

Early Renaissance



What was the Renaissance?

- Period following the middle ages (1450-1550)
- “Rebirth” of classical Greece and Rome
- Began in Italy
- Moved to northern Europe



Objectives

- During the middle ages
 - Find God
 - Prove pre-conceived ideas
- During the Renaissance
 - Find man
 - Promote learning



"The Renaissance gave birth to the modern era, in that it was in this era that human beings first began to think of themselves as *individuals*. In the early Middle Ages, people had been happy to see themselves simply as parts of a greater whole – for example, as members of a great family, trade guild, nation, or Church. This communal consciousness of the Middle Ages gradually gave way to the individual consciousness of the Renaissance."

– McGrath, Alister, *In the Beginning*, Anchor Books (2001), p.38 ■

Humanism

- Pursuit of individualism
 - Recognition that humans are creative
 - Appreciation of art as a product of man
- Basic culture needed for all
- Life could be enjoyable
- Love of the classical past

Causes of the Renaissance

- Lessening of feudalism
 - Church disrespected
 - Nobility in chaos
 - Growth of Middle Class through trade
- Fall of Constantinople
 - Greek scholars fled to Italy
- Education
- Nostalgia among the Italians to recapture the glory of the Roman empire

Italian Background

- Major city centers
 - Venice: Republic ruled by oligarchy, Byzantine origins
 - Milan: Visconti and Sforza families
 - Florence (Tuscany): Republic ruled by the Medici
 - Papal States: Ruled by the Pope
 - Kingdom of Naples: King of Aragon



Italian Background

- Florence
 - Medici's—family of physicians
 - Money in banking
 - Financed wool trade
 - Became defacto rulers of Florence



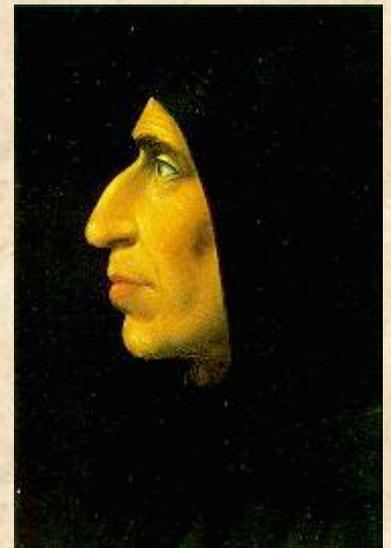
Italian Background

- Cosimo de Medici
 - Advanced arts and education
- Piero de Medici
 - Continued father's artistic support
- Lorenzo de Medici
 - Poet
 - Friend of Michelangelo
 - Rebuilt University of Pisa
 - Continued to invite scholars to Florence



Italian Background

- Piero de Medici
 - Forced to make military and commercial concessions to King of France
 - Medici's forced out of the city
- Savonarola
 - Friar who decried money, power
 - Gained power in lower class, but lost pope's support
 - Excommunicated and hung



Pico della Mirandola

- Close friend of Lorenzo Medici
- Brilliant and well educated
- Wrote set of 900 theses to cover all knowledge
- Believed human learning was based on basic truths
 - Wrote *On Dignity of Man*



Erasmus

- The leading humanist of the age
- Studied ancient languages
 - Translated New Testament
- Criticized Martin Luther
 - ...*Free Will and Hyperaspistes*
- *In Praise of Folly*
 - Major work
 - Written in classical style
 - Discoursed on the foolishness and misguided pompousness of the world



Early Renaissance Sculpture

Ghiberti

- Sculpture competition with Brunelleschi
- *Gates of Paradise*



Gates of Paradise



“Sacrifice of Isaac” Panels

Ghiberti



Brunelleschi



Donatello

Saint George



David



Mary Magdalene



Early Renaissance Architecture

Filippo Brunelleschi

- Founded Renaissance style
 - Simple lines
 - Substantial walls
 - Structural elements not hidden

