

EUROPE GOES MODERN

INTELLECTUAL, POLITICAL, ARTISTIC CONTEXT IN FRANCE,
1500-1800

HISTORY?
S* BE COMPLICATED...**

SO, MODERNITY?

WHAT DOES 'MODERNITY' MEAN, SUPPOSEDLY?

- Secularism in institutions
- 'Rational' investigation of nature
- Increasing skepticism of, and lack of reliance on, **tradition** (whether religious, political, aesthetic, etc.)
- Focus on the **human** rather than the divine

WHAT DOES 'MODERNITY' MEAN, SUPPOSEDLY? **cont.**

- A move (in Europe) **toward various** forms of, more or less, popular, **democratic government** (kinda...)
- A move **from transcendent** modes of thinking **to immanent** modes of thinking
- A move **out of feudalism toward** mercantile, and then industrial **capitalism.**

OUR VERSION OF MODERNISM

BEFORE THE FR

- **POLITICS:** democratic ideals, popular sovereignty, end of divine rights, equality before the law, right to revolution.
- **ART:** transformation of the nature and ends of representation; linear perspective; baroque staging
- **IDEAS:** individual subjectivity as the primary social unit; mathematicization of nature; rationalization and reason.
- **ECONOMY:** colonial conquest; mercantile intensification



POLITICS I:
Niccolò MACHIAVELLI
(1469-1527)

Italian diplomat, philosopher,
and first modern political
theorist.



**Portrait of Niccolò Machiavelli,
Santi di TITO, 1550s or later**

POLITICS I: MACHIAVELLI



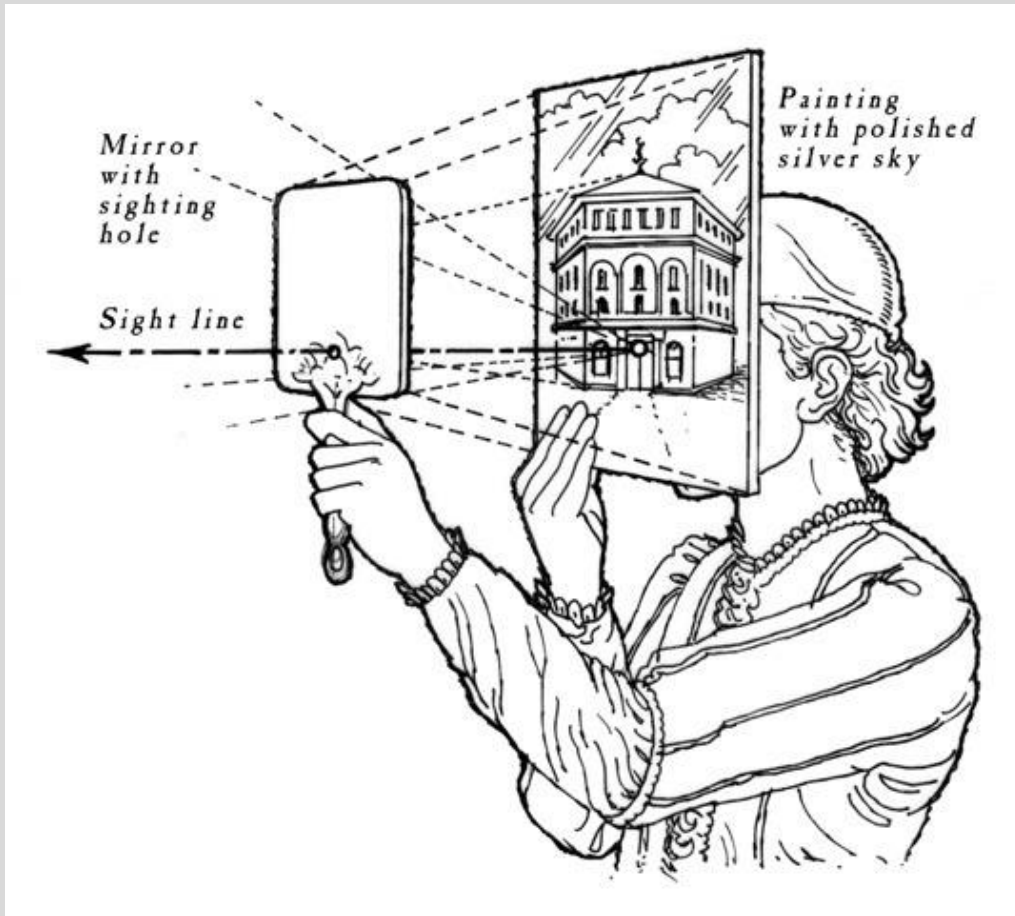
- lived and worked in Renaissance Italy during the late quattrocento early cinquecento
- infamous for political ‘realism’ or cynicism
- wrote the *Prince*, a letter to Lorenzo de’ Medici
- written in the ‘mirrors for princes’ style of the middle ages, but changes significantly the purpose and content of the form

