**15 to 16th century history research**

15th to 16th Century, 1400 to 1600 key events

1401 Timur conquers Damascus and reconquers Baghdad.

1402 Timur wins a great battle at Angora (Ankara). He is concerned about having helped Christians by defeating a Muslim army. He sends envoys to the Christian knights ruling Smyrna and demands that the knights convert to Islam or pay tribute. They refuse both, and Timur attacks and orders the city's entire population, including women and children, annihilated. The heads of the defeated, it would be said, are displayed in a pyramid.

1405 A Ming dynasty emperor, Yongle (or Zhu Di), orders one of his eunuchs, Zheng He, a Muslim who has traveled to Mecca and knows the world a little better than others in China, to sail a fleet of ships on the high seas in pursuit of his cousin, the former emperor.

1406 China's emperor, Zhu Di, sends troops that begin an eighteen-year attempt to conquer Annam (Vietnam).

1406 The geography of Ptolemy, an ancient Greek, is introduced in Europe. This holds that the earth is the center of the universe and that all heavenly bodies revolve around it in perfect circles.

1407 London has a new institution – a place for the insane called Bethlehem hospital.

1408 In Britain, John Wyclif's England language bible has been published.

1409 Prelates meet at Pisa to name a pope to replace the two claiming to be pope. The two existing popes refuse to step aside.

1410 A Germanic force, the Teutonic Knights, are trying to gain control of Poland. The knights are allied with the kings of Bohemia and Hungary. Their army has volunteer "crusaders" and numbers around 27,000. An army of 39,000 fighting for the Polish king, Wladyslaw Jagiello, includes Lithuanians, Ruthenians and Tatars in addition to Poles, and they defeat the Germans. The Teutonic Knights decline in power and Eastern Europe does not become a German colony.

1413 In England, followers of John Wyclif, dead since 1384, hold that the Bible is the only rule of faith. They appeal to the Catholic clergy to return to the simple life of the early Church. They oppose war, the doctrine of transubstantiation, confession, and images in worship. They march on London, and Henry V, fearing social disorder, suppresses the movement.

1415 John Hus, a Czech and former dean of philosophy at the University of Prague, travels to the Council of Constance to propose his reforms for the Church. Upon his arrival he is tried for heresy and burned at the stake.

1415 Prince Henry of Portugal, with a fleet of 200 ships and 20,000 men, captures the port of Ceuta from the Moors.

1416 Dutch fishermen are using drift nets.

1419 Lately the Portuguese have been building latine-rigged ships, which can tack into the wind. They are are exploring waters off the coast of northern Africa, and they lay claim to the island of Madiera.

1420 The Portuguese are fighting inhabitants of the Canary Islands, south of Madiera.

1421 In Austria, Jews are imprisoned and expelled.

1421 In Florence, the first patent is granted – for a barge with hoists, used for hauling marble.

1422 In Japan, a Zen teacher, Ketsugan, is performing exorcisms.

1425 Zen temples in Japan are contributing to cultural diffusion by importing Chinese literature, aritistic styles and religious ideas.

1428 Pope Martin V orders John Wyclif's bones exhumed and burned.

1428 King Alfonso V, king of Naples and Sicily, orders Jews in Sicily to convert to Catholicism.

1429 The Hundred Years' War is still on, and, in May, Joan of Arc defeats the English at Orleans. In August she enters Paris in triumph.

1431 Some Englishmen see Joan of Arc as truly a witch and as an agent of the devil – a common response to adversity in this age. Joan is captured. The English turn her over to ecclesiastic authorities – the Inquisition – and at the French town of Rouen, then under English rule, Joan is burned at the stake.

1431 The Mexica (Aztecs) have won a three-year war with the Tepaneca, who have been dominant in central Mexico and to whom the Mexica have been paying tribute. The Mexica have conquered the Tepaneca city, Azcapotzalco. The Mexica establish an alliance with the Acolhua, of the city Texcoco, and the Tepaneca, of Tlacopan. This alliance is to be the foundation of a Mexica empire.

1431 Admiral Zheng He of China leads a fleet of 52 ships, with nearly 30,000 men, to the east coast of Africa.

1433 The Songhai have rebelled against the Mali Empire and are disrupting Mali's trade on the Niger River. Mali is in decline. The Songhai are able to sack and occupy Timbuktu.

1434 In this pre-industrial age the biggest business is banking, and in the Tuscan city of Florence a banking family, the Medici, begins to dominate the city politically.

