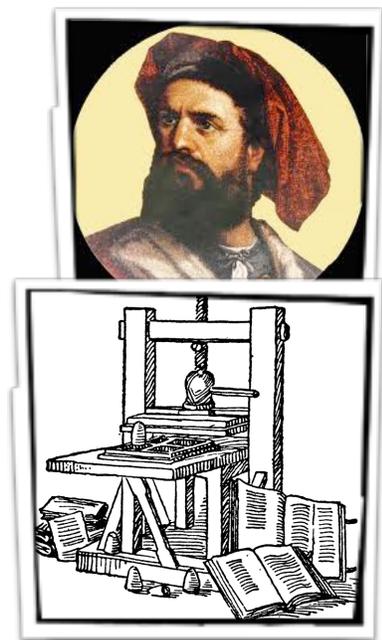


### Europe - Part 3: The Printing Press, Reconquista & Beginning Exploration

*Marco Polo...* was an Italian merchant from Venice. Marco Polo traveled from Venice through Central Asia to China along the Silk Road - one of the few to travel by land from end to end. He had his accounts of his travels written and published in a book. The book became immediately popular, inspiring a strong lust for Asian goods as well as the desire to explore.

The spreading of his book was aided by the creation of the Printing Press. In Germany (Holy Roman Empire) around 1450, Johannes Gutenberg created a machine with movable letters that allowed for the rapid reproduction of knowledge, cheaply. The hand-written versions would be written ~ 25-30 pages a day. The Gutenberg Printing Press could create 3,600 page a day. Few inventions have had a greater impact on the spreading of knowledge.



*Reconquista...* Back in the 700s AD, the Muslims had expanded from the Arabian Peninsula, across North Africa and up into the Iberian Peninsula (Home of Spain & Portugal). During the first part of the Muslims' reign, the people could practice whatever religion they wanted, as long as they paid an extra tax. As the centuries progressed, the Muslims became less friendly towards the Christians and Jews living in land, making the tax higher and life more miserable.

