People in Motion:
The Atlantic World to 1590

Chapter 1
European Civilization in Turmoil

Chapter 1-2
The Allure of the East and the Challenge of Islam

• Contact with Asia led to major changes in taste and patterns of consumption in Europe beginning in the early 15th century.
• Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims grew during the later Middle Ages.
• The strength of the Ottoman Empire gave them control over the overland trade routes that connected the Far East to Europe.
The Ottoman Empire, 16th and 17th Centuries
Illuminated Manuscript of Crusades, c. 1190AD
Trade, Commerce and Urbanization

• The commercial revolution of the 14th century vastly altered European society. The black death broke down traditional labor norms, new industries spread across Europe from the Mediterranean, and new financial industries emerged.

• Commercial development and urbanization led to a proto-capitalistic mentality that also spurred economic activity across Europe.

• Technologies such as the printing press facilitated the spread of knowledge and further innovation.

• These developments each combined to spur on Europeans’ interest in and curiosity about far off lands – they helped inspire exploration.
Hans Collert, “Sculptura in Aes (Engraving in Copper): Plate 19 of the Nova Reperta (New Discoveries), Late 16th Century
Renaissance

- The Renaissance was a revival of interest in the cultures of Greek and Roman antiquity, which began in Italy at the end of the Fifteenth century and later spread across the rest of Europe.
- This rebirth of classical learning known as the Renaissance transformed the way Europeans thought about art, architecture, science, political philosophy, and theology.
- Renaissance scholars emphasized the human capacity for self-improvement. These scholars, known as humanists, believed that humans were the masters of their world and were obligated to study it.
“The School of Athens,” Raphael Sanzio, 1509
Reformation

• The growth of humanism in the Universities encouraged many scholars to study the early church. This inspired some to call for reforms in Church practice and doctrine.

• In 1517 a young German monk named Martin Luther attacked key elements of Church doctrine and practice. Eventually, his criticisms evolved into a new theological alternative to Catholicism.

• Luther’s doctrine focused on faith over good works and argued that ordinary people did not need to depend on the clergy to access God’s word.

• Luther encouraged his supporters, known as Protestants, to challenge the political and religious power of the Catholic Church. From this, the movement for religious reform known as the Reformation began.

• John Calvin began another protestant movement known as Calvinism which stressed the doctrine of preordination and iconoclasm.
“Martin Luther Posts his 95 Theses,”
“destruction in the Church of Our Lady in Antwerp, the "signature event" of the Beeldenstorm August 20, 1566” by Frans Hogenberg
New Monarchs and the Rise of the Nation-State

• As the power of the Church declined in the wake of the Renaissance and Reformation, secular rulers became more powerful.

• This gave rise to the development of nation-states such as France, England, Portugal, and Spain.

• To maintain power and keep their rival nation-states from attacking, monarchs needed huge sums of money to maintain standing armies. Territorial expansion and exploration could provide revenues.

• Henry VIII of England breaks from the Catholic church to consolidate his power in England.

• Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain attacked the power of their nobility and created close ties with the Roman Catholic Church to solidify their power. The monarchs also orchestrated the Spanish Inquisition to root out heresy and to punish Jews, Muslims, and their political opponents. The ties between the Church and the new monarchs proved effective in increasing the power of both.
Questions:

• What changes took place in Europe during the late Middle Ages?

• What happened during the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation?