

European Renaissance Primary Sources

Document 1

Source: Portrait of Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici (1389-1464), an Italian banker, politician, and art patron who established the Medici family as effective rulers of Florence during much of the Italian Renaissance



Document 2

Source: Niccolò Machiavelli, Florentine humanist and political theorist, *The Prince*, 1532

Here the question arises: whether it is better to be loved than feared or feared than loved. The answer is that it would be desirable to be both but, since that is difficult, it is much safer to be feared than to be loved, if one must choose. For on men in general this observation may be made: they are ungrateful, fickle, and deceitful, eager to avoid dangers and avid for gain and while you are useful to them they are all with you, offering you their blood, their property, their lives, and their sons so long as danger is remote, as we noted above, but when it approaches they turn on you. Any prince, trusting only in their words and having no other preparations made, will fall to his ruin.

Document 3

Source: Baldassare Castiglione, Italian courtier, diplomat, soldier, and prominent Renaissance author, *The Courtier*, 1528



Let the man we are seeking be very bold, stern, and always among the first, where the enemy are to be seen; and in every other place, gentle, modest, reserved, above all things avoiding ostentation [showiness] and that impudent [bold] self-praise by which men ever excite hatred and disgust in all who hear them. . . .

I would have him more than passably accomplished in letters, at least in those studies that are called the humanities, and conversant not only with the Latin language but with Greek, for the sake of the many different things that have been admirably written therein. Let him be well versed in the poets, and not less in the orators and historians, and also proficient in writing verse and prose.

Document 4

Sources: Images: *Madonna Enthroned Between Two Angels* by Duccio di Buoninsegna; *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci.
Text: Theodore Rabb, *The Last Days of the Renaissance & The March to Modernity*, Basic Books, 2006.

Note: The painting on the left was done in the late 1200s by the Italian artist Duccio di Buoninsegna. During the Middle Ages, most paintings had religious subject matter. The painting on the right, the *Mona Lisa*, was made by the Renaissance artist and scholar Leonardo da Vinci in the early 1500s.



Document 5

Source: Francesco Petrarca, Italian scholar, poet, and one of the earliest humanists, *Letter to Posterity*, 1372

I have always possessed extreme contempt for wealth...I have on the contrary led a happier existence with plain living and ordinary fare...the pleasure of dining with one's friends is so great that nothing has ever given me more delight than their unexpected arrival.

I possess a well-balanced rather than a keen intellect--one prone to all kinds of good and wholesome study, but especially to moral philosophy and the art of poetry. The later I neglected as time went on, and took delight in sacred literature...Among the many subjects that interested me, I dwelt especially on antiquity, for our own age always repelled me, so that, had it not been for the love of those dear to me, I should have preferred to have been born in any other period than our own. In order to forget my own time, I have constantly striven to place myself in spirit in other ages, and consequently I delighted in history...

Document 6

Source: The Birth of Venus, oil painting by Italian artists Sandro Botticelli, it depicts the ancient Roman goddess Venus arriving at the shore after her birth, painted in the mid-1480s



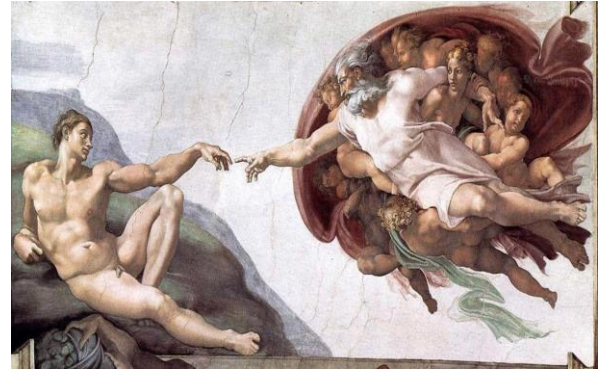
Document 7

Source: St. Peter's Basilica, located in Vatican City, construction began in 1506 and was completed in 1626



Document 8

Source: The Sistine Chapel in Vatican City, the chapel takes its name from Pope Sixtus IV who has it built between 1473 and 1481 and painted by Michelangelo

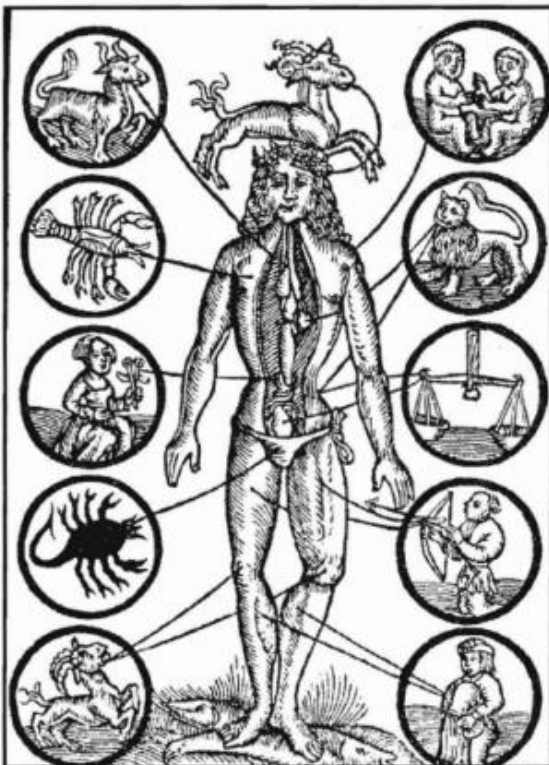


Document 9

Source: A woodcut called "Zodiac Man" from a book by German astronomer Johann Regiomontanus, 1512, and a woodcut from the anatomy book *On the Makeup of the Human Body* by Belgian physician Andreas Vesalius, 1543.

Note: The image on the left reflects the Middle Ages belief that each sign of the zodiac* governed a certain part of the body. For example, the constellation of stars called Aries the Ram controlled the head; Sagittarius the Archer controlled the thighs. The illustration on the right was based on the research done by Andreas Vesalius, who dissected human corpses to better explain the human body to his medical students.

*The zodiac is a band of 12 groups of constellations (stars) that stretch across the sky.



Document 10

Source: The Act of Supremacy issued by English King Henry VIII, 1534

Albeit, the King's Majesty justly and rightfully is and oweth to be the supreme head of the Church of England, and so is recognized by the clergy of this realm in their Convocations; yet nevertheless for corroboration and confirmation thereof, and for increase of virtue in Christ's religion within this realm of England, and to repress and extirp all errors, heresies and other enormities and abuses heretofore used in the same, Be it enacted by authority of this present Parliament that the King our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England called *Anglicana Ecclesia*, and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm as well the title and style thereof, as all honours, dignities, preeminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits and commodities, to the said dignity of supreme head of the same Church belonging and appertaining.



Document 11

Source: The Arnolfini Portrait, oil painting by Dutch artist Jan van Eyck, believed to depict the Italian merchant Giovanni di Nicolao Arnolfini and his wife, 1434



Document 12

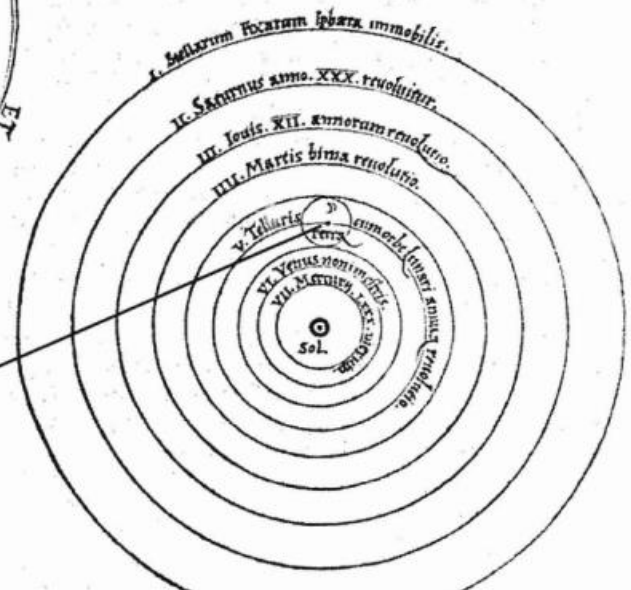
Source: Drawings of the universe by Claudius Ptolemy (circa 100 CE) and Nicolaus Copernicus (circa 1500).

Note: Ptolemy (tol-eh-mee) was a Roman astronomer who lived in Alexandria, Egypt, about 100 years after the time of Jesus. He developed a theory of the universe that was adopted by most scholars during the Middle Ages. The Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus lived from 1473 to 1543. Relying mostly on mathematics, he developed a very different understanding of the universe. Geocentric means "earth-centered" and heliocentric means "sun-centered."