1434 Portuguese start sailing past Cape Bojador, beyond which had been considered a "Sea of Darkness" from which no European had returned.

1435 Amid rebellion and turmoil, Sweden's parliament meets for the first time, to be dominated by noble families and the body that maintains Swedish national identity.

1436 From the Caucasus region, al-Ashraf Qaytbay, at the age of twenty, is brought to Egypt as a slave, purchased by a merchant for recruitment as a Mamluk warrior. He is an able horseman, and his gifts are to catch the eye of Egypt's leading militarists.

1438 The Chanca tribe attacks the Inca city-state of Cusco from the north. In defense, the Inca begin to reorganize their governmental system, to expand their alliances and with force to build the Tahuantinsuyu Empire.

1439 Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church leaders agree to reunify these two branches of Christianity. The Russians do not agree and the Russian Orthodox Church is to remain independent of the Vatican in Rome.

1441 In one of their caravels, the Portuguese transport around 200 slaves from Africa to Portugal.

1448 In China, hyperinflation reduces the value of paper money 97 percent.

1448 On a small island known as Arguin (Arguim), rougly 700 kilometers south of Cape Bojador, the Portuguese build a castle and establish the first European trading post in Africa.

1448 The Russian Orthodox Church becomes independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

1450 In Kyoto, the Ryoanji Zen temple is built. It has a garden of fifteen rocks on raked white sand – an austerity to aid meditation.

1450 The wealthiest state on Africa's east coast, Zimbabwe, is abandoned after having suffered from overgrazing, eroded farmlands and a loss of timber. Kingdoms neighboring Zimbabwe are conquered by Mwene Mutapa.

1452 In Europe, metal plates are being used in screw-type presses.

1452 There is famine in the Mexica (Aztec) city of Tenochtitlan.

1453 Constantinople has been declining economically, in population and military strength. Using European artillery and experts, the Ottoman Turks break through Constantinople's walls. Disciplined Muslim forces capture the city. This ends Constantinople as the center of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and the heart of the remains of the Roman Empire.

1453 The French capture Bordeaux, the last place the English hold except for the port city of Calais, on the English channel. The Hundred Years' War ends without a formal treaty signed and no renouncing of rights to the French throne by an English king. Nationalism had increased, and common people in England are upset at what they see as England having lost the war. With the end of the Hundred Years' War, trade revives and economic depression ends.

1453 Forty-one Jews are burned at the stake in Breslau, Poland.

1455 In the German town of Mainz, Johann Gutenberg, using metal type in a screw-type printing press, prints the "Gutenberg" Bible. His printing press is a step up from screw presses used in agriculture. He was the first European to use type-setting, beginning around 1439. Printing was to increasing the circulation of literature, stimulate a rise in literacy, knowledge and science.

1455 With humanistic leanings and an enthusiasm for literature and art, Pope Nicholas V has in the last five years given rebirth to the Vatican Library – putting it on course to becoming one of the largest libraries in the world. He dies at age 58.

1456 Judges and commissioners in the archbishop's palace in the city of Rouen declare that Joan of Arc was innocent of the charges that led to her execution – after nineteen years of appeal and almost one year of hearings. The Archbishop declares the case ended.

1456 The Ottoman Turks overrun Athens, begin a stay that will last 400 years, and they turn the Parthenon into a mosque.

1459 The Ottoman Turks have taken control of all Serbia.

1461 Two families, both descended from King Edward III (who reigned from 1327 to 1377 and was of the Plantagenet dynasty) have been at war for years. One family is the House of York the other the House of Lancaster. This is the War of the Roses. Edward, from the House of York, defeats the Lancastrians at Mortimor's Cross. He is proclaimed king and ascends the throne as Edward IV.

1461 King Loius XI of France creates a postal service.

1463 The Ottoman Turks expand into Bosnia. They execute Bosnia's king, Stefan Tomasevic – the last of the Kotromanic dynasty. Assassination, as a means of resistance to foreign rule, is viewed by the Serbs of Bosnia as a heroic act.

1464 The Songhai and Mali Empire fight over Timbuktu, with great loss of life. The Songhai win and the Mali Empire is more obviously in decline.

1466 An Albanian, George Kastrioti, also known as Skanderbeg, has led another successful resistance against an Ottoman invasion, and he is a hero across Christendom.

1467 In Japan a dispute over succession of the Ashikaga shogunate begins the Onin War, which exacerbates the strife between regional warlords (daimyo).

