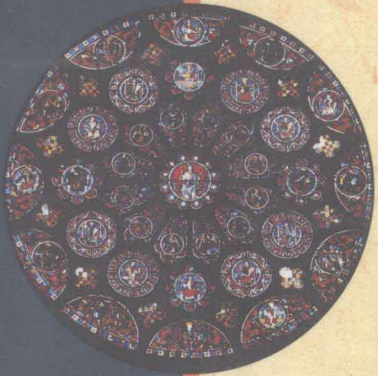


# THE HUMANISTIC TRADITION

SECOND EDITION

Gloria K. Fiero



# 3

On the Threshold of  
Modernity:  
The Renaissance and  
the Reformation

*Auch Bam*

—E

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HUMANISTIC  
TRADITION

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On the Threshold of  
Modernity:  
The Renaissance and  
the Reformation

Gloria K. Fiero

*University of Southwestern Louisiana*

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*Front cover*

Main image: Raphael, *The School of Athens* (detail), 1509-1511. Fresco, 26 ft. × 18 ft. Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican, Rome. Scala/Art Resource, New York.

Insets: (top) Epicetus, Cup (detail), ca. 510 B.C.E. Diameter 13 in. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.

(center) Detail of South rose window, Chartres Cathedral, France, thirteenth century. Photo: Sonia Halliday, Weston Turville.

(bottom) *Shiva Nataraja* from Chidambaram, ca. eleventh century. Bronze, height 21¼ in. Museum van Asiatische Kunst Amsterdam. Photo: Bildarchiv preussischer kulturbesitz, Berlin.

*Frontispiece*

Detail of Limbourg Brothers, February Calendar page from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* ("Very Precious Hours"), ca. 1413-1416. Illumination. Musée Condé, Chantilly France. Giraudon.

# THE HUMANISTIC TRADITION

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the Reformation



# Preface

"It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life!" exclaimed Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, as she watched the Cheshire Cat slowly disappear, leaving only the outline of a broad smile. "I've often seen a cat without a grin, but a grin without a cat!" A student who encounters an ancient Greek epic, a Yoruba mask, or a Mozart opera – lacking any context for these works – might be equally baffled. It may be helpful, therefore, to begin by explaining how the artifacts (the "grin") of the humanistic tradition relate to the larger and more elusive phenomenon (the "cat") of human culture.

## The Humanistic Tradition and the Humanities

In its broadest sense, the term *humanistic tradition* refers to humankind's cultural legacy – the sum total of the significant ideas and achievements handed down from generation to generation. This tradition is the product of responses to conditions that have confronted all people throughout history. Since the beginnings of life on earth, human beings have tried to ensure their own survival by controlling nature. They have attempted to come to terms with the inevitable realities of disease and death. They have endeavored to establish ways of living collectively and communally. And they have persisted in the desire to understand themselves and their place in the universe. In response to these ever-present and universal challenges – *survival, communality, and self-knowledge* – human beings have created and transmitted the tools of science and technology, social and cultural institutions, religious and philosophic systems, and various forms of personal expression, the sum total of which we call culture.

Even the most ambitious survey cannot assess all manifestations of the humanistic tradition. This book therefore focuses on the creative legacy referred to collectively as *the humanities*: literature, philosophy, history (in its literary dimension), architecture, the visual arts (including photography and film), music, and dance. Selected examples from each of these disciplines constitute our *primary sources*. Primary sources (that is, works original to the age that produced them) provide first-hand evidence of human inventiveness and ingenuity. The primary sources in this text have been chosen on the basis of their authority, their beauty, and their enduring value. They are, simply stated, the masterpieces of their time and, in some cases, of all time. Because of their universal appeal, they have been imitated and transmitted from generation to generation. Such works are, as well, the landmark examples of a specific time and place: they offer insight into the ideas and values of the society in which they were produced. *The Humanistic Tradition* surveys these landmark works, but joins "the grin" to "the cat" by examining them within their political, economic, and social contexts.