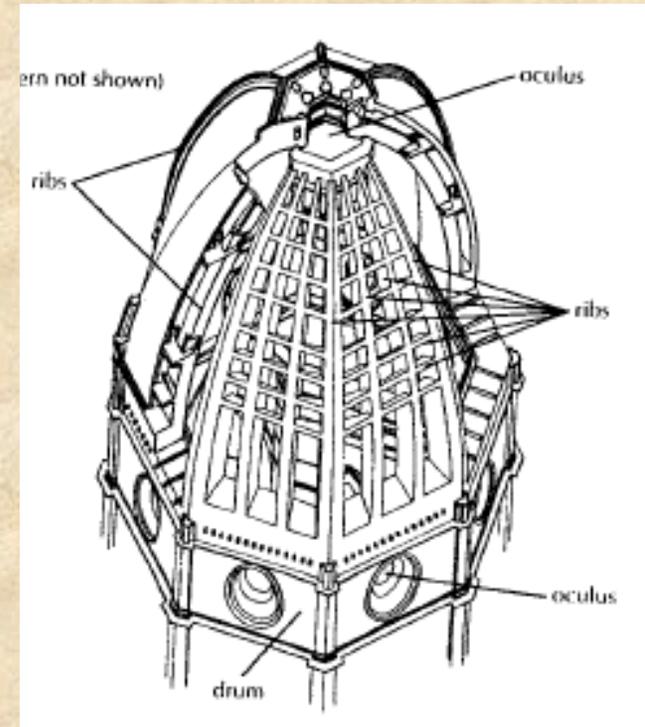
Filippo Brunelleschi

- Il Duomo Cathedral's dome (Florence)



Filippo Brunelleschi

- Commissioned to build the cathedral dome
 - Use unique architectural concepts
 - Studied Pantheon
 - Used ribs for support
 - Structural elements have been copied on other buildings



Dome Comparison

Il Duomo
(Florence)



St. Peter's
(Rome)



St. Paul's
(London)

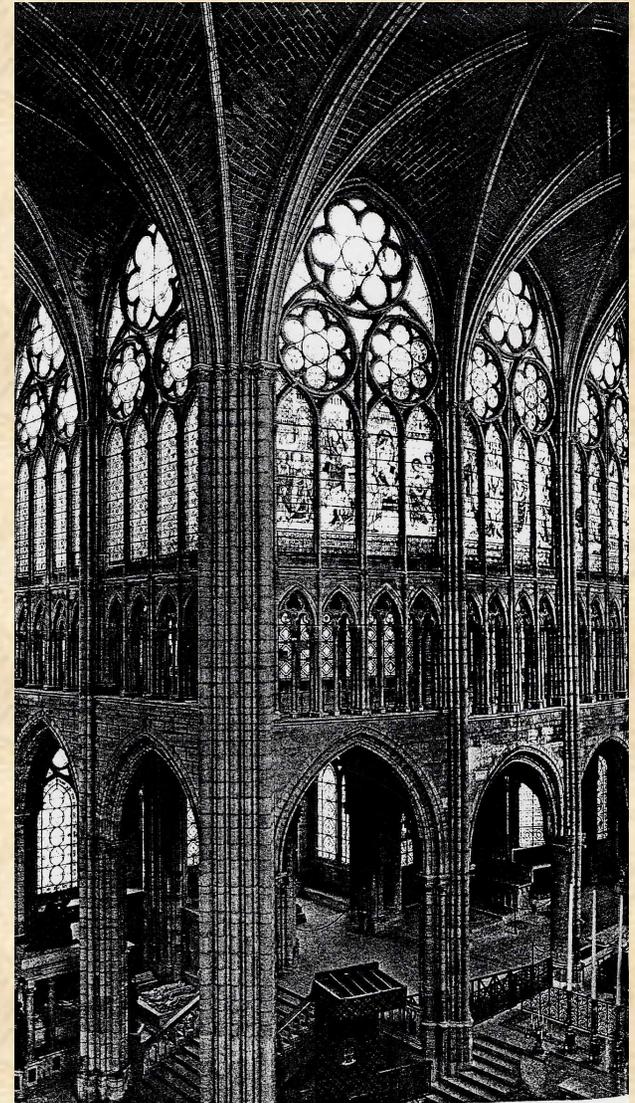


US capital



Filippo Brunelleschi

- Pazzi Palace Chapel
- Compare to Gothic

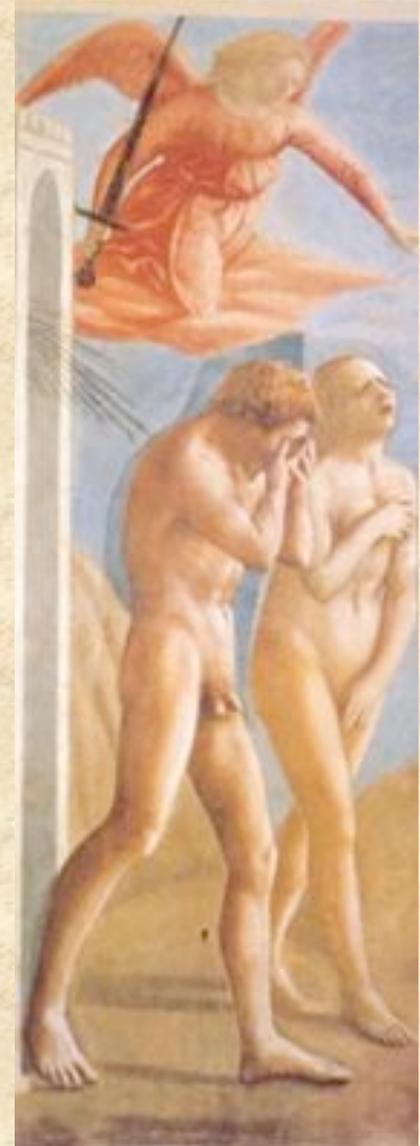


Early Renaissance Art

- What was different in the Renaissance:
 - Realism
 - Perspective
 - Classical (pagan) themes
 - Geometrical arrangement of figures
 - Light and shadowing (chiaroscuro)
 - Softening of edges (sfumato)
 - Backgrounds
 - Artist able to live from commissions

Masaccio

- Realism and expression
 - *The Expulsion from Paradise*



Masaccio

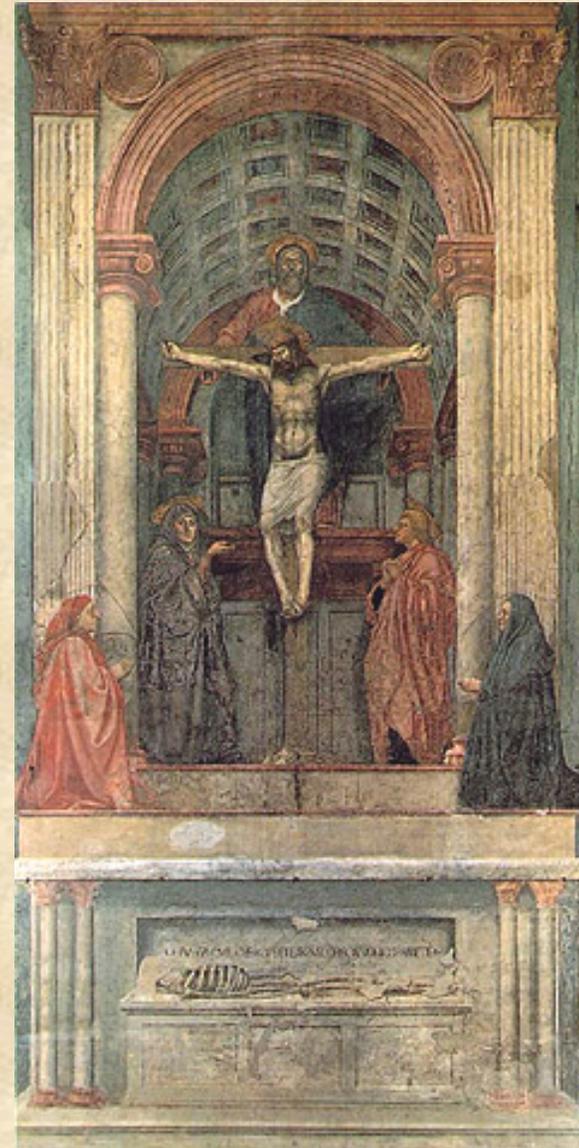
- **Perspective**

- *Tribute Money*
- Size of people diminishes with distance
- Use of light, shadow and drama



Masaccio

- **Perspective** (cont.)
 - *The Holy Trinity with the Virgin and St. John*
 - Geometry
 - Inscription: *"What you are, I once was; what I am, you will become."*