1468 Skanderbeg has been ill and dies in bed, and the Ottomans absorb Albania.

1468 In Egypt, al-Ashraf Qaytbay becomes the Mamluk sultan. He buys 46,000 more slaves from the his area of origin – the Caucusus. These slaves are normally from ages ten to 20, shipped through the Turkish straits. It is a trade in the hands of the Genoese.

1469 Ferdinand of Aragon marries Isabella of Castile.

1471 After having secured much of what today is central and northern Peru, the Inca have expanded their empire into Ecuador. With a new king, Tupac Inca, they begin to expand southward into Chile, Bolivia and Argentina.

1472 Benin is a walled city several kilometers wide in a forested region inland from where the Niger River empties into the Atlantic Ocean. Its king, Ewuare trades captives taken in battle, delivering them as slaves to the Portuguese.

1472 On one of his journeys the Mamluk sultan, Qaytbay, is rushed by peasants. He waves back his bodyguards, greets them and allows them to clutch at his garments.

1477 France's Louis XI gains control of Burgundy.

1477 In Japan the Onin War ends. The shogunate is weakened and power shifts to feudal warlords (daimyo).

1478 A conspiracy, that includes the Archbishop of Pisa and has the support of Pope Sixtus IV, leads to an attack on the Medici while they are in church. The Archbishop and several others are hanged. Pope Sixtus puts Florence under the interdict and excommunicates the Medici leader of Florence, Lorenzo de Medici. The pope forms a military alliance with the King of Naples, and Lorenzo's diplomacy prevents an attack.

1479 After four years of war, Spain accepts monopoly trade for Portugal along Africa's Atlantic coast and Portugal acknowledges Spain's rights in the Canary Islands.

1479 The Ottoman Turks and Venice have been at war since 1463. Venice is defeated militarily and gives up that part of its empire, along the Adriatic Sea, that the Ottoman Turks occupy.

1480 Leonardo da Vinci of Florence, age 28, of invents the parachute.

1480 Moscow's Ivan III feels strong enough to refuse to pay tribute to the Mongols

1481 Louis XI of France gains the territories of Anjou, Bar Mine and Provence.

1480 Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain employ the Spanish Inquisition to investigate whether converted Jews are secretly clinging to Judaism.

1481 Two Latvian monarchs are executed for murdering the Polish king, Kazimierz IV.

1482 Portuguese have founded new trading settlements on Africa's "Gold Coast." They are trading ironware, firearms, textiles and food for gold, ivory, food and slaves.

1482 The Ottoman Turks occupy Herzegovina and join it administratively with Bosnia. Its nobles and a large percentage of its peasants are to accept Islam.

1482 Cairo is one of the largest and wealthiest of cities and is much admired by western travelers.

1483 Edward IV of England has died. His son succeeds him as Edward V, and he is murdered. The Duke of Gloucester, the youngest brother of Edward IV, usurps the throne and is crowned Richard III.

1483 Pope Innocent VIII issues a statement deploring the spread of witchcraft and heresy in Germany. He orders that cats belonging to convicted witches be burned as well as the witches.

1485 Henry Tudor, a relative of the Lancaster family, defeats Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth. The Tudor family takes power and is crowned Henry VII.

1485 Henry VII marries Elizabeth of York, uniting the Lancaster and York families. The War of Roses is over.

1491 King Charles VIII of France invades Brittany and forces 14-year-old Ann of Brittany to marry him, adding Brittany to French territory.

1492 Spain's monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, do their part in a war against Islam – they annex Granada. Also they give Jews three months to convert to Christianity if they are to avoid banishment from the country. And the voyage that the monarchy is paying for, led by Christopher Columbus, sets sail for China by going westward.

1493 Christopher Columbus returns from the Caribbean, and later in the year he sails back to the Caribbean.

1494 Kings were doing what kings had been doing for ages: pursuing wealth, territorial expansion and control over people. This year Christopher Columbus – an agent for Ferdinand and Isabella – begins using people of the Caribbean as slaves.

1494 Piero de Medici has ruled since the death of his father, Lorenzo, in 1492. He makes peace with the French, who have invaded Tuscany (in which Florence is located). A political rising drives him into exile. Florence is in anarchy. A Dominican priest, Savonarola, is anti-Renaissance. He is opposed to popular music, art and other worldliness.

1496 Jews are expelled from Syria.

1496 Sultan Qaytbay dies at the age of 53 followed by grand amirs competing to succeed him.

1497 Boys working under Savonarola collect from homes things associated with moral laxity: mirrors, cosmetics, pictures, books, fine dresses, the works of immoral poets. Savonarola has these burned. Renaissance art work is lost. Pope Alexander VI excommunicates Savonarola.

