

East Tennessee State University

Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University

Art Appreciation Open Educational Resource

Open Ancillary Materials

2020

Lesson 08: The Renaissance

Marie Porterfield

East Tennessee State University, marieporterfield@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.etsu.edu/art-appreciation-oer>



Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#), and the [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#)

Editable versions are available for this document and other Art Appreciation lessons at <https://dc.etsu.edu/art-appreciation-oer>.

Recommended Citation

Porterfield, Marie. 2020. "Lesson 08: The Renaissance." *Art Appreciation Open Educational Resource*. Johnson City: East Tennessee State University. <https://dc.etsu.edu/art-appreciation-oer/9>

This Book Contribution is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Ancillary Materials at Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Art Appreciation Open Educational Resource by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. For more information, please contact digilib@etsu.edu.

“The Renaissance” is part of the

ART APPRECIATION

Open Educational Resource

by Marie Porterfield Barry
East Tennessee State University, 2020

Introduction

This course explores the world’s visual arts, focusing on the development of visual awareness, assessment, and appreciation by examining a variety of styles from various periods and cultures while emphasizing the development of a common visual language. The materials are meant to foster a broader understanding of the role of visual art in human culture and experience from the prehistoric through the contemporary.

This is an Open Educational Resource (OER), an openly licensed educational material designed to replace a traditional textbook.

Course Materials

Presentations

The course materials consist of 24 presentations examining art across the globe from prehistory through the contemporary art world. These introduce key vocabulary, explore the way that culture and art are linked, describe the varying methods and techniques of the featured artists, and encourage classroom discourse.

Reading Lists

Each of the 24 presentations has an accompanying reading list which provides links to articles, videos, and other resources. The reading list is meant to reinforce and clarify information covered in each of the presentations.

Sample Assignments

A list of sample assignments is also included. Ranging from brief essays to simple art projects, these are designed to be completed in a sketchbook to more deeply explore course concepts. Intended to encourage learners to think like artists, art critics, and art historians, assignments emphasize practices of creative thinking and artistic method, while reinforcing concepts addressed in classroom lectures and required readings.

Copyright Information

Creative Commons License

This OER is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License \(CC BY-NC-SA 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/); it is intended for non-commercial, educational purposes. Whenever available, images used within this OER are public domain or licensed under Creative Commons. Each image includes the individual licensing or copyright information.

Educational Fair Use

Due to the nature of the course materials, some of the works of art covered are protected by copyright. Images of these works of art are included with a tag stating that they are [Educational Fair Use](#). These copyrighted materials should not be printed or reproduced as this may qualify as copyright infringement. Images designated as Educational Fair Use are provided in low resolution which is suitable for display on the screen but is not high quality enough for printing or reproducing. Whenever possible, a link is included to access a higher quality version of the image on museum or educational websites. If available, copyright information is also listed on these images.

Some of the images presented in this OER are marked with a Creative Commons license and include a tag for Educational Fair Use, especially works of art that have been photographed while installed in museums. The photographs of these works of art are licensed by the photographer but the two-dimensional works of art are protected under copyright. The images are therefore meant only for the purpose of education and contemplation and are included in a low resolution.

Adopting, Adapting, or Expanding the Resource

The goal for this OER is to build an educational resource that is flexible enough to address concepts relevant to the contemporary discourse and scholarship in the visual arts. For those interested in utilizing these course materials, I am providing below some additional information that may be useful in expanding, adapting, or reinterpreting the materials. Editable versions are available in Microsoft PowerPoint and Word at <https://dc.etsu.edu/art-appreciation-oer/>

The font used to create the presentations and written documents for this OER is Calibri.

Finding Additional Readings, Lessons, and Articles

Smarthistory: <https://smarthistory.org/>

Smarthistory is an extensive open educational resource which publishes outstanding essays and video lectures about art. The Creating + Conserving section of Smarthistory includes wonderful informational articles and videos about materials and processes: <https://smarthistory.org/tag/conservation/>

MoMA Learning: https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/

MoMA Learning provides a wonderful selection of essays on works of modern art and also has assignment suggestions at the bottom of each section.

KhanAcademy: <https://www.khanacademy.org/>.

Khan Academy is an outstanding platform of open educational resources covering a variety of academic and scholarly topics.

Trivium Art History: <https://arthistoryproject.com/>

Trivium Art History is a free, online art history book with clean design and approachable descriptions of works of art, periods of art history, and fun artist biographies. The [Themes of Art](#) section is a nice tool to help students explore works that match their interests. The [World of Art](#) section is a useful tool for an exploratory World Art sketchbook prompt. The [Timeline](#) section is useful, as it separates works of art into galleries based on period.

Introduction to Art: Design, Context, and Meaning: <https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/arts-textbooks/3/>

For a more traditional, textbook approach, there is an Introduction to Art open educational resource textbook available.

Locating Images

If you are utilizing the course materials and would like to add new images that are public domain or licensed under Creative Commons, there are several useful tips provided below for finding images.

The Met Museum: <https://www.metmuseum.org/>

The Met has an option to search for Open Access images within the collection [here](#). Make sure that the “Open Access” box is checked. The image license is [CC0 1.0](#), and will be marked OA Public Domain at the lower left of the image.

Google Images: <https://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi&ogbl>

[Google Images](#) has an option under “Settings” > “Advanced Search” to search by “Usage Rights”. Choosing “Free to use share or modify” will allow a search for images suitable for expanding our OER.

Wikimedia Commons: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

[Wikimedia Commons](#) is an outstanding resource for finding open source images, with a strong collection of works of art.

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com>

[Flickr](#) allows users to specify image licenses on uploaded photographs. Click “Some rights reserved” at the lower right of the image to check the licensing. Some images will say “Public Domain” or will be licensed under a [Creative Commons](#) (CC) license, allowing for the use in an OER.

Smarthistory Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/groups/smarthistory/pool/>

The [Smarthistory Flickr](#) is expansive with images licensed for educational purposes.

Acknowledgements

This Art Appreciation OER was adapted from existing resources by Marie Porterfield Barry as part of East Tennessee State University’s Open Educational Resources (OERs) Initiatives, which are a collaboration of the Charles C. Sherrod Library and the Center for Teaching Excellence. Deepest gratitude for the support from Ashley Sergiadis of Sherrod Library and Phil Smith of the Center for Teaching Excellence during the building of this resource. Thanks as well to my students at East Tennessee State University whose feedback and participation during our Art Appreciation classes was immensely valuable in compiling and evaluating this OER.



Preface to the
RENAISSANCE
in Europe



During Classical Antiquity
(Ancient Greece & Rome)
there was a focus on the beauty
of the human form, including
free-standing nude figures.

Left: Polykleitos Spear Bearer, c. 450 BCE.
Author: [Marie-Lan Nguyen](#), Source: Flickr,
License: [CC BY 2.5](#)



Right: Warrior, c. 460-450 BCE.
Author: [Effems](#), Source: Wikimedia
Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)
Photo cropped and retouched from original.



Deesis, or Christ Pantocrator, installed inside Hagia Sophia; Christ blessing with right hand, with Virgin Mary and John the Baptist, c. 1261 (Late Byzantine), Author: [Till Niermann](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

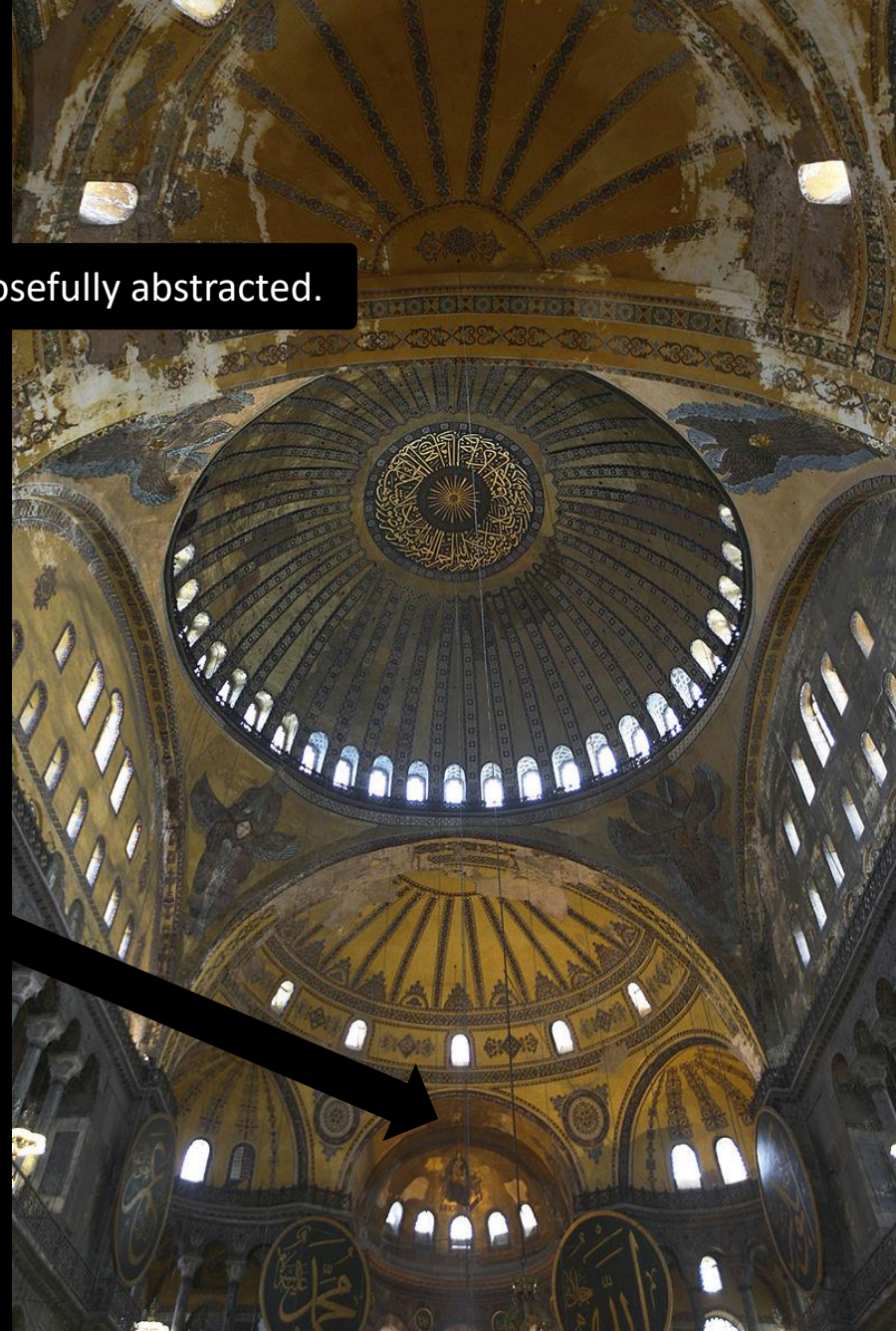
Following Constantine's movement of the capital of the Roman Empire to Constantinople (thus beginning the Byzantine Empire) a focus on Christian ideology and iconography heralded a new style of art.



Figures were purposefully abstracted.

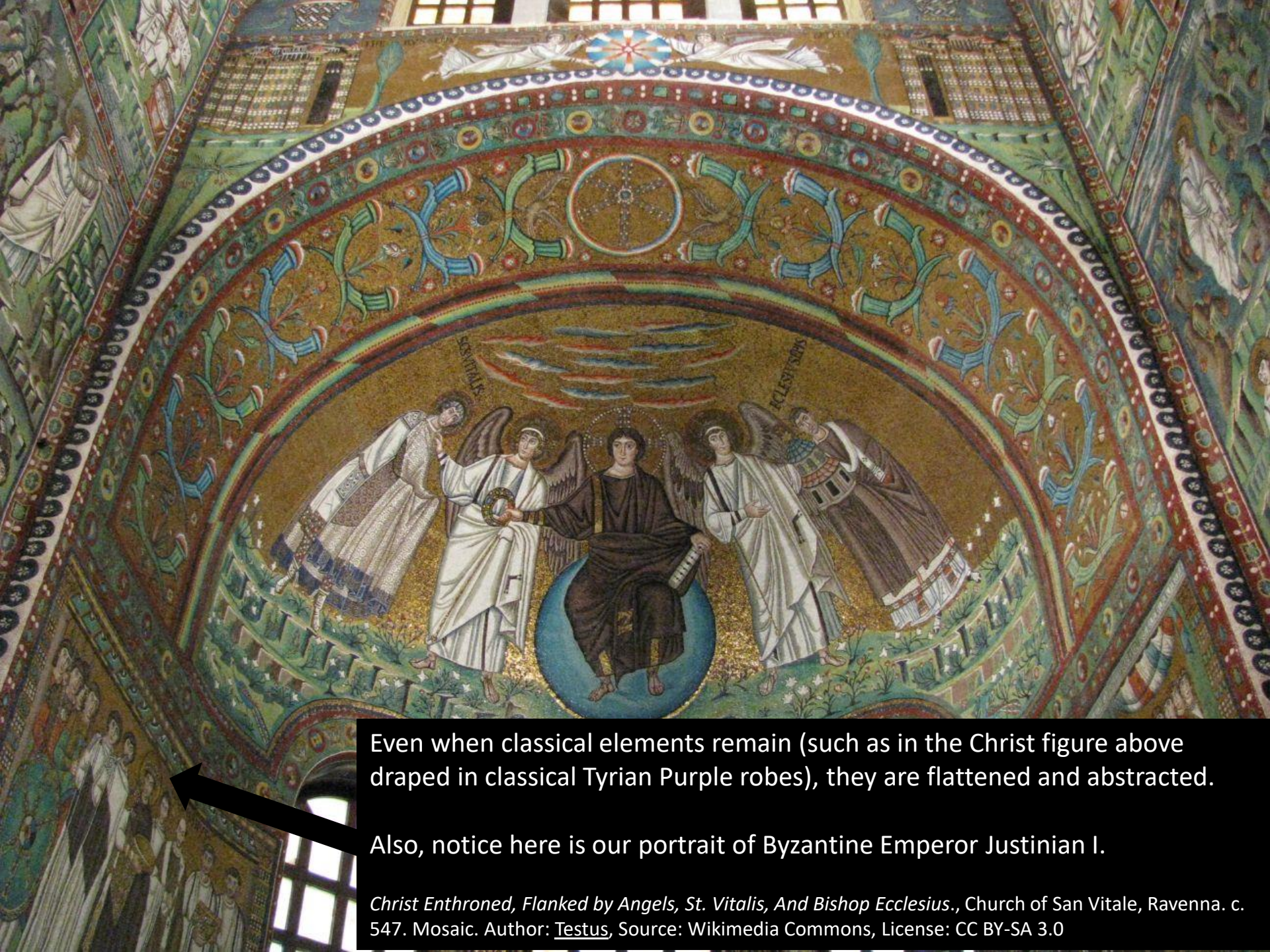


Figures were purposefully abstracted.



