

APUSH: Period One (1491-1607) | Reading Packet

[Native American Societies before European Conquest](#) | European Exploration in the Americas | Columbian Exchange, Spanish Exploration, and Conquest | Labor, Slavery, and Caste in the Spanish Colonial System | Cultural Interactions between Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans

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Introduction:

Learning Objective B:

Explain how and why various native populations in the period before European contact interacted with the natural environment in North America.¹

Re-Envisioning the Map of North America

When studying early American history, it is customary to feature maps that carve up the North American continent according to the territorial claims of European powers. For instance, this map depicting 17th century North America shows French territorial claims in purple, English in pink, and Spanish in light green; the dark green represents that portion of North America that was not claimed by any European powers. (See Image One.)

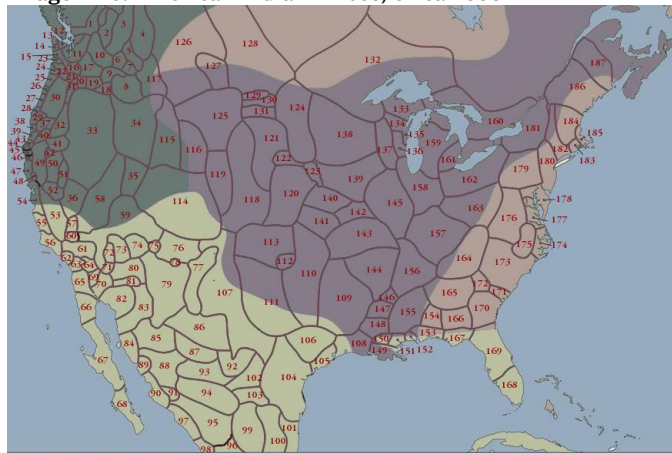
However, maps that only show European territorial claims in North America erase the presence of Native Americans; as a result, such maps bear little relation to the actual situation on the ground in North America. The following map (Image Two) more accurately represents conditions on the ground in early North America, because in addition to identifying European territorial claims in North America, it also shows where Native American tribes lived in North America around 1600. It gives us a much greater sense of the five million to thirteen million Native Americans who are estimated to have lived in North America in 1492. In 1492, those millions of Native Americans lived in more than 500 separate communities and spoke at least 375 different languages. Our first topic in Period One (1491-1607) begins to tell some of their story.

Image One: 17th-Century European Territorial Claims



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Image Two: American Indian Tribes, Circa 1600



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Introduction, Continued:

Native Americans Interacted with the Natural Environment in North America

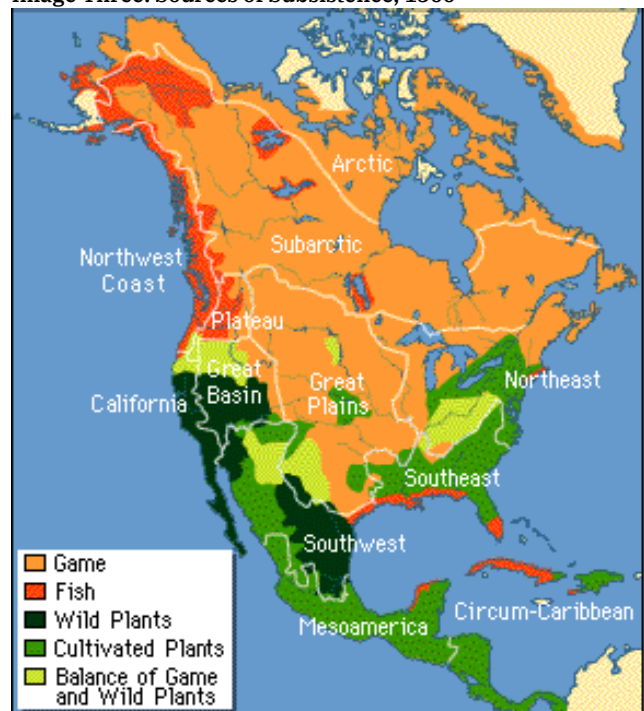
When we tell the story of the peoples of North America, we need to avoid making the mistake that early Europeans made. Specifically, when early Europeans looked at the “New World,” they described it as a wilderness. For example, in 1620, Governor William Bradford, while looking out over his Plymouth colony, said that the Pilgrims “had come into a vast wilderness filled with hideous beasts and hideous men.” But the reality is that while North America looked like a wilderness to the Europeans, it was anything but a wilderness. What Bradford saw, indeed what the other Europeans saw, was “a world that had been shaped very consciously, very decisively by peoples who had been there for generations, in some places, many, many generations. They really understood the world they lived in, and they found ways to master that world.”

Topic One, then, helps you learn to explain how and why native populations in the period before European contact interacted with the natural environment in North America; it helps you understand, as historian Alan Taylor put it, that “each Indian people supported themselves by a savvy and complex use of their particular place.”

Specifically, we will look at Native Americans from four regions of North America on the eve of European contact:

- (1) Native Americans of the present-day American Southwest, some of whom adopted maize, beans, squash cultivation;

Image Three: Sources of Subsistence, 1500



- (2) Native Americans of the Great Basin and grasslands of the western Great Plains, who developed largely mobile lifestyles;
- (3) Native Americans in the Northeast, Mississippi River Valley, and along the Atlantic Seaboard, some of whom developed mixed agriculture and hunter-gatherer economies;
- (4) and Native Americans in the Northwest and present-day California, who supported themselves by hunting and gathering, with some using the vast resources of the ocean.

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The Present-Day American Southwest:

Key Concept 1.1.I.A

The spread of maize cultivation from present-day Mexico northward into the present-day American Southwest and beyond supported economic development, settlement, advanced irrigation, and social diversification among societies.⁴

The Three Sisters Spread North with the Medieval Warm Period (900-1300 CE)

With the Medieval Warm Period of 900-1300 CE, there was an agricultural revolution that swept across North America, where maize-beans-and-squash agriculture and a way of life based upon it took hold everywhere in North America the climate allowed, including in portions of the American Southwest.

Prior to the Medieval Warm Period, hunting, fishing, and gathering remained the primary means of subsistence everywhere north of the Rio Grande; North Americans had yet to adopt the Three Sisters (maize, beans, and squash), which had been pioneered by the peoples of central Mexico.

However, during the Medieval Warm Period, average temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere were two or three degrees Fahrenheit higher than in the previous epoch and perhaps five degrees higher than in the depths of the much less stable era that followed. As a result of these increased average temperatures “growing seasons became longer and more reliable than they had in the past,” and the climate was more stable. The additional several weeks of frost-free days in most years was enough to encourage North American Native Americans to turn to maize-beans-squash agriculture.

Image Four: The Present-Day American Southwest



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Wherever adopted, these domesticated crops created a population surge, facilitated larger and more permanent villages, and “promoted economic differentiation and social stratification,” as great disparities emerged between rich and poor. A small group of elites in these new agricultural societies mobilized a labor force to perform the necessary agricultural duties and controlled the produce. These elite members of society “strengthened and consolidated their positions by controlling access to outside resources and to the spiritual world.”