POLITICS I: MACHIAVELLI



- Despite its dictations of violence and deception, the *Prince* is modern
- It secretly underpins political action through popular sovereignty, thereby reconceptualizing the ground of the political as such.

ART I: RENAISSANCE: LINEAR PERSPECTIVE



- Linear perspective represents one of the most widespread transformations of modernity
- Coincides with dramatic changes in economy science and philosophy
- Indicated a paradigm shift in the way people thought of themselves, and how they perceived the external world
- [link](#)

Illustration of BRUNELLESCHI
Experiment first carried out ~1420

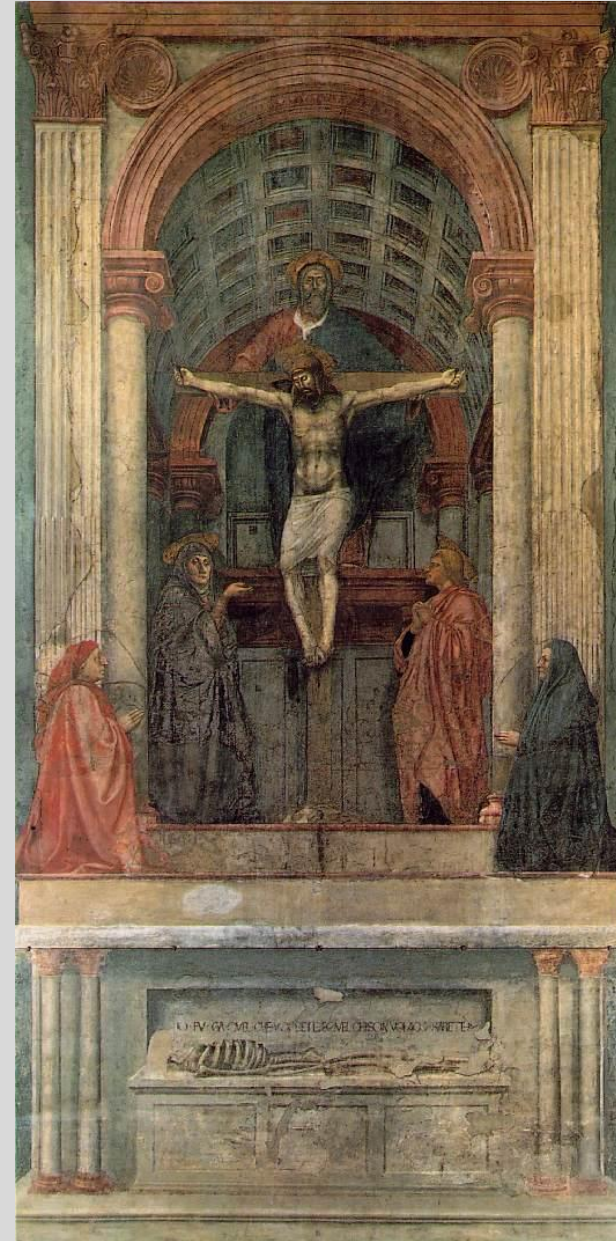
ART I: RENAISSANCE: LINEAR PERSPECTIVE



**Portrait of Filippo BRUNELLESCHI
(1377-1446), made in 1420s**

- Origins: Architect FB originated it to accurately depict architectural sites
- His method was later refined by artists like Alberti, della Francesca, Dürer, and others.
- Linear perspective became the hallmark of Western art from the late 1400's until the middle or late 19th C.