Virgin and Child in the Apse of Hagia Sophia, dedicated in 867,
Author: [Myrabella](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC0 1.0](#)

Hagia Sophia, Author: [Steve Evans](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons,
License: [CC BY 2.0](#)



Even when classical elements remain (such as in the Christ figure above draped in classical Tyrian Purple robes), they are flattened and abstracted.

Also, notice here is our portrait of Byzantine Emperor Justinian I.

Christ Enthroned, Flanked by Angels, St. Vitalis, And Bishop Ecclesius., Church of San Vitale, Ravenna. c. 547. Mosaic. Author: [Testus](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: CC BY-SA 3.0

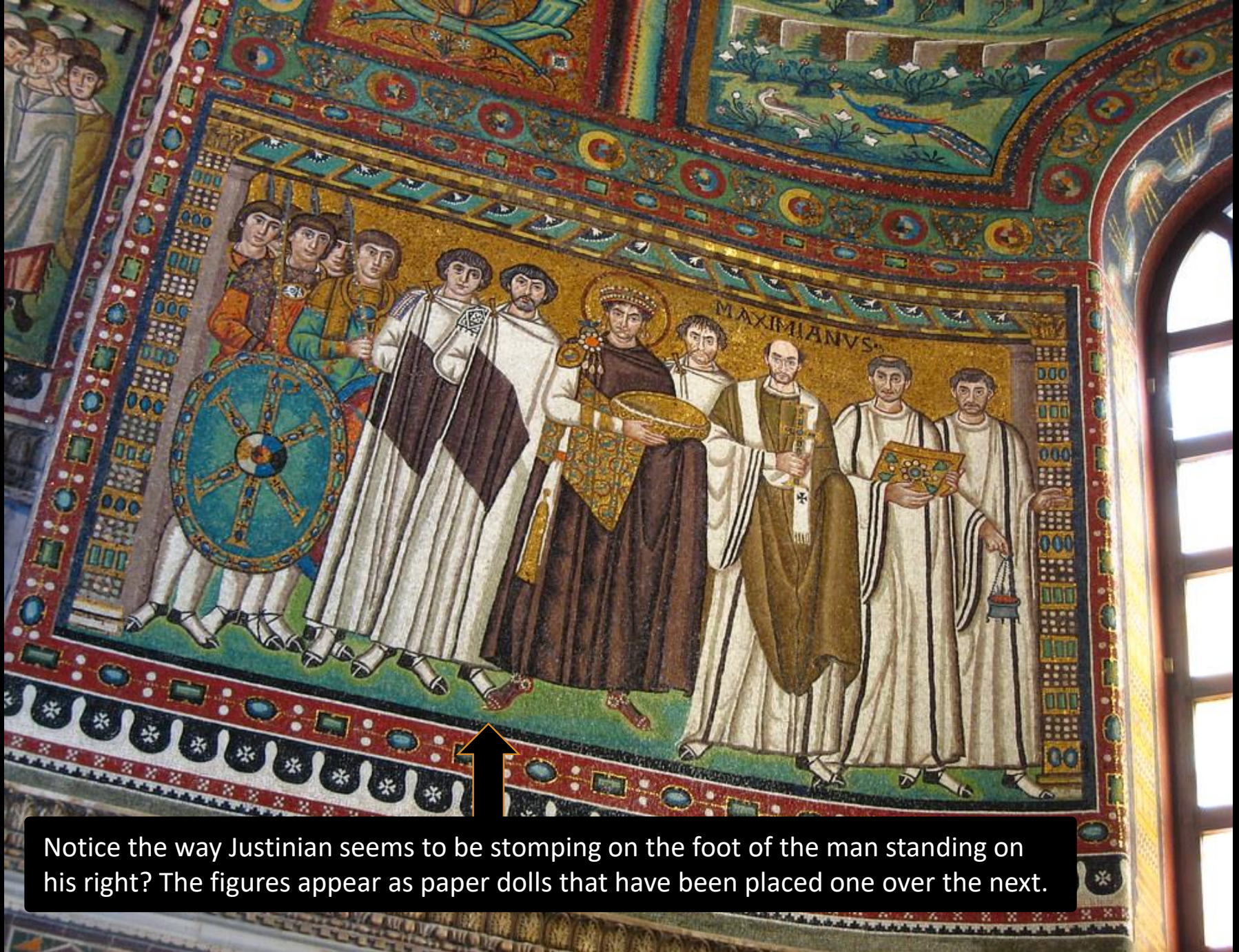
Mosaic panels showing both Justinian I and Theodora appear in the Church of San Vitale.
The figures are much more static and stylized than earlier works.



Mosaic panels showing Justinian I, Author: [Scott McDonough](#),
Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)



Mosaic panels showing Theodora,
Author: [Scott McDonough](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)



Notice the way Justinian seems to be stomping on the foot of the man standing on his right? The figures appear as paper dolls that have been placed one over the next.



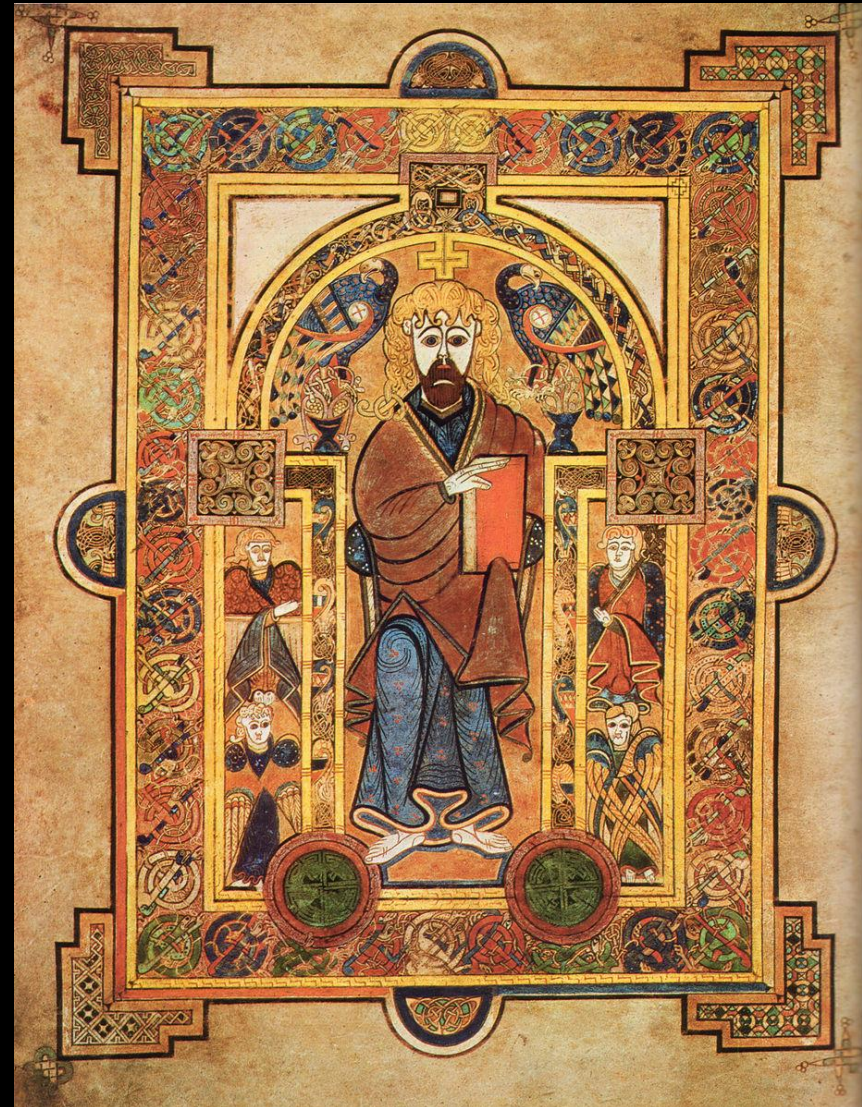
The abstraction of the figures, the flatness of the space, the bright color and patterning, and the generous use of gold are meant to create spiritual, rather than physical, spaces.

Christian subjects were portrayed with increased abstraction.



*Hildegard and Volmar, 1927-1933 facsimile of the frontispiece of the *Liber Scivias* of Hildegard of Bingen. Original, 1150-1175.*

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



Christ Enthroned from the Book of Kells, c. 800 CE.

Author: [Abbey of Kells](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Unlike their ancient counterparts, sculpted figures remained clothed and attached to structures (rather than detached as free-standing sculptures), like the ones decorating Chartres Cathedral.

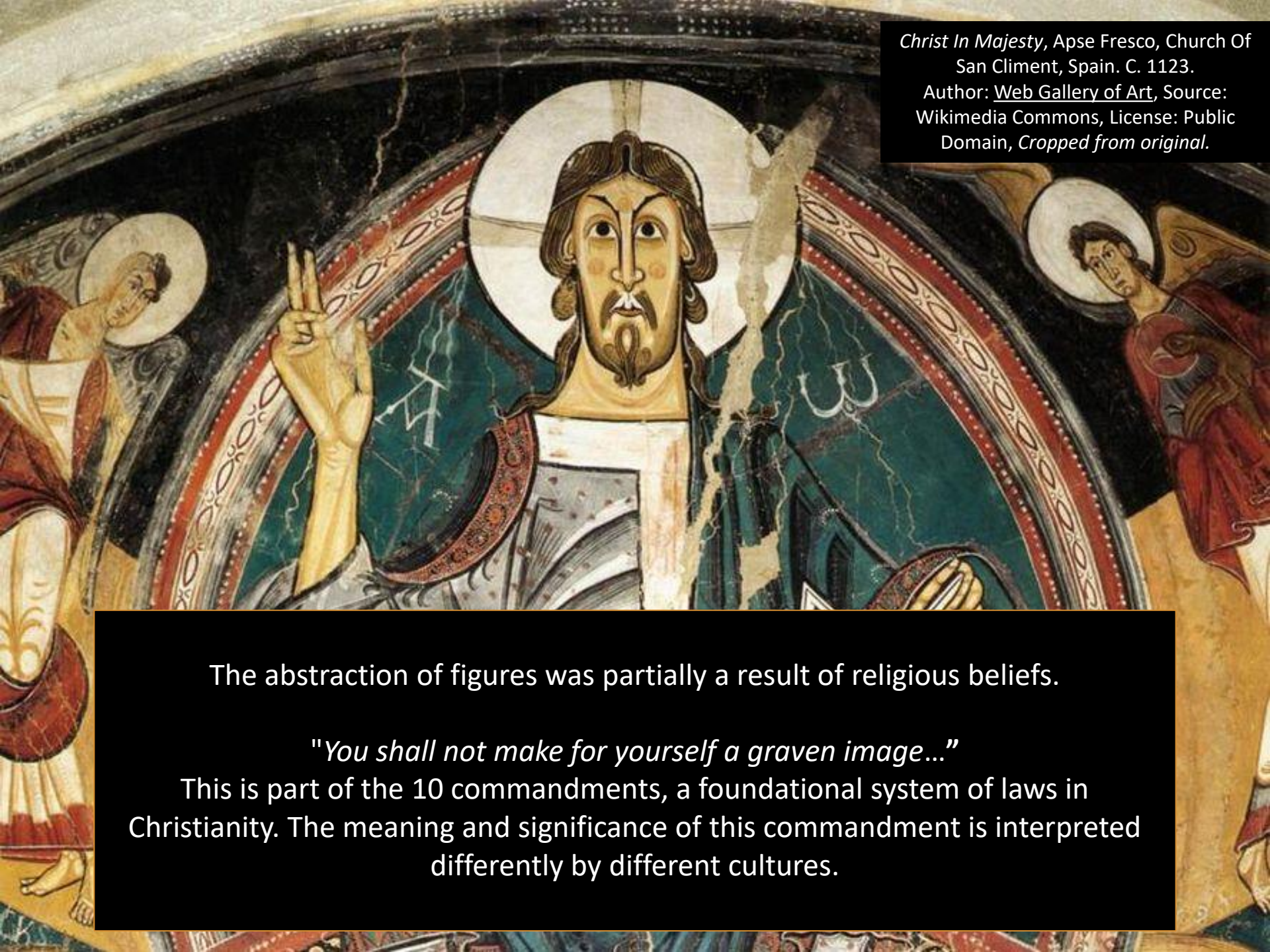
Prophets and Ancestors of Christ, Royal Portal, Chartres Cathedral, c.1145-1155.

Author: [Urban](#)

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain





Christ In Majesty, Apse Fresco, Church Of San Climent, Spain. C. 1123.

Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain, *Cropped from original.*

The abstraction of figures was partially a result of religious beliefs.

"You shall not make for yourself a graven image..."

This is part of the 10 commandments, a foundational system of laws in Christianity. The meaning and significance of this commandment is interpreted differently by different cultures.

There were even periods in which Christians destroyed Christian images, such as when the 8th century Byzantine Emperor Leo III launched a campaign of **iconoclasm**.

Iconoclasm means “image breaking” and is the banning and/or destruction of images, especially icons and religious art.



Crucifixion and Iconoclasts, from the Chludov Psalter.
Mid 9th century.

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crucifixion_and_Iconoclasts.jpg)
License: Public Domain

Church leaders feared that the use of images in worship was distracting or leading to idolatry. Growing instability in Byzantium led rulers to blame hard times on God's displeasure at idolatrous use of images.

This is one of many examples of times during history in which works of art have been feared and destroyed.



Crucifixion and Iconoclasts, from the Chludov Psalter. Mid 9th century. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crucifixion_and_Iconoclasts) License: Public Domain

People are concerned with the power and purpose of art and images; reaction to this fear manifests itself in many ways throughout history



Nazis confiscated and destroyed works of art as well as exhibiting them under the title “Degenerate Art” during the mid-20th century.