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The Anasazi or Ancestral Puebloans

One of the complex and populous cultures that emerged in the American Southwest between 300 and 1100 CE was the Anasazi (shown on the map as the “Ancestral Pueblo”). With the onset of the Medieval Warm Period, for most of the 10th century there was “a continued favorable moisture regime” in the Southwest, which led to an expansion of agriculture in the region. This agriculture led to substantial population growth, which fostered “the emergence of several remarkable urban areas,” the most remarkable being Chaco Canyon in the present-day Four Corners region of New Mexico. (The Four Corners is the only place in the United States where four states intersect at one point: Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado.) These cultures were known as the Anasazi; because the word Anasazi is a Navajo slur that means “Ancient Enemies,” the more neutral term for these peoples is Ancestral Puebloans.

Ancestral Puebloans Settlement

The Ancestral Puebloans constructed large, rectangular pueblos. “By the mid-11th century,” stretching for miles down the north side of the Chaco Canyon, there were 12 “great houses” that controlled water resources. On the opposite rim were 3,000 or so less carefully laid out room blocks, known as “unit pueblos.” Archaeologists estimate that several thousand people lived in this core area, while tens of thousands more lived within a 60-mile radius, where approximately 70 great houses and perhaps 5,300 villages constituted a single sphere of cultural and economic interaction. The great houses served as central Facilities where corn, beans, and squash were collected,

Image Five: The Ancestral Puebloans



and later redistributed. As a result, most of the hundreds of rooms at a great house were probably “used for food storage and ceremonial purposes,” and not for housing. Most of the crops stored in these storage rooms were grown at the numerous smaller houses, and the still-smaller unit dwellings in surrounding areas.

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Ancestral Puebloans Settlement, Continued

The best-known, and largest, of the Anasazi great houses is “known today as Pueblo Bonito,” whose approximately 700 rooms, four stories, and dozen kivas were primarily constructed between 1030 and 1079 CE.

Each room in a pueblo required cutting more than 40 tons of sandstone from the canyon cliffs. Human laborers would then haul this sandstone to the construction site. At least 200,000 large trees were felled with stone axes and dragged more than 50 miles to roof and floor the 12 cities in the canyon. The kivas at the Great Houses had diameters of between 30 to 60 feet, and were dug to a depth of 6 more feet. One scholar estimates that it would have required nearly 30,000 person-hours of work to construct one great kiva.

Chaco also had an incredible network of roads; some 250 miles of road spread “out from the canyon, linking cities to one another.” Roads were cut a few inches into the earth or were lined with boulders or stone walls, and they included flights to steps that enabled people to get around or past obstacles, and to descend to the canyon floor.

Ancestral Puebloan Advanced Irrigation

“The Anasazi irrigation system caught and retained winter’s rainwater on the mesa tops,” and in the spring and summer this water was released through “diversion channels to low-lying fields” which lay by the . . . stream beds where the people cultivated their crops.” This level of irrigation required “extensive, coordinated labor to build and maintain.” The abundant crops resulting from

Image Six: Pueblo Bonito From the Cliff



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Image Seven: Great Kiva at Pueblo Bonito



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this irrigation enabled many peoples to live clustered together. Because so much intense labor was required to transform the land so that they could preserve moisture, in the Southwest, unlike the rest of North America, agricultural work was done mostly by men (although the land and crops were still controlled by women).

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Ancestral Puebloan Social Diversification

Archaeological evidence strongly suggests that there was “a major gulf between the elite inhabitants of the great houses and the commoners who lived in the unit pueblos.” Generally speaking, great-house inhabitants were “better nourished than their unit-pueblo counterparts.” While the great-houses accumulated “an array of exotic goods from across the continent and Central America,” archaeologists have found few, if any of those items in the unit pueblos where the commoners lived. Among the exotic items found in the great houses were “copper and feather from Mexico, marine shells from the Pacific Coast, turquoise and ceramic pottery from closer at hand, mica and selenite from farther away.”

The differences between great house residents and unit pueblos were evident even after death. Some of the rooms at the Great Houses were clearly designed as tombs. Bodies of the elite were buried within these rooms, along with exotic goods such as “turquoise, shell beads, rare minerals, ceremonial sticks, and pottery vessels.” By contrast, lesser individuals were buried simply beneath the floors of their unit pueblos, and not with the exotic goods that the elite were buried with. Evidence at Bonito suggests that funerary rites for certain elite were accompanied by the ritual killing of lesser individuals, who were then entombed in the same chamber as the favored elite. It appears as though these victims suffered public deaths that may have involved ritual cannibalism. In addition to the bloody killings that occurred in several of Bonito’s many rooms, evidence also exists of entire families and communities being massacred in many of

the surrounding settlement sites. Bearing in mind that the evidence is ambiguous, there is some suggestion that common people’s support of the elite was “encouraged” by systematic terror carried out by armed gangs.

Such bloody rituals—especially in death—indicate the ritual significance of great houses; they were major ceremonial centers. The leaders who conducted these ceremonies were supposed to be adept at mobilizing the powers of the sun, the rain, and the earth, so that their crops would grow and their people would thrive. Some architectural features at the Great Houses seem to have been designed “to serve as astronomical observatories, where they could track the passage of the sun and moon and the rotation of the skies around a northern axis. Ceremonies marking the seasons and important points in the agricultural calendar would have drawn hundreds of pilgrims from the countryside to the open spaces and kivas of the great houses.”

Movement and Shift to New Pueblos

Collapse in the arid Southwest came swiftly. “A 50-year-long drought struck the Chaco Canyon area after 1130, at the height of the Warm Period.” In response to these trying conditions, it seems that the elite abandoned Pueblo Bonito and the other great houses of Chaco, moving to a site known today as the Aztec Ruins, which was approximately one hundred miles to the north. At Aztec Ruins the great houses and kivas were rebuilt; but within a century, these newer great houses were abandoned. The commoners of the Four Corners, meanwhile, dispersed over several generations “to more ecologically sustainable communities elsewhere.” But

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Movement and Shift to New Pueblos, Continued

another series of droughts struck the Southwest in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, followed shortly thereafter by two centuries of unpredictable rainfall that was the hallmark of the ensuing Little Ice Age.

By the end of the thirteenth century, most of the Anasazi abandoned their homeland and fled south and east, seeking locales that had more certain source of water and soils that had not been exhausted by corn. Some of these Anasazi regrouped in western New Mexico and eastern Arizona to build the Acoma, Hopi, and Zuni pueblos. These new settlements tended to be fairly large, and were

designed for defense, which was necessary in light of the military chaos of the period. Like the Anasazi, they farmed with the help of elaborate irrigation systems. Other Anasazi traveled farther to the east, settling along the upper Rio Grande, which offered sufficient year-round water to sustain irrigation even in drought years. Instead of “collapsing,” the Anasazi culture *moved*, shifting into impressive new pueblos to the south and east of its former homeland. The former stratified system, where smaller villages supported larger pueblos, disappeared in favor of a more egalitarian settlement pattern.

