

The Reformation

Context, Characters

Controversies, Consequences

Class 3: The World in 1500

Class 3 Goals

- Identify major European events that impacted the time period of the Reformation.
- Explore how transformative discoveries and technologies reshape culture and the Church.
- Look at the religious dimensions with the encounters with the indigenous persons of the New World.

Opening Question

- Assuming the Lord tarries, what technological, cultural, social or political changes of the last fifty years will historians of the future say had the greatest impact upon the Church?

The Siege of Constantinople



The Impact of Wars

- In 1453 Constantinople falls to the Ottoman Turks marking the collapse of the Byzantine Empire nearly 1,000 years after the fall of Rome.
- In 1492 *The Reconquista* ends with the Moors expelled from Spain and the country reunited under the Christian Ferdinand and Isabella
- In 1529 the Ottomans laid siege to Vienna, attempting to conquer Central Europe, but failed to capture the city.
- The 100 years war between England and France 1337-1453
 - Included new cannons, the development of military contractors.

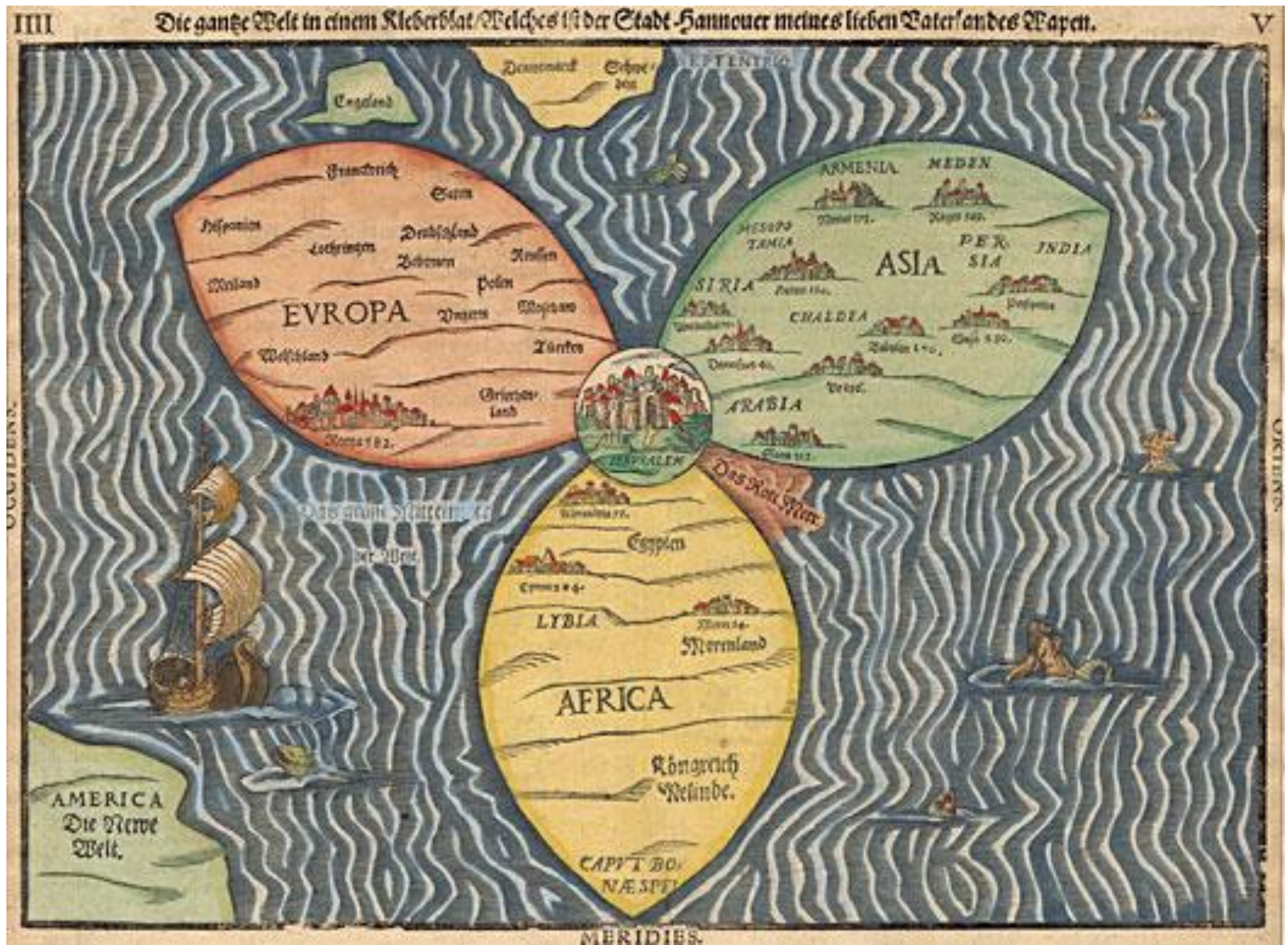
Ptolemy's World Map 1482 - Ulm



Martin Waldseemüller Map 1507



Heinrich Bunting - 1582



The Columbian Exchange



A Transformed Europe

- Portugal
 - Leads the way with new navigational technologies and crown sponsored exploration. Establish colonies in the East Indies and Brazil
- Spain
 - Becomes the dominant Imperial Power in the 16th century using “New World” silver to finance elaborate construction and many wars.
 - Eventually inflation, lack of innovation, and the defeat of the Spanish Armada leads to relative decline opening the way for new players on the global stage such as the Dutch, the French, and the English

Sir Thomas More *Utopia* 1516



Scenes from Utopia

- A Fictional work narrated by Hythloday (a companion of Amerigo Vespucci)
- Utopia was located on an island off the coast of Brazil
- More was clearly influenced by accounts of the indigenous people that were circulated by Columbus and others.
- The residents of Utopia lived in a “Commonwealth” and More contrasted the Utopians with what he perceived as the corruptions of the Old World.
- Many readers believed it to be true and saw the Utopians as having escaped the consequences of the fall.
- Were there ways in which the natives were more Christians than the Christians?

Considering a Document

- **Author:**
- **Place and Time:**
- **Prior Knowledge:**
- **Audience:**
- **Reason:**
- **The Main Idea:**
- **Significance:**