Author: [German Federal Archives](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 3.0 DE](#)



16th century Protestant iconoclasm is evident in the removal of the face of holy figures at the Cathedral of Saint Martin in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Author: [Arktos](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.5](#)

The eyes and ears were gouged out of this ancient portrait head of an Akkadian ruler, likely as a means of removing power from statue.

Author: [Sumerophile](#), Source: Ancient History Encyclopedia, License: Public Domain

This 9th century manuscript illumination shows the crucified Christ being tormented by soldiers. Below this scene, two iconoclasts (including their names) destroy an icon portrait of Christ.

This visual parallel links the harassment of Christ with the destruction of the image of Christ by the iconoclasts.



Crucifixion and Iconoclasts, from the Chludov Psalter. Mid 9th century.

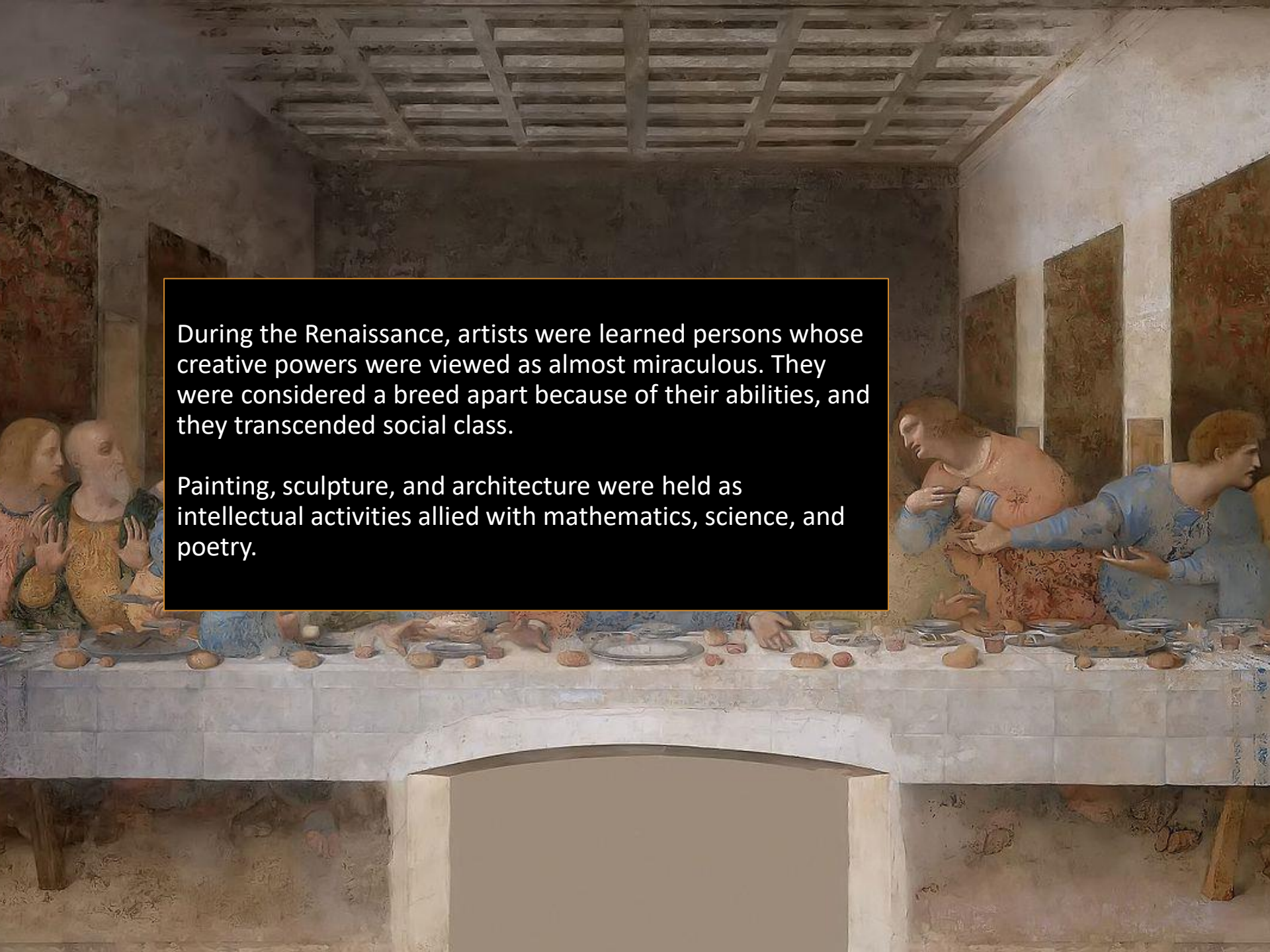
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crucifixion_and_Iconoclasts.jpg)
License: Public Domain



The RENAISSANCE in Europe

Covering the period from roughly 1400 to 1600, Renaissance means “rebirth”. It refers to the revival of interest in ancient Greek and Roman culture.

Artists merged Classical style and methods with Christian iconography.

A Renaissance painting depicting a dining room. A long, light-colored stone table is set with various dishes, including bread, fruit, and a roasted bird. Several figures are seated around the table, engaged in conversation. In the foreground, a large, arched fireplace is built into the wall. The ceiling features a wooden lattice structure. The overall style is characteristic of the Renaissance, with detailed shading and a focus on domestic life.

During the Renaissance, artists were learned persons whose creative powers were viewed as almost miraculous. They were considered a breed apart because of their abilities, and they transcended social class.

Painting, sculpture, and architecture were held as intellectual activities allied with mathematics, science, and poetry.



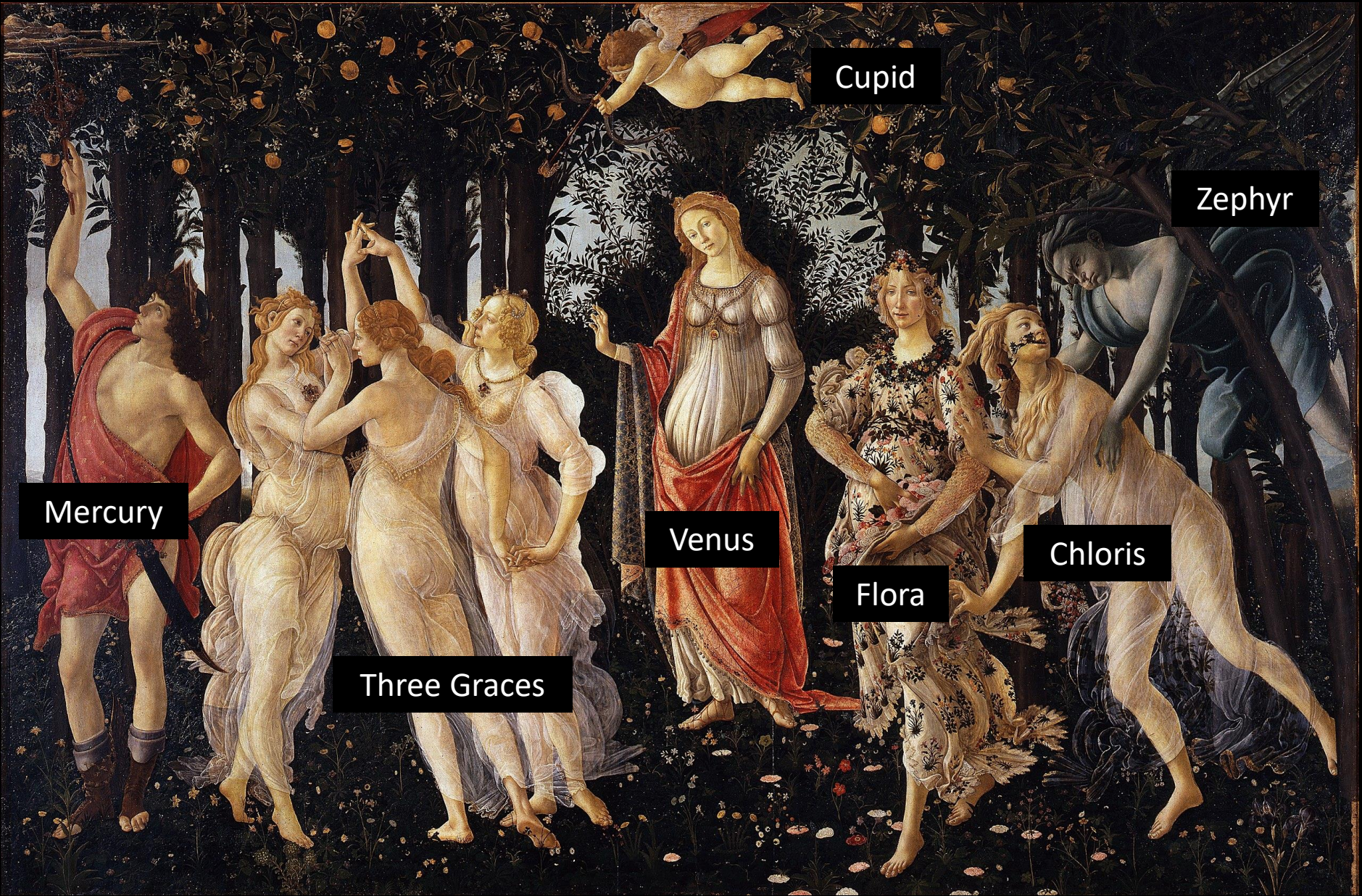
Botticelli, *Primavera*, c. 1482, Tempera on panel, Italian Early Renaissance
Author: [Google Art Project](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [Public Domain](#)

Artists like Botticelli populate works of Renaissance art with figures from Classical mythology...

Like the Roman gods and goddesses associated with springtime and love depicted in Botticelli's *Primavera*.



Botticelli, *Primavera*, c. 1482, Tempera on panel, Italian Early Renaissance
Author: [Google Art Project](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



Cupid

Zephyr

Mercury

Venus

Chloris

Flora

Three Graces

Botticelli, *Primavera*, c. 1482, Tempera on panel, Italian Early Renaissance

Author: [Google Art Project](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Scholars during the Renaissance were eager to make classical figures harmonious with Christian belief.

For example, Venus, the goddess of love and beauty was thought to have two natures: one that rules over divine love (analogous to the Virgin Mary), and the other that rules over earthly human love.

Botticelli
Primavera
c. 1482

Author: [Google Art Project](#)
Cropped from original
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: Public Domain



Clearly inspired by classical art, Botticelli adorns the figures in *Primavera* with transparent, classicized garments.



Sculptures from the East Pediment of the Parthenon
c. 447-432 BCE

Author: [Justin Norris](#) (cropped from original)

Source: Flickr

License: [CC BY 2.0](#)

Botticelli
Primavera
c. 1482

Author: [Google Art Project](#)
Cropped from original
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Renewed interest in monumentality in sculpture based on Classical ideals resulted in the reemergence of the sculpted free-standing male nude.



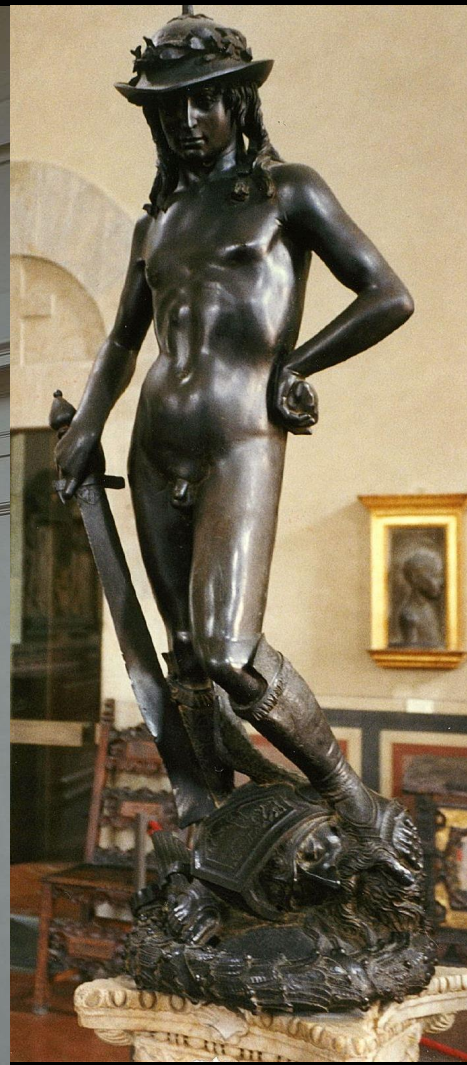
Classical

Author: [Marie-Lan Nguyen](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY 2.5](#)



Renaissance

Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY 3.0](#)



Renaissance

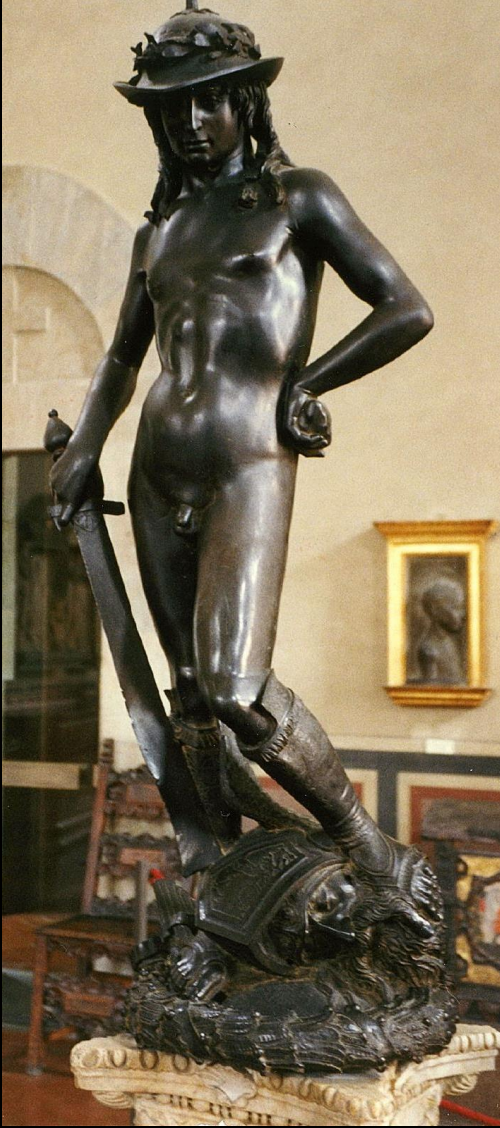
Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



Classical

Author: [Effems](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Who is the subject of these sculptures?



Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [CC BY 3.0](#)

Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: [Flickr](#), License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

One might mistake these for sculptures of Classical heroes...



Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY 3.0](#)



Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

But indeed these are sculptures depicting a biblical narrative in which a young Israelite shepherd (and future revered king), David, battles and defeats the Philistine giant Goliath.



Donatello, *David*, c. 1440
Bronze, 5'2" tall

Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#), Source:
Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



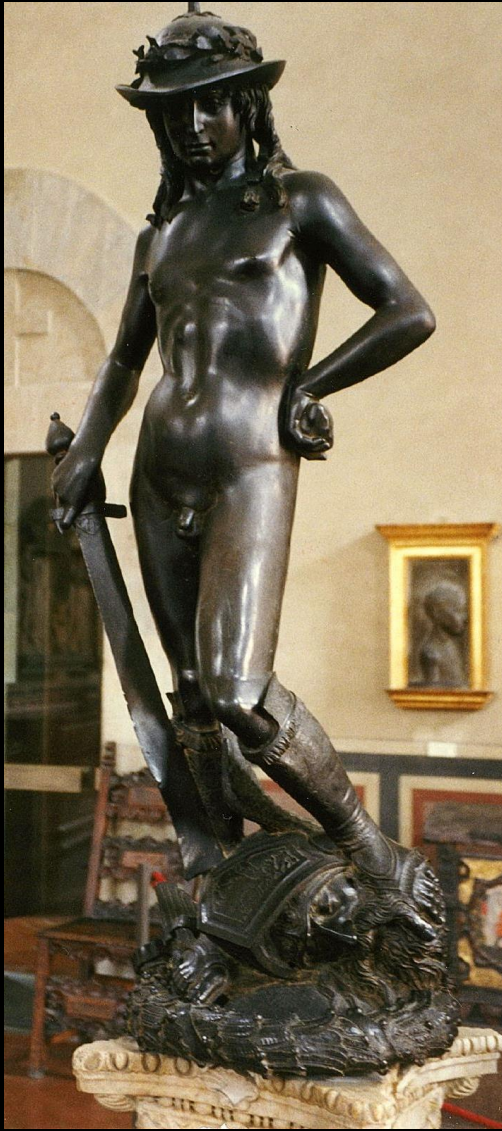
Michelangelo, *David*, 1501-4
Marble, 17' tall

Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#), Source:
Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY 3.0](#)



Bernini, *David*, 1623
Marble, 5'7" tall

Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



EARLY RENAISSANCE

Donatello, *David*, c. 1440

Bronze, 5'2" tall

Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#), Source:

Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



HIGH RENAISSANCE

Michelangelo, *David*, 1501-4

Marble, 17' tall

Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#), Source:

Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY 3.0](#)



BAROQUE

Bernini, *David*, 1623

Marble, 5'7" tall

Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC](#)

[BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



David is a young shepherd when he volunteers to face the most fearsome Philistine warrior, a giant named Goliath.

Declining any armor, David faces the giant with nothing but a rock and his sling. He defeats the giant by knocking him out with a rock launched from his sling, then beheads the giant with Goliath's own sword, securing victory for the Israelites.

EARLY RENAISSANCE

Donatello, *David*, c. 1440

Bronze, 5'2" tall

Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#), Source:

Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



Listen to Malcolm Gladwell tell the story of David and Goliath:

https://www.ted.com/talks/malcolm_gladwell_the_unheard_story_of_david_and_goliath

EARLY RENAISSANCE

Donatello, *David*, c. 1440

Bronze, 5'2" tall

Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#), Source:

Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

How would you describe Donatello's *David*?

Which point in the story is being portrayed?

How does David seem to be feeling?

Early Renaissance

Donatello

David, c. 1440

Bronze, 5'2"

Author: Patrick A. Rodgers

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC BY-SA 2.0





Donatello
David, c. 1440
Bronze, 5'2"



Left: Author: [RenArt88](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)
Right: Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



Donatello
David, c. 1440
Bronze, 5'2"

Left: Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

Right: Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



The moment portrayed is the moment of rest
and contemplation following the battle.

Donatello
David, c. 1440
Bronze, 5'2"

Author: [Rufus46](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)



Donatello's *David* was the first free-standing nude sculpture since classical antiquity.

Donatello
David, c. 1440
Bronze, 5'2"

Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



The influence of ancient Greek art is clear.
Donatello's *David* stands in contrapposto
with a look of restrained emotion reminiscent of
High Classical art.

Donatello
David, c. 1440
Bronze, 5'2"

Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)





To learn about the method of lost wax bronze casting, visit:
<https://smarthistory.org/lost-wax/>

WARRIOR
Found in the sea off Riace, Italy.
c. 460-450 BCE.
Bronze with bone and glass eyes,
silver teeth, and copper lips and nipples,
height 6'9"

Donatello
David, c. 1440
Bronze, 5'2"

Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#)
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)





How would you describe Michelangelo's *David*?

Which point in the story is being portrayed?

How does David seem to be feeling?

Michelangelo
David, 1501-4
Marble, 17' tall

High Renaissance

Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#) (*Cropped from original*)
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: [CC BY 3.0](#)



Michelangelo
David, 1501-4
Marble, 17' tall

Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: [CC BY 3.0](#)

Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [CC BY 3.0](#)



Michelangelo
David, 1501-4
Marble, 17' tall

Author: Jörg Bittner Unna, Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: CC BY 3.0



Author: Jörg Bittner Unna, Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: CC BY 3.0



Michelangelo
David, 1501-4
Marble, 17' tall

Author: Jörg Bittner Unna, Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: CC BY 3.0



Author: Jörg Bittner Unna, Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: CC BY 3.0



The moment of greatest psychological tension is being portrayed. Michelangelo depicts David in the moment before the battle.

Michelangelo
David, 1501-4
Marble, 17' tall



Michelangelo's *David* is a Classical idealized muscular male nude combined with Christian iconography.

Michelangelo
David, 1501-4
Marble, 17' tall



Michelangelo's *David* stands in contrapposto with a look of restrained emotion reminiscent of High Classical art. Classical heroic nudity is used to depict a Biblical hero.

Michelangelo
David, 1501-4
Marble, 17' tall



The proportions of Michelangelo's *David* follow the Canon of Polykleitos.

Polykleitos
Spear Bearer
c. 450-440 BCE
Marble

Michelangelo
David, 1501-4
Marble



Author: [Carole Raddato](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY 3.0](#)



Michelangelo
David
1501-4
Marble

Learn about the quarrying and carving of marble:
<https://smarthistory.org/quarrying-and-carving-marble/>



Michelangelo
Awakening Slave
1525-1530
Marble



Author: Jörg Bittner Unna, Source:
Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY 3.0](#)

At 17' tall, Michelangelo's *David* is monumental.

Michelangelo's *David*: 17'
Bernini's *David*: 5'7"
Donatello's *David*: 5'2"



Author: [Steven Zucker](#)
Cropped from original
Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#)
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



How would you describe Bernini's *David*?

Which point in the story is being portrayed?

How does David seem to be feeling?

Bernini

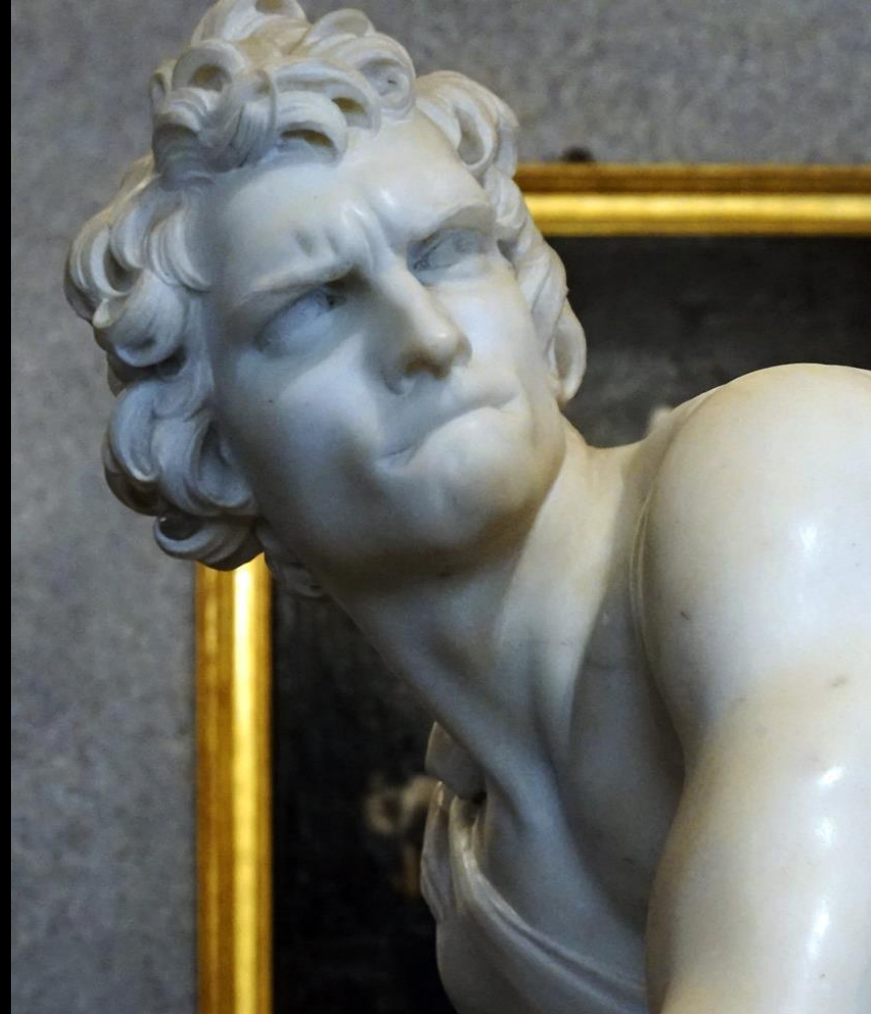
David, 1623

Marble, Height 5'7"

Author: [Steven Zucker](#) (Cropped from original)

Source: Flickr

License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



Author: [Steven Zucker](#) (Cropped from original), Source: Flickr,
License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

Bernini
David, 1623
Marble, Height 5'7"
Author: [Steven Zucker](#) (Cropped from original)
Source: Flickr
License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



Bernini portrays David at the moment of greatest physical action. In the midst of battle, David pulls back the sling while his body twists in motion.



Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

Bernini
David, 1623
Marble, Height 5'7"

Author: [Steven Zucker](#) (Cropped from original), Source: Flickr,
License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

Bernini
David, 1623
Marble, Height 5'7"

Author: [Steven Zucker](#) (Cropped from original), Source: Flickr,
License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



Bernini is a Baroque artist and is more concerned than his Renaissance predecessors with portraying the drama, theatricality, and emotion of the moment.

Bernini
David, 1623
Marble, Height 5'7"



Bernini's *David* relates more strongly to the Greek Hellenistic period due to the strong emotion, twisting body, and theatricality of the figure.



Athanadoros, Hagesandros, and Polydoros of Rhodes, *Laocoön and his Sons*
Original of 1st century BCE, or a Roman copy, adaptation, or original of the
1st century CE. Author: Steven Zucker, *Cropped from original*, Source:
Wikimedia Commons, License: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Bernini, David, 1623, Author: Steven Zucker (Cropped from original), Source: Flickr, License: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Before



Michelangelo, 1501-4

Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY 3.0](#)

During



Bernini, 1623

Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

After



Donatello, c. 1440

Author: [Patrick A. Rodgers](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

The image shows a close-up of the Mona Lisa painting. The woman's face is the central focus, with her characteristic enigmatic smile. She has long, dark hair and is wearing a dark, patterned garment. The background is a hazy, atmospheric landscape with a bridge and distant hills. A black rectangular box with white text is overlaid on the center of the painting.

HIGH RENAISSANCE in ITALY

The background of the slide is a reproduction of the Mona Lisa painting. The woman's face and upper torso are visible, with her characteristic enigmatic smile. The background of the painting shows a hazy, mountainous landscape.

HIGH RENAISSANCE in ITALY

During the Renaissance, artists were given an elevated position. No longer simply considered artisans who are skilled with their craft, Renaissance artists were deemed gifted of both the hand and the mind. The concept of the artist as genius was promoted.

“Beauty is the adjustment of all parts proportionately so that one cannot add or subtract or change without impairing the harmony of the whole.”

- *Leon Battista Alberti*,
Renaissance humanist, poet, artist

Leonardo da Vinci
Mona Lisa
Between 1503 and 1516
Oil on poplar wood

Author: [Musée du Louvre, Paris](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: [Public Domain](#)





As a painter, inventor, engineer, scientist, mathematician, musician, architect, and anatomist, the polymath Leonardo da Vinci embodies the term “Renaissance man” and the concept of the artist as genius.

Leonardo da Vinci
Self-Portrait (presumed)
c. 1512
Red chalk on paper

Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: [Public Domain](#)

On his reason for painting, Leonardo writes:

If you, poet, had to represent a murderous battle you would have to describe the air obscured and darkened by fumes from frightful and deadly engines mixed with clouds of dust polluting the atmosphere, and the panicky flight of wretches fearful of horrible death. In that case the painter will be your superior, because your pen will be worn out before you can fully describe what the painter can demonstrate forthwith by the aid of his science, and your tongue will be parched with thirst and your body overcome by sleep and hunger before you can describe with words what a painter is able to show you in an instant.