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The Great Basin and the Grasslands of the Western Great Plains:

Key Concept 1.1.I.B

Societies responded to the aridity of the Great Basin and the grasslands of the Western Great Plains by developing largely mobile lifestyles.⁹

The Mobile, Hunter-Gatherer Lifestyles of Societies in the Great Basin and Western Great Plains

“Horticulture never spread universally among the Indians.” For some, the growing season was too short—as “in the vast arctic and subarctic regions of Alaska and Canada or in the high elevations of the Rockies and Sierra Nevada.” For others, they lived where there was too little water—as was the case for those living in the western Great Plains and in most of the Great Basin between the Rockies and Sierra Nevada.” For those who dealt with too little water or with growing seasons that were too short, “they continued to live in small, mobile, highly dispersed, and relatively egalitarian groups. Rather than horticulture, the most significant development for these people was their adoption of the bow and arrow after about A.D. 500.”

The peoples of the Great Plains consisted of small, dispersed groups of hunter-gatherers, while the peoples of the Great Basin traveled in kin-based bands over vast distances to hunt Bison along the Yellowstone River and bighorn sheep at high altitudes, and to fish for salmon, as well as gather pine nuts.

Image Eight: The Great Basin and The Great Plains



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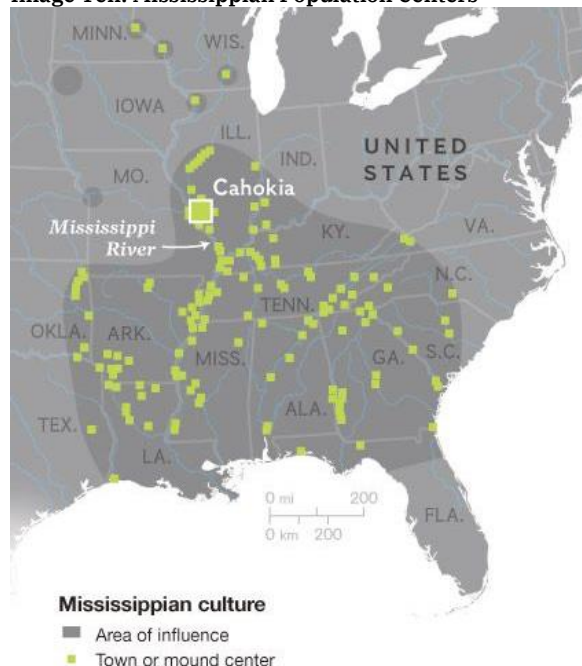
Key Concept 1.1.I.C

In the Northeast, Mississippi River Valley, and along the Atlantic Seaboard, some societies developed mixed agricultural and hunter-gatherer economies that favored the development of permanent villages.¹¹

Mississippian Population Centers and Culture

Various population centers flourished during the Medieval Warm Period (from roughly 1000 to 1600 CE) in the Mississippi, Ohio, and Arkansas river valleys, as well as in the Southeast interior and the upper Florida peninsula. Collectively, these population centers are called “Mississippian.”

Image Ten: Mississippian Population Centers



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Image Nine: The Northeast, Mississippi River Valley, and Along the Atlantic Seaboard



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While these population centers “did not share a common language or political affiliation,” they did share some basic characteristics: highly stratified societies organized as chiefdoms, sharp divides between elites and commoners, specialized artisans, widespread trading networks, surrounding agricultural settlements supplying them, and elaborate mortuary rituals involving the burial mounds.

Except for the far northern regions (where the growing seasons were too short), maize, beans and squash became

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the principal food source for peoples throughout the American east beginning around 800 CE, overtaking hunting and gathering. However, unlike the peoples of the American Southwest, Mississippians did not require elaborate irrigation systems to sustain horticulture. The Mississippi River Valley has numerous riverside plains, and gets abundant rainfall. Because the soil on flood plains is so easy to work, Mississippians developed an impressively simple agricultural tool—a digging stick. Using only this digging stick, they made a hole, planted their seeds in this hole, and used a stone hoe to build a hill around the growing plants. Notably, corn, beans, and squash were all grown together in the same fields. Beans grew twined around corn stalks, while the broad-leaved squash vines lessened weed infestations, and helped the soil retain moisture. “Once the squash and beans began to spread, little weeding or other tending was necessary until the crops matured.”

In fact, the soil was so rich, and the climate so favorable, that southern Mississippian farmers could produce two crops of maize per year: “a green corn harvested in summer and a second crop in autumn.” With the rise of chieftains (around 1000 CE), surplus maize was collected and stored at local centers in structures above the ground. This new horticulture promoted the quadrupling of the population, making the Mississippi Valley “the most densely settled region north of central Mexico.

In most Mississippian societies, farming became women’s work. Female kin groups controlled the fields, the food produced in those fields, and the houses. Men were responsible for the animal-protein portion of the diet. Most male labor took place during seasonal hunts, while fishing, and at fowling camps. In general, the forest belonged to the men; the “clearing,” to women.

“Like the people of central Mexico, Mississippians regarded the sun as their principal deity, and believed that it was responsible for their crops. Their priests and chiefs termed themselves “Great Suns,” believing that they were quasi-sacred beings who were descendants of the sun. Chiefs reigned by virtue of their birth into the highest-ranking lineage. Chiefs and priests conducted rituals centered on the solar cycle and the seasons, which were performed to ensure successful crop yields, and promote their power. Chiefs distributed surplus maize to commoners during droughts. They also “exchanged surplus maize for prestige items from neighboring peoples,” thus controlling external trade. Prestige goods were items that were produced outside of the chiefdom, as well as highly specialized craft items, and included “columella pendants, sheet-copper hair ornaments and headdresses, robes, pearls, . . . and ear ornaments.

In terms of the elaborate Mississippian mortuary rituals, bodies of the deceased chiefs (and other members of ruling families) were “either cremated or exposed on a platform until the flesh decayed, or both.” The bones were “then carefully gathered and stored communally in a ‘charnel house,’” where the bones were tended by religious specialists. At a particular point in the ritual calendar, the bones and the house that contained them was burned to the ground, and everything was covered with earth. Repeated over decades at a particularly sacred spot, this was the process that created the substantial earthwork mounds, which became popular in the central and lower Mississippi Valley around 700 CE. As in the Southwest, some high-status burials of the chiefs and priests involved the wholesale slaughter of lesser folk. When a chief died, his wives and servants/slaves were killed for burial beside him, as companions for the afterlife. Chiefs were also buried with their prestige items.

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Mississippian Example One: Cahokia

The greatest urban center seen in North America prior to the eighteenth century is known as Cahokia (although we don't actually know what its inhabitants called it.) Cahokia was located near the Mississippi River, in the midst of a fertile floodplain extending over about 350 miles. (Cahokia is located in Illinois, just across the Mississippi River from the modern city of St. Louis.) The site had been inhabited since approximately the year 700 CE, "but around 1050, fueled by the new agriculture and, presumably, the rituals believed necessary to sustain it, Cahokia underwent a rapid transformation." Archaeologists believe that Cahokia housed approximately 10,000 residents, with another 20,000 to 30,000 living in smaller communities and farms in the surrounding hinterland.

