Making of the Western Mind
Institute for the Study of Western Civilization
Week 19, The Renaissance
Sunday March 8, 2020
Niall Ferguson:
“The rise of the West is, quite simply, the pre-eminent historical phenomenon of the second half of the second millennium after Christ. It is the story at the very heart of modern history. It is perhaps the most challenging riddle historians have to solve.”

The “Grand Narrative” and doubts about it.
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IF THE RISE OF THE WEST IS REAL
WHAT ROLE DID THE RENAISSANCE PLAY?
The Great Transition (1300-1600)
1. The emergence of the modern state.
2. The emergence of modern diplomacy.
3. The creation of the modern standing army.
4. The creation of modern taxation.
5. The creation of vernacular literature.
6. The creation of secular culture.
7. The creation of the idea of secular virtue.
8. The creation of modern vision (perspective).
9. The creation of modern religion (Protestants).
10. The creation of modern democratic ideas.
11. The creation of modern historiography.
Italy in the middle
Florence in the middle of Italy
Dante in the middle of Florence
Florence, 1300
Dante Alighieri, 1265-1321
nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovi per una selva oscura,
ché la diritta via era smarrita.
   Ahì quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte
che nel pensier rinova la paura!
   Tant’è amara che poco è più morte;
ma per trattar del ben ch’i’ vi trovai,
dirò de’ l’altre cose ch’i’ v’ho scorte.
   Io non so ben ridir com’i’ v’intrai,
tant’era pien di sonno a quel punto
che la verace via abbandonai.
   Ma poi ch’i’ fui al piè d’un colle giunto,
là dove terminava quella valle
che m’avea di paura il cor compunto,
guardai in alto e vidi le sue spalle
vestite già de’ raggi del pianeta
che mena dritto altrui per ogne calle.
   Allor fu la paura un poco queta,
che nel lago del cor m’era durata
la notte ch’i’ passai con tanta pietà.
   E come quei che con lena affannata,
uscito fuor del pelago a la riva,
si volge a l’acqua perigiosa e guata,
cosi l’animo mio, ch’ancor fuggiva,
si volse a retro a rimirar lo passo
che non lasciò già mai persona viva.
   Poi ch’èi posato un poco il corpo lasso,
ripresi via per la piaggia diserta,
sì che ’l piè fermo sempre era ’l più basso.

When I had journeyed half of our life’s way,
I found myself within a shadowed forest,
for I had lost the path that does not stray.
   Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was,
that savage forest, dense and difficult,
which even in recall renews my fear:
   so bitter—death is hardly more severe!
But to retell the good discovered there,
I’ll also tell the other things I saw.
   I cannot clearly say how I had entered
the wood; I was so full of sleep just at
the point where I abandoned the true path.
   But when I’d reached the bottom of a hill—it
rose along the boundary of the valley
that had harassed my heart with so much fear—
I looked on high and saw its shoulders clothed
already by the rays of that same planet
which serves to lead men straight along all roads.
   At this my fear was somewhat quieted;
for through the night of sorrow I had spent,
the lake within my heart felt terror present.
   And just as he who, with exhausted breath,
having escaped from sea to shore, turns back
to watch the dangerous waters he has quit,
   so did my spirit, still a fugitive,
turn back to look intently at the pass
that never has let any man survive.
   I let my tired body rest awhile.
Moving again, I tried the lonely slope—
my firm foot always was the one below.
nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
ché la diritta via era smarrita.

Ah! quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte
che nel pensier rinova la paura!

Tant’è amara che poco è più morte;
ma per trattar del ben ch’i’ vi trovai,
dirò de l’altr’ cose ch’i’ v’ho scorte.

Io non so ben ridir com’i’ v’intrai,
tant’ era pien di sonno a quel punto
che la verace via abbandonai.
The World of Dante (c.1250-1300)
Medieval Time/Space-Unity

1. There is **ONE TEXT**
   Christian Ontology.
The Bible-OT & NT-is the Text.

2. **TIME IS ONE STORY**
   beginning/middle/end.
   Time is one solid piece/
   one story in which we all participate.
   Creation/Incarnation/Last Judgement.
   God's creation on the move.

