Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517-1648 (The Penguin History of Europe)

Mark Greengrass
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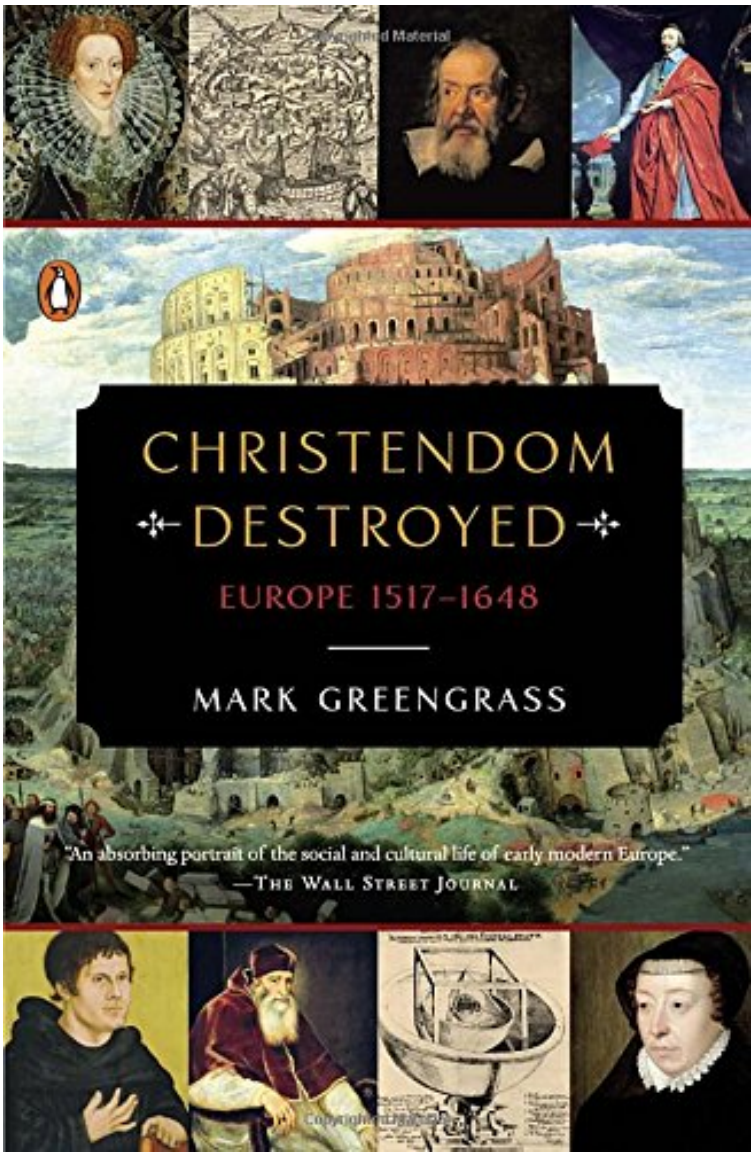

#305680 in Books Greengrass Mark 2015-11-10 2015-11-10Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.37 x 1.55 x 5.43l, 1.00 #File Name: 0143127918752 pagesChristendom Destroyed Europe 1517 1648 | File size: 75.Mb

Mark Greengrass : Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517-1648 (The Penguin History of Europe) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517-1648 (The Penguin History of Europe):

59 of 59 people found the following review helpful. An interesting and different takeBy Eric C. PetersenQuite an achievement by Greengrass who seems to have read about every document published in the 16th and 17th centuries. He breaks down "big picture" movements such as the Reformation, Counter Reformation, the wars of religion, 30 Years War and so forth into discreet examples of "small picture" events taking place in various parts of Europe at the same time; these smaller, localized events either gained wider traction, or not, and it was these knock-on movement that shaped the course of events. I wouldn't recommend this book for those without a general knowledge of the history of the period or tying the many specific examples Greengrass uses might not coalesce into a comprehensible picture; however, the bits and pieces do make for interesting reading. I thought his approach to the 30 Years War provided a most interesting insight of the conflict: It contains virtually no military history - unusual for coverage of a war - rather he looks at the changing pressures put on the major players in the conflict, their motives, changing alliances and so forth that well explains this most confusing conflict in a new light. Scholars of this period should find this book indispensable; for the average reader perhaps a bit of a challenge - why I gave it four instead of five stars. The author's writing style is approachable but also interestingly oblique and pithy. The outstanding characteristic of the book is the depth and breath of Greengrass's knowledge, a tribute to his outstanding scholarship. [Screen seems to have frozen up so I can't edit this; hopefully it makes some sense as is!]1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy David GravesGood history to know for the contemporary world.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Maurice Champagnevery scholarly, needed it for a class.