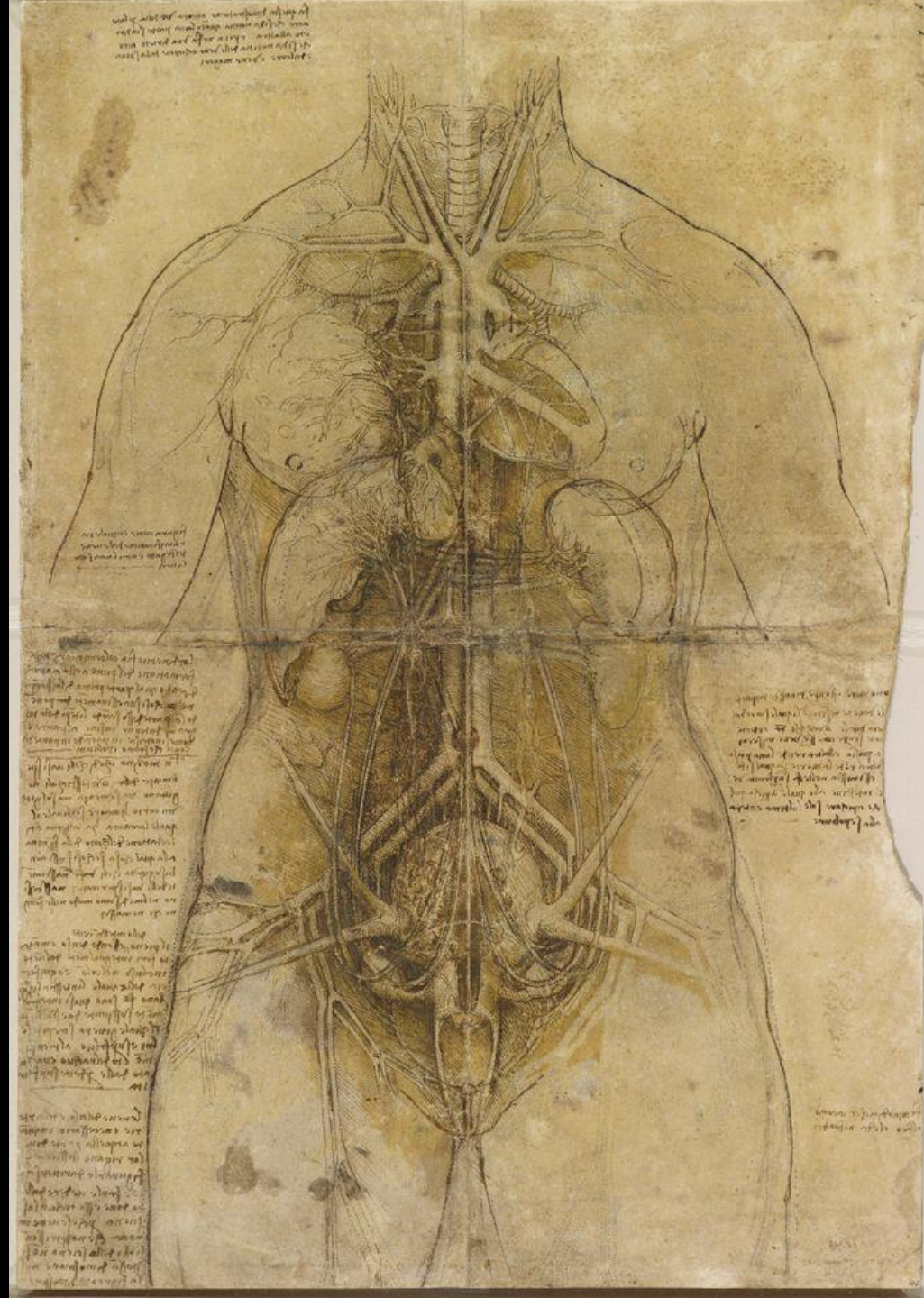
-Leonardo da Vinci

Excerpt from *A Comparison Between Poetry and Painting*

From his undated manuscripts



Through detailed analysis of cadavers, Leonardo made advancements in the study of anatomy while also perfecting his ability to render the figure for his painting.



Leonardo da Vinci
Cardiovascular System and Organs of a Woman

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: Public Domain

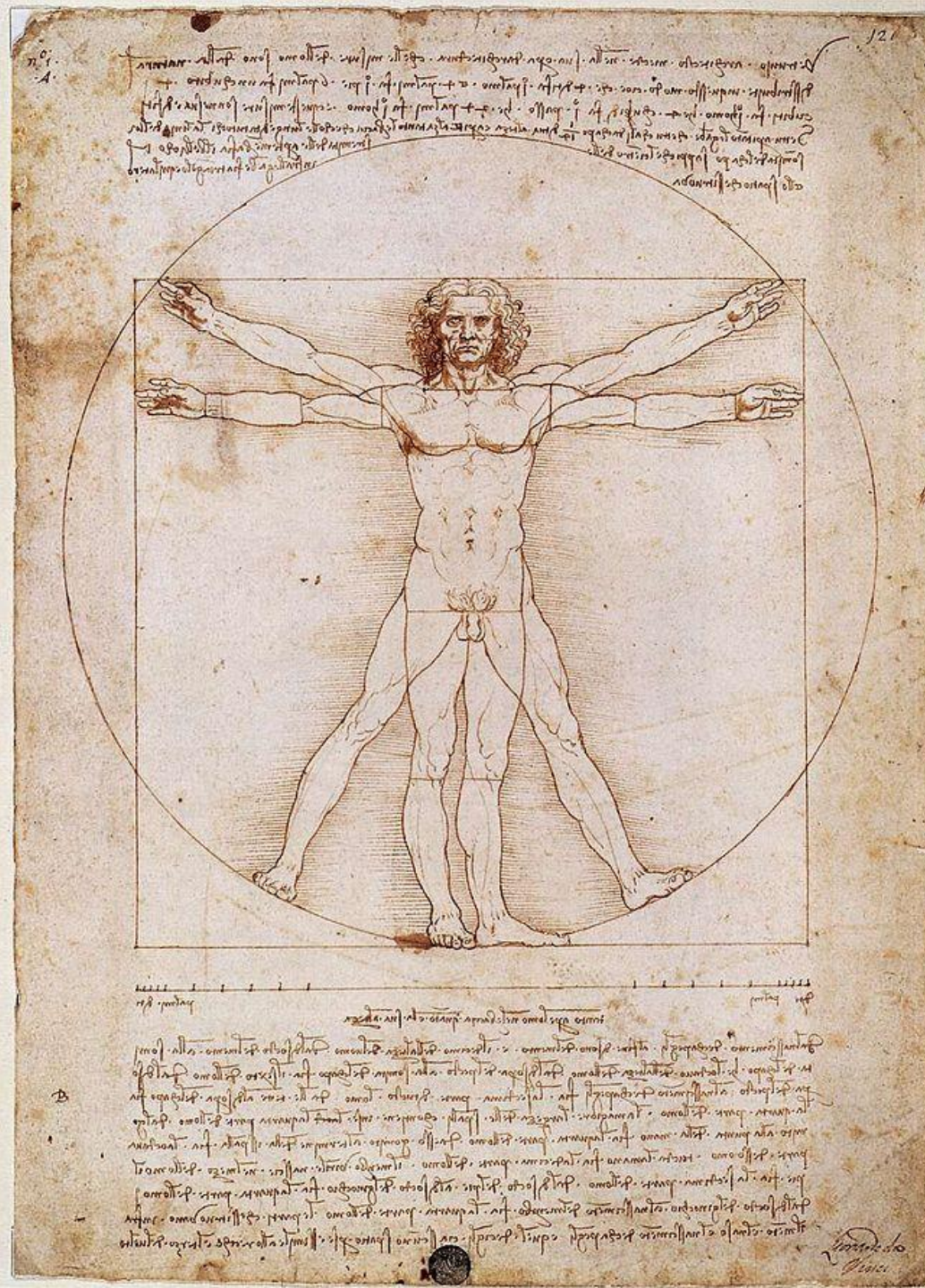


Leonardo da Vinci
 Study of a Fetus in the Womb
 Author: Luc Viatour
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

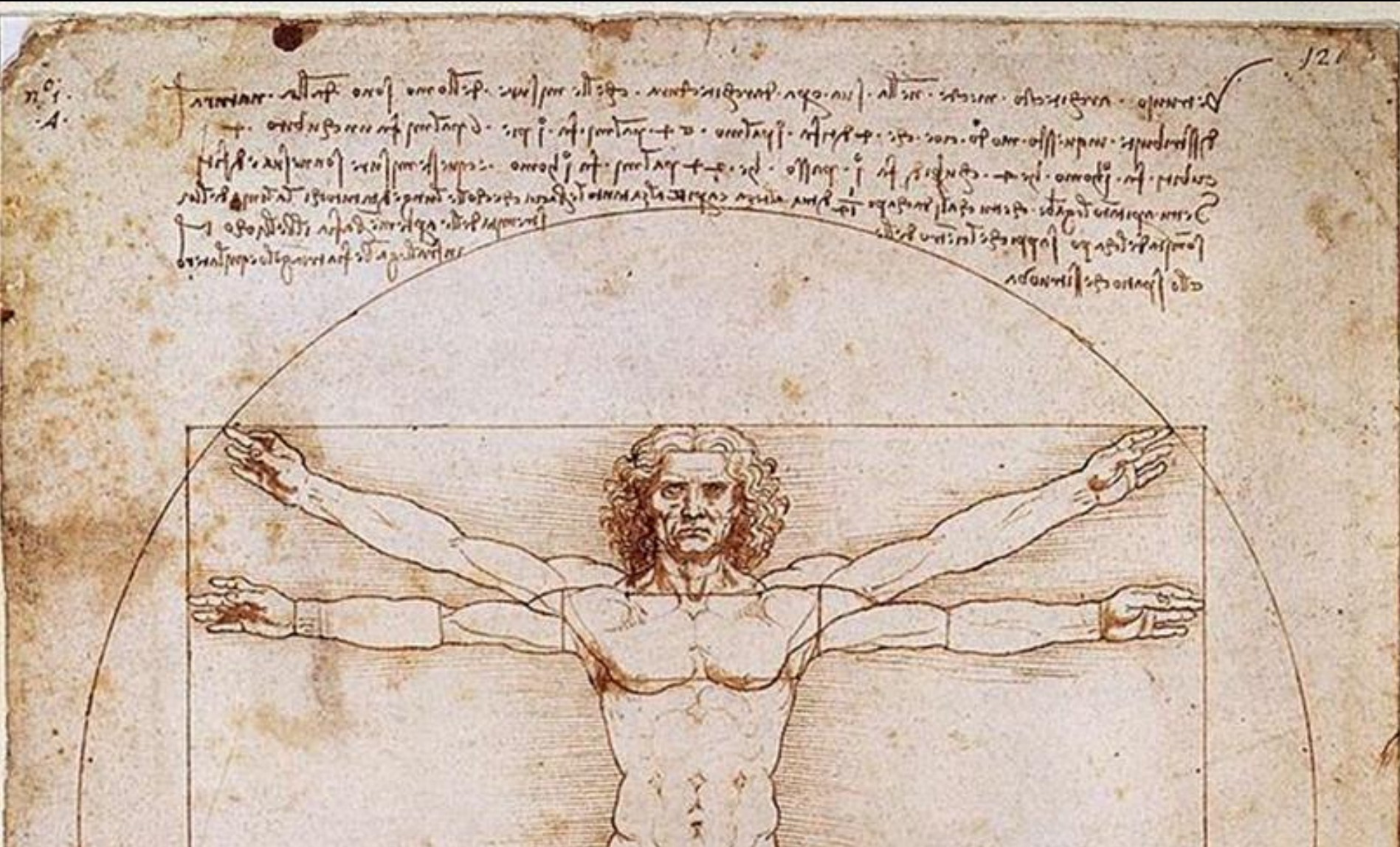
Leonardo's interest in classical scholarship and ideal, mathematical beauty manifests itself in his drawing of the *Vitruvian Man*. Vitruvius was a first-century BCE Roman architect and engineer who equated ideal man with both a circle and a square.

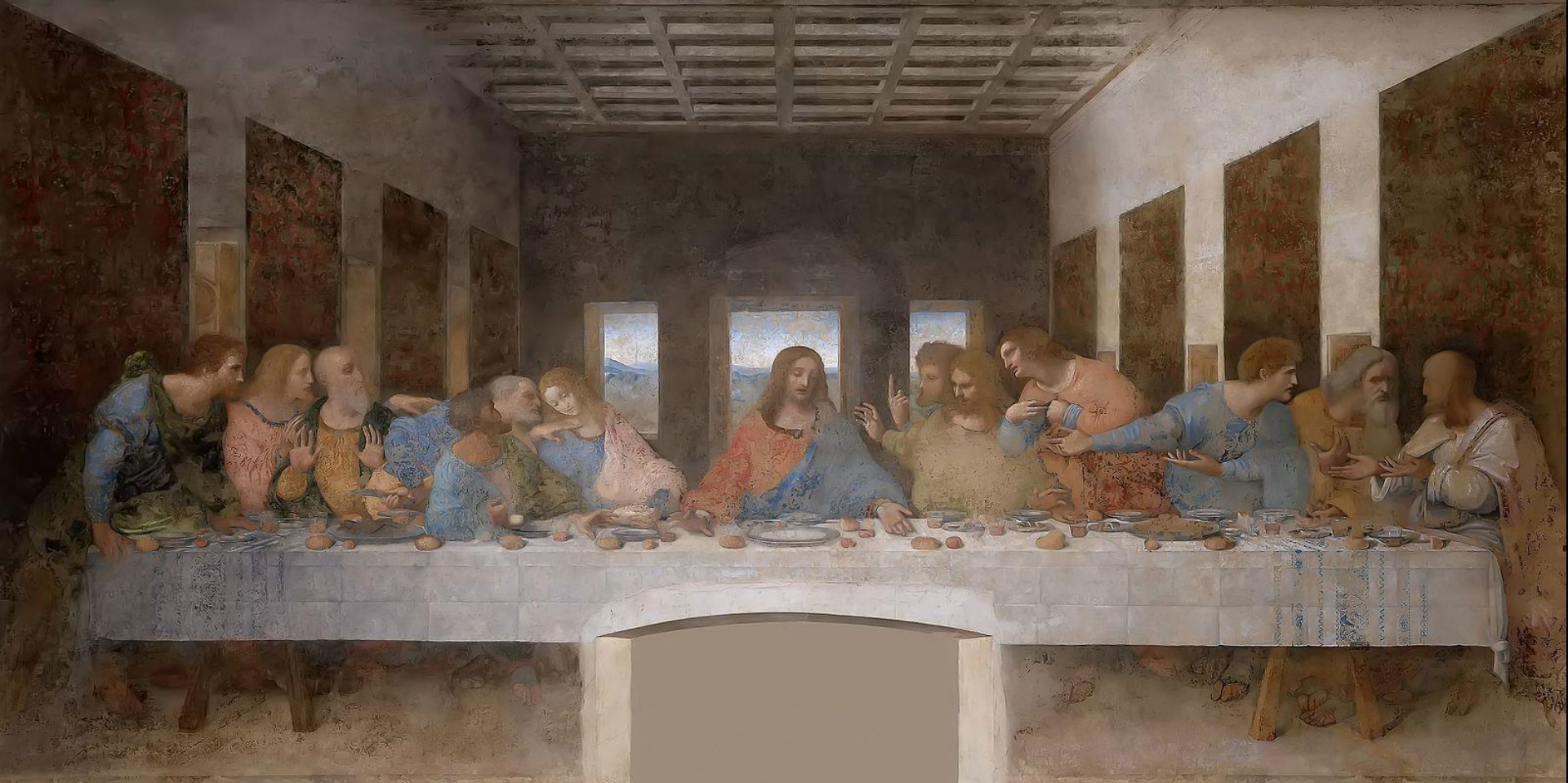
Leonardo da Vinci
The Vitruvian Man
c. 1490

Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: [Public Domain](#)



Leonardo's drawing of the *Vitruvian Man* also features his mirror writing. Leonardo commonly wrote his personal notes from right to left on the page, perhaps to keep his hand clean as a left-handed writer, or perhaps to help protect his ideas from being stolen by prying eyes.