*The Humanistic Tradition* explores a living legacy. History confirms that the humanities are not frivolous social ornaments, but rather, integral forms of a given culture's values, ambitions, and beliefs. Poetry, painting, philosophy, and music are not, generally speaking, products of unstructured leisure or indulgent individuality; rather, they are tangible expressions of the human quest for the good (one might even say the "complete") life. Throughout history, the arts have served the domains of the sacred, the ceremonial, and the communal. And even in modern times, as these domains have come under assault and as artists have openly challenged time-honored traditions, the reciprocal relationship between artist and community prevails. Unquestionably, the creative minds of every age both reflect and shape their culture. In these pages, then, we find works made by individuals with special sensitivities and unique talents for interpreting the conditions and values of their day. The drawings of Leonardo da Vinci, for example, reveal a passionate determination to understand the operations and functions of nature. And while Leonardo's talent far exceeded that of the average individual of his time, his achievements may be viewed as a mirror of the robust curiosity that characterized his time and place – the Age of the Renaissance in Italy.

## The Scope of the Humanistic Tradition

The humanistic tradition is not the exclusive achievement of any one geographic region, race, or class of human beings. For that reason, this text assumes a global and multicultural rather than exclusively Western perspective. At the same time, Western contributions are emphasized, first, because the audience for these books is predominantly Western, but also because in recent centuries the West has exercised a dominant influence on the course and substance of global history. Clearly, the humanistic tradition belongs to all of humankind, and the best way to understand the Western contribution to that tradition is to examine it in the arena of world culture.

As a survey, *The Humanistic Tradition* cannot provide an exhaustive analysis of our creative legacy. The critical reader will discover many gaps. Some aspects of culture that receive extended examination in traditional Western humanities surveys have been pared down to make room for the too often neglected contributions of Islam, Africa, and Asia. This book is necessarily selective – it omits many major figures and treats others only briefly. Primary sources are arranged, for the most part, chronologically, but they are presented as manifestations of *the informing ideas of the age* in which they were produced. The intent is to examine the evidence of the humanistic tradition thematically and topically, rather than to compile a series of mini-histories of the individual arts.

## Studying the Humanistic Tradition

To study the creative record is to engage in a dialogue with the past, one that brings us face to face with the values of our ancestors, and, ultimately, with our own. This dialogue is (or should be) a source of personal revelation and delight; like Alice in Wonderland, our strange, new encounters will be enriched according to the degree of curiosity and patience we bring to them. Just as lasting friendships with special people are cultivated by extended familiarity, so our appreciation of a painting, a play, or a symphony depends on close attention and repeated contact. There are no shortcuts to the study of the humanistic tradition, but there are some techniques that may be helpful. It should be useful, for instance, to approach each primary source from the triple perspective of its *text*, its *context*, and its *subtext*.

*The Text:* The *text* of any primary source refers to its *medium* (that is, what it is made of), its *form* (that is, its outward shape), and its *content* (that is, the subject it describes). All literature, for example, whether intended to be spoken or read, depends on the medium of words – the American poet Robert Frost once defined literature as “performance in words.” Literary form varies according to the manner in which words are arranged. So poetry, which shares with music and dance rhythmic organization, may be distinguished from prose, which normally lacks regular rhythmic pattern. The main purpose of prose is to convey information, to narrate, and to describe; poetry, a form that assumes freedom from conventional patterns of grammar, is usually concerned with expressing intense emotions. Philosophy (the search for truth through reasoned analysis) and history (the record of the past) make use of prose to analyze and communicate ideas and information. In literature, as in most kinds of expression, content and form are usually interrelated. The subject matter or the form of a literary work will determine its *genre*. For instance, a long narrative poem recounting the adventures of a hero is an *epic*, while a formal, dignified speech in praise of a person or thing constitutes a *eulogy*.

The visual arts – painting, sculpture, architecture, and photography – employ a wide variety of media, such as wood, clay, colored pigments, marble, granite, steel, and (more recently) plastic, neon, film, and computers. The form or outward shape of a work of art depends on the manner in which the artist manipulates the formal elements of color, line, texture, and space. Unlike words, these formal elements lack denotative meaning. The artist may manipulate form to describe and interpret the visible world (as in such genres as portraiture and landscape painting); to generate fantastic and imaginative kinds of imagery; or, to create nonrepresentational imagery – that is, without identifiable subject matter. In general, however, the visual arts are all spatial in that they operate and are apprehended in space.