A remarkable new volume in the critically acclaimed Penguin History of Europe seriesFrom peasants to princes, no one was untouched by the spiritual and intellectual upheaval of the sixteenth century. Martin Luthers challenge to church authority forced Christians to examine their beliefs in ways that shook the foundations of their religion. The subsequent divisions, fed by dynastic rivalries and military changes, fundamentally altered the relations between ruler and ruled. Geographical and scientific discoveries challenged the unity of Christendom as a belief community. Europe, with all its divisions, emerged instead as a geographical projection. Chronicling these dramatic changes, Thomas More, Shakespeare, Montaigne, and Cervantes created works that continue to resonate with us.Spanning the years 1517 to 1648, Christendom Destroyed is Mark Greengrasss magnum opus: a rich tapestry that fosters a deeper understanding of Europes identity today.

AnEconomistandFinancial Times Book of the Year A magisterial account of the birth of modern Europe, from the Reformation, which broke the dominance of the Roman Catholic church, to the Peace of Westphalia, which entrenched the idea of the nation-state.The Economist A masterly synthesis of depth and breadth.... Mr. Greengrass is adept at material and environmental history. Christendom Destroyed captures a great deal of truth about the wrenching transitions of the early modern age. with admirable clarity and a notable lack of condescension.Wall Street Journal An immensely well-informed, informative and engaging account of the disintegration of Christendoms universalism.Glen C. Altschuler, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Any student of European history will find this a solid, close survey and a 'must' for understanding social and religious change.Midwest Book An absorbing and enlightening book that explains much about the emergence of modern Europe.Booklist It is Mark Greengrass achievement to have imposed upon his subject a sense of order which draws the reader along. He may be commended, too, for having written a book which, by illustrating human situations and predicaments, places men and women centre stage, while recognising the importance of ideas and their influence upon the world of the time. It is characteristics such as these which earn the book the five stars which it surely deserves.Christopher Allmand, The Tablet Like its fellow volumes in the Penguin History of Europe, Greengrasss book is a model of scholarly dedication....Nothing escapes Greengrasss fascinated gaze, from the new foods that came to Europe from the Americas, such as pumpkins, pineapples and potatoes, to the extraordinary politics of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, arguably Europes first constitutional monarchy. Almost every page has a memorable nugget.Dominic Sandbrook, The Sunday Times (UK) [Mark Greengrass] writes with clarity and vigour, in a highly engaging style, and his book is as full of fascinating nuggets as it is of wise judgements.... Mark Greengrass succeeds brilliantly in bringing to life a vanished world that is consistently strange and surprisingand sometimes disturbing and repellanteven as he encourages us to recognise the ways in which it prefigures our own. Peter Marshall, Literary (UK) [Christendom Destroyed] offers insight into the extraordinary turmoil that the average European endured in an era typically described through reverent admiration for art, architecture, and intellectual development. Using the histories of well-chosen cities and countries as examples for each discussion, Greengrass reveals that it was curiosity [that] destroyed Christendom. Publishers Weekly Greengrass reaches deeply behind the early myth of a united Europe. A tour de force of scholarship that begins with a gradual and accessible buildup and then descends, like the century, into a convulsion of dynastic entanglements. Kirkus s Christendom Destroyed is a magnificent achievement. Engagingly written, remarkably comprehensive in scope, impeccable in its scholarship, it should find a wide readership which will be rewarded with a new understanding of one of the most decisive eras in European history. There are insights on every page. Mark Greengrass brings his deep learning and light touch to a period that now bears the mark of his strong and convincing interpretation.Robert A. Schneider, Professor of History,