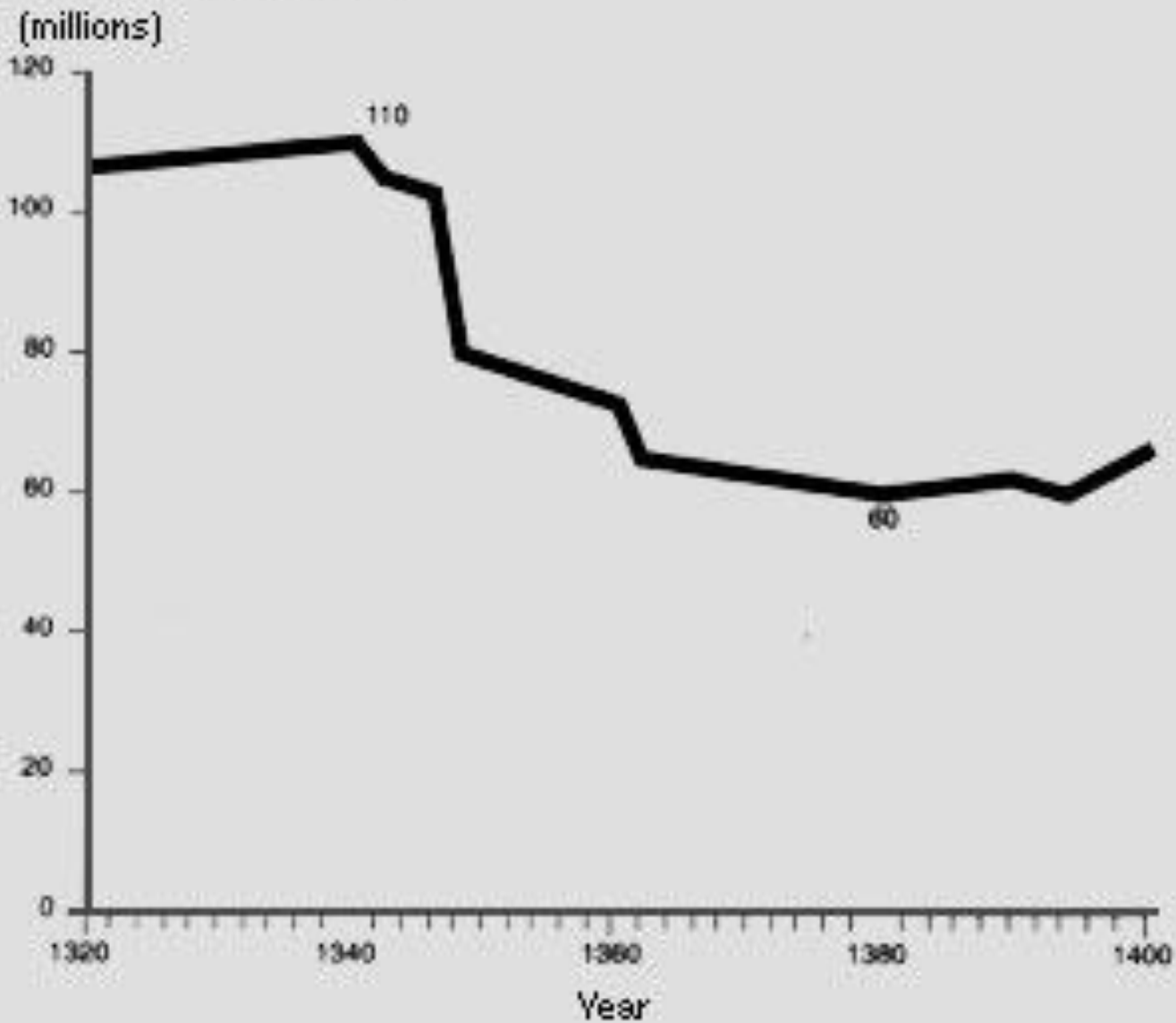
Agrarian Crisis – Famine and Plague

- Fourteenth Century Trends
 - Urbanization – cause and consequence of other crises
 - Greater social mobility – but newcomers excluded from guilds often became dependent poor
 - Transition from natural to money economy
 - Growth of individualism but decline of Christian community
 - Climate change associated with the “Little Ice Age” caused floods, severe cold, and drought sparking crop failure and famine.
 - The weakened population could not withstand the black death
 - From 1347 to 1348 it travelled from Sicily to England



Spread of the Black Death. Spread by merchants and travelers, the plague killed more than a third of Europe's population within five years.

FIGURE 6. Collapse of European population in the fourteenth century.



Impact of Plague

- Many abandoned loved ones for fear of the disease
- Subsequent waves continued into The Reformation
 - Zwingli nearly succumbed to the plague.
 - In 1527 the plague hit Wittenburg where Luther was living.
- “Ring around the rosey, pocket full of posies, ashes, ashes, we all fall down”
- Perceived as God’s punishment for sins
- Many sought charms or the protection of saints.
- Others believed it was a “Jewish Plot”
- The development of new Masses on behalf of the dead
- The development of the doctrine of purgatory
 - Purgatory perceived as a place of great suffering