Engaging in a massive building project that required thousands of laborers and reflected the designs of a stratified society, the people of Cahokia built more than 120 earthwork mounds. The centerpiece of Cahokia was "a four-sided flat-topped pyramid now called "Monk's Mound." This mound had a base of sixteen acres, and reached to a height of several hundred feet, towering above a fifty-acre earthwork plaza that was oriented on a perfect north. The temple on top of the mound contained a sacred fire that represented the sun, and it housed the chief, along with his family and servants.

Monks Mound was part of the ceremonial core of Cahokia, which consisted of 16 mounds surrounding a 46 acre plaza. More mounds, numerous secondary plazas, and other functional and ceremonial features sit outside of the central plaza area.

Image Eleven: Monk's Mound



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Collapse of Cahokia

Cahokia was abandoned in the middle of the 13th century (at around the same time that the Anasazi collapsed). Its decline in population and power was initiated by "a long string of natural and human-caused disasters," which must have undermined the supernatural claims to power of Cahokia's chiefs, therefore challenging the effectiveness of the agricultural ceremonies over which they presided. Historian Daniel K. Richter suggests that there was likely a "loss of faith in religious leaders whose authorities rested on their pretensions to control the forces that allowed crops to flourish."

While Cahokia declined, Mississippian culture remained vibrant for a while in several southern towns, "including Moundville in Alabama, Etowah in Georgia, and Spiro in eastern Oklahoma. But in the 14th century, collapses similar to that of Cahokia occurred at other Mississippian cities.

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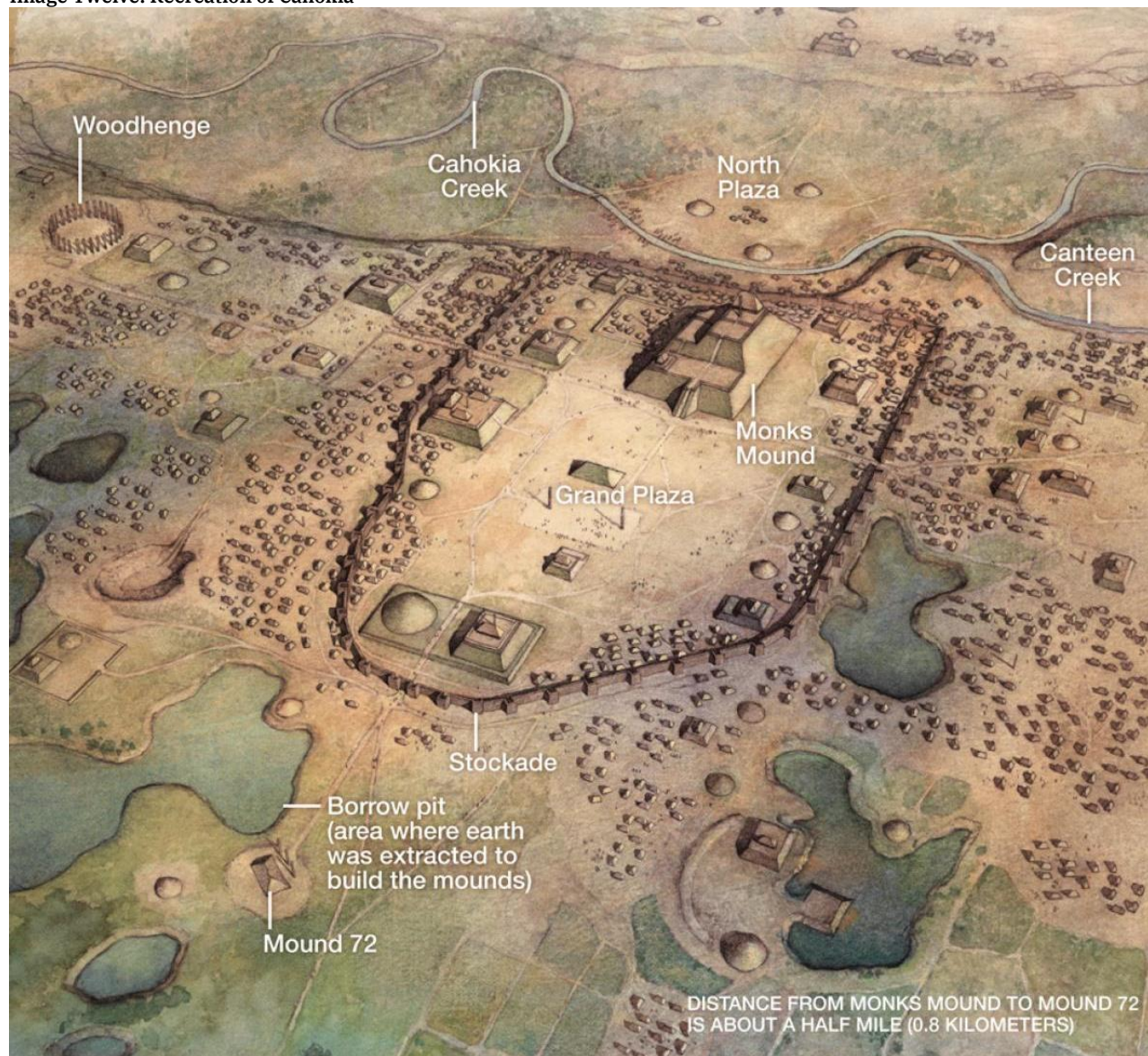
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Image Twelve: Recreation of Cahokia



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Mississippian Example Two:

Despite the collapse of a number of key population centers, Mississippian culture endured, and was still in evidence throughout much of the Southeast at the time of first contact with Europeans. For example, in 1540 the Spanish conquistador Hernando de Soto (see Period One, Topic Two) and his men encountered The Lady of Cofitachequi, who ruled over a Mississippian community in present-day South Carolina. She commanded great power across the Carolinas, and dominated subordinate chiefdoms. The Lady's subjects numbered in the thousands.

Through military conquest or strong-arm diplomacy, the Lady of Cofitachequi had gained control of weaker polities, which, as a result, owed her tribute in the form of food, animal skins, and perhaps even laborers. Cofitachequi was an exquisitely rich land, abounding in walnuts, mulberries, deer, and freshwater pearls.

The Lady of Cofitachequi had a temple at Talimeco, a Muskogean place-name meaning "chief's town"; it was a planned town with a central ceremonial center and carefully arranged houses.

A number of tall, flat-topped earthen mounds dominated the landscape at Talimeco. Atop the largest mound at Talimeco, was the great house of the Lady. Her temple crowned the top of another impressive mound. Captain Gonzalo Silvestre, a veteran soldier later stationed in Peru, told an interviewer that this temple "was among the grandest and most wonderful of all the things that he had seen in the New World. The roof was constructed of cane woven so tightly that it was waterproof; skeins of marine

shells and festooned pearls decorated the exterior. Inside, Silvestre recalled, "it was large being more than a hundred paces long and forty wide; the walls were high in keeping with the size of the room." Six finely carved warrior effigies guarded each side of the temple door. In addition to more shells and pearls, the Spaniards found plumes of colorful feathers, dressed skins and mantles of albino deer, and finely crafted shields made from buffalo hide-rare and beautiful things designed to enhance the prestige of the ruling lineage. The temple also contained the remains of the Lady's ancestors, which rested in chests along the wall. Each chest was accompanied by a wooden statue depicting the individual in life.

