

The Atlantic World to 1500c.e.



The Middle Ages

The era in European history from about C.E. 500 to 1300 is known as the **Middle Ages, the Medieval Period, or the Dark Ages.**

Europe Takes Shape

- **Germanic** tribes settled across much of Europe.
- Viking warriors from the north and caused great destruction to parts of Europe and settled in others.
- The **Muslim empire** spread across North Africa and into Spain.

The Middle Ages

These invasions brought about the destruction of the Roman Empire in Western Europe and with it the stability of Europe

- Led to a decline in the pursuit of the arts, education, and technological advances**

Why?

People were more concerned about survival than education and art.

This decrease in European Culture is the reason this time period is often referred to as the **Dark Ages**

European Political/Social System

Feudalism

- **System of government where powerful nobles, or Kings divided their landholdings among lesser lords and knights.**
- **Serfs (or peasants), worked the land, and gave the lord a portion of the harvest in exchange for shelter and protection.**

Judeo-Christian Tradition

- The **Roman Catholic Church** governed the spiritual and daily lives of medieval Christians.
 - The **Pope (head of the Roman Catholic Church)** had authority over rulers and sometimes even appointed them.
 - The **clergy, or church leaders** were often the only educated people in medieval Europe.

The Growth of Cities

- Popular centers of trade grew into cities, especially in northern Italy and northern France. This growth had three major effects:
 1. It created a new middle class, a social class between the rich and poor.
 2. It revived a money economy.
 3. It contributed to the eventual breakdown of the feudal system.

The Late Middle Ages

The Rise of Monarchs

- Europe's growing wealth increased the power of monarchs..
- Monarchs, those who rule over a state or territory,
- They sometimes clashed with each other and with their nobles.
- In 1215, England's King John was forced by his nobles to sign a document, the Magna Carta, granting Lords legal rights.

The Magna Carta would become the foundation for American ideas of liberty and justice.

The Renaissance

The Renaissance- an era of enormous creativity and rapid change in art, culture, and technology



It began in Italy in the 1300s and reached its height in the 1500s.

Key Events of The Renaissance

- By the late 1500s, the Renaissance had spread to the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, England, and Germany.

The Printing Press

- German Johann Gutenberg produced a Bible made on a **printing press** in 1455.
- This invention meant books could be mass produced, rather than copied by hand; increase the rate at which information spread.

The Reformation

- The **Reformation**, a revolt led by **Martin Luther**, declared that the Bible, not the Church, was the true authority from God.
- Luther's followers called themselves **Protestants**, because they protested Church authority.



The Renaissance—Sea Travel

- Instruments developed by Renaissance scientists made long-range sea travel possible.
 - **Compass**: used to determine direction
 - **Astrolabe and quadrant**: used to determine approximate location



- **Prince Henry of Portugal**, later called **Prince Henry the Navigator**, established a mariners' school in Portugal.



- The Portuguese developed the **caravel**, a ship that could sail against the wind as well as with it.
- Portuguese mariner **Vasco da Gama** sailed from Portugal to India, opening the first sea route from Europe to Asia.
- Spain became determined to surpass Portugal in the race to explore new sea routes and to spread Christianity

West Africans and Europeans Meet

- Europeans had been trading with **North Africans** since ancient times.
- The **North Africans** traded gold which came from their West African trading partners.
- Europeans decided to bypass the **North Africans** and go straight to the West Africans for gold.
- In West Africa, the Europeans found a new source of wealth, Slaves.