The medium of music is sound. Like literature, music is durational: that is, it unfolds over the period of time in which it occurs, rather than all at once. The formal elements of music are melody, rhythm, harmony, and tone color – elements that also characterize the oral life of

literature. As with the visual arts, the formal elements of music are without symbolic content, but while literature, painting, and sculpture may imitate or describe nature, music is almost always nonrepresentational – it rarely has meaning beyond the sound itself. For that reason, music is the most difficult of the arts to describe in words, as well as (in the view of some) the most affective of the arts. Dance, the artform that makes the human body itself a medium of expression, is, like music, temporal and performance-oriented. Like music, dance exploits rhythm as a formal tool, but like painting and sculpture, it unfolds in space as well as time.

In analyzing the text of a work of literature, art, or music, we might ask how its formal elements contribute to its meaning and affective power. We might examine the ways in which the artist manipulates medium and form to achieve a characteristic manner of execution and expression that we call *style*. We may try to determine the extent to which a style reflects the personal vision of the artist and the larger vision of his or her time and place. Comparing the styles of various artworks from a single era, we may discover that they share certain defining features and characteristics. Similarities (both formal and stylistic) between, for instance, Golden Age Greek temples and Greek tragedies, between Chinese lyric poems and landscape paintings, and between postmodern fiction and pop sculpture, prompt us to seek the unifying moral and aesthetic values of the cultures in which they were produced.

*The Context:* We use the word *context* to describe the historical and cultural milieu. To determine the context, we ask: In what time and place did the artifact originate? How did it function within the society in which it was created? Was the purpose of the piece decorative, didactic, magical, propagandistic? Did it serve the religious or political needs of the community? Sometimes our answers to these questions are mere guesses. Nevertheless, understanding the function of an artifact often serves to clarify the nature of its form (and vice-versa). For instance, much of the literature produced prior to the fifteenth century was spoken or sung rather than read; for that reason, such literature tends to feature repetition and rhyme, devices that facilitated memorization. We can assume that literary works embellished with frequent repetitions, such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Hebrew Bible, were products of an oral tradition. Determining the original function of an artwork also permits us to assess its significance in its own time and place: The paintings on the walls of Paleolithic caves, which are among the most compelling animal illustrations in the history of world art, are not “artworks” in the modern sense of the term; cave art was most probably an extension of sacred hunting rituals, the performance of which was essential to the survival of the community. Understanding the relationship between text and context is one of the principal concerns of any inquiry into the humanistic tradition.

*The Subtext:* The *subtext* of the literary or artistic object refers to its secondary and implied meanings. The subtext embraces the emotional or intellectual messages embedded in, or implied by, a work of art. The epic poems of the

ancient Greeks, for instance, which glorify prowess and physical courage, carry a subtext that suggests such virtues are exclusively male. The state portraits of the seventeenth-century French ruler, Louis XIV, carry the subtext of unassailable and absolute power. In our own century, Andy Warhol's serial adaptations of soup cans and Coca-Cola bottles offer wry commentary on the supermarket mentality of postmodern American culture. Analyzing the implicit message of an artwork helps us to determine the values and customs of the age in which it was produced and to test these values against others.

### Beyond *The Humanistic Tradition*

This book offers only small, enticing samples from an enormous cultural buffet. To dine more fully, students are encouraged to go beyond the sampling presented at this table; and for the most sumptuous feasting, nothing can substitute for first-hand experience. Students, therefore, should make every effort to supplement this book with visits to art museums and galleries, concert halls, theaters, and libraries. *The Humanistic Tradition* is designed for typical students, who may or may not be able to read music, but who surely are able to cultivate an appreciation of music in performance. The clefs that appear in the text refer to the forty-five Music Listening Selections found on two accompanying cassettes, available from Brown and Benchmark Publishers. Lists of suggestions for further reading are included at the end of each chapter, while a selected general bibliography of humanities resources appears at the end of each book.

### The Second Edition

The second edition of *The Humanistic Tradition* broadens the coverage of non-European cultures, while emphasizing the fertile, reciprocal nature of global interchange. This edition also gives increased attention to the contributions of women artists and writers. Selections from the writings of the Han historian, Ssu-ma Ch'ien; from Li Ju-chen's eighteenth-century satire, *Flowers in the Mirror*; and from modern Chinese and Japanese poetry enhance our appreciation of the Asian literary tradition. A new, more graceful and precise translation of the Koran appears in Book 2. Three Native American tales have been added to Book 3. Short stories by Isabel Allende (Chile) and Chinua Achebe (Africa) now enrich Book 6, which has been updated to include a section on sexual orientation, AIDS art, and the most recent developments in global culture. In response to the requests and suggestions of numerous readers, we have added literary selections from the works of Cervantes, Pushkin, Frederick Douglass, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Kate Chopin, and Gwendolyn Brooks; and we have lengthened the excerpts from the *Iliad*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, the Gospel of Matthew, the writings of Augustine, Dante's *Inferno*, *Sundiata*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