ART I:
RENAISSANCE:
LINEAR PERSPECTIVE

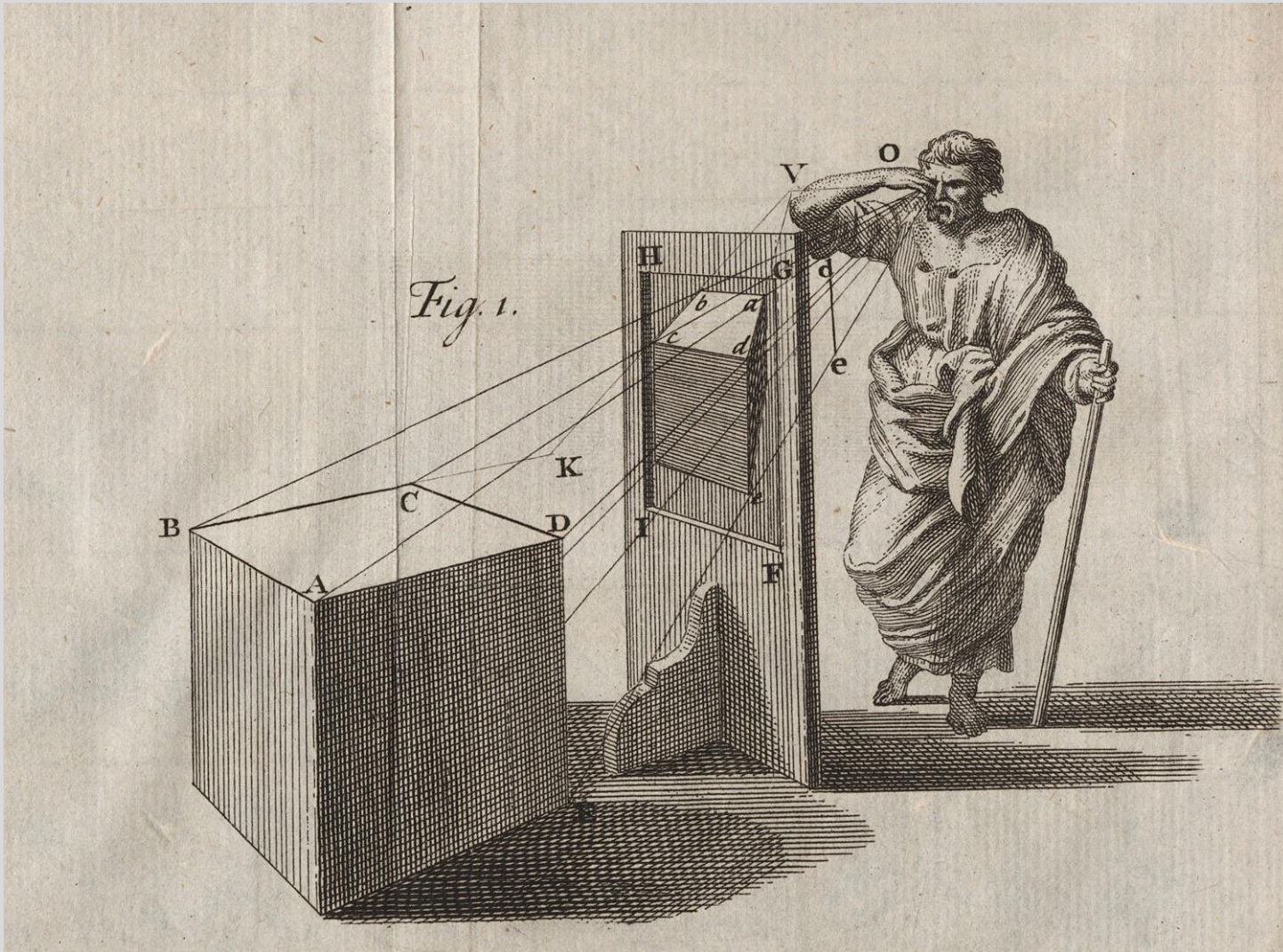


MASSACIO, *HOLY TRINITY*, 1425-8

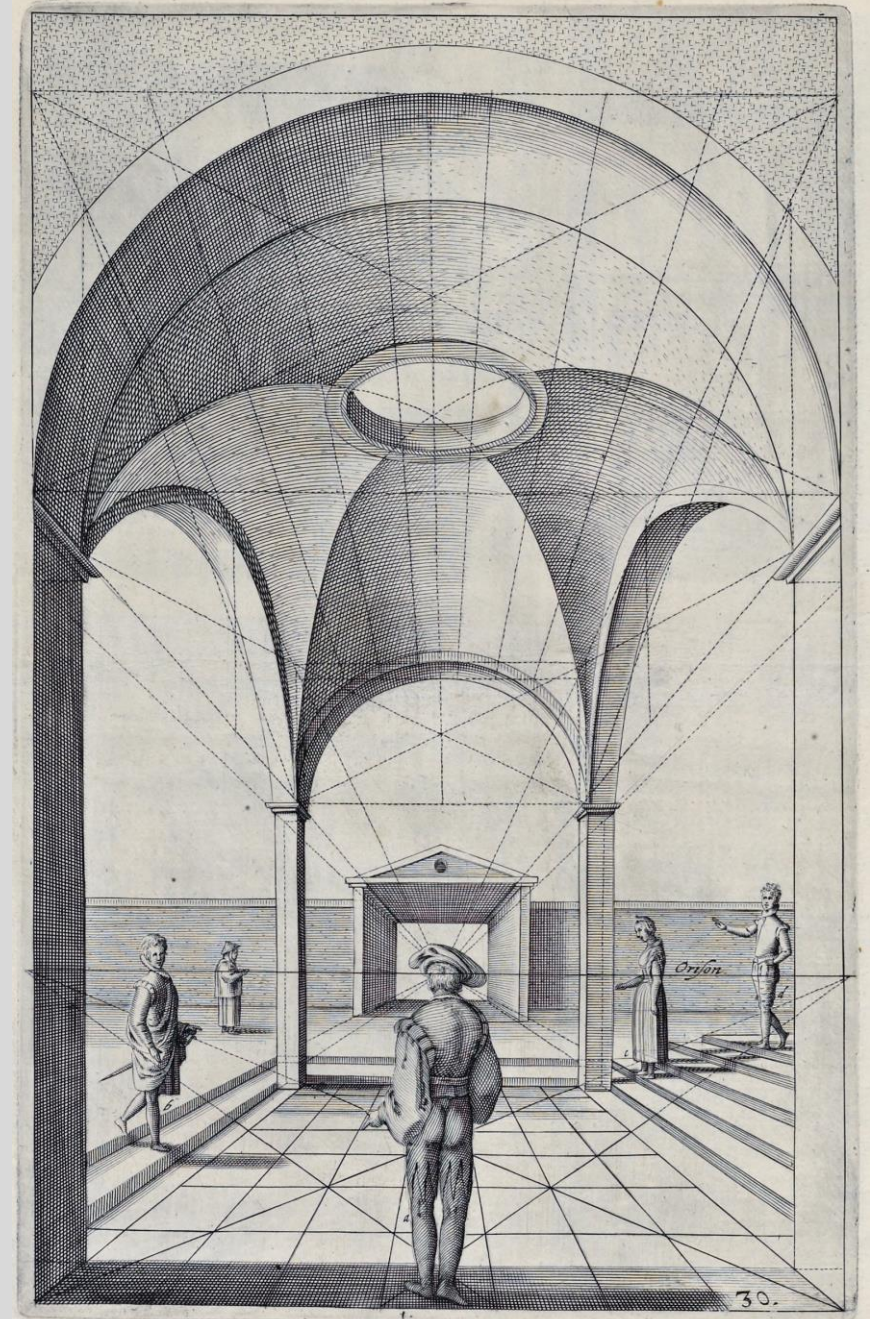