1497 In Scotland, children are required by law to go to school

1498 Toothbrushes appear in China.

1498 Vasco da Gama reaches India.

1498 Savonarola is hanged. An enraged crowd burns Savonarola at the same spot where he ordered his bonfire.

1498 Columbus sails from Spain with six ships on his third voyage to the Americas.

1498 Jews are expelled from Nuremberg and Bavaria.

1498 The Ottoman Turks invade Dalmatia and devastate land around Zara. Venice goes to war again against the Ottoman Turks.

1500 Portugal settles the islands of Sao Tome and Principe off the Atlantic coast of Africa.

1501 The world has a population of around 435 million – about one-fourteenth today's population of 6.4 billion.

1501 A military Sufi order in Persia known as the Safavids have survived Timur (Tamerlane) and have adopted the Shia branch of Islam. They have been eager to advance Shi'ism by military means. They seize Tabriz in western Iran and make it their capital. They believe in the glory of their king (shah) and in the old tradition of passing rule and religious righteousness from father to son.

1502 Christopher Columbus begins his fourth and last journey to the Caribbean. He still believes that the islands he has found lay off the coast of India.

1504 Machiavelli is in France, learning about the strength of a nation united under a single ruler rather than under various centers of power.

1506 In the city of Lisbon, on April 19, religiously impassioned Christians slaughter nearly 4,000 Portuguese Jews.

1506 May 20: Columbus dies in Spain.

1509 A Dutch humanist, Desiderius Erasmus, writes In Praise of Folly. He is a devout Catholic who has been bothered by what he calls absurd superstitions of most of the Christians of his day. He favors the translation of the Bible from Latin to local languages so that the masses can read it, and he believes that common people have the capacity to understand Christianity as well as do priests.

1510 Portuguese ships are heavily armed with cannon and dominate the Indian Ocean. Indian ships are smaller and held together with coconut fibber ropes, instead of iron nails. Portuguese Catholics establish a presence at the port at Goa on India's western coast, a point from which Muslims had been debarking for pilgrimages to Arabia. Goa begins to serve as Portugal's port and capital town in Asia. India these days has a population of around 105 million – about one-twelfth the number of people in Pakistan and India today.

1512 Three sons of the aged Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II are fighting for his throne. Janissaries are a power behind the throne and choose the most warlike of the three: Selim. He eliminates all potential future successor claimants except his favourite son.

1512 Michelangelo finishes the Sistine Chapel.

1514 The Ottoman sultan, Selim – a Sunni – defeats the Shah of Iran, Isma'il. Isma'il – a Shia – has been accustomed to victory, and he and his Safavid followers believed that Allah was on their side. They are bewildered by their defeat. Isma'il finds relief from depression in wine. Selim annexes Diyarbekir and Kurdistan.

1514 Portuguese traders reach what today is Indonesia, then the centre of spice production.

1517 A Portuguese ship arrives at Guangzhou (Canton) in southern China.

1517 The Ottoman sultan, Selim, with superior weaponry, routes the Mamluks. It is the end of Egypt's Mamluk sultans. The last of them is hanged. Selim appoints a viceroy to rule Egypt as pasha. Egypt will now acknowledge Ottoman suzerainty and pay annual tribute to the Ottoman sultan.

1517 An Augustinian friar and professor of theology, Martin Luther, lists his 95 theses.

1519 Gold mining in Hispaniola has dwindled. The value of gold is still relatively high among Spaniards, and a search for gold elsewhere in the New World begins. Spain's authority in the Americas sends Hernando Cortez on a mission to Mexico.

1520 Luther has refused to retract some of his protests. He has been printing pamphlets explaining his position. The papacy orders Luther's works burned.

1520 Sweden is free from the rule of Danish kings.

1520 Henry VIII of England and King Francis of France, each with army behind him, meet on June 7. They dismount and embrace in one of the world's earlier summit meetings. There will be celebrations and sermons on the virtues of peace.

1521 Charles V has been elected as the Holy Roman Emperor, and Pope Leo X allies himself with Charles against Martin Luther. Francis of France does not like Charles – a Habsburg. The Italian War begins with Francis invading Navarre and the Low Countries. Francis is allied with the Republic Venice. England's Henry VIII sides with Charles and the Papal States.

