Age of Discovery (Ren-Ref)

**Age of Discovery**
1450-1550

- Cantino World Map, 1502

**The New World**

- Theodore Galle after Jan van der Straet, “The Arrival of Vespucci in the New World”, c. 1600

**The New World II**
Agenda:
Europeans & the World

• Pre-Columbian knowledge of the world
  – Classical sources, Muslim sources, Christian sources (cf. Wiesner, chap. 12)

• Portuguese Exploration

• Spanish Exploration
  – Columbus, Cortes, Pizarro, et al.

• The New World
  – "Columbian Exchange" (video on Friday)

European knowledge of the world very limited before c. 1300

• Trade with China dates back to the Roman Empire
  – Marco Polo traveled to China 1271-92
• Trade with India also ancient (via Venice)
• Long connections with North Africa, but very little knowledge of Africa beyond the Sahara
• Almost no knowledge of Scandinavian voyages to Iceland, Greenland, and Vinland (Canada)
Ptolemaic World Map (1486)

Classical & Medieval Maps

- A stylized medieval map (T&O)
- Jerusalem at center, God above
- Intended to display Scriptural understanding of the earth
The World Beyond Christendom

- Sir John Mandeville
- Marco Polo
- Pliny and Ptolemy
- Ibn Fadlan & Mohammed Idrisi

Portuguese Explorers
1350-1515

- Prince Henry “the Navigator” (d. 1460)
- Africa, Azores, Madeira islands
- Navigational innovations
  - Astrolabe, caravel, lateen sails
The European Age of Exploration

- The goal: get to the Indies and control the flow of trade goods from there
  - circumnavigate Africa
  - Cape of Good Hope rounded by Bartolomeo Diaz in 1487 under the sponsorship of the Portuguese crown
  - in 1497, Vasco da Gama reached the coast of India, and returned with cargo worth sixty times the cost of the voyage
What's the problem??

Vasco da Gama

- The first European to reach India by sea, da Gama established Portuguese naval and commercial power in the Indian Ocean.
In the sixteenth century Portuguese men moved to the Indian Ocean basin to work as administrators and traders. This Indo-Portuguese drawing from about 1540 shows a Portuguese man speaking to an Indian woman, perhaps making a proposal of marriage.

Spanish Explorers
1492-1532

- Christopher Columbus
- Hernan Cortes
- Ferdinand Magellan
- Francisco Pizzarro

See Noble, p. 367, for map of early explorers’ travel.
Christopher Columbus

- Although his legacy has been the focus of great debate and contention,
- Christopher Columbus remains the most influential and recognizable explorer of Europe's Age of Exploration.

Columbus' approach

- Go to China and India by going west
- geographical theory based on myth and faulty science
  - Medieval accounts
    - Polo & Mandeville
  - Renaissance rediscovery of ancient geographical treatises
    - Ptolemy and Pliny
  - Muslim accounts of geography

Pre-Columbian map of the world
The Americas and Early European Exploration

The several voyages across the Atlantic led by Columbus explored the Caribbean basin and set the stage for Spanish conquest of many American societies, most notably of the Aztec and Inca empires.

World Exploration, 1492-1535

- The voyages of Columbus, da Gama, and Magellan charted the major sea-lanes that became essential for communication, trade, and warfare for the next three hundred years. (Noble, p. 367)
Why 1492?

- Renaissance optimism & wealth
- Humanist curiosity
- Technology improvements in navigation & military hardware
- Success of Reconquista vs. Moors
  - $$ now available
  - Divine right of conquest

Cantino Map (ca. 1502)

The Cantino Map was named for the agent secretly commissioned to design it in Lisbon for the Duke of Ferrara, an avid Italian map collector. It reveals such a good knowledge of the African continent, of the islands of the West Indies, and of the shoreline of present-day Venezuela, Guiana, and Brazil that modern scholars suspect there may have been clandestine voyages to the Americas shortly after Columbus's.

Waldseemüller’s map, 1507
a map of the world, 1570