ART I: RENAISSANCE: LINEAR PERSPECTIVE



ART I: RENAISSANCE: LINEAR PERSPECTIVE



ART I:
RENAISSANCE:
LINEAR PERSPECTIVE



DE VRIES, *The Perspectival Subject*, 1604

ART I: RENAISSANCE: LINEAR PERSPECTIVE

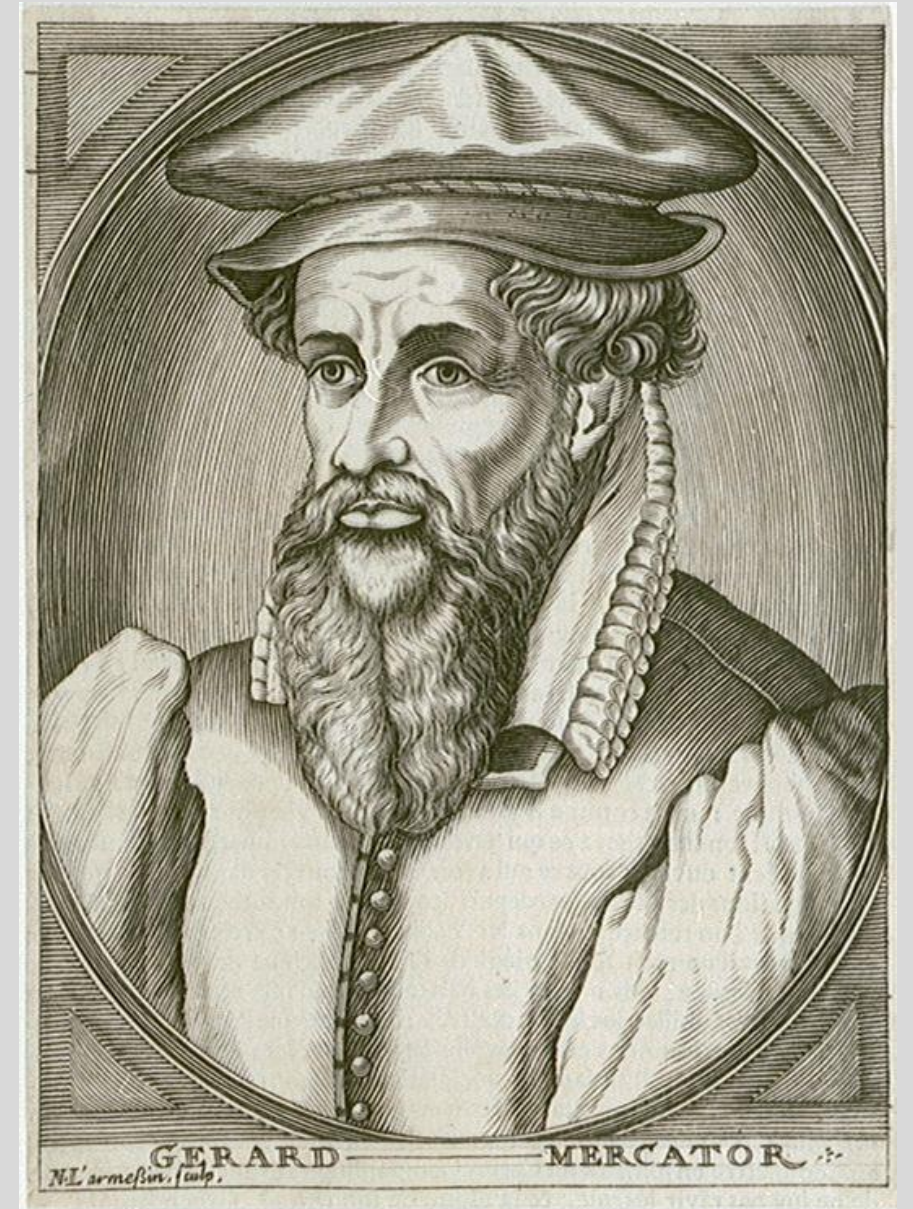
WHY DOES LP MATTER?

- It begins a process of the ‘rationalization of sight’
- Maximizes verisimilitude of the individual vantage of experience
- Allows for the development of a comparable, quantifiable notion of ‘absolute, or ‘homogeneous’ space
- This comes in tandem with complementary advances in mapping and navigation, both of which represent species of ‘projective geometries’

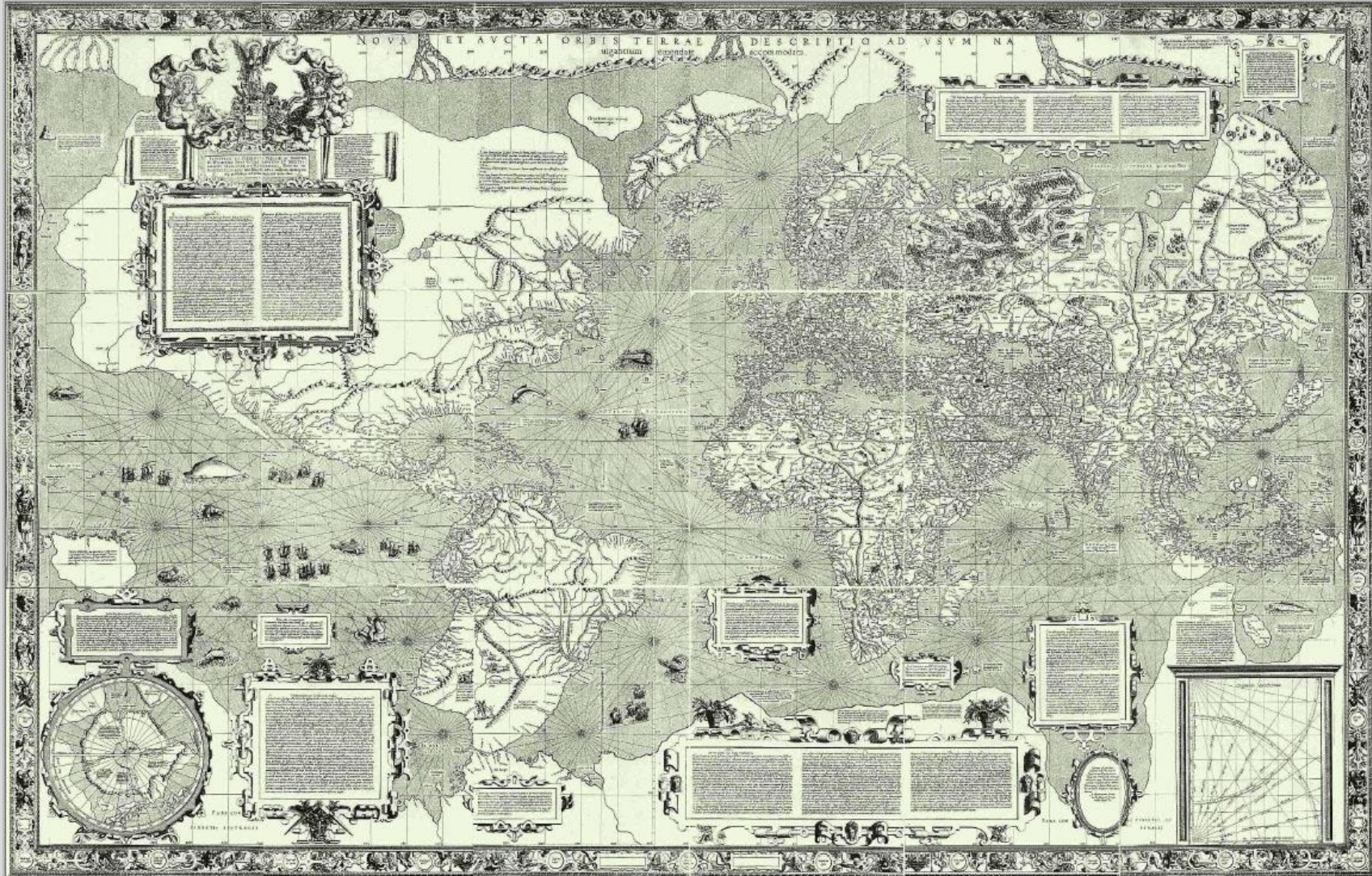
**ART I:
RENAISSANCE:
Conformal Maps**

**Gerardus MERCATOR
(1512-1592)**

- **Cartographer
extraordinaire.**

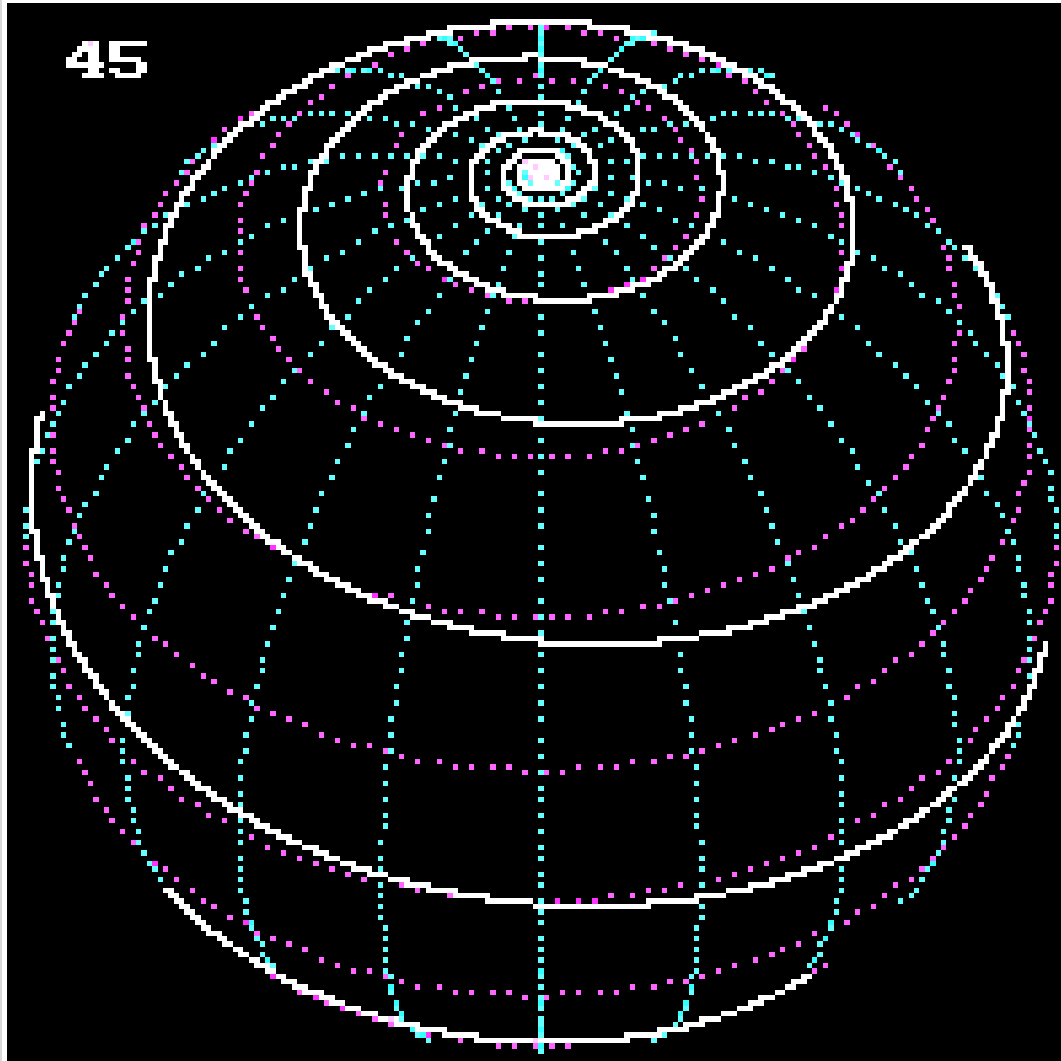


ART I: RENAISSANCE: Conformal Maps



Mercator,
*MERCATOR
PROJECTION
WORLD MAP,
1569*

ART I: RENAISSANCE: Conformal Maps



Rhumb line, remains
straight on Mercator
projection

ART I: RENAISSANCE: projective geometry

“Although already implicit in the first linear perspective images, the formulation of a general projective geometry effectively completed the rationalization of vision initiated in the Renaissance. It definitively established a rigorous mathematical correspondence between absolute physical space and any of its possible perspectival representations. The rules of projective geometry would provide a standard by which the spatial fidelity of visual perception could be