1521 The Ottomans continue to expand. Their sultan, Selim, has died and his son Suleiman (Sulayman) succeeds him and captures Belgrade.

1521 Hernán Cortés (Cortes), with cannon and an enlarged army of Spaniards and Indians, attacks the Mexica (Aztecs) at Tenochtitlan (Mexico City). The people of Tenochtitlan have no guns and are weakened by small pox. Their supply of water is cut. They are killed by the thousands and defeated.

1522 Suleiman sends an armada of 400 ships and more than 100,000 men to Rhodes. He is using artillery and explosives. Rhodes capitulates after a siege of 145 days.

1525 In Italy, King Francis of France is defeated at the Battle of Pavia. Francis is taken prisoner and many of his chief nobles are killed. France fails to regain territories in Italy.

1526 The printing press is introduced in Stockholm, Sweden.

1526 From Kabul a Muslim tribal leader, Babur, has been making a series of raids through the Khyber Pass into the Indus Valley, seeking plunder. He has found opposition forces weak, and at Panipat (about fifty miles north of Delhi, he routes the forces of the Sultan Ibrahim Lodi – an Afgan who has ruled much of India since 1489.

1526 Suleiman the Great defeats an army led by King Louis II of Hungary and Bohemia, near Mohács, about 150 kilometers south of Buda and Pest. King Louis falls under his horse into a river and drowns.

1527 Machiavelli dies of ill health never seeing the unification of Italy that he desired.

1527 In South America a small pox epidemic devastates the Inca people of Cusco. Five years of civil war begin over which of two sons is to succeed the now dead king, Huayna Capac.

1529 From the Muslim town of Adal in what today is Somalia, Ahmad ibn Ghazi has been leading a jihad against the Ethiopian Christian emperor Anbasa Segad. According to the Ethiopian Royal Chronicles, Emperor Segad has 16,000 cavalry and 200,000 infantry. Grazni is victorious with 560 cavalry, 12,000 soldiers and firearms. In coming years the Muslims will plunder southern Ethiopia, burn churches and monasteries and compel Christians to convert.

1529 Suleiman sends an army from Hungary against Vienna: 325,000 men, 90,000 camels and 500 artillery pieces. Thousands of camels are lost because of the spring rains and 200 of the heavier artillery pieces are sent back. Suleiman's force finally arrives in late September. Their attempts to get past Vienna's walls fail, and in mid-October they withdraw.

1531 Martin Luther warns that Catholic clergy and monks are sodomites.

1531 German Protestants form the League of Schmalkalden to defend against the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, and the Roman Catholic states.

1532 Machiavelli's The Prince, written in 1513, is published.

1532 The Portuguese begin to ship slaves to Brazil, slaves they have paid for in Africa with manufactured goods.

1532 In South America a Spaniard in his mid-fifties, Francisco Pizarro, arrives in Inca territory with 102 men, 62 horses and some interpreters. Meanwhile in the civil war between the two Inca brothers, Huascar and Atahualpa, Atahualpa proves himself the superior commander. His forces defeat Huascar’s forces.

1533 Pizarro has imprisoned Atahualpa, who offers a room full of gold for his freedom. He is executed by the Spaniards for the murder of his brother.

1535 Henry VIII breaks from Catholicism and declares himself head of English Church.

1536 Japan's Toyotomi Hideyoshi is born in a thatched hut, the son of a poor farmer.

1536 Henry VIII charges his second wife, Anne Boleyn, with adultery. He has her beheaded and marries her lady-in-waiting Jane Seymour.

1538 At Preveza (on the coast of western Greece, 200 kilometers southeast of the Italian peninsula), a Barbary pirate, Barbarossa, employed by the Ottoman Empire, destroys the combined Christian fleets of the Pope, Venice and Spain. The Ottoman Empire dominates the Mediterranean Sea.

1539 In Japan, trading monopolies end and a free market begins.

1540 Babur's eldest son, Humayun, has been ruling in India, but the empire he inherited has barely been held together by force of arms. Humayan is dislodged from power by Islamic nobles allied with Afghans. Humayun goes into exile and allies himself with the Safavid sultan in Iran.

1541 John Calvin, 32, a Protestant, is driven out of France.

1541 Spanish conquistadors arrive in New Mexico.

1541 Suleiman captures the town of Buda.

1542 A Chinese vessel carrying hides from Siam and three Portuguese is blown by a storm to a small island 20 miles southwest of Japan's island of Kyushu. The Portuguese have muskets, which they introduce to the Japanese.

