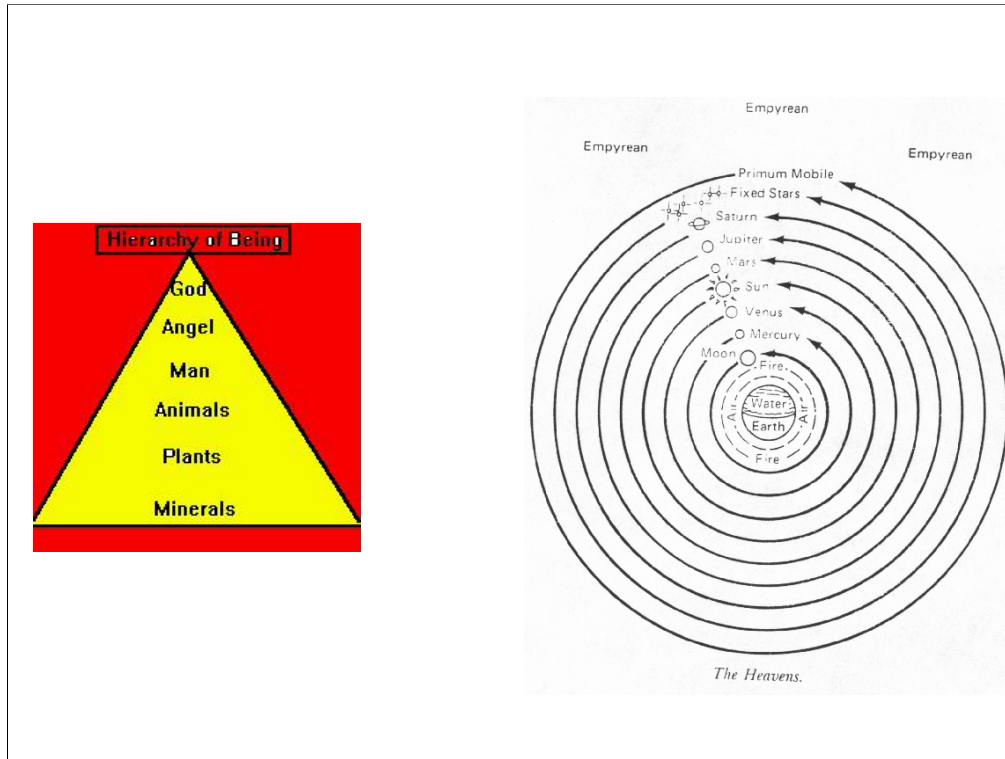


The end and the beginning...

the fourteenth century



The Medieval world was a hierarchical place. Francis defied that logic, which is why, in his time, preaching to animals was so outrageous.

Medieval thinkers believed in a **hierarchy of being** that classified all things in a pyramid order. Man was at the top of the heap, and all things were under his rule. Therefore, to the medieval/ renaissance mind, man could dominate creation.

In the hierarchy of being, minerals were at the bottom, followed by plants, animals, women, children, men, the pope, angels, and finally God.

The vision of the universe at the time was also hierarchical and **Geocentric**. Scientists (if you can call them that) believed that the earth was at the center of the universe, surrounded by the 4 elements. Beyond lay the planets and then heaven.



Understanding a few things about the organization of the medieval church is very important.

Local authority and services were held by Abbots, priests & clerics. These folks actually dealt with people on an individual basis. They were paid small salaries. Above them were regional authorities usually known as bishops. Above bishops were district authorities known as Cardinals. And at the top of the organization was the pope, the infallible voice of God on earth.

Below the pope, the positions were non-exclusive. You could hold several positions and collect several stipends or salaries.

Placement in the church was sometimes because of a dedication to religion and a spiritual calling. It was also sometimes from knowing the right people. The church demanded chastity from its officials, but usually the only thing the non-spiritually-motivated guys abstained from was marriage. In fact the word **nepotism** starts around this time period. It comes from nepota, meaning nephew. Frequently the “nephews” of important church officials were given cushy jobs in the church, but they were usually nephews in name only, really being illegitimate children.