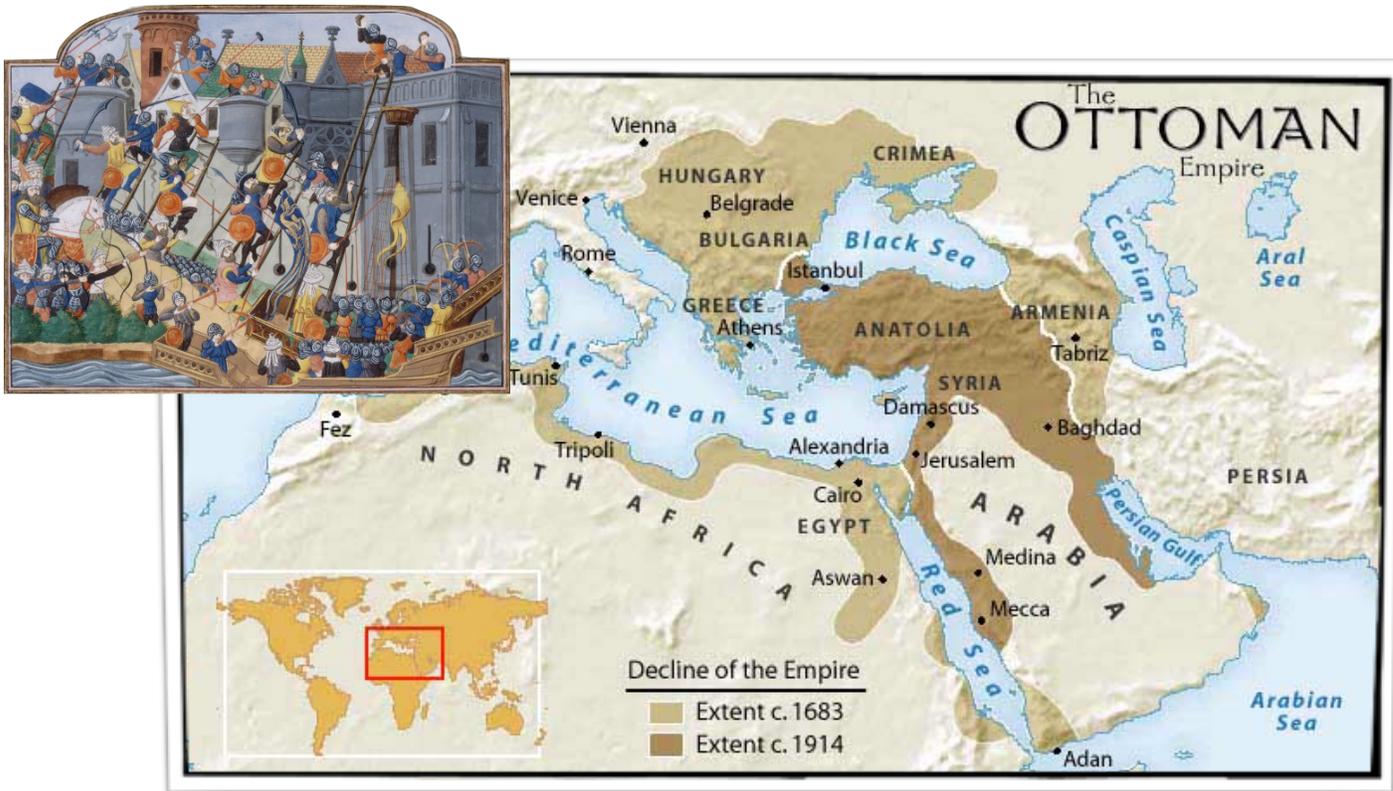
As the Europeans began the Crusades, they started a quest to push the Muslims out of Western Europe. They called it the "Reconquista," or the "re-conquering" of the lands we now know as Spain and Portugal. In the 1200s, Portugal was the first to fully regain its land and started a navy. The problem was that the only boating knowledge they had was for fishing boats that could not stray far from the coast or else the boats would get lost at sea or destroyed by the waves. The only people with decent sailing technology were the Northern Italians. However, the Italians were good trading partners with the Muslims and were too busy getting rich to get tangled up in conflict.

*Portuguese Exploration Begins...* In 1415, Prince Henry the Navigator learned of the Trans-Saharan Slave Trade. Prince Henry became interested in ways of getting to India by going AROUND Africa, as well as ways of stealing the trade from the Muslims. In 1418, Prince Henry start a navigation school, seeking to improve Portugal's pathetic sailing abilities. At this school, they studied astronomical observations, map making techniques, and other similar sciences. Many important advancements were made at Prince Henry's navigational school including the Caravel. The caravel was an improvement on their fishing boats that allowed them to sail safely away from shore into the open waters of the Atlantic. The advancement of the Caravel helped to speed up the journey south.

Progress was slow but steady. In 1434, the Portuguese had reached the edge of their maps and feared sailing off the edge of the world. In 1455, Pope Nicholas the Fifth made a decree: all land, resources and trade routes south of Cape Bojador will belong to the Portuguese (unless they are already owned by other Christians like the Ethiopians, of course). This decree "gave" all of Africa to Portugal.

Finally, the Portuguese persistences paid off. In 1482, Bartolomeu Dias reached tip of Africa, but had to turn back when his ships broke down in a massive storm. In 1488, Vasco da Gama became the first European to successfully sail all the way to India, establishing the first direct sea route to between Europe and India. The Portuguese had successfully found a way to trade with Asia without using Muslim land.