Indiana University Mark Greengrass is a leading authority on early modern Europe, and hes written an extraordinary book, one that combines learning, imagination, and insight. It explores the full range of the European experience in these years, with attention to all social classes and regions, and to Europe's interactions with other continents. This is history that takes seriously our twenty-first century questions about what Europe is and where it fits in the larger world.Jonathan Dewald, University at Buffalo, State University of New York Composed in four countries (three of them in the European Union), Mark Greengrasss contribution to this series offers an unusually wide-angled panorama of European history from Luther to the Peace of Westphalia, seasoned with a plethora of richly-illustrative and often unfamiliar illustrations. While some centripetal concepts vanished in this era, an emergent Europe composed of composite states acquired decisive global advantages through scientific breakthroughs and overseas empires.William Monter, Professor of History, Northwestern UniversityAbout the AuthorMark Greengrass is a professor emeritus of early modern history at the University of Sheffield. He is an awardwinning historian, noted for his work on France and the Reformation. He lives and works in Paris, with affiliations to the University of Paris-IV (Centre Roland Mousnier).Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.1. The Fall of Western Christendom When Thomas Cockson published his engraving entitled The Revells of Christendome in the wake of the controversial truce between Catholic Spain and the newly emergent Dutch Republic in 1609, he drew on well-known satirical modes to make fun of Christendom. At the head of the table stands Pope Paul V with, to his left, other crowned heads of Europe (Henry IV of France, James I of England and King Christian IV of Denmark) facing us. Opposite, three Catholic monks play backgammon, dice and cards with them for the future of Europe. A dog urinates on the foot of one of them. The implication of the print was clear. The fate of Christendom was out of anyones hands. It had become a joke. Many of the elements which contributed to the fall of western Christendom were already at work in Europe before 1500. But it was only when they were all in place, interacting with one another, that Christendoms eclipse became total. THE IMPACT OF THE RENAISSANCE The revival of classical texts and ideas had begun well before 1517 in the urban cultures of northern Italy, Flanders and the Rhineland. It challenged scholasticism as the accepted way of defining the philosophical concerns of Europes lites, and with it the dominance of Aristotelian philosophy. Humanist scholars saw it as their task to recover the texts of classical Antiquity in their purity, and to enter into a dialogue with the thought of those who wrote them, subjecting it to cross-examination and scrutiny. Humanist teachers emphasized persuasion, learning how to marshal and deploy arguments that would win other people over to ones point of view. Their pupils, brought up on a diet of Latin (especially Ciceronian) texts, absorbed a new language and set of preoccupations about the proper conduct of citizens. That led to different conceptions of the relationship between ruler and ruled, the political and the social, and a different universalism (the public) from that afforded by Christendom. The public was the largest conceivable universitas, a fictive person in the eyes of Roman law, distinct from those who created it, an entity which could mimic a living person, take on rights and responsibilities, and delegate others to carry them out in its name. The universitas of a republic embodied the will of its members. There could be a pluralism of republics, some more virtual than others. The republic of letters, for example, took advantage of changing modes of communication and was energetically promoted by humanist scholars of the age. It also, however, reflected the history of Europes intellectual capital, which was increasingly out of the hands of a small clerical and bureaucratic lite and vested in a more complex and cosmopolitan market of producers and consumers, in which patrons, printers, engravers, librarians and readers of varying sorts all had a stake. How that market functioned depended upon the local environment, which explains why the Renaissance had a variable intellectual and social geometry, its impact differing across Europe, the distinctive contours sharpened by religious divisions. One of its important components would be the princely courts, and the Renaissance readily migrated and transmuted into a court culture, adapting itself to their needs and aspirations. Like the great scientific discoveries of the twentieth century, the Renaissance had the power to transform, and to destroy. It could cement ecclesiastical and political authority but also undermine it. It could challenge fundamental ideas about Gods providence in the world, and also reinforce them. Its new pedagogies introduced fresh ways of understanding how one learned about oneself, the world and its creator. Humanist scholars discovered, among other things, that ancient philosophy had a history to it. To understand Aristotle you had to place him in the context of those whose thought he was engaging with. He ceased to be a unique authority upon which to construct truth and legitimacy. The process had begun with the editing, translating and popularization of the Greek text of Diogenes Laertiuss Lives of the Philosophers. This provided a genealogy for the competing sects of Greek philosophers, giving lustre to views which had been marginal in the Middle Ages. Contemporaries presented Aristotle to their students within this more complex lineage, and took the arguments and debates of the Greek world seriously. Some philosophers in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were disciples of the Epicureans, Stoics, Platonists and Pyrrhonists. The result was that ancient philosophy ceased to be the handmaiden of Christian truth and the instrument by which a universal order could be constructed. That did not stop philosophers of the period seeking to discern an underlying set of truths. Some thought that, as in any genealogy, you could trace the line back to an ancestral primacy, of which all the descendants would contain perennial, genetic traces. Francesco Patrizi, for example, in his New Philosophy of Universals traced what Aristotle wrote, back through what Plato had told him, through Solon and Orpheus, to the Mosaic account of the creation of the world and the mysticism of the Egyptians, as