The Geocentric Universe of Ptolemy



The Heliocentric Universe of Copernicus



Document 13

Source: Prologue from the play *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, an English playwright, poet, and actor, 1593

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,¹
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd
love,

And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.²

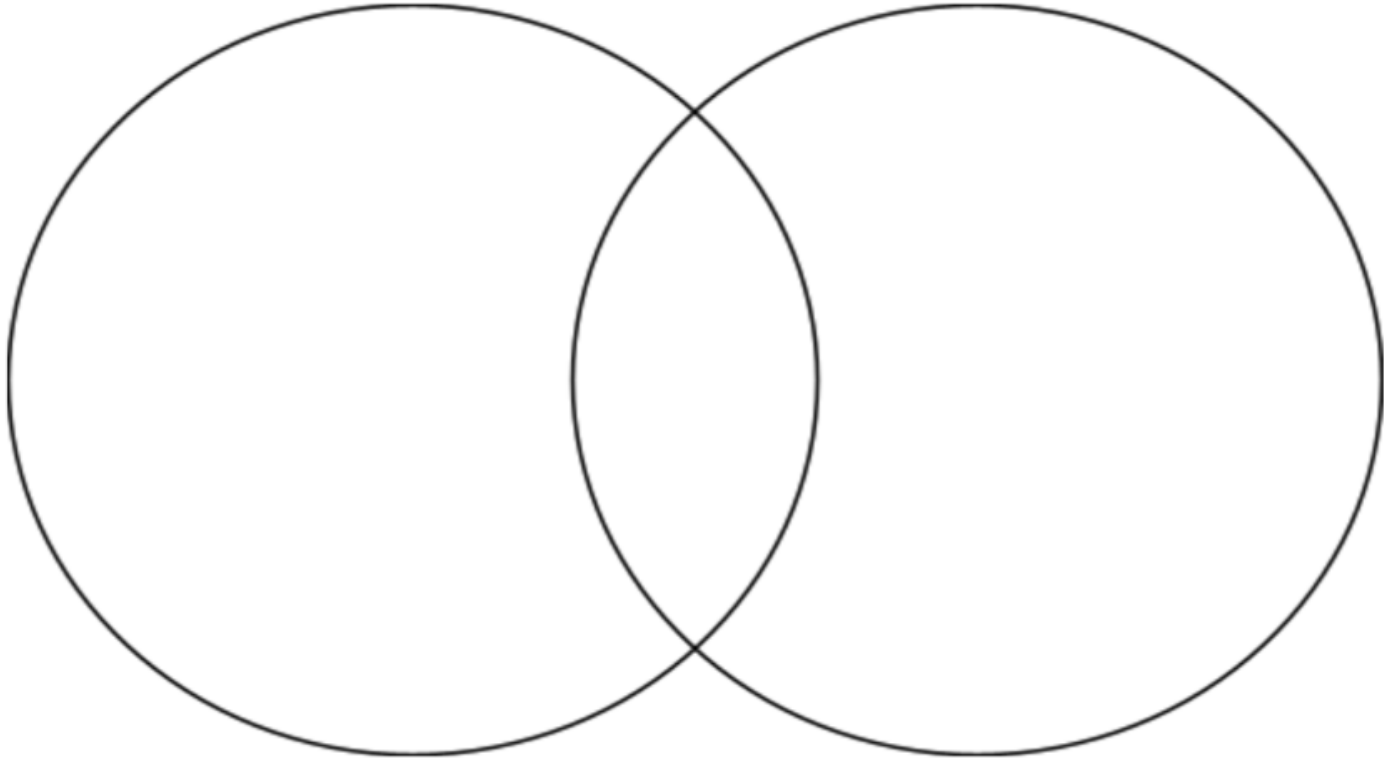
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European Renaissance Primary Source Analysis

Prompt: To what extent did the Renaissance change Western European society in the period between the 14th century and early 17th century?

PREPLAN



CONTEXT

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

Doc #	Difference from Medieval Europe? Economic, social/cultural, and/or political changes?
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	

GROUPING (must use at LEAST 7 DOCS)

Main Idea #1:

Doc #s:

Main Idea #2:

Doc #s:

Main Idea #3:

Doc #s:

THESIS STATEMENT