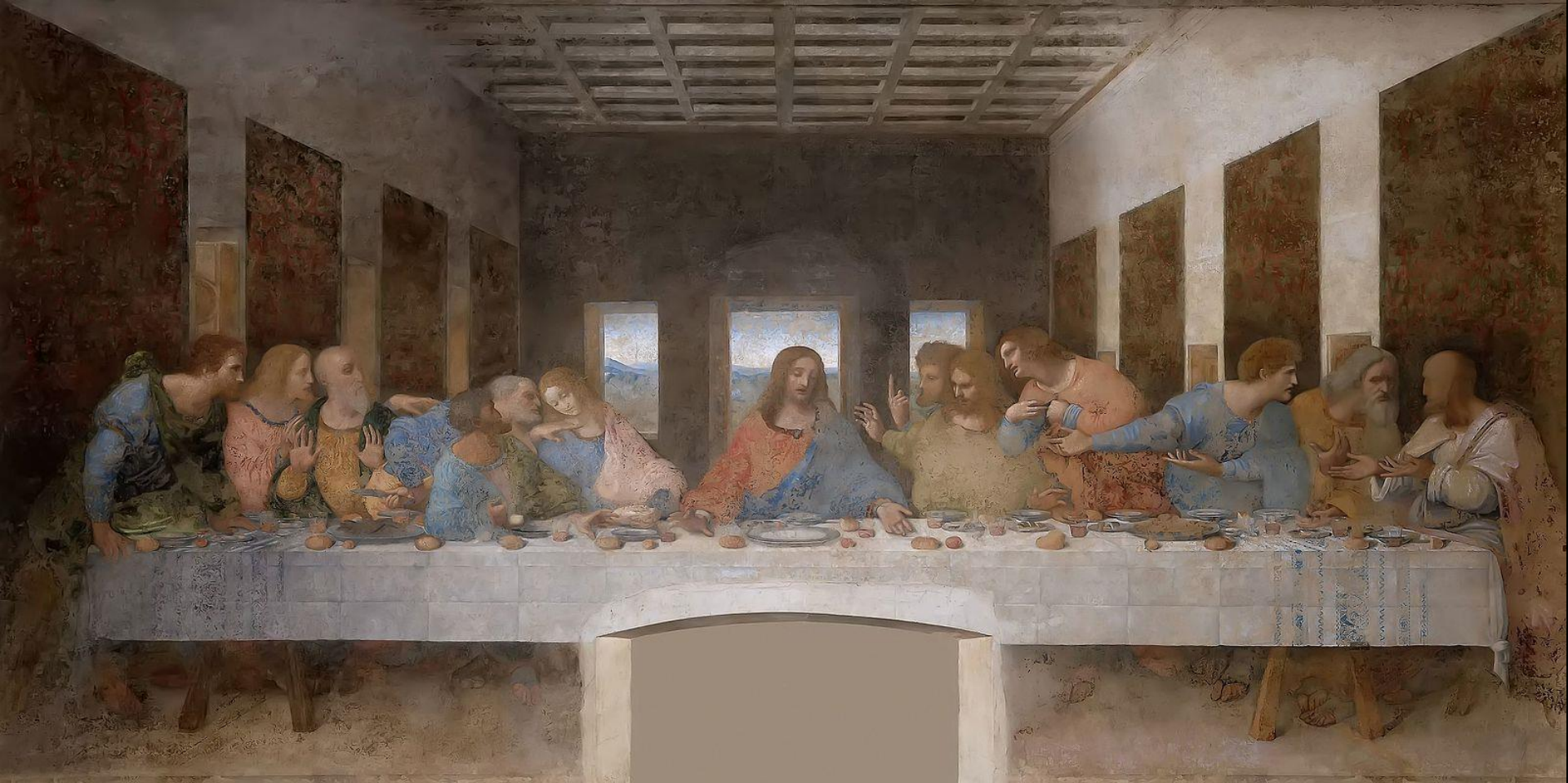




Leonardo, *The Last Supper*. 1495-1498.

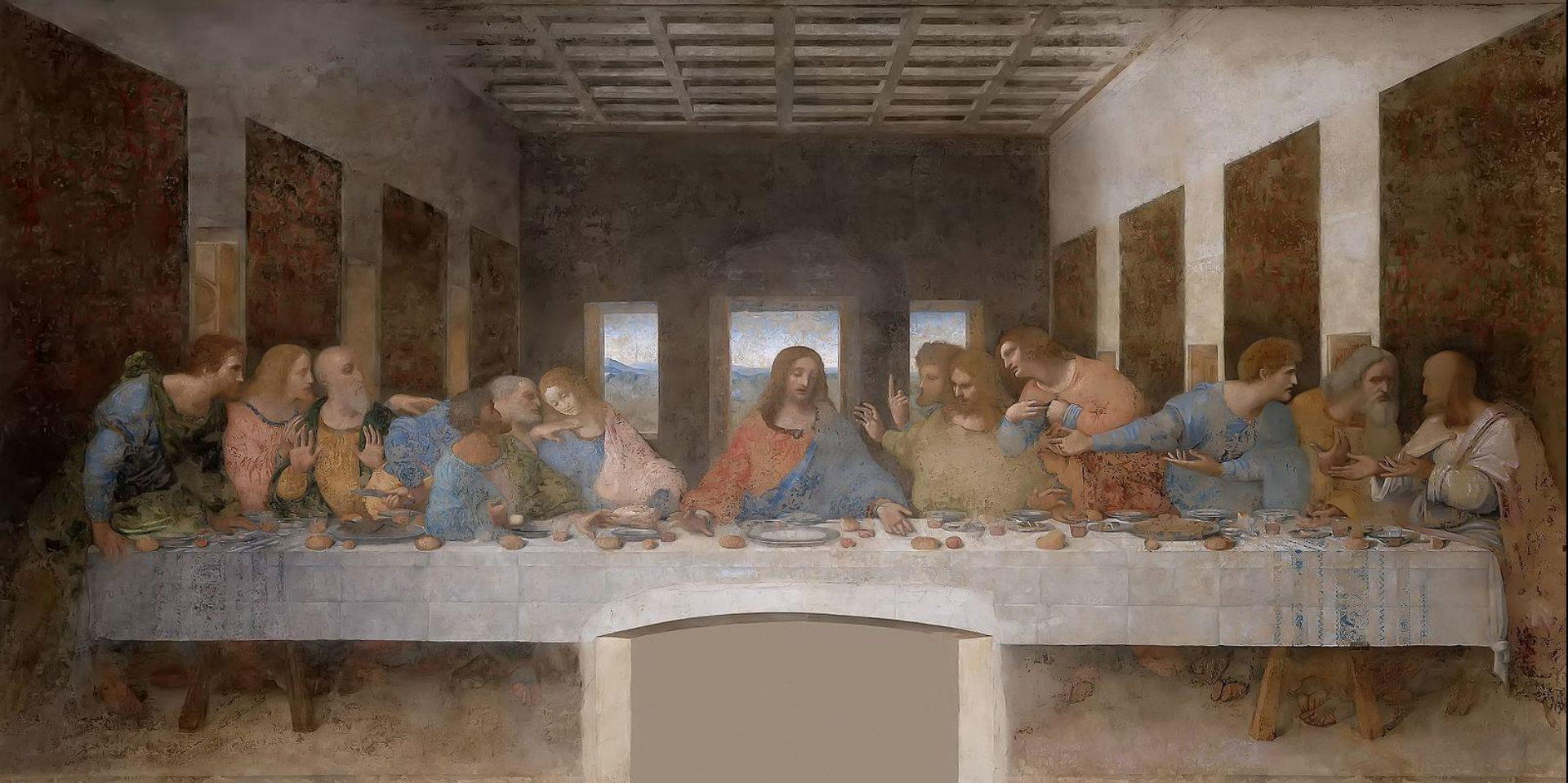
Refectory of the monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan Italy.
Tempera and oil on plaster.

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



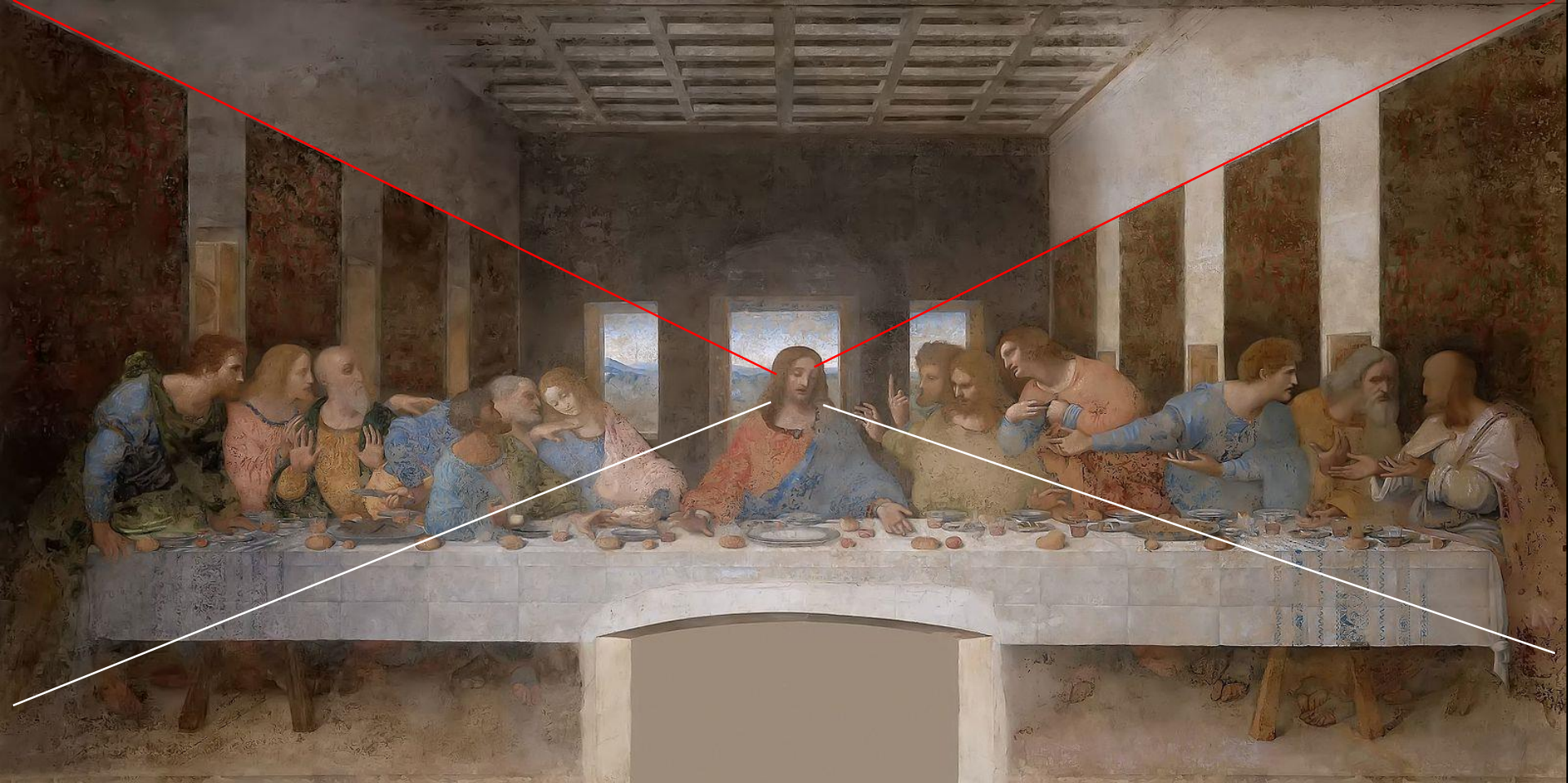
Leonardo, *The Last Supper*, 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

The Last Supper is depicted in art beginning during the early period of Christianity. The scene shows the last meal that Christ shares with his Twelve Apostles. During the meal, Jesus breaks bread with his Apostles and announces that one of the twelve will betray him. Betrayed shortly following this meal, Christ will be arrested and executed.



Leonardo, *The Last Supper*, 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Leonardo paints the Last Supper in High Renaissance style. The composition is balanced and harmonious with geometric organization that relies heavily on the use of linear perspective. The figures around the table are idealized with graceful gestures.



Leonardo, *The Last Supper*, 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

The dark geometric windows that line the room follow one-point linear perspective with the vanishing point just behind the head of Christ. Thus, through the use of linear perspective, Leonardo leads the viewer's eye to the central figure of Jesus, emphasizing his importance.



Leonardo, *The Last Supper* (Cropped from original), 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Which moment is portrayed?
What do the expressions of the figure suggest?



Leonardo, *The Last Supper* (Cropped from original), 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Leonardo paints the moment following Christ's announcement:
"One of you will betray me."
It is the moment of greatest psychological tension.



Leonardo, *The Last Supper* (Cropped from original), 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Which figure is Judas, the one who betrays Christ leading to his arrest and execution?