   Time stretches out in one unbroken piece/
   one narrative.
   **No cycles;**
Time stretches out in one unbroken piece
one narrative.
No cycles;
No repetitions.
One Creation/One Salvation/One End

And Time is HOLY.
God's revelation will come IN HISTORY
God's story and plan revealed in time, through time.

Everything is part of ONE GREAT DIVINE PAGEANT.
All time and space fall under one roof one unity stretching out.
All humanity, all nature all animals all everything together.
The world as NOAH'S ARK.
3. There is a **ONE UNIFIED SPACE**
   A unified space.
   A limited knowable time/space.

   No infinity.
   No hidden Black Holes.
   A known and knowable world.
   (but tiny little hints like Ulysses in DC that there is more)

   **SPACE** is full with gradations/order/unity.
   It is **knowable** because it is God’s space.

   God **WANTS** us to know and understand our world.
   God would not trick us. (Aristotle and Plato agree)
   It has a limit/an order/a goal.
4. The **ART** of this time shows us this one story / one piece / one human narrative.
   The Gothic Cathedral.
   The Divine Comedy.
   Scrovegni Chapel
   Maestá

5. This Judeo/Christian/Hellenic tradition has a kind of **ENCYCLOPAEDIA**.
   Wants to include it all / aristotle / christ / aug / everything.
   Thus 13thC Cathedral has everything in it; everything under one roof.

6. Dante's **DIVINE COMEDY** the one most perfect literary embodiment of this world.
Dante Alighieri, 1265-1321
Florence, 1300-1350
Fourteenth Century Background
1. Universal chronology breaks down into “ages.”
2. Church breaks down into schism and heresy.
3. Empire breaks down, thanks to collapse of Pope-Emperor partnership.
4. Christendom breaks down into “Europe.”
5. Europe breaks down into nation-states.
6. Italy breaks down into communes.
7. France breaks down into the Hundred Years War. (1337)
8. International language of Latin breaks down into vernaculars.
9. Literatures break down into national/vernacular works.
10. Art breaks down into personal point of view (Giotto).
11. Traditional religion of church breaks down into personal piety, personal inspiration, personal secret religious communication, and mysticism.
12. Christian confidence, piety breaks down under burden of Black Death.
13. Philosophy breaks down into subjectivism, intuition (Ockham).
14. Social cohesion, labor cooperation, entrepreneurial/labor unity breaks down under the impact of Black Death. End of “happy” family manor, beginning of modern labor, unions vs. owners (example: Ciompi Rebellion in Florence, 1381)
15. Agriculture breaks down under over-extension, famine, drought, and then Black Death; no workers, land values explode, overpopulation.
Francesco Petrarca, 1304-1374
Solo e pensoso i più deserti campi
vo mesurando a passi tardi e lenti,
e gli occhi porto per fuggire intenti
ove vestigio uman l'arena stampi.

Altro schermo non trovo che mi scampi
dal manifesto accorger de la genti,
perché negli atti d'alegrezza spenti
di fuor si legge com'io dentro avampi.

Sì ch'io mi credo omai che monti e piagge
e fiumi e selve sappian di che tempre
sia la mia vita, ch'é celata altrui.

Ma pur sì aspre vie, né sì selvagge
cercar non so, ch'Amor non venga sempre
ragionando con meco; et io co' lui.

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Alone and deep in thought
I measure with slow and lingering steps
the loneliest fields,
ready to flee if my eyes discern
a human footprint in the sand.

No other defense have I,
from the knowing glances of mankind,
for in my looks, bereft of joy,
one may read outwardly
how I burn within.

So that now I think
only the mountains and the hillsides
the rivers and forests,
know the temper of my life,
which is hidden from all men.