1542 The Ming emperor, Jiajing, has focused on Taoism and immortality, but his spiritualism has not made him worthy in the eyes of eighteen of his concubines. They detest him and conspire to strangle him while he sleeps. All of them are executed except the one who warned the empress.

1542 Ivan, to be known as The Terrible, is twelve-years-old. He entertains himself by dropping dogs from the roof of a Kremlin wall battlement.

1542 Francis Xavier, a Portuguese Jesuit missionary, lands in Goa.

1543 Nicolaus Copernicus is dead. He had waited until the end of his life to defy Church doctrine with the publication of his work "On the Revolution of Heavenly Bodies," explaining his theory that the earth and other planets revolve around the sun rather than the sun around the earth.

1543 John Calvin's theocratic government begins in Geneva.

1543 Michelangelo paints the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel.

1545 The Council of Trent – the 19th ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic church – begins, to be on and off again until 1563.

1545 In France, attacks to the Catholic clergy have occurred. Troops are sent against the Protestant heresy in a cluster of towns. About twenty towns are destroyed and about 3,000 Protestant men, women and children are killed.

1545 Humayun is marching eastward with 14,000 Safavid troops from Iran, where he had gone into exile and where he had allied himself with the Safavid sultan. Humayun takes the Afghan city of Kabul.

1547 Henry VIII of England dies.

1549 Francis Xavier, a Catholic Portuguese missionary, arrives in Japan.

1550 A Frenchman, Ambrose Pare, begins creating artificial limbs.

1551 In France, the works of Martin Luther, John Calvin and others considered heretics are prohibited. In the cites of Paris, Toulouse, Grenoble, Rouen, Bordeaux and Agners, various heretics and those selling forbidden books have been burned at the stake. Another massacre of Protestants occurs. More than 3,000 Protestants are to be reported as having been killed and 763 houses, 89 stables and 31 warehouses destroyed.

1551 In Geneva, Robert Estienne, also known as Robert Stephanus, is the first to print the Bible divided into standard numbered verses.

1553 Ivan (The Terrible) now of age and no longer under the regency of his mother, takes the title Tsar Ivan IV.

1553 Henry's successor, Queen Mary, re-establishes Roman Catholicism as England's state religion.

1554 Queen Mary marries a fellow Catholic – Spain's Habsburg prince, Philip, eleven years her junior. The marriage gives Spain influence in England's affairs.

1555 Philip's father, the Habsburg monarch, ruler of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, concludes the Peace of Augsburg with a league of Protestant German princes (the Schmalkaldic League). The Peace of Augsburg recognizes the right of each prince in the Holy Roman Empire to choose between Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism and to impose the religion of his choice on his subjects.

1555 Humayun has recaptured that part of India that he had inherited from his father, Babur.

1555 French Protestants (Huguenots), running from persecution, are dropped off from three ships at a place that will eventually be called Rio de Janeiro.

1556 Rushing to prayer, Humayun falls down some stairs and dies. His thirteen-year-old-son, Muhammad Akbar, born by an Iranian woman, succeeds him, becoming the third Moghul emperor. With a multi-cultural background he will end Islam as the state religion and declare himself impartial between Islam and Hinduism. He will encourage religious tolerance, art and culture. And he will also expand his empire by military means.

1558 Queen Mary dies and is succeeded by her half-sister, Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth re-establishes Anglican Protestantism as the state religion.

1559 An Italian invents ice cream.

1559 Machiavelli's The Prince appears on the Pope's Index of Prohibited Books. Machiavelli advocated responses in foreign affairs be based on empirical realities and with something other than prayer and Christian love.

1559 Prince Philip is now Philip II of Spain. He appoints his half-sister, Margaret, as regent of the Netherlands. She pursues Philip's order to wipe out Protestantism there, and she tries, exercising the common belief that it was a king's prerogative to decide how his subjects should worship. Margaret raises taxes in the Netherlands to finance the intervention, and higher taxes add to the hostility among the people of the Netherlands towards Spanish rule.

1560 Europe is still suffering from periodic epidemics and famines. One-half of all infants born alive are dying before twelve months (as in the poorest countries today). The wealthy might live to between 48 and 56, and the poor, who do not eat as well, might live to 40.

1560 The Portuguese drive the French Huguenots from Rio de Janeiro, killing some of them. Portuguese begin building their own settlement there.

1562 The English seaman John Hawkins raids a Portuguese ship taking slaves to Brazil. He begins England's participation in the slave trade by exchanging the slaves in Hispaniola for ginger, pearls and sugar, a transaction that brings him a huge profit that interests other Englishmen.