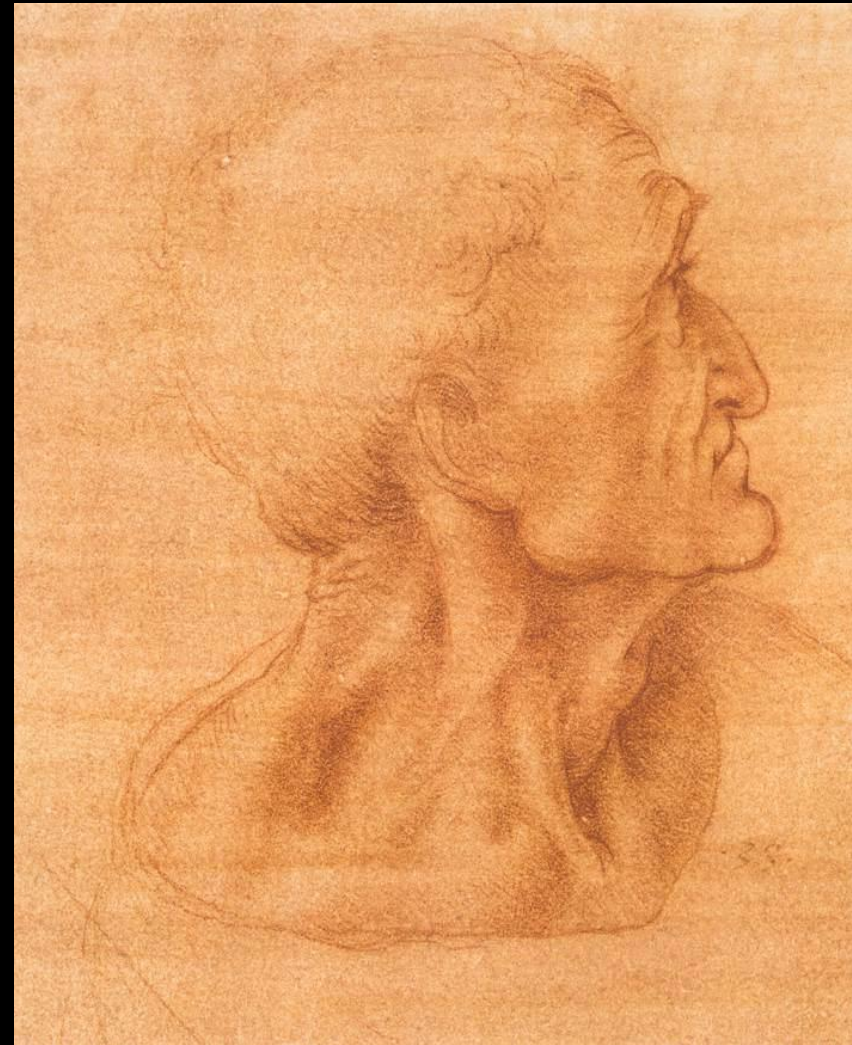


Leonardo, *The Last Supper* (Cropped from original), 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Rather than place Judas on the opposite site of the table, or sitting at the end far from Jesus and ready to flee, Leonardo places Judas in the central set of figures. He turns Judas' face so that it is obscured and shadowy and tilts his body so that it angles away from Jesus.



Leonardo's study for Judas shows his interest in understanding the anatomy of a head turning in space.



Leonardo da Vinci, *Study for Judas*, Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



Leonardo, *The Last Supper* (Cropped from original), 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

The expressions on the apostles demonstrate the restrained emotion and psychological complexity that characterize High Renaissance art.



Leonardo, *The Last Supper*, 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Giorgio Vasari, considered the father of art history, in his 1568 *Lives of the Artists* writes:

"Leonardo imagined, and has succeeded in expressing, the desire that has entered the minds of the apostles to know who is betraying their Master. So in the face of each one may be seen love, fear, indignation, or grief at not being able to understand the meaning of Christ; and this excites no less astonishment than the obstinate hatred and treachery to be seen in Judas."



Leonardo, *The Last Supper*, 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Leonardo used his inquisitive mind to study painting materials as well. The *Last Supper* was painted using an experimental method of tempera paint (typically made by mixing the pigment with egg yolk) and oil paint (made by mixing pigment with an oil binder such as linseed oil) on plaster.

The painting began deteriorating immediately and has needed regular restoration ever since.

Leonardo's *Last Supper* is painted on the wall of a monastery's dining hall where diners could sit beneath it and dine with Jesus and his apostles.

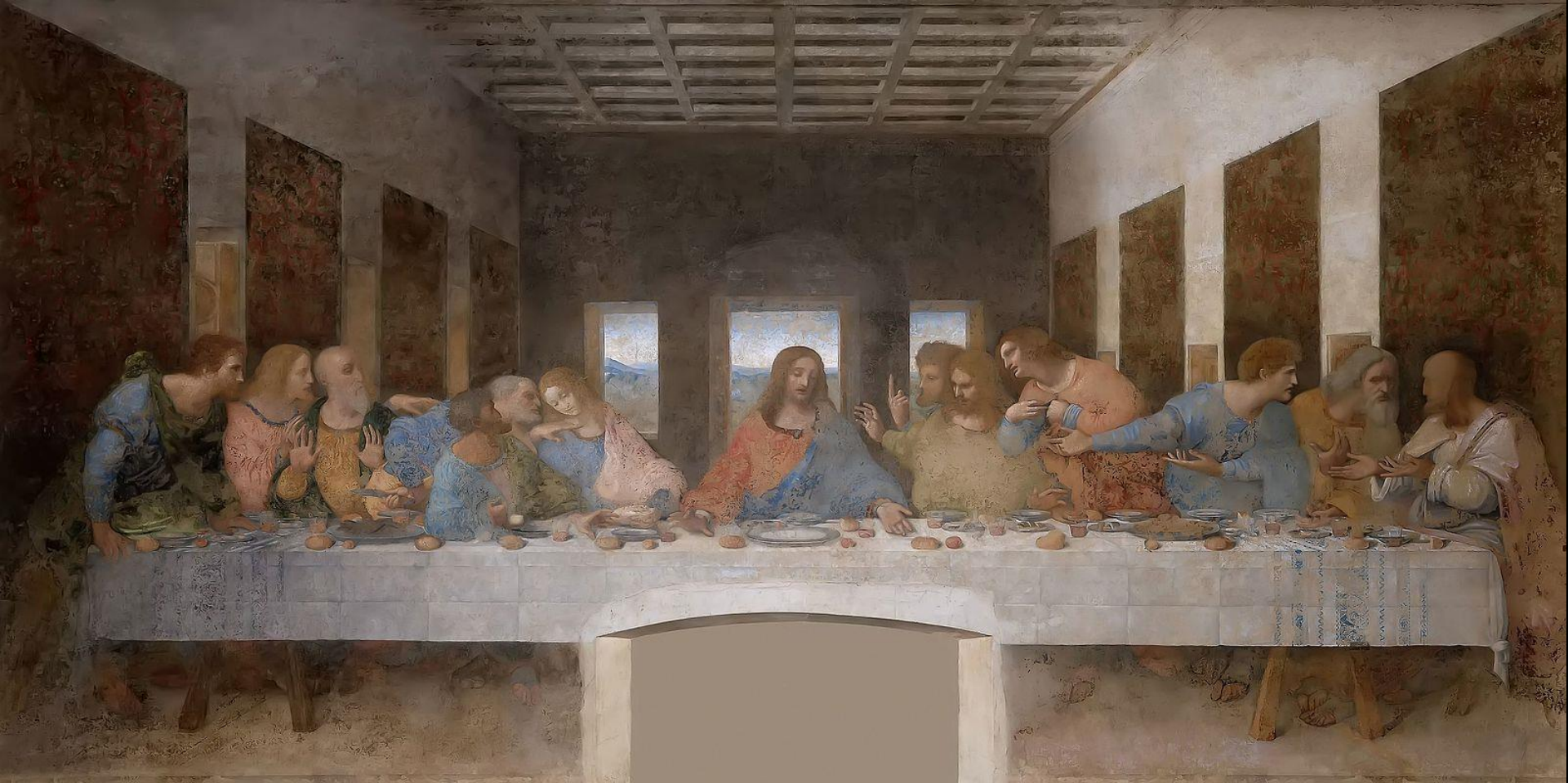
Leonardo da Vinci
Last Supper

Refectory of monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie,
Milan, Italy.

Tempera and oil on plaster.
1495-1498.

Author: [Joyofmuseums](#)
Cropped from original
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 4.0



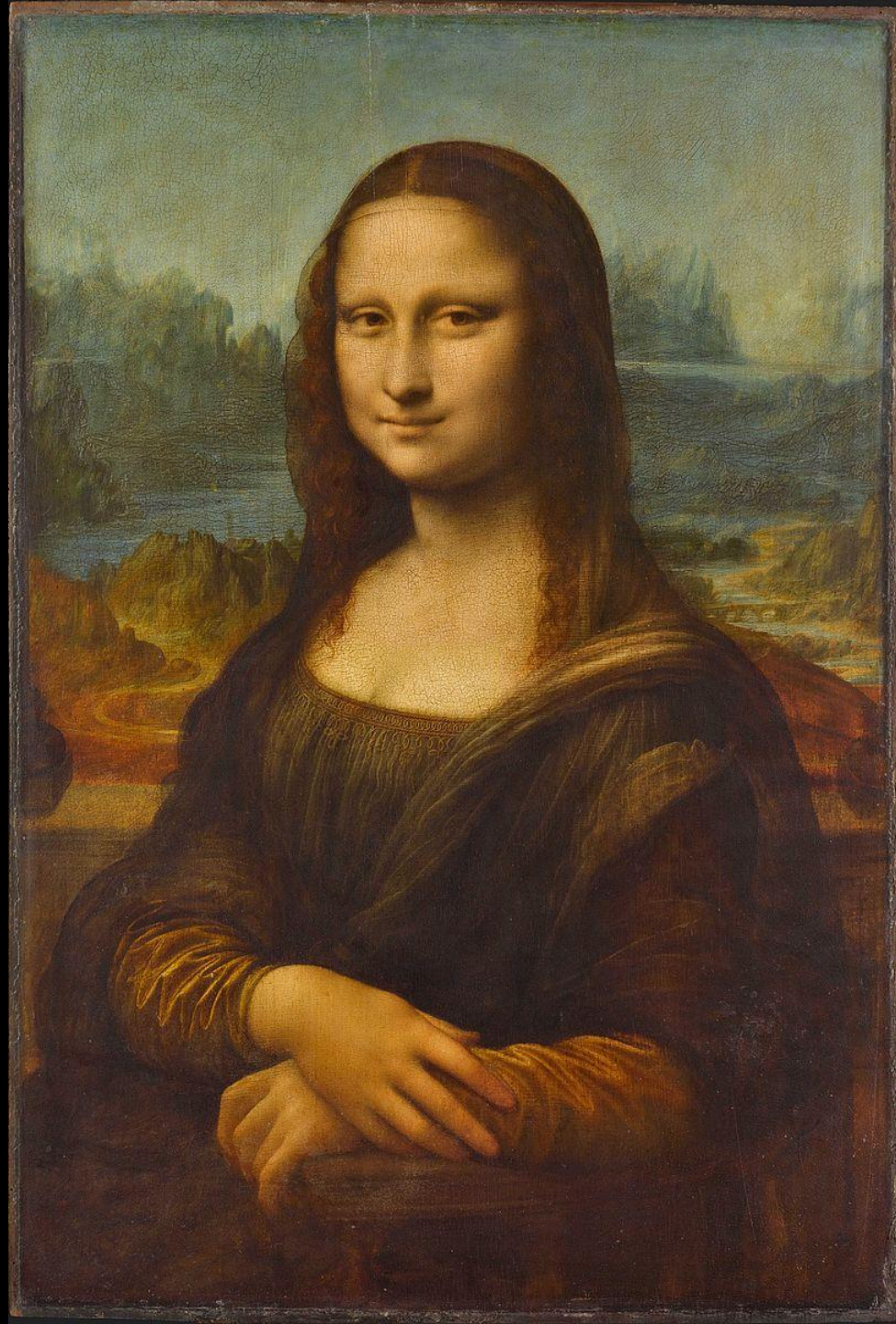


Leonardo, *The Last Supper*, 1495-1498. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

The *Mona Lisa* is a portrait that exemplifies High Renaissance style through its cohesive design, harmonious composition, and restrained emotion.