The second edition offers a larger selection of high quality color illustrations and a number of new illustrations, some representative of the rich legacy of Japanese

art. Expanded timelines and glossaries, updated bibliographies, and color maps provide convenient study resources for readers. In Book 3, materials on the Euro-American encounter have been augmented with text and illustrations. To facilitate the transition from Book 3 to Book 4, we have added to the latter an introductory summary of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Other changes of organization and emphasis have been made in response to the bountiful suggestions of readers.

### Acknowledgments

Writing *The Humanistic Tradition* has been an exercise in humility. Without the assistance of learned friends and colleagues, assembling a book of this breadth would have been an impossible task. James H. Dormon read all parts of the manuscript and made extensive and substantive editorial suggestions; as his colleague, best friend, and wife, I am most deeply indebted to him. I owe thanks to the following faculty members of the University of Southwestern Louisiana: for literature, Allen David Barry, Darrell Bourque, C. Harry Bruder, John W. Fiero, Emilio F. Garcia, Doris Meriwether, and Patricia K. Rickels; for history, Ora-Wes S. Cady, John Moore, Bradley Pollack, and Thomas D. Schoonover; for philosophy, Steve Giambrone and Robert T. Kirkpatrick; for geography, Tim Reilly; for the sciences, Mark Konikoff and John R. Meriwether; and for music, James Burke and Robert F. Schmalz.

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The University of Southwestern Louisiana facilitated my lengthy commitment to this project with two Summer Faculty Research Grants. I am indebted also to the University Honors Program and to the secretarial staff of the Department of History and Philosophy. The burden of preparing the second edition has been considerably lightened by the able and spirited assistance of Rosemary Bradley, Associate Publisher at Brown and Benchmark; and by the editorial efficiency of Melanie White at Calmann and King Limited. Finally, I am deeply grateful to my students; their sense of wonder and enthusiasm for learning are continuing reminders of why this book was written.



In the preparation of the second edition, I have benefited from the suggestions and comments generously offered by numerous readers, only some of whom are listed below. I am indebted to the various members of four fine Humanities “teams” – those at Hampton College (Hampton, Virginia), Kean College (Union, New Jersey), Thiel College (Greenville, Pennsylvania), and Tallahassee Community College (Florida). Special thanks go to Enid Housty at Hampton, James R. Bloomfield at Thiel, and Jim Davis and Roy Barineau at Tallahassee. Useful guidance for the revision was provided by other members of these

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Special thanks also to James H. Dormon (University of Southwestern Louisiana) for assistance in expanding the materials on the Euro-American encounter; B. Ross Brown (Northern Arizona University) and Anne H. Lisca (Santa Fe Community College) for reviewing the final manuscript of Book 3.

## SUPPLEMENTS FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

A number of useful supplements are available to instructors using *The Humanistic Tradition*. Please contact your Brown & Benchmark representative or call 1-800-338 5371 to obtain these resources, or to ask for further details.

### Audiocassettes

Two ninety-minute audiocassettes containing a total of forty-five musical selections have been designed exclusively for use with *The Humanistic Tradition*. Cassette One corresponds to the music listening selections discussed in Books 1–3 and Cassette Two contains the music in Books 4–6. Each selection on the cassettes is discussed in the text and includes a voice introduction for easier location. Instructors may obtain copies of the cassettes for classroom use by calling 1-800-338 5371. Individual cassettes may be purchased separately; however, upon the request of instructors who place book orders, Cassette One or Two can be packaged with any of the six texts, so that students may use the musical examples *along with* the text.

### Slide Sets

A set of 50 book-specific slides is available to adopters of *The Humanistic Tradition*. These slides have been especially selected to include many of the less well-known images in the books, and will be a useful complement to your present slide resources. Please contact your Brown & Benchmark representative for further details.

A larger set of 200 book-specific slides is available for purchase from Sandak, Inc. For further information, please contact Sandak, 180 Harvard Avenue, Stamford, CT 06902 (phone 1-800-343-2806, fax 203-967-2445).

