



PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA & PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER



Francesca was a painter in the Early Renaissance (1415-1492) and he had a very unique style of painting. All of his paintings can be reduced to geometric shapes. Scholars claim that he stimulated the modern Cubists. He had a passion for mathematics, and wrote papers on geometry and perspective.



This is a cubist-style painting of the Eiffel Tower in France, by an artist named Robert Delaunay. Keep this in mind as you look at some of Francesca's work. Ask yourself if it is similar.



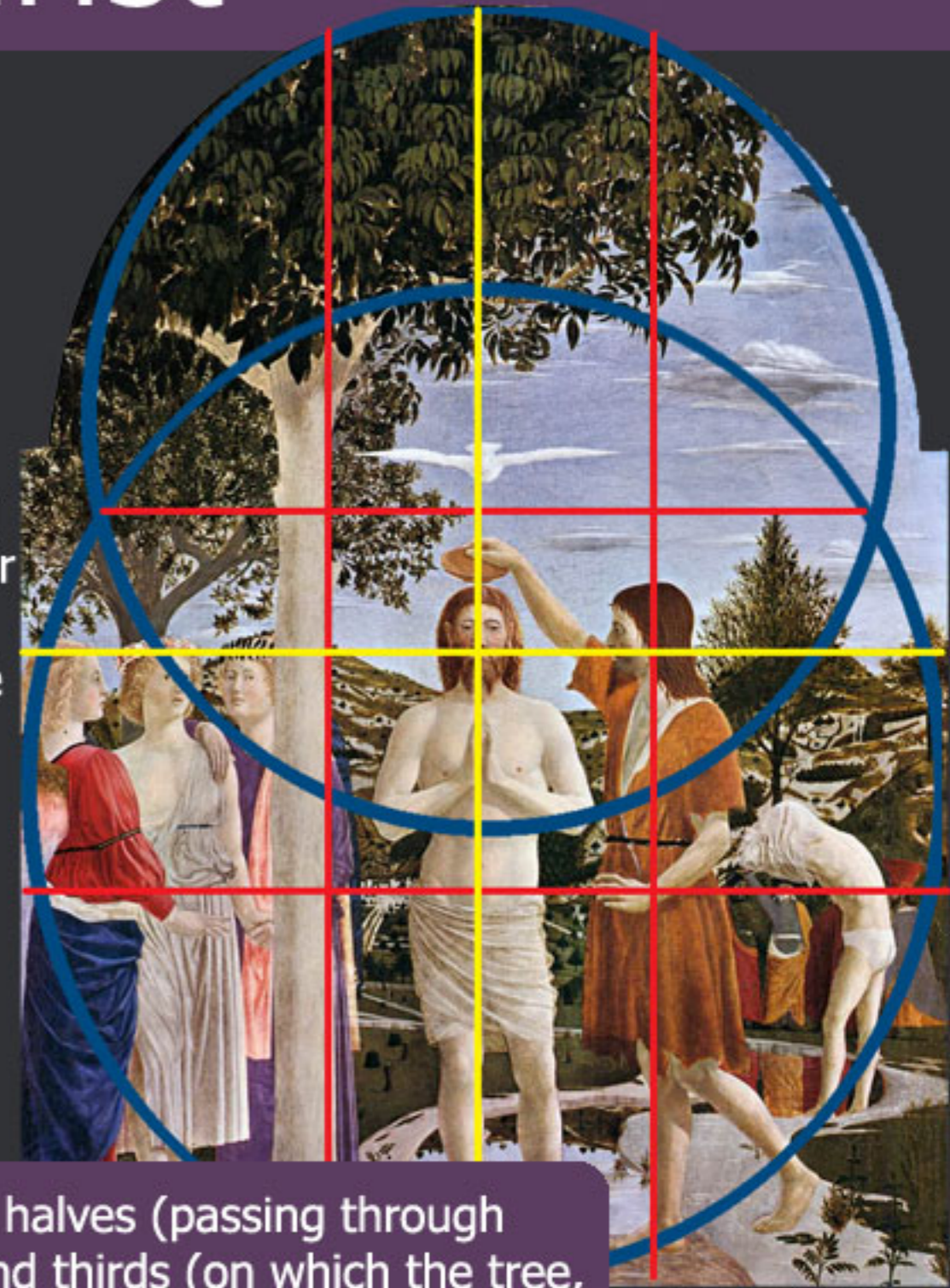
Bruegel is considered the greatest Flemish painter of the 16th century. His earlier paintings consist of landscapes, while his later works became more Italian looking. The "Peasant Wedding" is considered to be a more Italian work because the figures are very colorful and round.