Yet no path is so harsh, so savage,
that Love cannot find a way to join me,
and to speak to me,
and I to Him.
Francesco Petrarca, 1304-1374
Petrarch in the Forum with friend Giovanni Colonna

HISTORY

Sunday March 8, 2020
Petrarch with his Books

The Sonnet

“Solo e Pensoso”
Petrarch with his Books
The Sonnet
“Solo e Pensoso”

Il Canzoniere
The Big Song Book
The Sonnet

1. Petrarch “invents” it.
2. One subject (love)
3. Short
4. a/b/b/a
   or
   a/b/a/b

14 lines (various)
12 syllables/line (various)
Giovanni Boccaccio, 1305-1375
Giovanni Boccaccio, 1305-1375
IL DECAMERON
Di Messer
Giovanni Boccaccio
Cittadino Fiorentino.
Ricorretto in Roma, et Emendato secondo
l'ordine del Sacro Conc. di Trento,
Et riscontrato in Firenze con Tesi Antichi & alla sua
vera lezione ridotto da Deputati di loro Alt. Ser.
Nuovamente Stampato.
Con Privilegj del Sommo Pontefice, delle Magnificis del Re Chris
di Christianissimo Re Catholico, delle Serenissimi Gran Duca & Principe di Toscana,

IN FIORENEZA
Nella Stamperia de i Giunti
MDLXXIII.

Giovanni Boccaccio, 1305-1375
I. Florentine
2. Merchant-banker
3. Layman
4. Traveler
5. Scholar
6. Greek
Luigi Marsili, (1342-1394)
Augustinian Prior of monastery at Santo Spirito
friend of Petrarch
friend of Boccaccio
Meetings at Santo Spirito:
Coluccio Salutati
Poggio Bracciolini
Roberto dei Rossi
Palla Strozzi

Sunday March 8, 2020
Giovanni Boccaccio and Florence
Coluccio Salutati
Florentine Chancellor
1331-1406

COMES TO FLORENCE 1400 TO TEACH GREEK

Manuel Chrysoloras
1355-1415
1400: Florence ready for new thought.
Gian Galeazzo Visconti
1351-September 3, 1402

Coluccio Salutati
Florentine Chancellor
1331-1406
Castello Visconteo, Milan
1385: Coup in Milan
Gian Galeazzo overthrows his uncle Bernabó
Gian Galeazzo in control.
1387: Milan Conquers Verona
1387: Giangaleazzo marries daughter Valentina to Louis d’Orleans, Brother of King Charles VI
1390: Treaty of Alliance between Milan and Siena
Feb 1399: Pisa Joins Milan Alliance
Aug 1399: Siena Accepts Milanese Overlordship
Florence pays huge price for Price Rupert of Germany to come to Italy with troops to defeat Visconti. Oct 1401: Rupert defeated by Milan. All the money wasted.
June 1402: Milanese troops enter Bologna
Summer 1402: Florence totally isolated.
Empire cant help.
France cant help-royal chaos.
England cant help: political upheaval
Pope cant help: Schism
Siena, Pisa, Bologna in hands of enemy.
Summer 1402:
The greatest crisis in the history of the Florentine Republic
Summer 1402:
Florence waited all summer for the attack.
September 3, 1402: Giangaleazzo Visconti died of plague.
In Florence, in leadership circles the Crisis was a sign. The meaning was visible in Gregorio Dati History of Florence: “...all the freedom of Italy lay in the hands of the Florentines alone... every other power deserted them.” Freedom won. Free Flo Republic won.
Result: Inside the salons, a new ethic was formed: Greek philosophy, Roman history, Florentine Republic
THE CRISIS OF THE EARLY ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

By Hans Baron

1900-1988
1400-1405: Circle of scholars, politicians, businessmen

Salutati

Fra Luigi Marsili

Poggio Bracciolini

Palla Strozzi
A NEW VIEW OF HISTORY EMERGES: FLORENCE AS HEROIC REPUBLIC FREEDOM WINS: CULTURE POLITICS HISTORY
Historiarum Florentini populi libri XII

History of the Florentine People, 12 Books

Republics good things, Roman Empire not so good.