Mississippian Example Three:

Meanwhile, in Florida, sixteenth-century Spanish explorers also encountered the Apalachee Indians, Mississippians who occupied a network of towns built around mounds and fields of maize.

Archaeological evidence shows that before European contact, the Apalachee in northern Florida grew maize, beans, and squash; built ceremonial centers with platform mounds, plazas, and villages; and were part of an extensive trade network involving other Mississippian cultures in the interior southeast. The largest prehistoric Apalachee settlement at Lake Jackson north of Tallahassee originally consisted of seven large earthen mounds. Chiefs were buried here between A.D. 1250 and 1500 with trade items such as copper breastplates, engraved shells, and copper and stone celts indicating their status. At the time of European contact, the Apalachee had moved away from their mound centers and were living in large villages.

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Peoples of the Eastern-Woodlands

In the eastern woodlands, many groups adopted maize agriculture, but did not otherwise display Mississippian characteristics. These eastern Indians divided into Algonquin and Iroquoian peoples. Centrally located, the Iroquois clustered around Lake Ontario and along the St. Lawrence Valley to the east, or the Susquehanna Valley to the south. The Iroquoians were surrounded by an even larger and more diverse array of Algonquians, who occupied the Atlantic seaboard from Labrador to North Carolina and along the northern and western margins of Iroquoia to Lake Superior.

Algonquians and Iroquois shared related languages and lifestyles but were divided into dozens of distinct communities, none of which approached “the Mississippian level of population density, social stratification, or political centralization.” Most occupied villages composed of 500 to 2,000 people, built around fields of maize, beans, and squash during the summer months; at other times of the year, they dispersed in smaller groups to hunt, fish, and gather. Throughout the eastern woodlands, as in most of North America, women tended crops, gathered plants, and oversaw affairs within the community, while men were responsible for activities beyond it, especially hunting, fishing, and warfare.

Algonquians and Iroquois had no single style of political organization. Many were chiefdoms, with one individual claiming authority. Some were paramount chiefdoms, in which numerous communities with their own local chiefs banded together under a single, more powerful ruler. Some granted political authority to councils of sachems or leaders, instead of chiefdoms.

Paramount Chiefdoms: The Powhatan Chiefdom

Paramount chiefdoms resulted when numerous communities with their own local chiefs banded together under a single, more powerful ruler. For example, the Powhatan Chiefdom, which dominated the Chesapeake Bay region, was made up of more than thirty subordinate chiefdoms, and some 20,000 people, when Englishmen established the colony of Virginia.

The Little Ice Age affected village peoples living along the coast of what would become Virginia. When the climate began to change, it put pressure on food supplies. By 1550, six village-based Algonquian groups formed an alliance and placed a hereditary chieftain (known as a weroance) in charge of coordinating their mutual affairs. At about the same time a child was born in one of the villages. As an adult he was called “Wahunsunacock” or sometimes “The Powhatan.”

Throughout Powhatan’s life, conditions grew continuously worse. In addition to the bad weather, neighboring groups had begun to consolidate into local confederacies and conflicts were common. More troubling was the increasingly frequent appearance of odd-looking strangers (Europeans) who arrived in ever greater numbers along their shores. Shortly after the appearances of these strangers, people in the villages became sick and a great many died.

When Powhatan reached adulthood, he became the weroance of the six-village confederacy into which he had been born. He decided that, in light of worsening conditions, his political state must either expand or die. Calling upon the five to six hundred fighting men who

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who lived in the six villages, he used a combination of diplomacy, intermarriage, and brute force to pull other confederacies and isolated villages into a larger confederation. By 1607, when the mysterious strangers actually began to settle permanently in the region, the little six-village alliance had grown to nearly thirty villages and occupied some 8,000 square miles. They could field between 1,500 and 2,000 armed soldiers.

They were led by their paramount chief, Powhatan. From his especially large lodge in the village of Werowocomoco on the York River, Powhatan displayed a large entourage of servants, forty bodyguards, and one hundred wives, all supported from the tribute in maize and deerskins collected from the subordinated villages.

Councils of Sachems or Leaders: The Iroquois Confederacy

Some Native American groups granted political authority to councils of sachems, or leaders. This was the case with the Iroquois Confederacy.

The Haudenosaunee (or Iroquois) League, was a loose military alliance among the Seneca, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk (the Tuscarora would join the league after 1720), and was one of the greatest indigenous polities north of the Rio Grande in the two centuries before Columbus came to the New World.

Living in the Finger Lakes region in present-day New York, the ancestors of these Five Nations took up the trinity of maize-beans-squash agriculture around 1000 A.D. As a result, the population of these nations rose dramatically, and the separate tribes began fighting one

another. Adding to their woes was a long-lasting change in weather that made corn production less dependable, leading to scarcity, and greater reliance on hunting and gathering. This all led to conflict. Since each violent abduction, injury, or death had to be avenged, there was a worsening cycle of violence.

Into this context came Deganawidah, the Peacemaker. Originally not a member of the Five Nations, he was an outsider and a shaman who was said to have been born of a virgin girl far to the north. Leaving his home village in a canoe, he wandered the Adirondack and Allegheny forests, which were the site of violent and cannibalistic behavior. Deganawidah had a message of peace from a spirit he called the Peacemaker, and Peacemaker had charged Deganawidah with uniting all of the Iroquois into a great and powerful nation.

However, Deganawidah had a severe speech impediment. So to speak for him he solicited the help of Hienwatha (we know him as Hiawatha), a member of the Onondaga tribe (according to some accounts, Deganawidah recruited Hienwatha when Hienwatha was butchering a fresh kill; whether the kill was a man or beast it not known). Deganawidah shamed Hienwatha for his sad and dishonorable condition, and suggested that the two of them work together to try and correct the problem that had created this dishonorable behavior.

And so Hienwatha became Deganawidah's spokesmen, and the two promptly confronted Tododaho, the powerful sachem of the Onondaga, and a shaman in his own right. A warrior-leader, Tododaho was deeply locked into the prideful violence of the day, so he did not take too kindly to Hienwatha's and Deganawida's pleas for peace, killing Hienwatha's three daughters. This act almost derailed the

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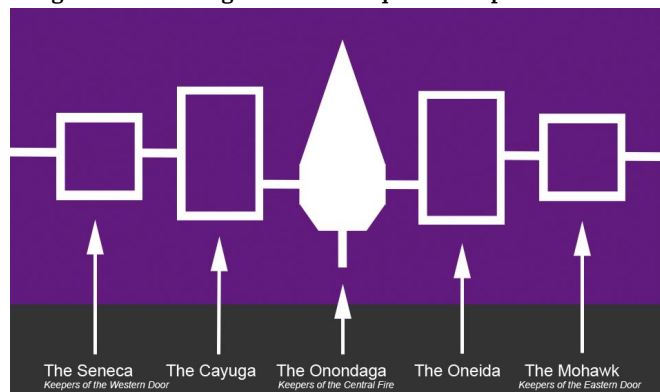
The Northeast, Mississippi River Valley, and Along the Atlantic Seaboard:

Image Thirteen: Replica Iroquois Wampum Belt



This belt is a recreation of the 18th-century Hiawatha belt that records when the first five nations of the Iroquois Confederacy—the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk (the Tuscarora joined later)—agreed to live in peace. The center tree symbol represents Onondaga, where Hiawatha, the peacemaker, planted the Tree of Peace under which the leaders buried their weapons of war. The squares and center line represent the other nations connected in peace.¹⁶

Image Fourteen: Diagram of the Iroquois Wampum Belt



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quest for peace. Refusing to be deterred from his efforts, though, Hienwatha vowed that no parent would ever experience such a loss again, and he rededicated himself to spreading Deganawidah's ideas.