### Instructor's Resource Manual

The Instructor's Resource Manual, written by Paul Antal of Front Range Community College, Boulder, and Regis University, Denver, is designed to assist instructors as they plan and prepare for classes. Course outlines and sample syllabi for both semester and quarter systems are included. The chapter summaries emphasize key themes and topics that give focus to the primary source readings. The study questions for each chapter may be removed and copied as handouts for student discussion or written assignments. The *Factual Questions* allow students to recapture the important points of each chapter, while the *Challenge Questions* force students to think more deeply and critically about the subject matter.

The Test Item File, previously at the end of the manual, has been revised and expanded, and is now divided by chapter. Each chapter also has a correlation list that directs instructors

to the appropriate music examples, slides, transparencies, and software sections of the other supplements. A list of suggested videotapes, recordings, videodiscs and their suppliers is included.

### MicroTest III

The questions in the test item file are available on MicroTest III, a powerful but easy-to-use test generating program by Chariot Software Group. MicroTest is available for DOS, Windows, and Macintosh personal computers. With MicroTest, an instructor can easily select the questions from the test item file and print a test and answer key. You can customize questions, headings, and instructions, you can add or import questions of your own, and with the Windows and Macintosh versions, you can print your test in a choice of fonts if your printer supports them. You can obtain a copy of MicroTest III by contacting your local Brown & Benchmark sales representative or by phoning Educational Resources at 1-800-338-5371.

### Call-In/Mail-In/Fax Service

You may use Brown & Benchmark's convenient call-in/mail-in/FAX service to generate tests. Using this test item file, select the questions to include in the customized test. Then simply call (1-800-338-5371), mail (Brown & Benchmark Publishers/25 Kessel Court/Madison, WI 53711), or FAX (608-277-7351) your request to Educational Resources. Within two working days of receiving your order, Brown & Benchmark will send by first-class mail (or FAX), a test master, a student answer sheet, and an answer key for fast and easy grading.

### Brown & Benchmark Humanities Transparencies

A set of 71 acetate transparencies is available with *The Humanistic Tradition*. These show examples of art concepts, architectural styles, art media, maps, musical notation, musical styles, and musical elements.

### Culture 2.0 ©

Developed by Cultural Resources, Inc., for courses in interdisciplinary humanities, Culture 2.0 © is a fascinating journey into humanity's cultural achievements on Hypercard © software. Available in either IBM PC or Macintosh formats, this seven-disk program allows students to explore the achievements of humanity through essays, almanacs, visual, or musical examples. Each time period contains historical, political, religious, philosophical, artistic, and musical categories, creating an interactive, Socratic method of learning for the students. Culture 2.0 © also features note-taking capabilities, report capabilities, and a student workbook for more guided learning. Contact your Brown & Benchmark representative for preview disks or ordering information.

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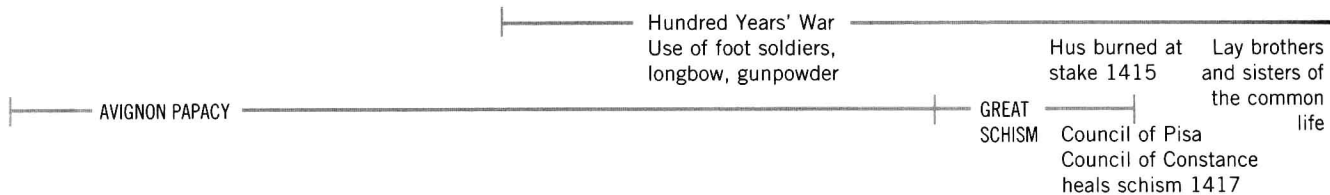
Magna Carta 1215;  
Growth of Parliament  
in England

Black Death destroys  
third of European  
population

Peasant upris-  
ings (*Jacquerie*)

