- Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499)
- The teachings of Hermeticism
- Giovanni Pico Mirandola (1463-1494)
-- *Oration on the Dignity of Man*

VIII. The Renaissance Papacy



- Loss of influence over European nation-states
- Decline in moral prestige and leadership
- Pope Julius II (1503-1513)
- Popes as patrons of Renaissance art
--Leo X (1513-1521)
- Nepotism used to promote family interest

IX. Spread of Humanism to the Rest of Europe



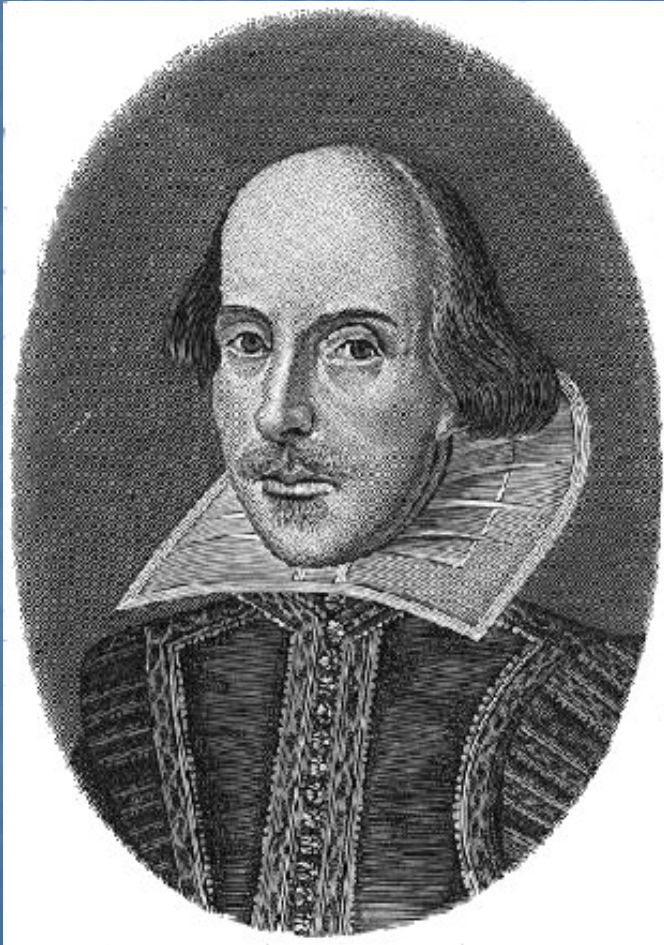
- The significance of Gutenberg's printing press
- Explosion of printed materials
 - By 1500, 40,000 titles printed and between 8-10 million copies
- The impact of movable-type printing presses: research and literacy

IX. Spread of Humanism to the Rest of Europe (cont)



- Popular publications in the early days of the printing press
- Thomas More
 - *Utopia*
 - Executed by Henry VIII in 1535
- Erasmus—Dutch Christian Humanist

IX. Spread of Humanism to the Rest of Europe (cont)



- William Shakespeare (1564-1616)
--Globe Theater
- Shakespeare returns to classical subjects and genres
- His history plays were the most popular at the time
- *Macbeth*: ambition
- *Hamlet*: individualism
- Keen sensitivity to sounds and meanings of words