Baptism of Christ

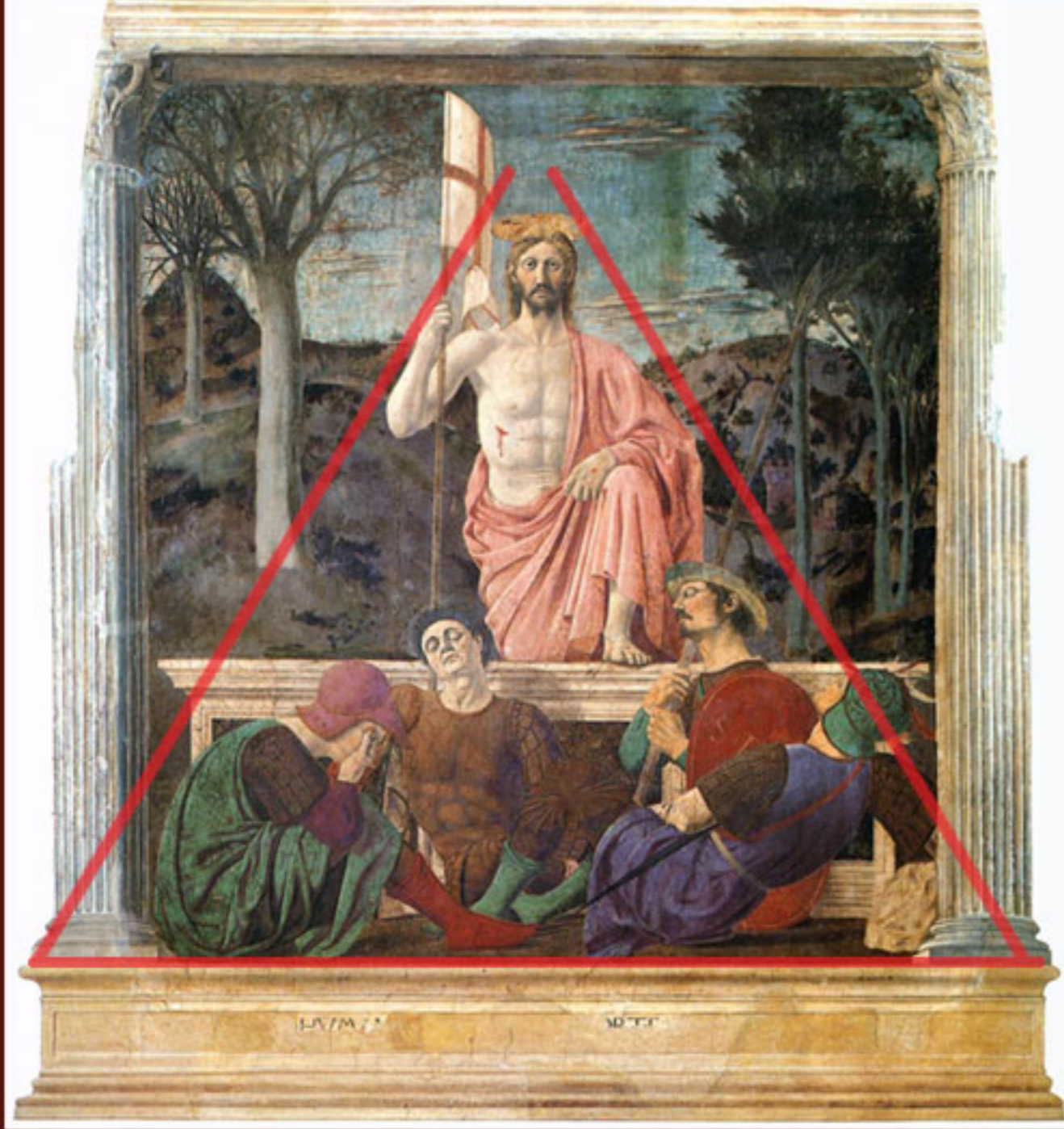
In this painting by Piero Della Francesca, Christ is baptized by his cousin John the Baptist, a prophet known for living in the wilderness.

This simplistic altarpiece would be placed at the front of a church as the focal point, behind the altar where Christians would bow in prayer. The simplicity of this piece comes from the fact that it uses exact proportions and geometric shapes. Christ, thought to be the most perfect of human forms, is placed as the center of the work.

The composition is divided into halves (passing through the figure and face of Christ) and thirds (on which the tree, Christ, and St. John the Baptist are placed); even the height of the panel and its width is in a ratio of 3 to 2. Two circles, one with the dove of the Holy Spirit at its center, the other with the tips of Christ's fingers, make mathematical and symbolic sense.