Leonardo da Vinci
Mona Lisa
c. 1503 - 1506
Oil on poplar wood

Author: [Musée du Louvre, Paris](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: Public Domain

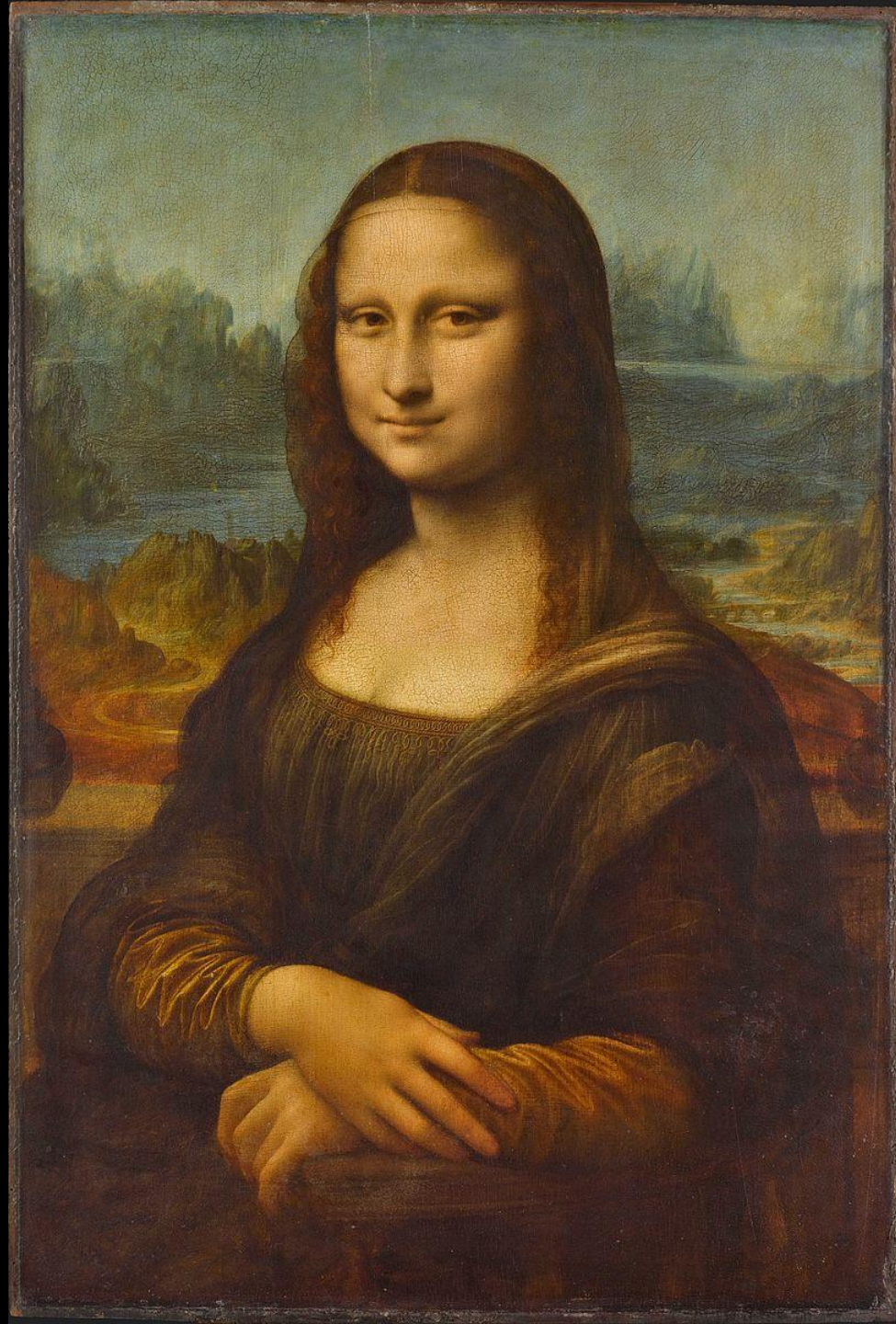


Her restrained emotion has captivated viewers for centuries.

Writers of the 19th century became fascinated with the mystery of her smile, an enigma over which viewers continue to puzzle today.

Leonardo da Vinci
Mona Lisa
c. 1503 - 1506
Oil on poplar wood

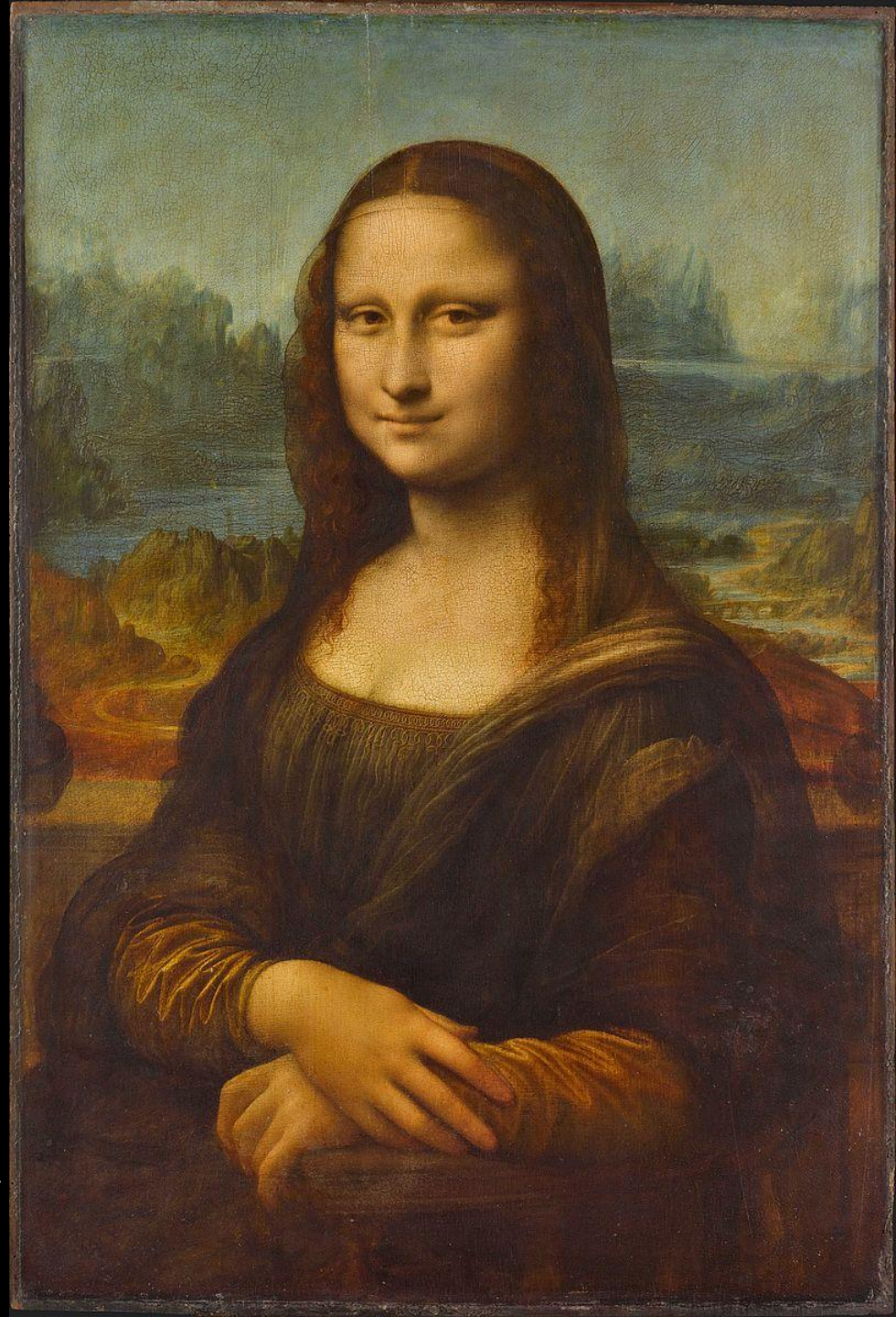
Author: [Musée du Louvre, Paris](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: Public Domain



The *Mona Lisa* dazzled contemporaries due to its lifelike qualities.

Leonardo da Vinci
Mona Lisa
c. 1503 - 1506
Oil on poplar wood

Author: [Musée du Louvre, Paris](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: Public Domain



In the *Mona Lisa*, Leonardo
blends the real
and the ideal.

Leonardo da Vinci
Mona Lisa
c. 1503 - 1506
Oil on poplar wood

Author: [Musée du Louvre, Paris](#)
Cropped from original
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: Public Domain



Her countenance, rather lifelike and animated as if she has just glanced out toward the viewer, is also soft and hazy. Leonardo used a gentle blending technique called *sfumato*, based on his studies of optics, to create the smoky smoothness of the portrait.

Leonardo da Vinci
Mona Lisa
c. 1503 - 1506
Oil on poplar wood

Author: [Musée du Louvre, Paris](#)
Cropped from original
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: [Public Domain](#)




Leonardo's extensive studies of ideal proportions and anatomy informed this balanced portrait.

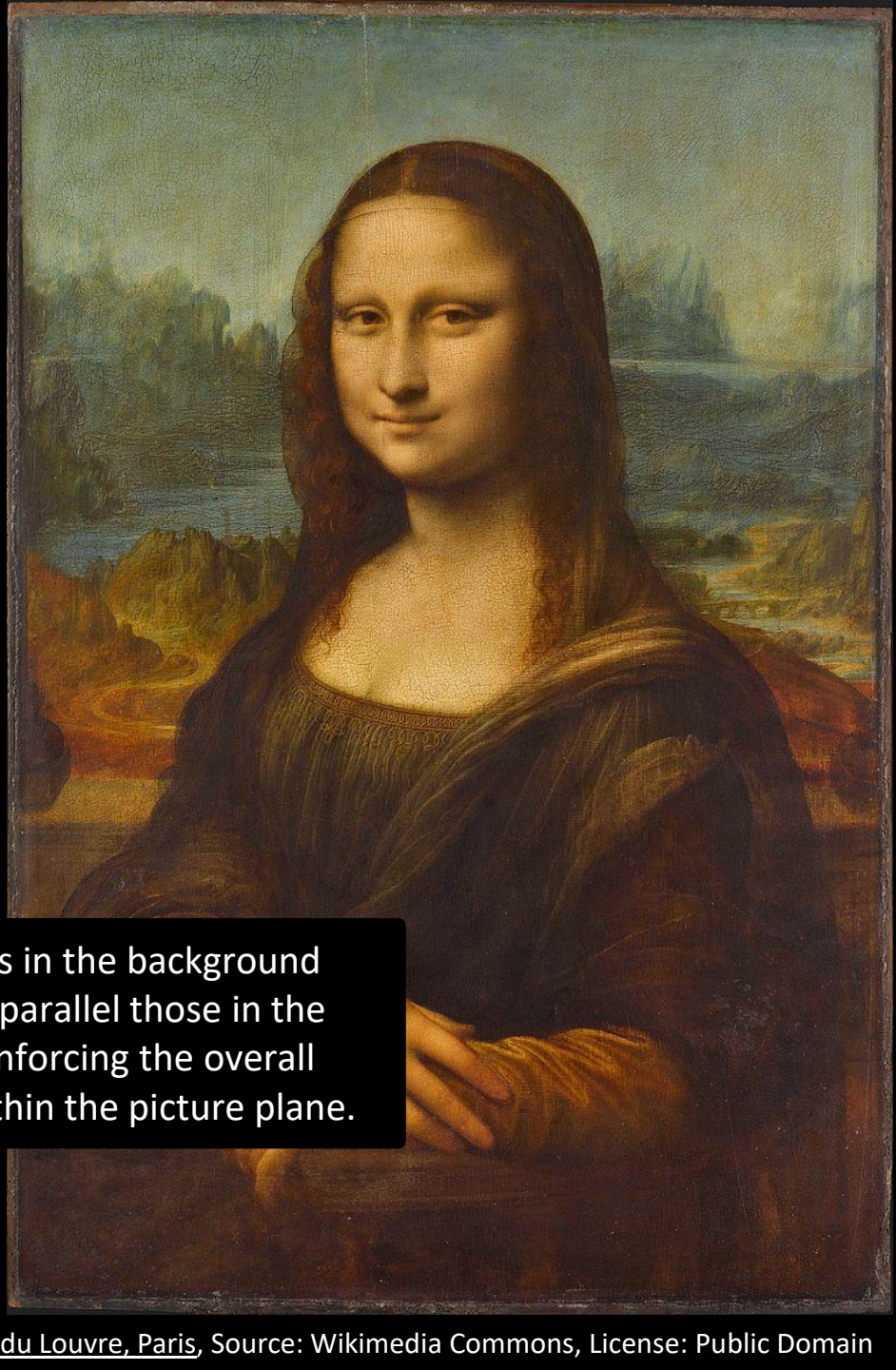
Leonardo da Vinci
Mona Lisa
c. 1503 - 1506
Oil on poplar wood

Author: [Musée du Louvre, Paris](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: [Public Domain](#)





Leonardo da Vinci
Mona Lisa
c. 1503 -1506
Oil on poplar wood



The shapes in the background landscape parallel those in the figure, reinforcing the overall harmony within the picture plane.

The *Mona Lisa* began as a portrait of the wife of a wealthy Florentine merchant.

However, Leonardo never delivered the painting to the patron and instead took it with him in 1516 when he went to work for Francis I, King of France.

Leonardo died in France in 1519 and the *Mona Lisa* became part of the collection of King Francis I.

Leonardo da Vinci
Mona Lisa
c. 1503 - 1506
Oil on poplar wood

Author: [Musée du Louvre, Paris](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
License: [Public Domain](#)





Reading List: 08_The Renaissance

Article about Byzantine art, which talks about abstraction as creating a spiritual space, as well as iconoclasm and fear of images:

<https://smarthistory.org/a-beginners-guide-to-byzantine-art/>

Article about iconoclasm and the Chludov Psalter:

<http://rijksmuseumamsterdam.blogspot.com/2012/09/anonymous-chludov-psalter-9th-century.html>

Listen to Malcolm Gladwell retell the story of David and Goliath, including a more detailed description of the weapon (sling and stone) used by the shepherd David:

https://www.ted.com/talks/malcolm_gladwell_the_unheard_story_of_david_and_goliath

Video lecture on Botticelli's *Primavera*:

<https://smarthistory.org/sandro-botticelli-la-primavera-spring/>

Article about Donatello's *David*:

<https://smarthistory.org/donatello-david/>

Video about the lost wax casting technique:

<https://smarthistory.org/lost-wax/>

Video about marble quarrying and carving (Michelangelo):

<https://smarthistory.org/quarrying-and-carving-marble/>

Video lecture about Michelangelo's *David*:

<https://smarthistory.org/michelangelo-david/>

Short illustrated video about the history and placement of Michelangelo's *David*:

<https://smarthistory.org/the-many-meanings-of-michelangelos-david/>

Video lecture about Bernini's *David* with article about the three Davids: Bernini's, Michelangelo's, and Donatello's:

<https://smarthistory.org/bernini-david-2/>

General article about Leonardo:

<https://smarthistory.org/about-leonardo/>

Leonardo da Vinci as anatomist video lecture:

<https://smarthistory.org/leonardo-anatomist/>

Article about the drawing of Leonardo da Vinci, including mirror writing:

<https://smarthistory.org/leonardo-and-his-drawings/>

Video lecture and article about the *Mona Lisa*:

<https://smarthistory.org/leonardo-mona-lisa/>

Detailed video lecture about the *Mona Lisa* (HENI Talks):

<https://smarthistory.org/heni-mona-lisa/>

Video lecture and article about Leonardo's *Last Supper*:

<https://smarthistory.org/leonardo-last-supper/>

Sketchbook Assignment: 08_The Renaissance

Appropriate the Mona Lisa. You can pose your friend as the Mona Lisa and take a photograph, edit or revise a picture of the Mona Lisa by changing her look, or write a story about her. You might want to tell the story of her life or bring her into a contemporary storyline. You can do as the French Romantics and write a poem about her smile. Find a way to engage with the painting that is interesting to you.