Leonardo Bruni:

Italy had revived in recent centuries; could be described as entering a new age.
Manual Chrysoloras not only teaches Greek to Flo. He also brings books in Greek to Flo.
Manuel Chrysoloras
1355-1415
1395 Chrysoloras in Venice
Meets Guarino and others

Ptolemy of Alexandria
100 - 170 AD
The Geography
Ptolemy of Alexandria
100 - 170 AD
The Almagest and
The Geography
The Geography gives us a complete version of latitude and longitude. It posits a GEOCENTRIC UNIVERSE. Columbus carried copy of the Geography maps with him.
Manuel Chrysoloras
1355-1415
1395 Chrysoloras in Venice
Meets Guarino and others
Jacopo d’ Angelo di Scarperia
1360: born in Scarperia
1380: Florence meet Salutati
1395: Venice meet Chrysoloras
1396: Constantinople with Chrysoloras
1397-1400: Florence
1406: Translate Ptolemy
1411: death in Rome
Ptolemy Comes to Florence, Rome
Jacopo trans. Geographia
Studies of Ptolemy
Print Ptolemy Geographia
Columbus Carries Ptolemy with him.
15th Century Europe
Mapping the World
The Geometrization of the World
The Power of Abstraction
Ptolemy Leads to Columbus
5th Century Italian manuscript based on Ptolemy
Vitruvius Presents His Book on Architecture to the young Emperor Augustus, 20 BC
De architectura – Ten Books on Architecture

1. Town planning, architecture or civil engineering in general, and the qualifications required of an architect (Education)
2. Building materials
3. Temples and the orders of architecture
4. 'continuation of book IV'
5. Civil buildings
6. Domestic buildings
7. Pavements and decorative plasterwork (FRESCO)
8. Water supplies and aqueducts
9. Sciences influencing architecture – geometry, measurement, astronomy, sundial
10. Use and construction of machines - Roman siege engines, water mills, drainage machines, Roman technology, hoisting,
Vitruvius, De Architectura, Bk X
St Gall manuscript on parchment (Vellum)
Dated: 750-987
Vitruvius, De Architectura, Bk X
St Gall manuscript on parchment
Dated: 750-987

1415: Poggio Brings Vitruvius to Florence
Brunelleschi reads Vitruvius
A Byzantine Greek world map according to Ptolemy's first (conic) projection. From Codex Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus 82, Constantinople c. 1300. Parchment 575 x 418 mm. Probably assembled by Maximus Planudes; later in possession of Palla Strozzi (1372-1462) then with Federico da Montefeltro.
Latin 1406

Vitruvius, De Architectura,
232. Design of Alberti’s Perspective Construction, according to recent discoveries

a. height of human being  b. base line  c. vanishing point  d. orthogonals

e. “little space”  f. distance point  g. vertical intersection  h. transversals

Brunelleschi’s perspective theory provided no system for projecting imaginary spaces and their contents within a modern scientific standpoint, produced a result that was aesthetically attractive and visually convincing across to the first. These horizontal lines would become the desired transversals in the first construction, and form trapezoids in conjunction with its orthogonals. The results can be easily counterproved by drawing diagonals through the corners of the trapezoids. These diagonals
Rebecca Receives Prophecy

Old Isaac Tricked into Blessing Jacob instead of elder Esau

Rebecca gives birth to Twins

Esau sells his birthright to bro

Isaac sends Esau hunting

Old Isaac Tricked into Blessing Jacob instead of elder Esau

Sunday March 8, 2020
BOTTICELLI IN FLORENCE 1470S WITH MEDICI
Simonetta Vespucci, 1453- April 26, 1476, buried in the church of Ognissanti, Florence
TRATTORIA
BORG O ANTICO
Puccini: Gianni Schicchi, O mio babbino caro