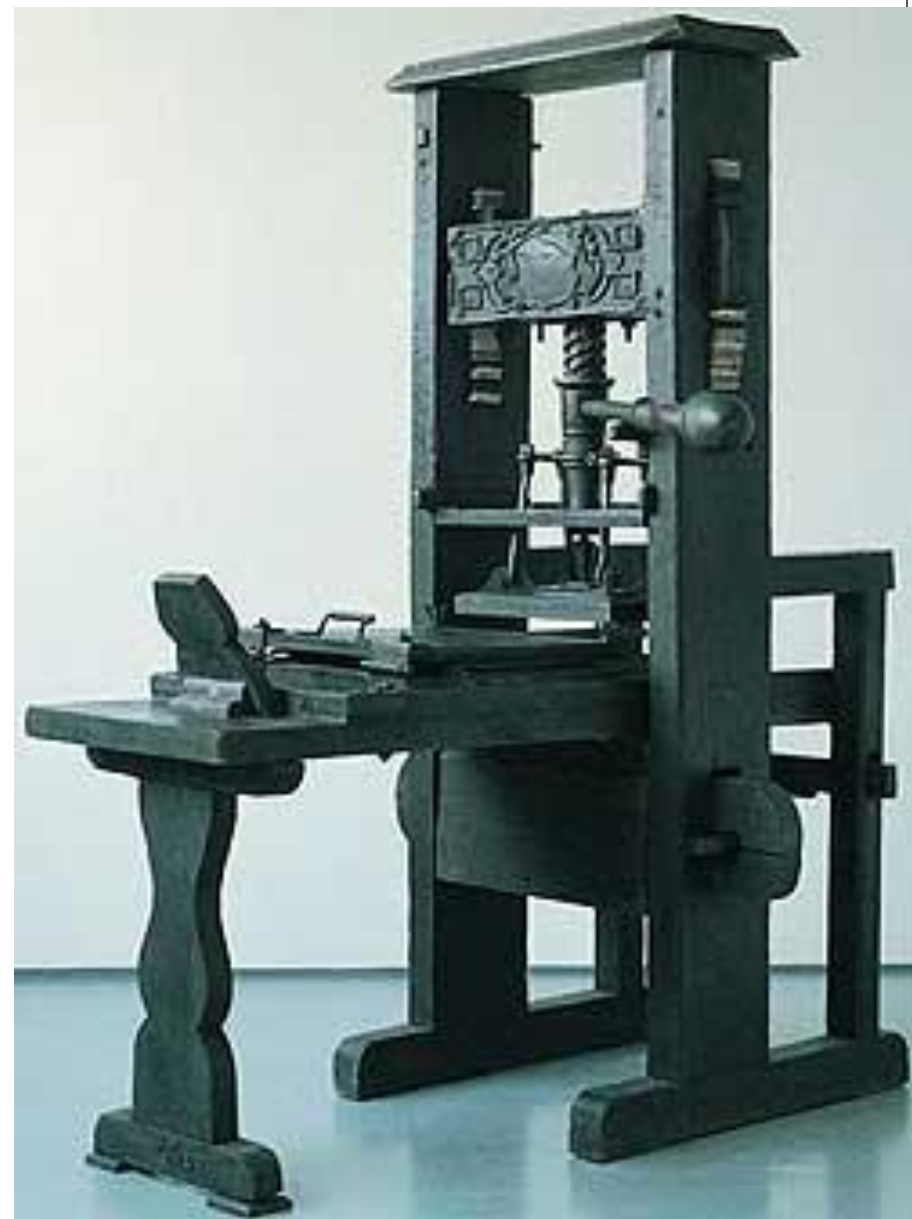
Hans Holbein (1498-1543)

Danse Macabre



Printing Press

- Cheaper Technologies
 - Linen Rag Paper (brought by Marco Polo from China) replaced more expensive papyrus and parchment.
 - Better ink developed by mixing carbon with an oily solution
- Gutenberg – durable moveable type that can be arranged and rearranged.
- Printing spread from Germany to Basel and the Low Countries
- By 1500 six million books printed, 30,000 titles, more than half religious
- More books produced from 1460 to 1500 than the entire Middle Ages



Impact of Publishing

- Wycliffe's books were hand copied and his ideas spread slowly.
- Luther's books printed and ideas spread rapidly
- The Reformation propelled the printing press forward
- Over 3,800 editions of Luther's German Bible were published.
- Martin Luther ran most successful "major propaganda campaign and mass movement" of the last 500 years.
(Edwards)
- Other changes – the growth of Universities from 20 to 70
University of Wittenburg founded in 1502

Impact of Reading

- Printing allowed for communities of readers (Reading Circles)
- Now the publication of devotional works *The Imitation of Christ*
- The mass publishing of the Bible allowed for it to be in many homes — allows for individual devotional reading and individual interpretation.
- Between 1450 and 1500 81 plain text versions of the Vulgate
- By 1500 the Bible was printed in German, Italian, French, and Czech
- Erasmus begins the process of developing a corrected Greek version of the Vulgate by appealing to earlier copies

Conclusion

- Massive changes in Europe helped to create the conditions in which the Reformation could occur.
- The defeat of Islamic empires helped to remove threats external threats and allow more internal fracturing.
- The discovery of a “New World” reshaped Europeans understanding of the world and their interactions with other peoples.
- Economic changes and the plague helped to displace traditional social arrangements.
- The development of the printing press changed the culture and made possible the rapid spread of Reformation ideas.

Next Week

- Martin Luther