Donation of Constantine

The pope had incredible power and temporal wealth. Upon their deaths many people left their lands to the church. In the middle ages, leaving land meant also leaving contracts of fealty and serfs. The church became administrators of money as well as belief.

One of the trump cards in this power was a document known as the **Donation of Constantine**. The document, supposedly written by Constantine's secretary gave the Pope the ultimate spiritual authority as well as the deed to Europe. Under the provisions of the donation, the Pope owned Europe. If a king took office, he was only there under the grace of the Pope – his land was on loan. He took an oath of fealty to God and the Church, and thereby to the pope.



Francis of Assisi

Son of a wealthy merchant. Dedicated himself to the church against his father's wishes.

St. Francis, unlike other monks of his day sought to be as much like Christ as possible. He gave up all his possessions and wandered the countryside. He would work and then donate all of his earnings to the poor. He considered all of creation as a part of God's plan and preached to everything, including birds and rocks.

Because of St. Francis' kindness, he gathered a huge following. The poor followed him and tried to emulate his actions. The papal court in Rome condemned him, but public opinion supported him.

Eventually, St. Francis, while praying was touched with the **stigmata** – the wounds of Christ's crucifixion. He died of the wound in his side.

Francis was canonized and his order was approved because of overwhelming public pressure. Frequently Francis is portrayed at the feet of the cross, crucified below Christ because he tried so hard to emulate Jesus' life.

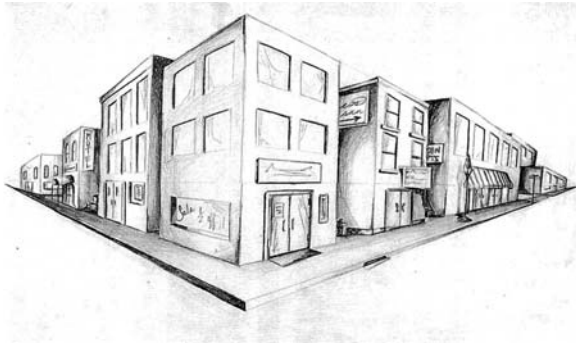
Great Schism



To add to the fun, in the 1300s, the papacy, which had been housed in France at Avignon for years because of security issues was moved back to Rome. However, the official elected to the office turned out to be a jerk. So the election council was re-called, and they pulled their approval away from that guy and elected a second pope who set up court back in Avignon. This caused all kinds of problems.

The kings of Europe took sides and chose which pope they felt was the legitimate successor to Apostolic Succession, and Europe was split down the middle. This division was known as the **Great Schism** or **East-West Schism** and caused major religious turmoil. Eventually, several popes later, a church council was called and the issue was resolved, returning the papacy to the successor in Rome.

Perspective



With the rise of the church and the rise of the city and middle class, Art made a giant comeback – there was somebody to pay for it!!

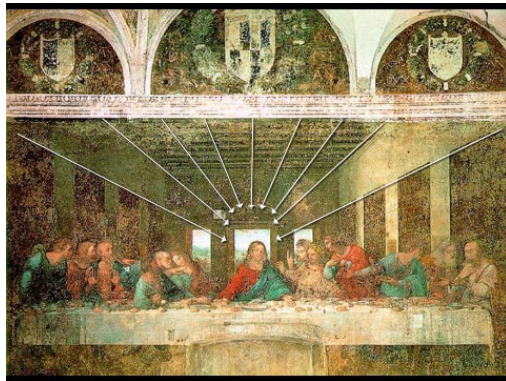
At this point, it's worth taking a brief side-trip to introduce 2 important “artsy” things you should know about when you look at a picture.

Perspective

Perspective is a way of representing things in space so that the image of the object looks “real.” For example, when you look down a hallway, it looks like the other end is smaller; it appears to recede in the distance. If you see two people, one closer and one further away, you know that the further person appears smaller because of distance, not actual size.

In a picture or painting, perspective is important for giving the viewer a sense of space.