Wat Tyler  
rebellion

Joan of Arc burns at  
stake 1431



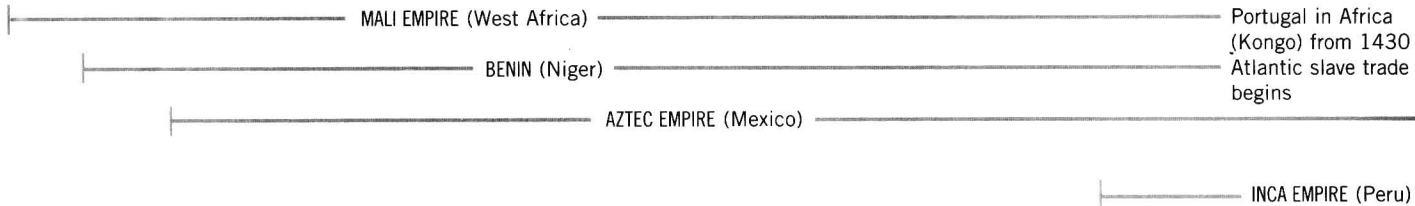
Marco Polo  
reaches China  
ca. 1275

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

NORTHERN RENAISSANCE

Decline of Mayan  
civilization

Ming Dynasty  
established in China 1368



WORLD EVENTS

LITERATURE AND  
PHILOSOPHY

Marguerite of  
Porete writes  
descriptions of  
divine love

Mystical and devotional  
literature:  
Eckhart, Suso, St. Bridget,  
Julian of Norwich

Petrarch: *Canzoniere*; letters

Boccaccio: *Decameron*

Chaucer:  
*Canterbury Tales*

Villon: ballades

Froissart:  
*Chronicles of  
England, France,  
and Spain*

Christine de Pisan:  
*Book on the City of  
Ladies*

Africa: *griots*  
Mali epics: *Sundiata*  
African myths, proverbs, tales,  
poems (oral tradition)

Cimabue: *Madonna  
Enthroned*

Giotto: Arena  
Chapel, Padua

Martini: *Annunciation*

Pucelle: Prayerbook for  
Jeanne d'Evreux

Benin bronzes:  
*Oba of Benin*

Limbourg: *Très Riches  
Heures*

*Danse macabre* woodcuts  
Dance of Death imagery

Sluter: *Well of  
Moses*

African headpieces,  
masks, and fetishes

Aztec architecture:  
Tenochtitlan sculpture

First use of oil paint  
Linear perspective  
Aerial perspective

van Eyck: *Arnolfini  
Marriage*  
van der Weyden:  
*Portrait of a Lady*

Masaccio: *The Tribute Money*  
Donatello: *David*  
Ghiberti: "Gates of Paradise"  
Brunelleschi: Dome of Florence  
Cathedral; Pazzi Chapel

