Quang Huynh

Learning, Literature and the Renaissance

**Roman Heritage** – Throughout the Middle Ages, people of the Latin West would write and worship a version of the Roman culture, such as language, obey their laws, and travel their roads. Even the clothing of the royalty had the designs of the Roman officials. But the Greco-Roman works and objects have disappeared with the emergence and rise of the biblical world in the Christian and Hebrew scriptures.

**Renaissance –** The pace of intellectual and artistic life would appear in the mid-fourteenth century called the Renaissance, beginning in northern Italy and would later spread to northern Europe. A renaissance is a period of intense artistic and intellectual activity. The European Renaissance is said to be the rebirth of Greco-Roman culture.

**Greek influence –** The Latin Christians would gain many documents of Greek and Arabic work. This would include works from Plato, Aristotle, along with Greek treatises on mathematics, geography, science, philosophy, and medicine.

**Translations from Arabic –** Jewish scholars would contribute greatly to the translation and analyzation of Arabic and other manuscripts.

**Universities –** The Latin West would innovate the idea of universities, which are degree-granting institutions of higher learning. Universities set the curriculum for each discipline and gave out final examinations for degrees. Students who completed longer training and learning can become masters or doctors.

**Scholasticism, Thomas Aquinas –** Theologians were sought to synthesize the rediscovered philosophical works of Aristotle, and the commentaries of Avicenna with the Bible’s revealed truth. This was known as scholasticism, which is a philosophical and theological system devised to reconcile Aristotelian philosophy and Roman Catholic theology. Moreover, Thomas Aquinas is a brilliant Dominican priest who taught theology at the University of Paris.

**\*Humanism/humanists**- In the mid-fourteenth century, a literary movement of humanists would begin in Florence, influenced by Dante. Humanists are European scholars, writers, and teachers associated with the study of humanities, which is influential in the fifteenth century and later.

**Francesco Petrarch –** Francesco Petrarch is a poet/humanist writer. Petrarch and storyteller Giovanni Boccaccio proclaimed a revival of the classical Greco-Roman tradition they had felt for centuries, lying below the rubble of the Middle Ages.

**Erasmus –** Dutch scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam had produced a critical edition of the New Testament in Greek. Erasmus would correct many errors and mistranslations in the Latin text that had been in general use throughout the Middle Ages.

**Gutenberg’s Printing Press –** Johann Gutenberg of Mainz would lead the new printing technology. The Gutenberg’s Bible of 1454 will be the first book in the West printed from movable type, would show beauty and craftsmanship that bore witness to Gutenberg’s years of experimentation. Other humanists will work closely with printers and spread the new techniques to Italy and France.

**Art: Giotto, Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Van Eyck -** Florentine painter Giotto is credited with the revival of the “lost art of painting.” Giotto replaced the stiff figures of Byzantine style to more natural and human portraits with emotions. In addition, Leonardo Da Vinci used all oil paints on the Mona Lisa, and worked on many medias. His notebooks contained many imaginative designs of modern vehicles. Michelangelo painted frescoes of biblical scenes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican, sculpted the statues of David and Moses, along with designing the dome for a new Saint Petr’s Basilica in Rome. Moreover, Van Eyck mixed his pigments with linseed oil in place of egg yolk of earlier centuries, which made painting dry more slowly and gave pictures a shine. Many other Italian painters will copy Van Eyck’s technique.

**Niccolo Machiavelli-** who was he? What topics did he write about? – Niccolo Machiavelli is a diplomat and a civil servant of Florence. Machiavelli is known for his book, the Prince. Machiavelli wrote about topics in politics and power. He understood how to gain power and the inner-workings of politics.