Hienwatha continued to pursue Iroquois unity. He weaved a wampum belt "that showed a great chain connecting the five northern Iroquois tribes—Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca." (The purple beads come from quahog shells. A Quahog is a hardshell clam. The white beads were made from whelk shells. Whelks are a type of sea snail.) Taking this belt with him, Hienwatha wove his way through the five nations, advocating the cessation of hostilities as the path to Iroquois survival. Steadily, over the years, Deganawidah and Hienwatha persuaded the Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, and Mohawk to form an alliance instead of constantly fighting. Tododaho and Onondaga continued to refuse. Finally, Deganawidah took a single arrow and invited Tododaho to break it, which Tododaho did easily. Then Deganawidah bundled together five arrows and asked Tododaho to break the lot. Tododaho was unable to. In the same way, Deganawidah prophesied, the Five Nations, each weak in its own, would fall into darkness unless they all banded together.

Soon after Deganawidah's warning, there was a solar eclipse. The shaken Tododaho agreed to have the Onondago join the Iroquois alliance, although he demanded that the main Onondago village serve as the headquarters of the confederacy.

Deganawidah laid out the new alliance's rules of operation in the Haudenosaunee constitution: the Great Law of Peace. When issues came up before the alliance, the Tododaho would summon the fifty sachems who represented the clans of the five nations. All decisions had

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to be unanimous, as the Five Nations regarded consensus as a social ideal. The five nations agreed that they would not make war on each other. The league was “maintained by a council that determined the rules of conduct among the nations and oversaw elaborate rituals or reconciliation.” The Iroquois, now united, emerged as the most powerful group in the Northeast.

The Iroquois did not recognize chiefs; instead, councils of sachems made decisions. These were matriarchal societies, with power inherited through female lines of authority. Women were influential in local councils, though men served as sachems, made war, and conducted diplomacy.

Native Americans and their Use of Fire

One way Native Americans consciously shaped the world around them was through fire. In fact, “from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Hudson’s Bay to the Rio Grande, almost every Indian group shaped their environment, at least in part, by fire.”

Twice a year (in the spring and fall), Indians in the Eastern Woodlands set fire to the forests beyond their fields. As a result, very little deadwood and brush could accumulate on the forest floor. The fires that the Native Americans set killed the small trees in the forest, but “spared the tall and thick mature trees with dense bark.”

flint-ignited torches were as important to their hunting as bows and arrows. So “deer in the Northeast; alligators in

The reason that Native Americans thinned out the forests was to assist them when they were hunting; in many ways the Everglades, buffalo in the prairies, grasshoppers in the Great Basin, rabbits in California, moose in Alaska, all were pursued by fire. In fact Thomas Jefferson tells us that what Native Americans would do is they would create large rings of flames by “firing the leaves fallen on the ground,” eventually forcing the animals towards the center, where the Native Americans could “slaughter them with arrows, darts, and other missiles.”

Europeans had ensured they had meat to eat by domesticating animals. Native Americans in North America didn’t domesticate animals for meat; instead, they burned the undergrowth in the forests to encourage elk, deer, and bear to come directly into their forests. As a result, North American forests were not thick and wild; rather, in many places they resembled English parks where you could drive carriages through the trees. The notorious John Smith claimed that he rode through the Virginia forest at a gallop. Remarkably, to illustrate how Native Americans directed animals to desired locations, bison could be found in New York, as well as Georgia. These prairie animals had been “imported to the East by Native Americans along a path of indigenous fire, as they changed enough forest into fallows for it to survive outside its original range.” Because fires fertilized the forest floor and opened patches of sunlight, the growth of grasses and berries was encouraged, which helped sustain larger deer (and other) herds. This may not have been the domestication of animals that Europeans practiced, but this was a practice with the same end-goal of ensuring a diet that included meat.

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The Northwest and Present-Day California:

Key Concept 1.1.I.D

Societies in the Northwest and present-day California supported themselves by hunting and gathering, and in some areas developed settled communities supported by the vast resources of the ocean.¹⁸

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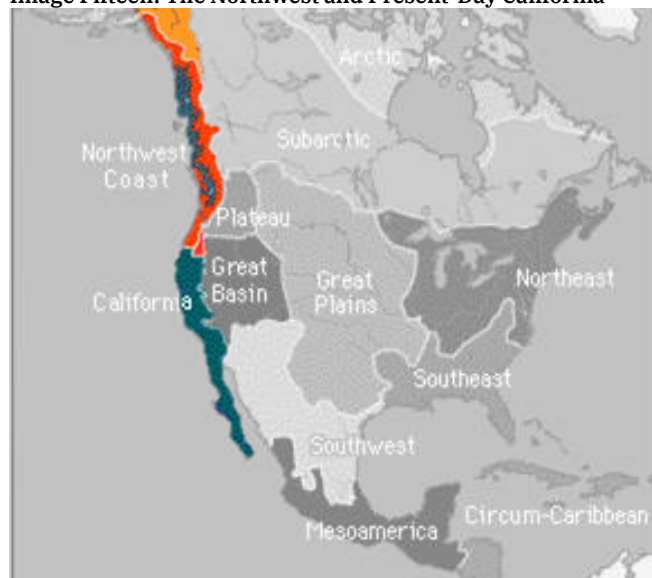
“Natives also did not develop horticulture in the temperate and humid coastal zone of California and the Pacific northwest, despite its sufficient growing seasons and abundant water. Along the Pacific coast, the hunting-gathering-fishing complex was so productive that the native peoples did not feel the pressures that elsewhere led to horticulture.

The Pacific Northwest

Endowed with a bountiful diet and leisure time, the Indians of the northwestern rain-coast could develop and sustain elaborate rituals, art, and status hierarchies without developing horticulture.”

In the Pacific Northwest, the Kwakwaka'wakw, Tlingits, Haidas, and hundreds of other peoples, speaking dozens of languages, thrived in a land with a moderate climate, lush forests, and many rivers. The peoples of this region depended on salmon for survival and valued it accordingly. Images of salmon decorated totem poles, baskets, canoes, oars, and other tools. The fish was treated with spiritual respect and its image represented prosperity, life, and renewal. Sustainable harvesting practices ensured the survival of salmon populations. The Coast Salish people and several others celebrated the

Image Fifteen: The Northwest and Present-Day California



First Salmon Ceremony when the first migrating salmon was spotted each season. Elders closely observed the size of the salmon run and delayed harvesting to ensure that a sufficient number survived to spawn and return in the future. Men used nets, hooks, and other small tools to capture salmon as they migrated upriver to spawn. Massive cedar canoes, as long as fifty feet and carrying as many as twenty men, also enabled extensive fishing expeditions in the Pacific Ocean, where skilled fishermen caught halibut, sturgeon, and other fish, sometimes hauling thousands of pounds in a single canoe.