**These images are not from the middle ages – they’re here to illustrate a point.



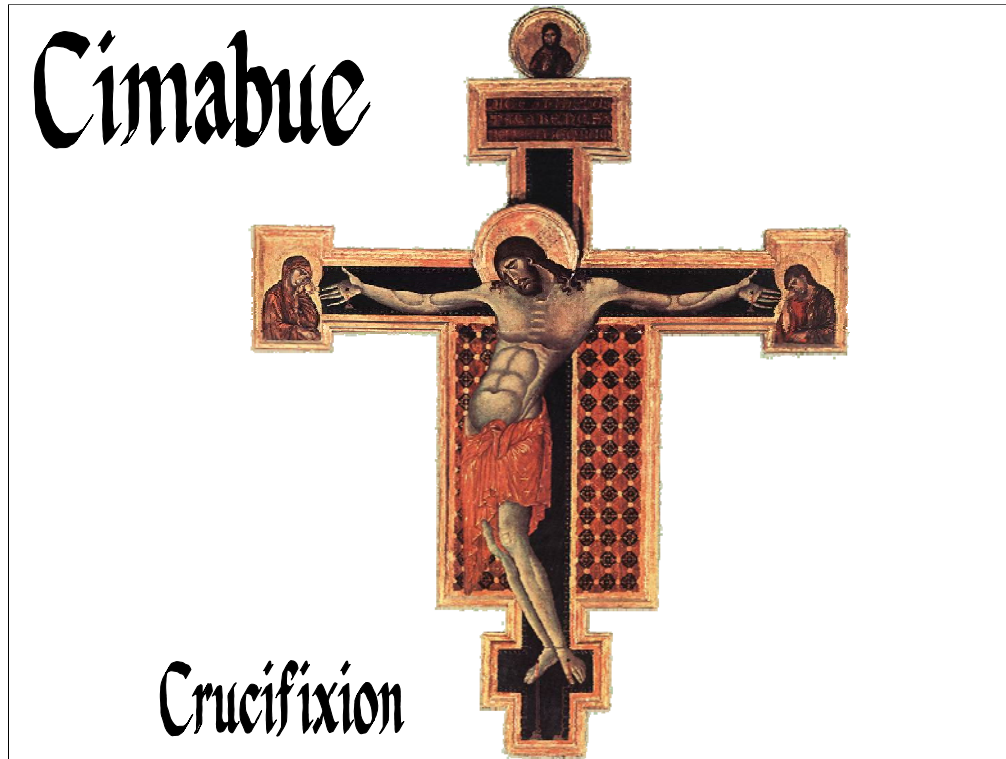
Focal Point



The other artistic element is known as a **Focal Point**.

A focal point, in art or architecture, uses a series of lines or shapes to guide the viewer's eyes where they should go. Focal points rely on mathematics and geometry.

******These images are not from the middle ages – they're here to illustrate a point.



3 artists stand out in this time period, and they're worth a look because they form the entrance to the art of the next time period – the renaissance.

The first is **Cimabue**.

Cimabue was Florentine. And was the last great painter in the Byzantine tradition.

Cimabue's work is notable for a the beginning of better organization. He began to note the natural movement of the body and try to use figures to show emotion.

Duccio

Annunciation



Duccio, a follower of Cimabue, but improved upon the master.

He began to demonstrate an understanding of not only figures but drapery. He also added architectural frameworks to his paintings for naturalness. He also wisely used elements to create a focal point and was able to integrate rudimentary perspective.



Giotto, the last and greatest of the 3 used the architectural frames and the detail of drapery. But he went a step further. He used individualized faces and emotion.

Prior to Giotto, all faces in a painting were essentially the same. Additionally, all the faces were set and stiff. They might be turned in different directions, but the emotion expressed was essentially the same. Giotto changed that, taking a major step toward naturalism.



To understand the differences and the progression, one of the easiest things to do is look at paintings by all 3 painters of the same exact subject. All 3 painters created images of the **Madonna Enthroned**.

The first is by **Cimabue**. It shows no architecture except the throne and a stiffness of fabric as well as a commonality of face throughout the image.

The people proportions are also off.



The second is by **Duccio**. The painting was purchased for \$45 million by the metropolitan museum of art.

Duccio shows more architectural frame and a clearer organization, but his faces are still consistent. The drapery is a little more natural.

The people proportions are also still off. The baby Jesus looks a little better, but he's still not right.