*Ars nova*

Isorhythm

*Caccia*  
Rounds: *Sumer  
is icumen in*

Landini

Machaut: *Messe de  
Notre Dame*  
polyphonic ballades

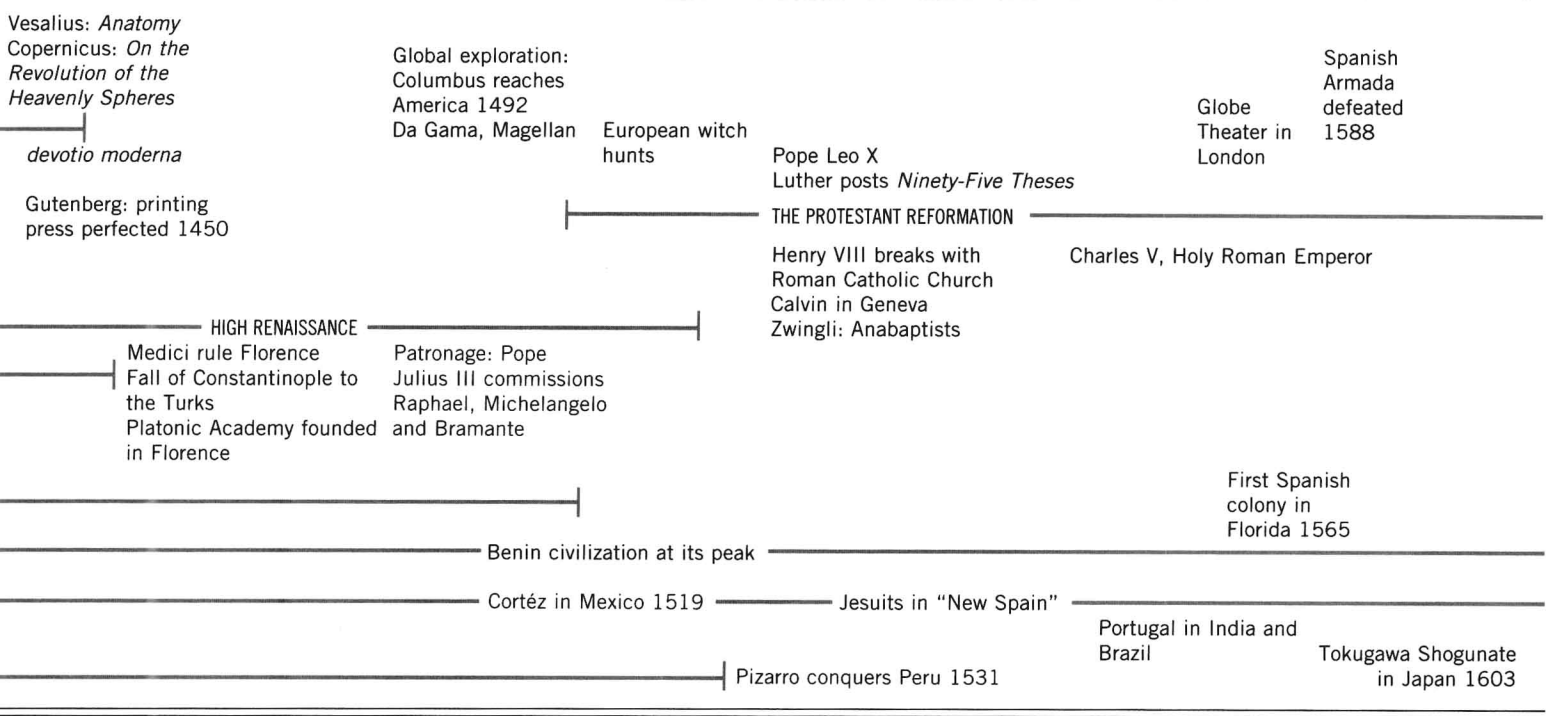
Clavichord

Harpsichord

African chant,  
music, and dance

Aztec/Inca sun dance  
Native American chant

MUSIC AND  
DANCE



Ficino: Neoplatonism Pico: <i>Oration on the Dignity of Man</i>	Castiglione: <i>The Book of the Courtier</i>	Rabelais: <i>Gargantua and Pantagruel</i>	Cervantes: <i>Don Quijote</i>
Alberti: <i>On the Family</i>	Machiavelli: <i>The Prince</i>	Luther: <i>Address to the German Nobility</i>	Montaigne: <i>Essays</i>
Thomas à Kempis: <i>Imitatio Christi</i>	Erasmus: <i>The Praise of Folly</i> More: <i>Utopia</i>	Vasari: <i>Lives of the Artists</i>	Shakespeare: <i>Othello</i> ; sonnets and other plays
Native America: myths, tales, poems (oral tradition)		Maya: <i>Popol Vuh</i>	Benzone: <i>History of the New World</i>

Alberti: <i>Ten Books on Architecture</i> ; Santa Maria Novella	Pollaiuolo: <i>Hercules and Antaeus</i> Botticelli: <i>Birth of Venus</i>	Raphael: <i>Alba Madonna</i> ; <i>School of Athens</i>  Bramante: <i>Tempietto</i>	Titian: <i>Pastoral Concert</i> ; <i>Venus of Urbino</i>	Michelangelo: <i>David</i> ; <i>Sistine Chapel</i> ceiling; dome of St. Peter's
Verrocchio: <i>Colleoni</i>	Leonardo: note books; <i>Mona Lisa</i> ; <i>Last Supper</i>	Dürer: landscapes, portraits, printmaking Bosch: <i>Garden of Earthly Delights</i> Grünewald: <i>Small Crucifixion</i>	Cranach Holbein: <i>Erasmus</i>	Palladio: <i>Four Books on Architecture</i> ; Villa Rotunda
Aztec "Calendar Stone"			Baldung Grien: <i>Witches</i>	Brueghel: <i>Wedding Dance</i>

Dufay: <i>chansons</i> ; <i>Missa l'homme armé</i> Ebreo: <i>Art of Dance</i> ; <i>balli</i> (ballet) Italian court dances: <i>basse dance</i> ; <i>salterello</i> ; <i>piva</i>	Printed music	Josquin des Prez: masses, motets  Word painting Imitation	Lutheran chorales: <i>A Mighty Fortress is Our God</i>	Renaissance madrigals: di Lasso: <i>Matona mia Cara</i> Dowland Morley: <i>My Bonny Lass She Smileth</i>
Town pageants, festival displays, theatrical dance				



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