hinted at in the works of Hermes Trismegistus (these latter, he said, contained more wisdom than Aristotles philosophy entire), written originally over 1,100 years before Plato. Others preferred to highlight the points of agreement between Plato and Aristotle as the signs of an underlying symphony in ancient thought, despite the apparent disagreements. Just as this syncretic agenda might have been consolidated, however, there emerged the radically sceptical voices of those who read the works of the Greek philosopher Sextus Empiricus. He had used the disagreements among his fellow philosophers in Greece to disparage Aristotles and others efforts to attain the truth at all. If you took his works seriously (and some heavyweight thinkers of the period, notably the French magistrate Michel de Montaigne, did), then classical philosophy was full of error. Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, the Martin Luther of sixteenth-century philosophy, wrote in his Examination of the vain doctrines of the Gentiles (1520): the entire learning of the Gentiles [i.e. pagan Antiquity] totters with superstition, uncertainty and falsehood. It would take the genius of the French philosopher Ren Descartes to build a universal philosophy, capable of supporting a new experientially based physics, on the foundations of such Pyrrhonism. But, by then, no one could seriously imagine Christendom being patched together on the basis of radical doubt. Humanist geographers, physicians and natural philosophers shared an emerging sense of the importance of direct practical experience and the value of experiment. That changed the picture of the natural world. Europes geographical discoveries in the wider world contributed to the gathering perception that the natural world was a cornucopia of rich and rare phenomena, a treasure-store of secrets, waiting to be interpreted by those who held the key to decoding nature. Astrologers, alchemists, cosmographers, natural magicians and unorthodox practitioners of medicine rivalled one another to offer explanations as to how that immense variety in nature might be reducible to ordered, physical principles, or at least to demonstrate that it was conducive to empirical enquiry. Some of them sought these principles in forces higher than nature itself magical power immanent in nature like a spirit hidden in earthly processes, or conveyed by celestial warmth and movement. They, too, like many philosophers, were vocal in their criticism of Aristotle, mainly on the grounds that his ideas about matter were too abstract. They enveloped their learning and insight in an aura of arcane mystery to protect them from their numerous critics and enhance their reputation for exceptional wisdom and power. But there was a contrary recognition that human knowledge had its limits, which implied that penetrating the secrets of nature could never be the work of a single individual. It had to be achieved through a collaborative effort of many enquirers, attentive to the practical aspects of knowledge and to the varying possibilities for its interpretation. The impact of such changes upon the notion of Christendom was nowhere more profound than in cosmology. The Copernican heliocentric universe owed a great deal to the revival of alternative cosmologies from classical Antiquity which challenged the Aristotelian consensus. But, if the earth was simply another planet, revolving around the sun, then the universe became dramatically large in comparison to the earth immense, as Copernicus conceded. That was because it was necessary to envisage an enormous distance between the orbit of Saturn and the sphere of the stars. Once the earth became one of the planets, all the processes of generation and corruption which had been explained by Aristotle as based on what happened in the natural world and on earth, could more plausibly be explained in terms of the influence of the sun, or the earths motion and position with respect to the sun and the other planets. Christendom was most comfortable when it was cocooned within the concentric circles of a geocentric and anthropomorphic universe. Placed in a heliocentric universe, it ceased to be at the heart of the created order of things. The brilliantly self-publicizing chemical physician Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim), the magician and astrologer John Dee, the theologian and cosmographer Giordano Bruno, the natural philosophers Francesco Patrizi and Galileo Galilei were among those who found themselves, in varying degrees, held in suspicion for heliocentric views by the remaining gate-keepers of Christendom, the Inquisition and the papacy. In February 1600, Bruno was burned at the stake in Rome. A year later, the Dominican friar Tommaso Campanella was brutally tortured for forty hours in the Castel Nuovo in Naples for his involvement in a popular rebellion. He spent the next quarter of a century a prisoner there, raging against the infected roots of pagan Aristotelian philosophy. He dreamed of a radical transformation of a world in which he now no longer truly belonged. The problem for radical thinkers in this period was that the circumstances of the moment, as well as the accident of where they happened to live, determined in what ways and how their ideas came to be seen as challenging which is why there was no end to the Renaissance, but rather a continuing renegotiation of its potential for demolishing old certainties in new contexts. THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION At the heart of the movement for religious change was the Protestant Reformation, a rift in Roman Christianity as spectacular and as permanent as that which had occurred between the eastern and western Churches in the eleventh century. What made it the more painfully complicated was that western Christianity splintered violently. Martin Luther became convinced that Christendom was going to wrack and ruin because of the louts and whores in Rome. In May 1520, a Leipzig Franciscan, Augustin Alveld, published a pamphlet in German defending the proposition that the pope in Rome had authority over Christendom by divine right. Luther replied to the ass of Leipzig and his rotten arguments saying that the pope and his Romanists had turned the papacy into the scarlet whore of Babylon, and that this papal Antichrist was at the heart of Christendoms woes. By then, his study of Scripture and Church history had led him to a contentious sense of what Gods truth was, and how it was proved. By faith alone (sola fide) was Luthers redefinition, and Scripture alone (sola scriptura) was his way of validating it. Papal authority was human, and not divine, in origin, and