*Fall of Constantinople...* In 1453, Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire fell to the Ottoman Turks. This proved as a mixed blessing for Western Europe. On the down side: the Byzantine Empire was no longer a buffer between Western Europe and the expanding Muslim Turks. This made Western Europe very vulnerable, especially since the crusades made the Muslims very angry with Western European Christians. It also symbolized the official end of the Roman Empire, after close to 2000 years of existence. Finally, it meant that all land and sea routes to Asia were now in Muslim hands. The Christians would either be not welcomed or have to pay very high taxes.

On the positive side, the Byzantine Empire had a large number of smart, talented and wealthy people who were Christian. These people had access to the old Greek and Roman literature, along with the knowledge the Muslims had gained in their scientific golden age. These people needed a place to go... so they traveled west back to Europe, mainly to Italy. This provided a massive influx of money, knowledge and talent helped kindle the movement known as the Renaissance: the revival of classic Greek-Roman literature, art, and architecture, along with great advancements in science and learning in Western Europe.

*The Rise of the Spanish...*

The nation of Spain was formed with the marriage of Ferdinand II of Castille and Isabella of Aragon in 1469. There was a strong fear of people of different religions in Spain. In 1478, Ferdinand & Isabella decided they to start an Inquisition, or intense investigation using torture and execution, in their land to identify and remove anyone who was not a Catholic Christian.

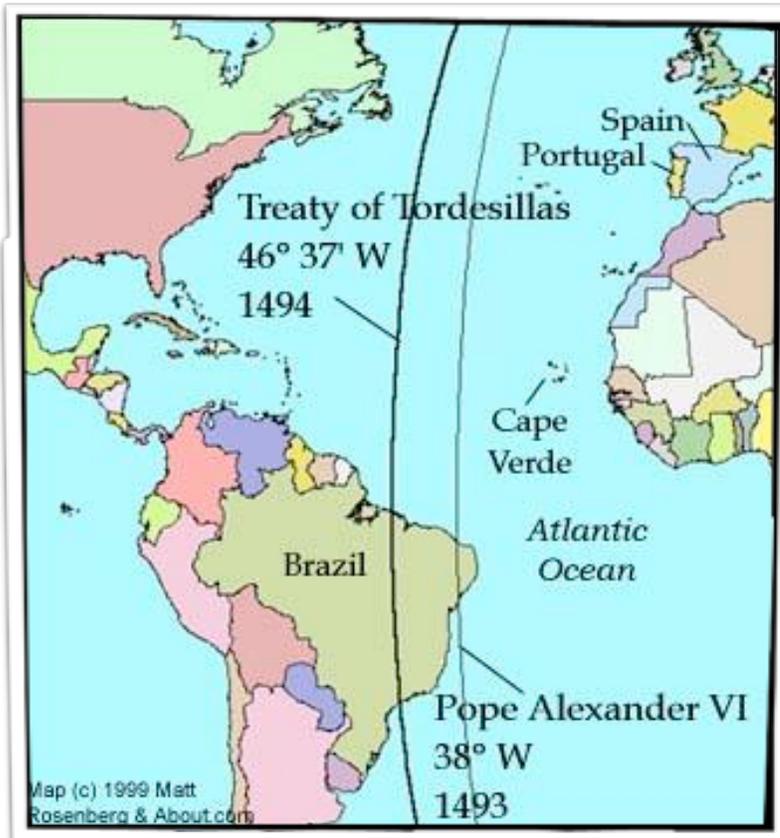
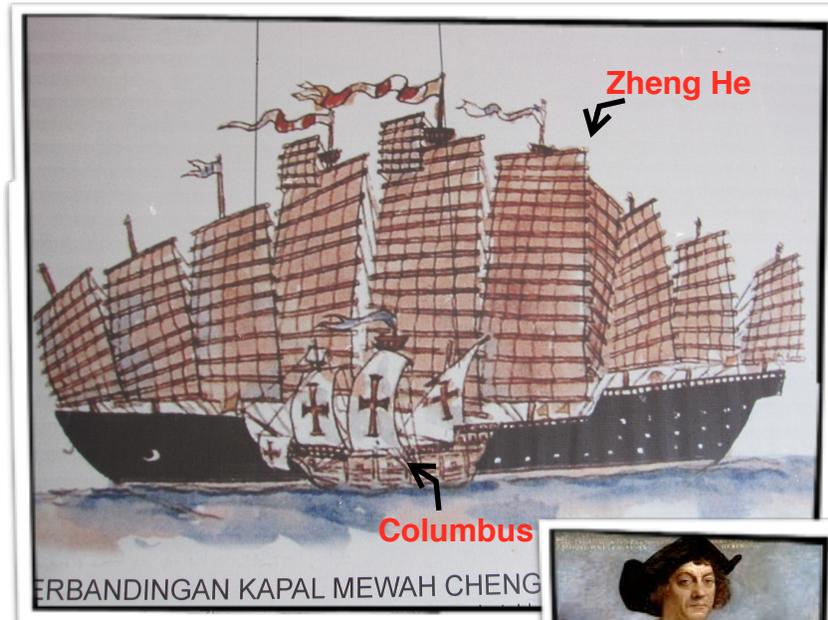
In 1482, Spain began a ten year war with the Muslims for the final piece of the Iberian Peninsula: Granada. Granada was valuable because whoever controlled the Granada controlled the only opening going in and out of the Mediterranean Sea. In 1492, the Spanish won the war and began to harass the remaining Muslims in Spain through the Inquisition.