1563 The Council of Trent, begun in 1545, is concluded. It is decided that tradition is to be judged co-equal to scripture as a source of spiritual knowledge, and that only the Church is to be considered as having the right to interpret the Bible. The clergy is ordered to be more disciplined and to have higher educational standards. Clerics who keep concubines are to give them up. Bishops are required to live in their own diocese. They are to have almost absolute jurisdiction there and to visit every religious house in their jurisdiction at least once every two years. Every diocese is to have a seminary for educating and training the clergy, and those who are poor are to be given preference in admission. Efforts are to be made toward giving instruction to the laity, especially the uneducated, and sermons are allowed in the language of common people. The sale of indulgences and Church offices is condemned, and so too is nepotism. And music in church is to fit with the occasion of solemnity, matching a new era of choral music and composition.

1566 Selim II, son of Suleiman, becomes the new Ottoman sultan. He is untrained in government or military affairs, unlike his two older brothers, both of whom betrayed Suleiman. Selim II is the beginning of disinterested sultans. He is devoted to the pleasures of the harem and alcohol.

1566 In China the emperor Jiajing has been withdrawing from governing for long periods. He has been pursuing a Taoist search for everlasting life by taking potions. This leads to death by accidental poisoning.

1566 In Antwerp, grain prices are high and people are agitated. In the summer, Calvinists with axes and sledgehammers, urged on by preachers, attack what they believe is false doctrine. They smash up Antwerp's Cathedral of Notre Dame. They smash altars, stained glass windows, ornaments, paintings, tombs. They destroy books, ecclesiastical vestments and manuscripts.

1566 In Rome, Pope Pius IV begins a campaign against "Sodomites."

1568 Civil wars have been ravaging Japan. Oda Nobunaga, lord of Nagoya Castle, is one feudal lord who can afford to buy muskets in significant number. Japan has been ready for the rise of a unifying power. Nobunaga gains control of the region around Kyoto, Japan's capital city, where the Ashikaga family has held power as shoguns. The Ashikaga period of Japan's history has come to an end. The emperor, in Kyoto, remains elevated by Shinto godly connection, above politics and war.

1568 Protestants in the Netherlands, led by Prince William of Orange, revolt against rule by the Catholic monarch, Philip II. The Eighty Years' War begins.

1568 A French architect, Philibert de l'Orme, has re-invented the use of concrete.

1568 Akbar is expanding his empire in India, and it will be reported that he has killed more than 30,000 Hindu peasants following his conquest of Chitod. Akbar is keeping as subordinates some local rulers, who are allowed to keep their own armies. At his palace, Akbar begins his day with prayer, and at dawn he steps onto his balcony and shows himself to his subjects who gather below, awed by his success and power. Akbar describes himself as father to his subjects. Drawing from Sufi philosophy he is described as having the attributes of the perfect, or universal, man and a microcosm of the universe. At court his kingship is described as a special emanation from God.

1570 A tidal wave destroys the sea walls from Holland to Jutland. More than 1,000 people are killed.

1570 Hispaniola's Indian population, estimated at 100,000 in 1493, is down to around 300.

1570 Ivan IV (The Terrible) executes in public almost all of his advisors.

1570 The first Japanese Jesuits are ordained.

1571 Tatars sack and burn the outskirts of Moscow. The Russians drive them back.

1572 On August 24, St. Bartholmew's Day, about 3,000 Protestants in Paris are massacred. Across France within three days approximately 20,000 Huguenots are executed. Catholics across Europe rejoice and Protestants mourn and express anger.

1572 On July 9, nineteen Catholic priests are hanged in Gorcum, Holland.

1573 Porcelain is being produced in Tuscany, but it is inferior to Chinese porcelain.

1574 In England horses have been replacing oxen as draught animals. They are now 60 percent of the draught animals compared to 20 percent in 1068.

1575 Japan is in a period of battles with large armies. Oda Nobunaga is expanding his control of Japan and has won the Battle of Nagashino using 3,000 men with muskets. He has also been using long pikes and ironclad ships and has been building roads that facilitate trade and the movement of armies.

1575-76 It will be claimed that the Spanish explorer, Juan Ferdandez, sights but sails past Tahiti.

1577 A Hindu monk, Tulasidasa, has written Tamacharitamanasa, said to be the greatest of medieval Hindu literature. It increases Rama worship in northern India.