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Food surpluses enabled significant population growth, and the Pacific Northwest became one of the most densely populated regions of North America. The combination of population density and surplus food created a unique social organization centered on elaborate feasts, called potlatches. These potlatches celebrated births and weddings and determined social status. The party lasted for days and hosts demonstrated their wealth and power by entertaining guests with food, artwork, and performances. The more the hosts gave away, the more prestige and power they had within the group.

Many peoples of the Pacific Northwest built elaborate plank houses out of the region's abundant cedar trees. The five-hundred-foot-long Suquamish Oleman House (or Old Man House), for instance, rested on the banks of Puget Sound. Giant cedar trees were also carved and painted in the shape of animals or other figures to tell stories and express identities. These totem poles became the most recognizable artistic form of the Pacific Northwest, but peoples also carved masks and other wooden items, such as hand drums and rattles, out of the region's great trees.

California

In California an abundance of acorns and other edible wild plants supported an especially large population.

More than 300,000 people lived in California at the time of Spanish colonization in the late 18th century. These native peoples were not organized in a single society, but lived in hundreds of small, politically autonomous communities connected by trade and kinship networks. Native California groups spoke at least 100 different mutually unintelligible languages, ate different foods, and practiced different religions.

One activity shared by all native Californians was interaction with and manipulation of the environment. Using combinations of hunting, gathering, fishing, and agriculture, they skillfully harvested California's natural resources. Many groups dried, shelled, ground, washed, and cooked acorns into soup and bread, flavored with berries, seeds, and nuts. Some caught trout, salmon, and shellfish with harpoons and nets. Others hunted elk, deer, rabbits, and fowl with bows and obsidian-tipped arrows.

Hunting and gathering in California could sustain large populations and stratified social structures. For example, in the southern region, Chumash villages could have over a thousand inhabitants. Similarly, in central California, the abundance of acorn and salmon, as well as vast quantities of deer, elk, antelope, and rabbit allowed for the establishment of villages of up to a thousand individuals. These villages included craft specialists who produced specific objects and goods for a living.

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A Search for New Sources of Wealth:

Learning Objective C:

Explain the causes of exploration and conquest of the New World by various European nations.

Key Concept 1.2.I.A:

European nations' efforts to explore and conquer the New World stemmed from a search for new sources of wealth,²⁰ economic and military competition, and a desire to spread Christianity.

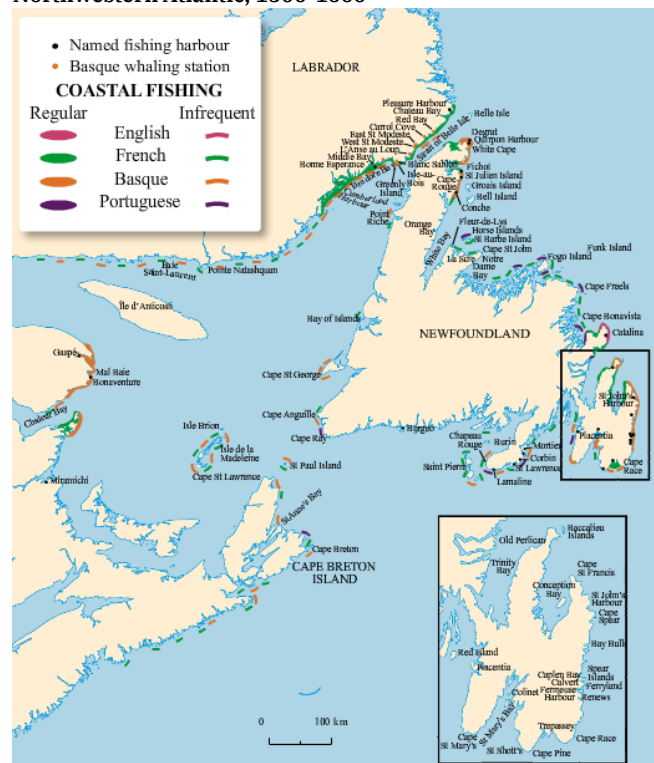
Fisheries In Newfoundland

While gold and silver were the American commodities that had the greatest impact in Europe, fish was the first great American commodity that was brought across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe and Africa. "If gold brought Spaniards to the Caribbean and what became known as Latin America, fish lured Europeans to North America."

When news of Christopher Columbus's voyage reached England, the Genoese mariner, John Cabot, petitioned King Henry VII for permission to undertake a western voyage across the Atlantic to Asia. Because Columbus had ventured across the Atlantic Ocean along the 28th north parallel "where the globe was relatively wide," Cabot reasoned that he could find a much shorter route by going farther north.

Sailing out of Bristol in May of 1497, Cabot and his crew landed in North America on June 24th, at a site he called Newfoundland, a land that had been explored and colonized (briefly) by the Norse a few centuries earlier. Cabot insisted "that he had discovered 'the country of the Great Khan.'"

Image Sixteen: European Inshore Fisheries in the Northwestern Atlantic, 1500-1600



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Significantly, Cabot and his crew immediately noted that Newfoundland has a great deal of fish—especially cod. Cabot is said to have reported that the Atlantic was “swarming with fish, which can be taken not only with a net, but in baskets let down with a stone.”

Towards the end of the 15th century, hundreds of ships from all over western Europe began to converge on Newfoundland every spring. By 1504 there were probably seasonal fishing stations established onshore; some “may have been inhabited year-round.” Throughout much of the 1500s, Newfoundland fisheries were dominated by Basques (from northern Spain) and French; by the end of the 16th century, though, English and Dutch fishermen became major participants. In addition to Newfoundland fisheries, by the end of the 16th century, English and French fishermen had their operations to the south, along the New England coast. By the 1630s, there were 300 English ships a year fishing off of Newfoundland, bringing fish back to Europe—especially dried cod, which was particularly popular in parts of southern Europe.

By the 17th century, as much as 200,000 tons of cod were shipped from America to Europe each year. This American fish provided Europe’s burgeoning population with much-needed protein—especially the Catholic nations in Europe. Even though there was animosity, and sometimes open warfare, between the Protestant and Roman Catholic nations in Western Europe, most fish, even if it was caught by English and Dutch fishermen (whose nations were Protestant), was sold to southern Europe, whose growing populations were Roman Catholic. In return, the merchants in these warmer, southern European nations sold northern Europeans wine, raisins, and olive oil. American fish enabled northern European nations to pay for these southern commodities.