gauged, simultaneously displacing and devaluing innate phenomenological experience. In this spirit, the 17th century artist Abraham Bosse, a student under Desargues and a lifelong promoter of his ideas, would affirm that painting’s true task was not to represent things ‘as the eye sees them or believes it sees them, but such as the laws of perspective impose them on our reason.’”

- **Antoine BOUSQUET, “The Perspectival Eye” (2017).**

PHIL/SCI I: DESCARTES



- Most famous modern philosopher
- “Je pense, donc je suis”
- Articulated the certainty of knowledge in terms of the one’s first-person experience.
- Wrote his *Discourse on Method* in the vernacular French, so that ordinary people might read it.
- Founder of analytic geometry, allowing precise metrical analysis of geometric figures (Cartesian coordinates)

Franz HALS (copy), *Portrait Of René Descartes*, originally 17th century

PHIL/SCI I: GALILEO



- Almost the most famous physicist
- Developed some of the first mathematically rigorous methods of observation and experiment on non-celestial bodies
- This was done by studying proportions or ratios of two processes or magnitudes (such as the inclined plane experiments) Hence ‘rationalization’.
- Proponent of the Copernican cosmology (for which he was persecuted by the Catholic church).

Justus SUSTERMANS, *Portrait Of Galileo Galilei*, 1636

PHIL/SCI/ART II: THE BAROQUE 17th C

Baroque art:

- focuses on dynamicism, gesture, movement frozen in time, curvilinear form, and the increasing material wealth of imperial and mercantile nations
- Increasing individuation of personality in figures.
- France enjoyed a golden age of monarchical culture under Louis XIV (a.k.a. ‘the sun king’); Palace of Versailles built.
- Newton and Leibniz invent the calculus independently. Using infinities in mathematics productively for the first time.
- Desargues completes his generalized projective geometry in the 1600’s, which won’t be fully appreciated until the 19th century

PHIL/SCI/ART II: THE BAROQUE



CARRAVAGIO,
The Incredulity of St. Thomas
1601-2

PHIL/SCI/ART II: THE BAROQUE



REMBRANDT,
*The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes
Tulp*, 1632

PHIL/SCI/ART II: THE BAROQUE



Albert ECKHOUT
Brazilian Fruits
1610-1666

COLONIALISM I: IN 1492 COLUMBUS SAILED THE OCEAN...RED

Countries that have been under European control

- Europe
- Colonized or controlled by Europe
- Partial European control or influence
- European sphere of influence
- Never colonized by Europe