Perspective



overlapping



diminution



vertical perspective



diagonal perspective



atmospheric perspective



divergent perspective



intuitive perspective

orthogonals



one-point



vanishing point

horizon line

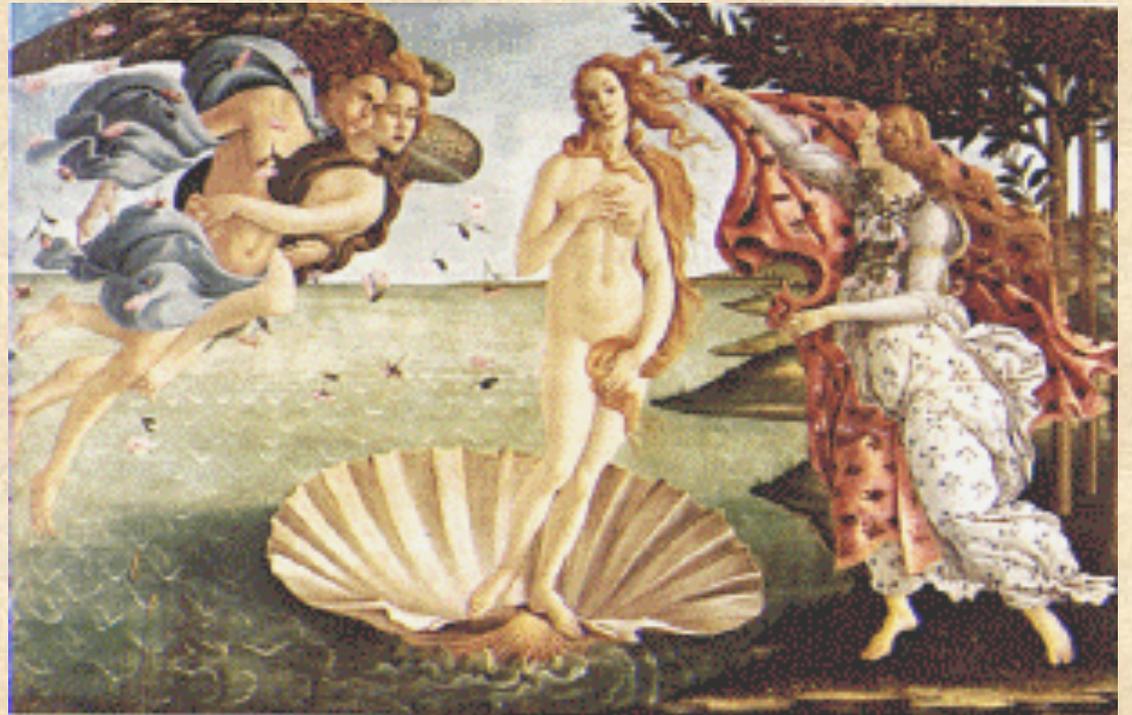
vanishing point

linear perspective

two-point

Sandro Botticelli

- Pagan themes
 - *La Primavera*
 - *The Birth of Venus*
- Attempt to depict perfect beauty