Sailing West... Now that the Muslim armies were removed, the Spanish turned their attention to a different problem: Portugal. While the Spanish had been fighting the Muslims, the Portuguese had made great strides, having found the sea route to India by going around Africa. The Pope had granted all the land and trade in Africa and India to the Portuguese. This meant that the Spanish could not try to compete for that land or trade without risking to anger the Pope.

In 1492, a desperate Christoforo Columbus came to the courts of Ferdinand and Isabella, seeking someone to fund an exploration sailing west to reach India. Columbus had been rejected twice by Portugal because of the success they were having sailing around Africa. Ferdinand and Isabella could not stand the thought of letting the Portuguese gain the upper hand in trade, so they paid for Columbus to take three ships for his voyage west in search of Asia (the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria).

In 1492, Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean thinking he was heading for India or China. When he arrived at a small island, Columbus named the people Indians as he thought he was just off of the Asian coast. Columbus returned to Spain and was greeted as a hero. Word of his travels spread quickly through Europe thanks to the printing press.



Columbus' discovery was a major success for Spain. Their success was further cemented by the Pope setting the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, giving the land west of the 46° 37' line to Spain and the land east to Portugal. Between 1500-1502, Spain sent 12 new expeditions, seeking to further their claims in what they thought to be Asia. Because of the power of the Pope, other European countries did not try to claim any new land for fear of excommunication.

### Closing

Before 1300, the people of the world lived "regionally." To travel farther than 30 miles was a big ordeal. After 1492, humanity started the path to living globally. Information, people and goods could now travel faster and farther than ever before.

The world would never be the same again.

# Europe/Asia in 1500



**Culture Regions**  
400–1500

**PERSIA** Culture region

**Viet** Culture group

Map shows present-day boundaries in gray.

0 1000 2000 miles  
0 1000 2000 kilometers

## ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Read & Update the Content Matrix
- 2) Fill out this chart with the the strengths/positives and weaknesses/negatives of each region.

Region	Strengths	Weaknesses
Europe		

- 3) Create an impact chart. As you read you are to evaluate each area on the level of impact the people in that region had on the world culturally, militarily, and economically.

- Rate each area as to how impactful you believe them to be at the at 1300 AD ( ■ ) and at 1500 AD ( ▲ ).
- Draw arrows to show whether they grew or shrunk in impact and influence.
- If there is change, ask yourself “What caused them to grow or shrink or stagnate in their influence?” and make note of it on your chart.

### Examples