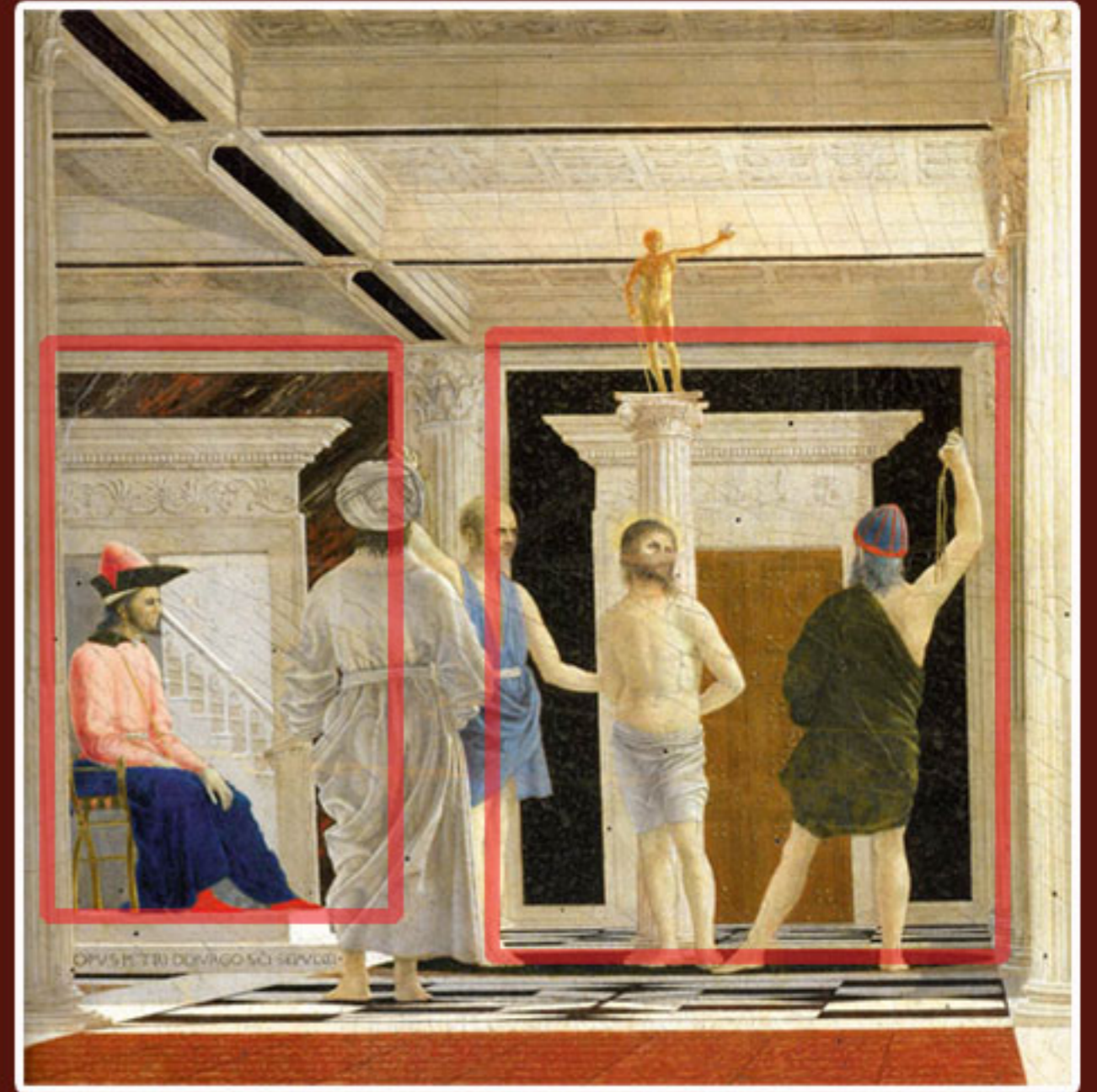


Triangles & Squares



In these two paintings, Francesca uses the square and the triangle as his base shape. "The Resurrection" is constructed from a triangle shape.

Renaissance artists viewed the circle and square as the perfect shapes, equal in balance. Geometric shapes lent their paintings a sense of geometric harmony.



Flagellation of Christ

A characteristic feature of Francesca's paintings are his strong layers of dark and light; they give the figures clear definition. This painting is full of squares! Can you see all of them?

Pieter Bruegel *the* Elder

“Winter Landscape
with a Bird Trap”:

While people enjoy themselves on the ice, the birds are falling into a deadly trap in the foreground. This is not an ordinary winter landscape- it warns the viewer of the constant dangers of everyday life.



Bruegel has created the illusion of distance with shape. You will observe this more detail on the next page.

Peasant Wedding



This painting is one of Bruegel's most famous. There are so many details in the painting, and yet it does not look overly cluttered. His use of shape guarantees that the painting is not overcrowded. The table recedes into the background, and all of the figures around it are worked into the shape of a rectangle.

The bride sits in front of a piece of blue cloth, with a kind of crown suspended over her head. The old man in the chair and the woman beside her are probably her parents, while the man farther back, who is so busy gobbling his food with his spoon, may be the bridegroom. The details in this picture are many!



Census

This is another winter scene by Bruegel, showing the landscape and the people in it. Space is created with geometrically accurate perspective.

