

Why John Buridan
(c. 1300 – after 1358)
should be remembered
for more than
cruelty to animals

Tony Mann

Buridan's Ass



Cantus, Wikimedia Commons

Buridan's Ass



Cham, *Le Charivari*, 1859, Wikimedia Commons



W.A. Rogers, *New York Herald*, c.1900, Wikimedia Commons

Buridan on self-reference

I say that I am the best-looking man at MathsJam

Am I telling the truth?

Buridan on self-reference

Proposition:

Someone at this moment is unsure
whether a proposition is true or false

Buridan on self-reference

Socrates wants to cross bridge Plato is guarding.

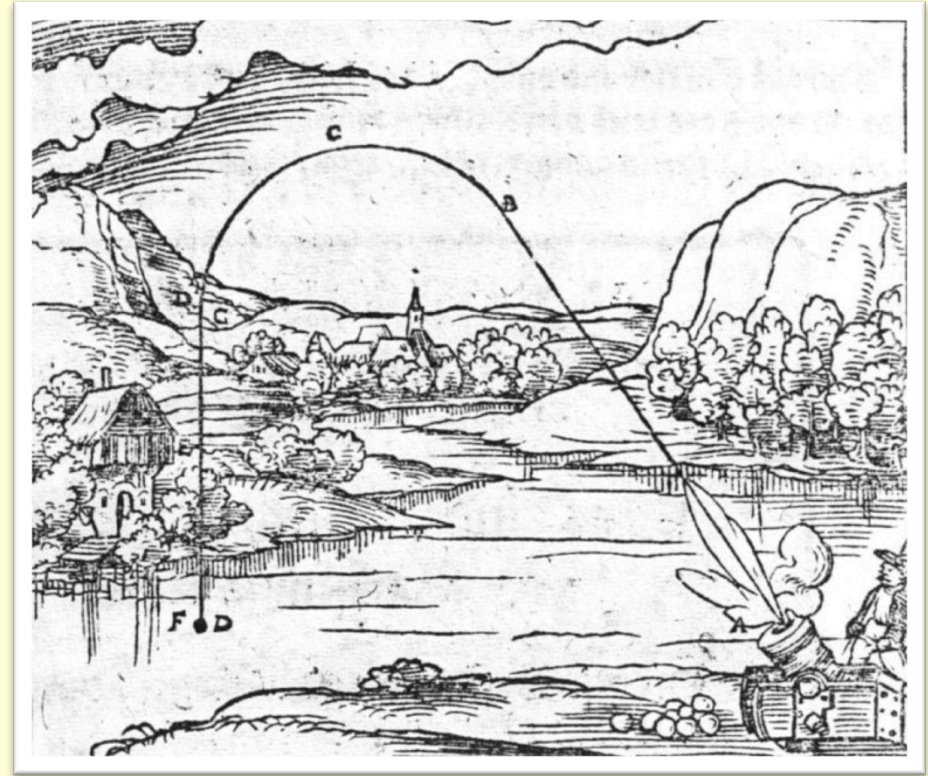
Plato will let Socrates cross if he makes a true statement but will throw him in the river if the statement is false.

Socrates: "You will throw me in the river"

What else did Buridan do?

Theory of Impetus
(\approx Newton's First Law)

“Created modern
theory of money”



“somewhere found on internet”, Wikimedia Commons

What else did Buridan do?

Hit future Pope Clement VI on head with shoe, giving him remarkable memory

Thrown into Seine in a sack by King of France because of his affair with the Queen



Pope Clement VI, Wikimedia Commons

Name-checked in famous poem



“François Villon”, 1489,
Wikimedia Commons

Où est la très sage Heloïs,
Pour qui fut castré et puis moyne
Pierre Esbaillart à Saint-Denys?
Pour son amour eut cest essoyne.
Semblablement, où est la royne

Qui commanda que Buridan
Fust jetté en ung sac en Seine?
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

François Villon
Ballade des dames du temps jadis

Thank you for listening!