



Desiderius Erasmus

1466-1536 A.D. A monk of the Western Church and Dutch Renaissance scholar. Primarily known for reviving Greek and Latin classics, he also wrote a Latin translation of the original Greek text of the New Testament. His own original works were generally critical and satirical.



Girolamo Savonarola

1452-1498 A.D. Italian reformer and Dominican friar, he is noted for his assaults on corruption, specifically the powerful Medici family and Pope Alexander VI. Convicted of heresy, he was excommunicated and executed.



Vasco da Gama

1460-1524 A.D. Portuguese navigator and explorer, the first European to discover an all-water trade route to India by way of the Cape of Good Hope. This established Portugal as a power due to trade and colonization with the rich lands of the East.



Cesare Borgia

1475-1507 A.D. Italian political and military leader, and son of Pope Alexander VI, he led campaigns terrorizing all of Italy with his brutal methods. He was ironically depicted favorably in Machiavelli's *The Prince*.



Johann Tetzel

1465-1519 A.D. German Dominican friar who unethically sold indulgences to help finance the Catholic Church. His preaching on the topic provoked Martin Luther to post his 95 theses on the church doors at Wittenberg.



Bartolomé de Las Casas

1474-1566 A.D. Known as "Apostle of the Indies," Spanish missionary and historian who fought to eradicate the slavery of natives in the Americas. He further procured laws protecting them from oppression.



Nicolaus Copernicus

1473-1543 A.D. Polish astronomer who developed the theory opposing the Ptolemaic system, that all the planets, including earth, rotate around a stationary sun.



Richard III

1452-1485 A.D. King of England who seized custody of the throne by deceitful tactics. This led to revolt by supporters of Henry of Tudor for the throne, but the rebellion collapsed. Henry caught up to Richard, killing him in the battle of Bosworth Field, and ultimately ending the Wars of the Roses.



Fall of Constantinople

1453 A.D. The Ottoman Turks, led by their ruler, Sultan Mehmed II, laid siege upon Constantinople, one of the most heavily fortified cities in the world. The variety of attacks lasted for fifty days, culminating with the Turks storming the gate and overwhelming the Christians. The city was renamed Istanbul and was officially claimed for Islam.



Leonardo da Vinci

1452-1519 A.D. Italian Renaissance painter, sculptor, engineer, musician, inventor, and scientist. Famous for his genius well ahead of his time, Leonardo documented many of his innovative ideas regarding anatomy, machinery, flight, optics, architecture, mathematics, and much more. His masterpieces include the *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*.



Menno Simons

1496-1561 A.D. Dutch reformer and Anabaptist leader. Also called Mennonites, followers lived a life characterized by simplicity and pacifism.



Niccolò Machiavelli

1469-1527 A.D. Italian statesman and political theorist best known for his book, *The Prince*. His support of a strong central government at all costs, even advocating immoral methods if it meant the prevention of great evils, led to his well known quotation, "The end justifies the means."