ultimate authority rested not with popes or councils or church fathers, but with the Bible. That was the way by which Luther claimed that Christianity could return to its roots the gospel of Christ. The Bible was the record of Gods promise to mankind from the beginning of the world, renewed in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Christ. Nothing was more literally true than this promise since God himself is to be trusted in faith. From this reductionist and stark truth-claim, so much else descended, including an irrecoverable breach with the Roman Church and a monumental Protestant division of theological opinion as to how literally it was to be taken. Luther used the term Christendom interchangeably with Church and Christian community. They all meant a virtual commonwealth, the communion of saints to which Christ referred when he said: my kingdom is not of this world. It was a stinking lie to say that Christendom was in Rome, or anywhere else for that matter. The true Church had no external forms, no vestments, special prayers, bishops or buildings. The sacred landscape dramatically shrank. According to Luther, it was faith alone which makes true priests of all believers, and turns the world in which they happen to dwell into a Christian order. Luther succeeded brilliantly in mobilizing pre-existing and disparate local resentments, especially in Germany, against the Roman Church. If the latter was the root of Christendoms canker, then it was up to others to step in and remove the rot. Christian people should act like children whose parents had gone mad, or like an individual who, seeing a building on fire, has a public duty to raise the alarm and put the flames out. That, in particular, was the responsibility of kings, princes and nobles. Their job was to prevent blasphemy and the disgrace of the divine name. Luthers purpose was to reinforce Christendom, not to destroy or replace it. But, by radically transposing the sources for authority and legitimation within Christendom, he opened the door to the decay of the united belief-community at its heart. In 1520, Luther was unequivocal. No universal authority was vested in anyone. The truth was that all Christians were members in equal standing in a Christian order, with one baptism, one gospel and one faith. These things alone created a spiritual and a Christian people. There was no difference between laymen and priests, or between princes and people, in their status as Christians. Spectacularly reductive as that was, it begged more questions in practice than it resolved. How, in reality, should Christian people organize themselves? What should they do to provide themselves with suitable pastors, and what were the duties and responsibilities of the latter? How should people act if their pastors or rulers failed in their Christian duties? What was the role of the ruler in those circumstances? What should Christians do if the prince or magistrate failed to carry out his Christian responsibilities? To whom did it fall to declare and enforce a unity of true belief? Whose job was it to defend Christendom? Beneath the theological divisions which opened up within the Protestant Reformation lay a transformation in the nature and manifestation of holy power. One of the most fundamental changes was in the relationship between ecclesiastical and state institutions. Luther and the other Protestant reformers ostensibly retained the bicephalous and notionally separate civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions of Christendom. In reality, however, the pressures of religious change altered the relationship, accentuating an uneasy friction between the two. While affecting to maintain the two regimes of Church and state, Luther enlarged the scope of the latter and emasculated the former. That renegotiation of power contributed to a different sense of what religious truth was in Protestant Europe. It became a truth declared by God, as guaranteed by the Scriptures, embodied in creeds, statements to which people subscribed, and lived out in confessionally configured communities where the instruments of public authority structured and monitored peoples lives and behaviours. Attenuated was the sense of humankind as a participant in Gods work of redeeming his creation. God had established a world of nature in which the sins of humankind were a fact of life, to be regulated, controlled and limited. Those limits were policed by state power, itself constructed around a theo-political imagination in which Gods power was the model of that of the state itself both almighty and irresistible.