Last of all is **Giotto's** work.

Giotto provides an architectural frame and uses different faces for the background as well as using natural drapery.

Baby's still deformed, though. I know, art critics don't care, but he is.



Chaucer

Whan that Aprill, with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;

Canterbury Tales



Out of this time period comes the first literary work written in English. Things were finally secure enough that people began to have a sense of region and nationality. Vernacular works began to have some worth, and one of the first authors to take advantage of the trend was the English author Geoffrey Chaucer.

Chaucer wrote the **Canterbury Tales**, which is the story of a group of Pilgrims on their way to see the relics at Canterbury cathedral. Traveling in a group for safety, the group includes people from all walks of life and social classes. On the trip (because it's boring), the travelers agree to tell each other stories. The Canterbury Tales are those stories.

The Canterbury tales are important because they reflect a cross section of medieval society, telling readers a great deal about life at the start of the renaissance.

- No standard spelling
- Vernacular
- Different grammar

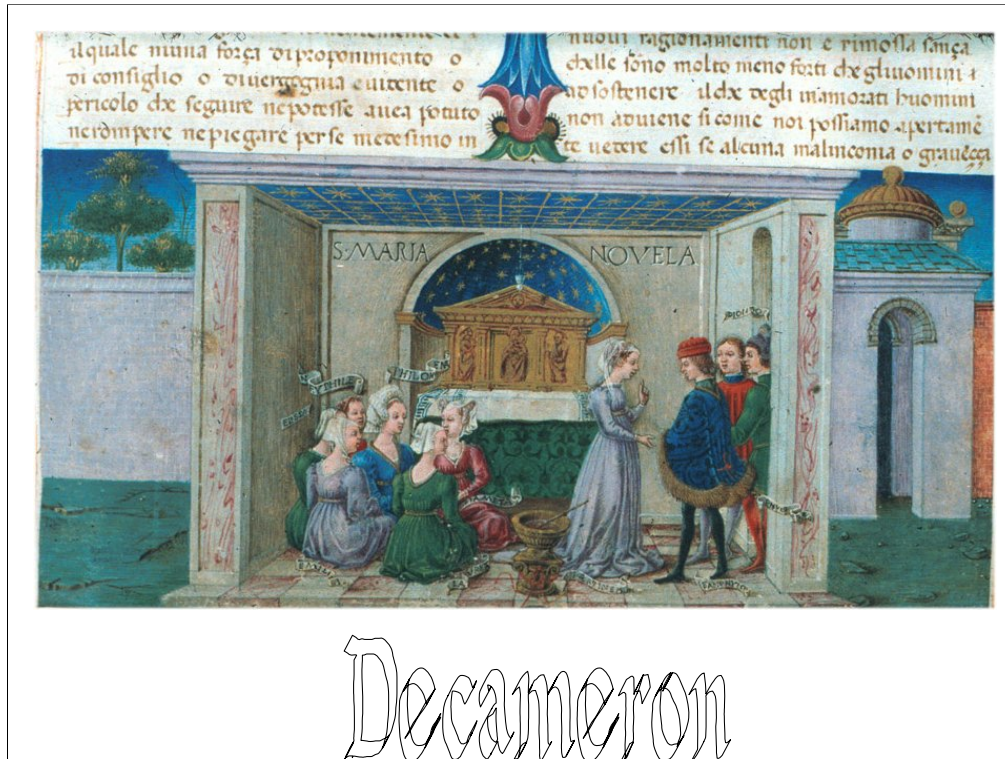
Black Death



One of the biggest events in the 14th century was the outbreak of the bubonic plague, the “**black death**” that swept across Europe, killing 1 in 3 people.

The black death began in the steppes of Russia and was carried south westward by merchants and travellers.

- Fleas and ticks
- Believed to be from the devil – cats killed as familiars
- Ring around the rosy



Boccaccio, an Italian poet, wrote his own “canterbury tales.” The Decameron was a tale about a group of young nobles who locked themselves away in a castle to avoid the black death. To pass the time while they were hiding, they agreed to tell 10 stories each.

During this time **Petrarch** also invented the sonnet form.

- 14 lines
- Rhyme and meter
- Stop and turn