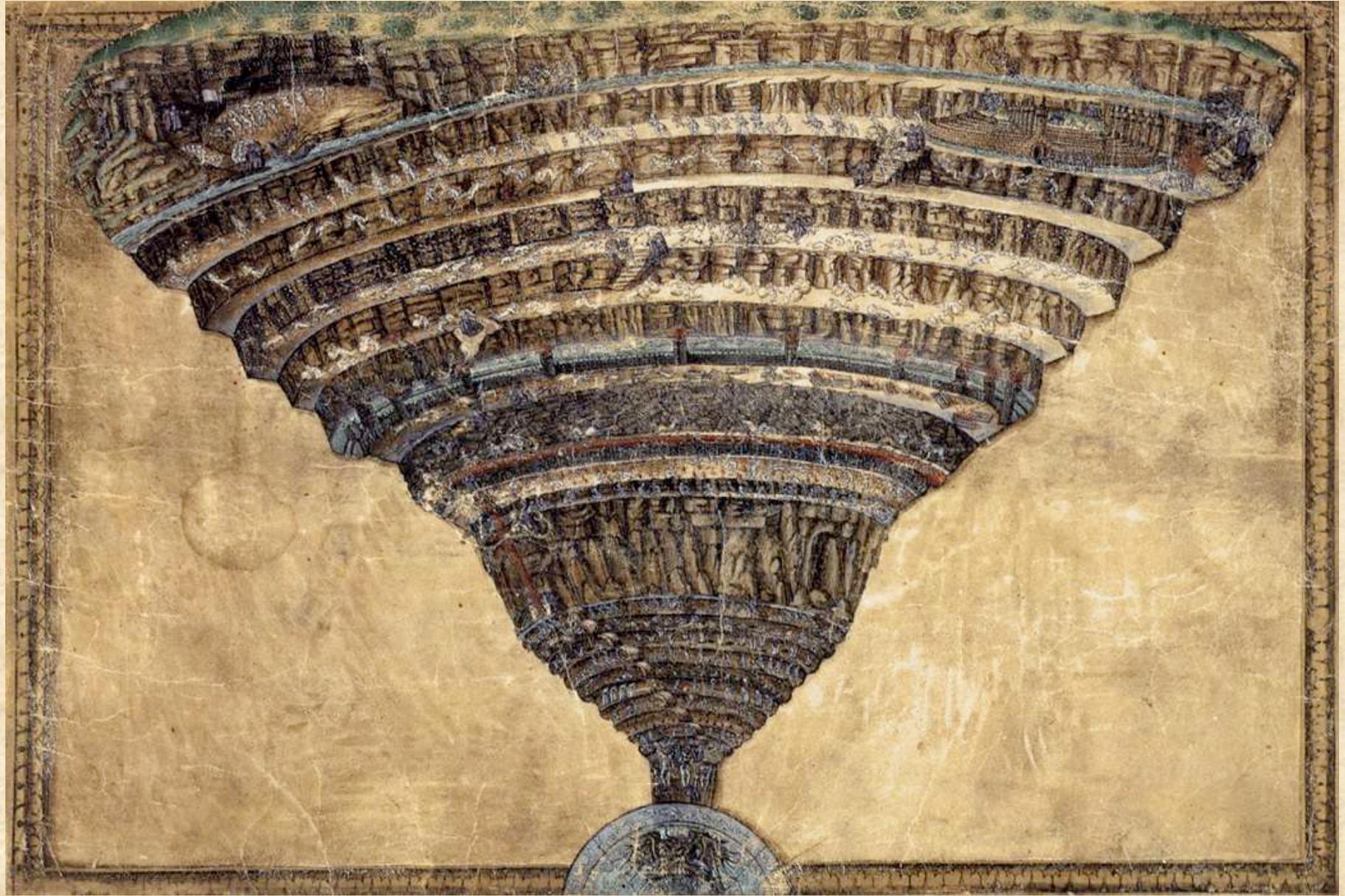
Classical Pose

*Birth of
Venus*



*Medici
Venus
(1st century
AD)*



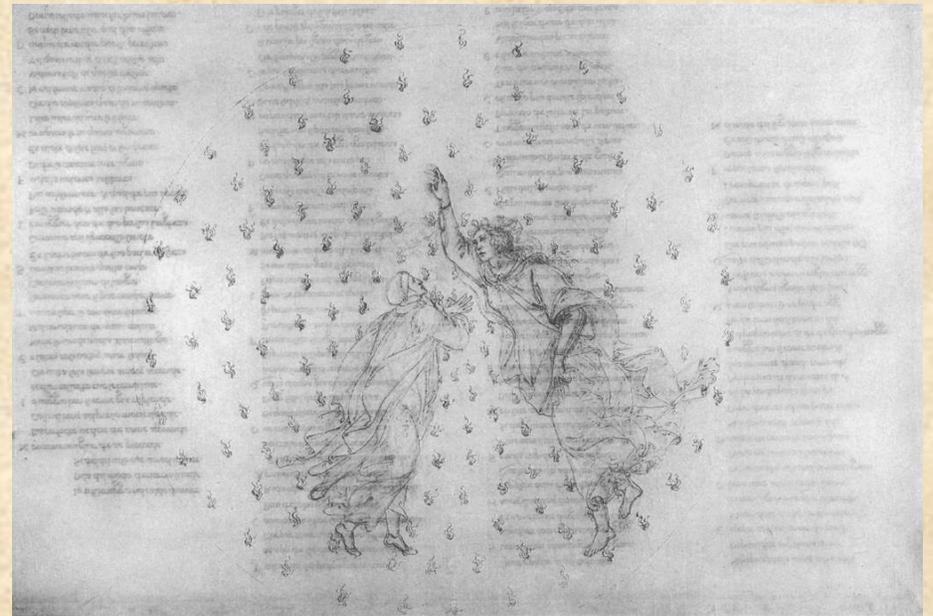


Botticelli: illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy





Hell



Heaven

Renaissance Man

- Broad knowledge about many things in different fields
- Deep knowledge of skill in one area
- Able to link areas and create new knowledge

"In 1423...a Sicilian adventurer named Giovanni Aurispa returned from Constantinople with a hoard of 238 manuscripts written in Greek, a language that scholars in Italy had learned only in the previous few decades. Among these treasures were six lost plays by Aeschylus and seven by Sophocles... But there was also a complete copy of the works of the geometer Proclus of Alexandria and, even more important for engineers, a treatise on ancient lifting devices, the *Mathematical Collection* of Pappus of Alexandria. In the decades that followed, so many manuscripts on Greek mathematics and engineering emerged that it is possible to speak of a "renaissance of mathematics" in fifteenth-century Italy."

– King, Ross, *Brunelleschi's Dome*, Penguin Books, 2000, p. 63.

“O investigator, do not flatter yourself that you know the things nature performs for herself, but rejoice in knowing that purpose of those things designed by your own mind.”

Leonardo da Vinci