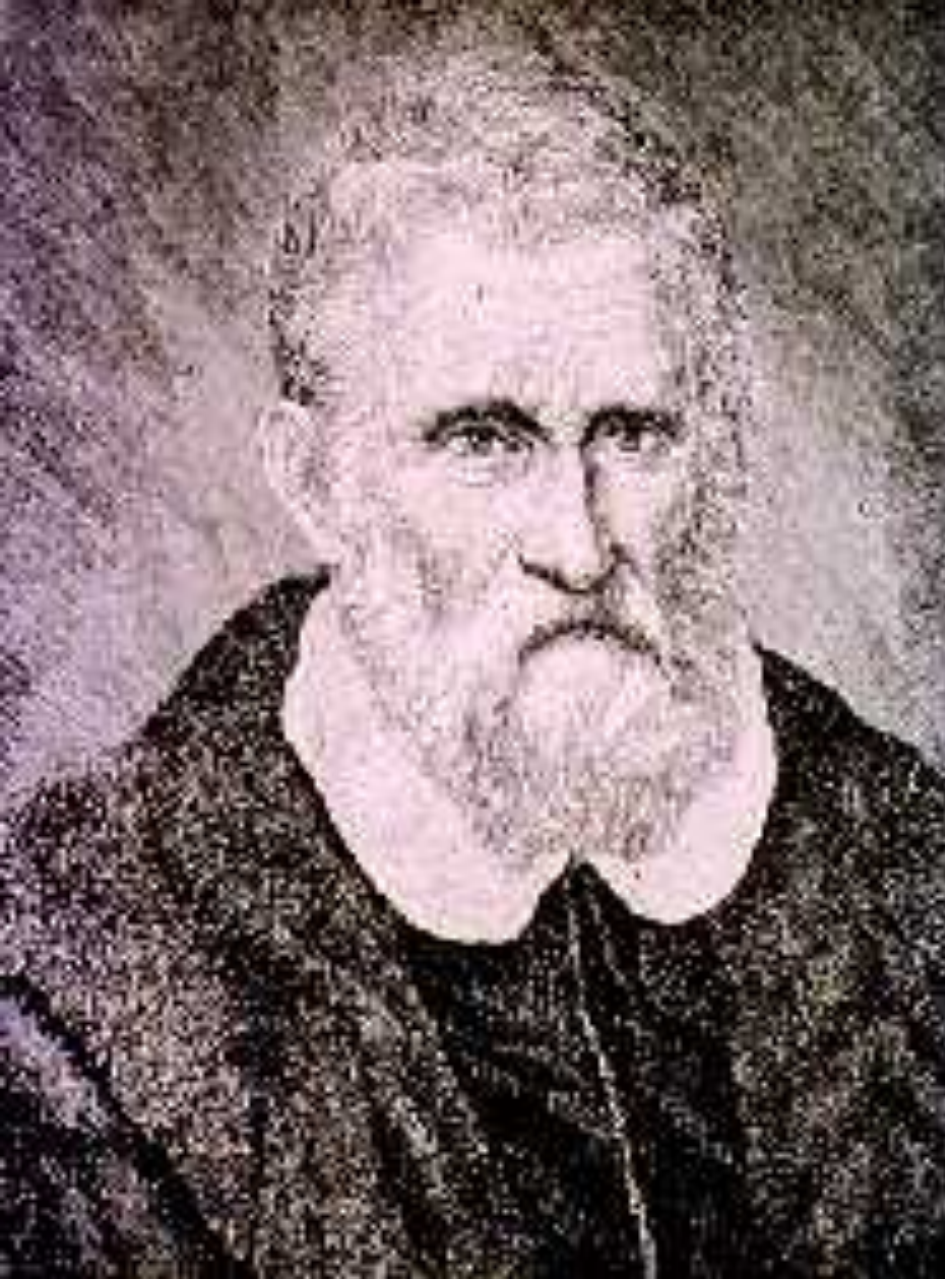
Slavery in Africa

- Europeans placed a high value on land because it was so **scarce** (in short supply) in Europe.
- Because land was plentiful in Africa, Africans valued labor more than land.
- The power of African leaders was judged by how many people they ruled, rather than how much land they controlled.

- Slaves provided the labor needed to work the land, and also became valuable as items of trade.



- Slaves in Africa tended to be people who had been captured in war, orphans, criminals, and other rejects of society.



Marco Polo

- Venetian Merchant
- Spent 3.5 years traveling to Cathay (China) 17 years living in Service to China's ruler the "Khan"
- Came back to Venice and published his experience in "A Description of the world"
- Claimed there were thousands of Islands around Cathay called the "Indies" with untold riches
- Inspired future exploration



Christopher Columbus

He was an ambitious religious explorer believed that God had given him a heroic mission: **to seek a westward sea route to the “Indies,”** meaning China, India, and other Asian lands.

A Daring Expedition

- ⊕ In 1492, **King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain** granted Columbus the title of noble and agreed to sponsor his journey.



Queen
Isabella
and
King
Ferdinand

⊕ Spanish nobles and clergy wanted his mission to succeed for several reasons:

1. The people of any new non-Christian lands would be ripe for conversion to Catholicism.
2. Wealthy merchants and royalty wanted a direct trade route that bypassed the existing Muslim-controlled routes.
3. An easier western route to Asia would give Spanish traders an advantage over Portuguese traders.

- In 1492, Columbus set off with three ships, the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa María* with a crew of 90 men
- He had underestimated the distance of his journey.
- Two months after setting sail, he and his crew landed San Salvador in the Bahamas, instead of Asia.



Meeting With Native Americans



- **Columbus soon encountered the Taino**
 - He named these people **Indians**, because he thought he had reached the Indies
 - The gold jewelry that adorned the Taino intrigued Columbus
 - One of his missions on this trip was to bring back proof of the riches that could be found

A Daring Expedition

- The Native Americans welcomed Columbus and gave him gifts: parrots, cotton thread, and spears tipped with fish teeth.
- Columbus traveled to other islands and collected more gifts—often by force—including Native Americans, to present to the rulers of Spain.
- Columbus returned to Spain and was awarded the governorship of the present-day island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean.

- Columbus made four more trips to the Americas.
- When Spanish settlers complained about his governing of Hispaniola, Columbus lost his position.
- He died in 1506, never accepting that he had discovered a new continent.



Columbus's Impact

The Columbian Exchange

- Columbus's journeys launched a new era of transatlantic trade.
- The **Columbian Exchange** allowed the trade of goods, weapons, and culture between the Americas and Europe
- Unfortunately, Native Americans became exposed to Europe's most deadly diseases; they had no resistance to these germs, and many perished.

Africans Enslaved

- Portugal and Spain established **plantations** or large farming operations that produced **cash Crops** or crops grown primarily for sale.
- These plantations supplied the American foods, such as sugar and pineapple, that Europeans demanded.

- At first, Native Americans were kidnapped and forced to work the plantations.
- But their lack of resistance to many European diseases made them an unreliable work force.
- As a result, Europeans began bringing enslaved Africans to the Americas.



Africans Enslaved

- Europeans regarded slaves as property, and as such, many slaves were mistreated.
- Estimates of the total number of West Africans abducted and taken to North and South America range from about 9 million to more than 11 million.

