

WC 373-383 PP 405-9: Machiavelli, *Prince*

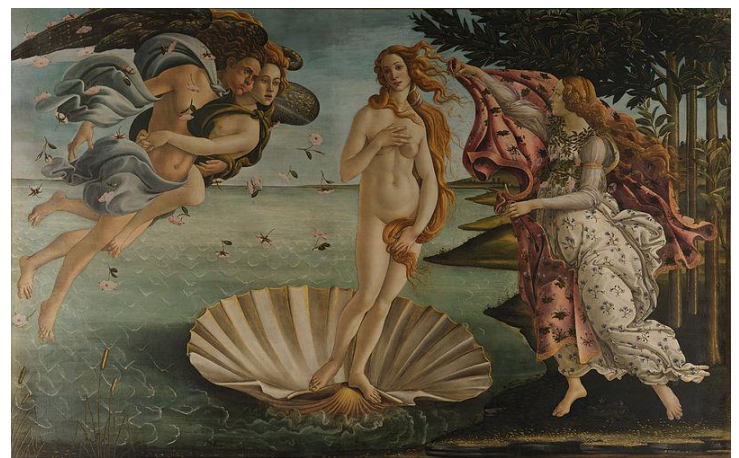
Chronology

1434	Medici Family runs Florence
1440	Lorenzo Medici debunks "Donation of Constantine"
1498	da Vinci, <i>The Last Supper</i> created
1504	Michelangelo completes statue of <i>David</i>
1511	Rafael, <i>The School of Athens</i> created
1512	Michelangelo completes Sistine Chapel
1513	Machiavelli writes <i>The Prince</i>

Star Terms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renaissance • Medici • florin • perspective • realism 	Geog. Terms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Republic of Florence • Republic of Siena • Papal States • Bologna • Milan
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A. Botticelli, *Birth of Venus* (1486) currently in the Uffizi, Florence

The Birth of Venus is probably Botticelli's most famous painting and was commissioned by the Medici family. Venus rises from the sea, looking like a classical statue and floating on a seashell. On Venus' right is Zephyrus, God of Winds, he carries with him the gentle breeze Aura and together they blow the Goddess of Love ashore. The Horae, Goddess of the Seasons, waits to receive Venus and spreads out a flower covered robe in readiness for the Love Goddess' arrival. In what is surely one of the most recognizable images in art history, this image is significant because it attests to the revival of Greco-Roman forms to European art and gives form to the idea behind the Renaissance: a rebirth by using Classical knowledge.



B. Florence Cathedral (the Duomo) Florence Italy (1436)

The Duomo, the main church of Florence, Italy had begun in 1296 in the Gothic style to the design of Arnolfo di Cambio and completed structurally in 1436 with the dome engineered by Filippo Brunelleschi, who won the competition for its commission in 1418. The dome is egg-shaped and was made without scaffolding. The raising of this dome, the largest in the world in its time, was no easy architectural feat. At the base of the dome, just above the drum, Baccio d'Agnolo began adding a balcony in 1507. One of the eight sides was finished by 1515, when someone asked Michelangelo -- whose artistic opinion was by this time taken as cardinal law -- what he thought of it. The master reportedly scoffed, "It looks like a cricket cage." Work was immediately halted, and to this day the other seven sides remain rough brick.

C. Donatello, *David*, bronze (c. 1440) currently in the Bargello Museum, Florence Italy

Donatello's bronze statue of David (circa 1440s) is famous for being the first unsupported standing work of bronze cast during the Renaissance, and the first freestanding nude male sculpture made since antiquity. It depicts David with an enigmatic smile, posed with his foot on Goliath's severed head just after defeating the giant. The youth is completely naked, apart from a laurel-topped hat and boots, bearing the sword of Goliath. This piece was commissioned by the Medici family and placed in the center of the courtyard of the Medici Palace in Florence. This daring move showed that the Medici family thought that they could take ownership of David, a symbol of the city of Florence. Because this was such a scandalous idea at the time, Donatello put some shifts on the subject matter that could explain away the identity of David as "just another sculpture". For example, David was supposed to have gone into battle completely nude, but this statue shows him wearing boots and a helmet. Goliath's helmet also has a feather protruding that can be seen as attached to David's foot, and thus characterized as Hermes, the Greek god. The Medici were exiled from Florence in 1494, and the statue was moved to the courtyard of the Palazzo della Signoria (the marble David was already in the palazzo). It was moved to the Pitti Palace in the 17th century, to the Uffizi in 1777, and then finally, in 1865, to the Bargello museum, where it remains today. It is significant because it shows a blending of Christian storytelling with new ideals of humanism flourishing in Florence at the start of the Renaissance.