1577 The Jesuit missionary, Matteo Ricci, arrives at Macao.

1577 The first clock with a minute hand appears, developed by Jost Burgi, a Swiss clockmaker.

1579 The population of China reaches 60 million. (It will be 22 times that in 2005).

1580 King Philip II of Spain declares Prince William of Orange an outlaw.

1580 With the surrender of the last great Buddhist fortress-monastery, in Osaka, Oda Nobunga becomes the master of central Japan

1581 Seven northern provinces of the Netherlands, including Holland, renounce their allegiance to Philip II. They form the United Provinces of the Netherlands. The Eighty Years' War continues.

1582 Oda Nobunaga is assassinated. A conflict over succession follows, with one of Oda Nobunaga's loyal military leaders, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, winning against Oda Nobunaga's descendants.

1582 In Catholic countries in Europe the Gregorian calendar adds a refinement to the Julian calendar, amounting to a 0.002% correction in the length of the year. The change puts the date for the celebration of Easter to that agreed to at First Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. Protestant countries will begin to adopt the new calendar a century later, Orthodox Greeks in 1923.

1584 On his death-bed, Ivan IV appoints Boris Godunov as one of the guardians of his son and heir, Feodor, age 27. Like many sons of domineering men, Theodor is weak in will and initiative.

1584 King Philip II has offered a reward of 25,000 crowns for the death of Prince William of Orange. He has called William a "pest on the whole of Christianity and the enemy of the human race." William is assassinated. The Dutch consider William the father of their country and are saddened.

1585 Spaniards are besieging Antwerp. There the Dutch use the first time-bombs, with small clocks floated on water.

1586 Italian humanist and philosopher Berdnardino Telesio has published his nine books countering Aristotle. He rejects metaphysics in favor of knowledge based on experience and experiment – science.

1587 Some Japanese have adopted European dress, and Christianity in Japan has been growing. Hiseyoshi and some others dislike this trend. Hideyoshi prohibits Christianity and expells Jesuit missionaries.

1587 Philip II of Spain has been plotting to replace Elizabeth I of England with Mary Stuart, the Queen of Scotland and a Catholic. Mary has been a rallying point for all in England opposed to Elizabeth. Elizabeth solves her problem with Mary by having her beheaded.

1588 Upon hearing of Mary's execution, Pope Sixtus V promises to pay Philip II one million gold ducats if his troops invade England. An English fleet confronts the Spanish armada of more than a hundred ships and 30,000 soldiers, heading for an invasion. Elizabeth's smaller ships scatter Philip's armada. Only about 65 of Philip's ships make it back to port.

1590 Mechanical inventions are on their way to advancing science. A spectacles maker in the Netherlands, experimenting with several lenses in a tube, discovers that nearby objects appear greatly enlarged. The modern microscope is born.

1591 Ivan the Terrible has been dead for four years. Feodor is still tsar but thought incompetent. Another of Ivan's sons, nine-year-old Dmitri, a possible heir to the throne, dies after his throat is cut. Officials claim that the boy accidentally cut himself playing with a knife during an epileptic fit. Believing that Dmitri has been murdered, mobs attacks and kill Dmitri's guardians.

1591 Toyotomi Hideyoshi expands his rule to all of Japan.

1592 Toyotomi Hideyoshi turns his attention to conquests abroad. Drawing from his military successes he thinks his armies are invincible, and he foresees himself conquering the rest of the world, beginning with China, by way of Korea, which he invades.

1592 Pope Clement VIII states that "All the world suffers from the usury of the Jews, their monopolies and deceit. They have brought many unfortunate peoples into a state of poverty, especially farmers, working-class people, and the very poor."

1593 In Italy, Galileo develops the first thermometer.

1594 The Protestant Bourbon King of Navarre, Henry, has converted to Catholicism in order to extend his power to Paris. He is crowned King Henry IV, France's first Bourbon monarch.

1595 An English actor and writer, William Shakespeare, age 30, is busy writing plays. He is a Renaissance man, his work less devoted to God and more about the vanities of people than were the writings that preceded the Renaissance.

1598 Hideyoshi fails in a second attempt at conquest in Korea. His campaign ends with his death. He leaves an order for his forces to withdraw from Korea.

1598 France's wars of religion are over. Tolerance between Catholics and Protestants is proclaimed in the Edict of Nantes by France's Henry IV.

1600 The Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno is burned at the stake.

1600 Queen Elizabeth of England charters the British East India Company to compete with the Dutch, who control the trade in nutmeg from the Banda Islands.