Hernán Cortés Conquers the Triple Alliance (1519-1521)

The inhabitants that Christopher Columbus first encountered in the New World were the Taino. The Taino of Hispaniola and Cuba died out rapidly as a result of disease and exploitation, with their population declining from 300,000 in 1492 to 33,000 in 1510 (and ultimately falling to 500 by 1548). This rapid drop in the Taino population created a labor shortage in the Spanish gold mines, cattle ranches, and sugar plantations. Needing replacements, Spanish conquistadores began raiding the mainland of Central America, seizing Indians and selling

Image Eighteen: Tenochtitlan



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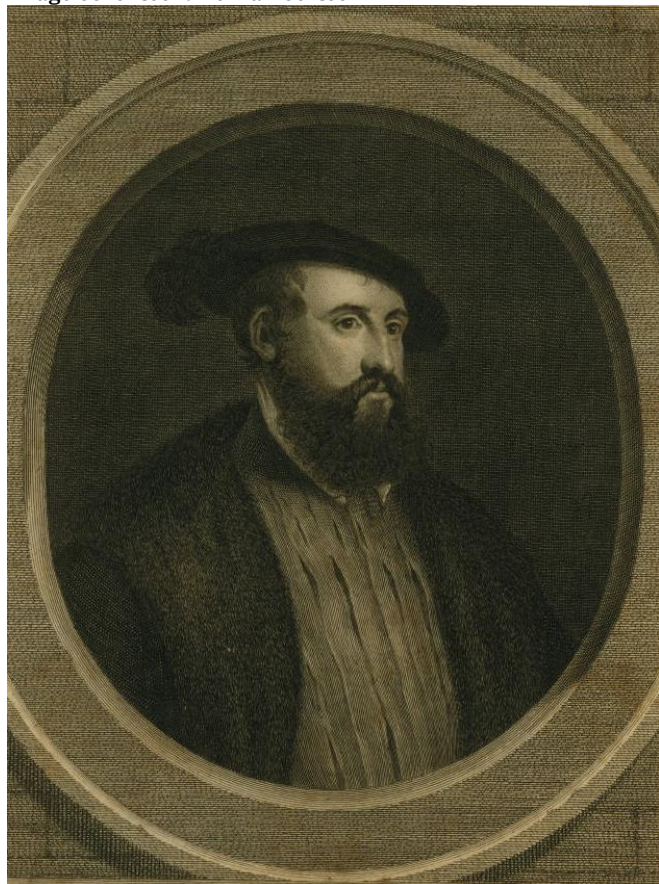
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Image Seventeen: Hernán Cortés



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them “to the miners and planters of the islands.” Of course, these new “slaves” were just as susceptible to European diseases as the Taino, and so these slaving expeditions expanded, “devastating the native villages around the Gulf of Mexico from Venezuela to Florida and up the Atlantic coast as far as present-day South Carolina.”

It was from these captives that the Spanish heard about the Mexica (or Aztec) Empire in central Mexico. It’s capital, Tenochtitlan, was a marvelous city, replete with islands, canals, and causeways, with fresh water brought in by a stone aqueduct. It’s plaza in the city center had tall stone pyramid-temples, the largest of which stood sixty meters tall. Its population of 200,000 “dwarfed the largest city in Spain, Seville, which had only 70,000 inhabitants.”

The city became “the center of a complex web of tribute exchange that crisscrossed Mesoamerica, receiving food, textiles, luxury goods, and victims for human sacrifice from hundreds of other states.” Almost all of the goods found in Tenochtitlan’s markets came from elsewhere. For instance, because Tenochtitlan stands at over 7000 feet above sea level, some of the key Mesoamerican crops were unable to grow there; this meant that cotton (which the inhabitants of Tenochtitlan consumed hundreds of thousands of bales of annually, using the cotton for things like clothing and armor) had to be brought in from subject states. The cacao that the Mexica ground into the intoxicating drink that their elite consumed at parties and in rituals “is a lowland crop that grows only in hot climates.” The list of goods brought in from surrounding subject states is long and varied: “quetzal feathers and jaguar belts; conches from the gulf; jade and amber; rubber for the ball game that . . . was an essential aristocratic rite; copal for incense; gold and copper; cacao; deerskins; and what the Spaniards called ‘smoking-tubes with which the natives perfume their mouths.’” “Only plunder on a grand scale could solve the logistical problems of keeping the city fed and clothed.”

One Spaniard who heard these stories about the Mexica was Hernán Cortés, who became determined to conquer

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the Mexica. In 1519, Cortés began his campaign against the Mexica, against the wishes of his superior, the governor of Cuba. Cortés landed near what is now the city of Veracruz on April 22, 1519.

Cortés and his men arrived at Tenochtitlan in November 1519 (along with as many as twenty-thousand Tlaxcalans, tribute peoples of the Mexica who had aligned themselves with the Spanish).

Needless to say, the Spanish were astounded by Tenochtitlan—especially its gold. Cortés, in a missive to the Spanish king, described the wealth of Moctezuma this way:

Can there be anything more magnificent than that this barbarian lord should have all the things to be found under the heavens in his domain fashioned in gold and silver and jewel and feathers? And so realistic in gold and silver that no smith in the world could have done better? And in jewels so fine that it is impossible to imagine with what instruments they were cut so perfectly? . . . In Spain there is nothing to compare with it.

Tenochtitlan inflamed the Spaniards' "desire to conquer, plunder, and enslave." And "in August 1521, the Spanish and their native allies reduced the city to a bloody rubble." The Mexica capitulated on August 21st, 1521. As his reward for this stunning conquest, Carlos V, the Spanish king, appointed Cortés governor of Mexico, and gave Cortés the coveted title of high nobility (*marquise*).

Spanish Gold and Silver

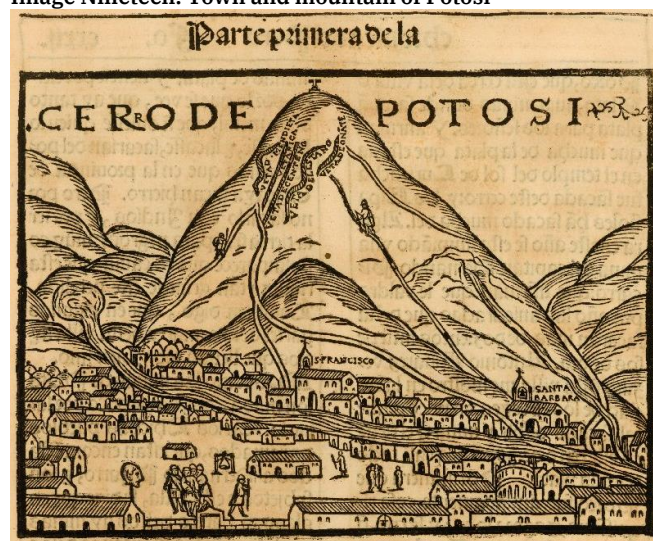
The silver mines of the Americas—especially the Peruvian

mines of Potosí (in present-day Bolivia) and the mines of Zacatecas in northern Mexico—made Spain incredibly wealthy. The Spanish first discovered "the ore-filled mountain of Potosí" in 1545. Throughout the 18th century, the annual value of the silver coming out of Potosí ranged between three and ten million pesos.

Potosí was one of the two great sources of Spanish American silver; the other great source was Mexico, especially northern Mexico, where Zacatecas was.

It is easy to lose scope of the size of the Mexican silver rush. One way to capture the magnitude of the Mexican silver rush is to compare it with the California Gold Rush

Image Nineteen: Town and mountain of Potosí



Includes a view of the churches, dwellings, and town square (with decapitated head on a pike) of the settlement. Also includes river and paths up the mountain along with an indication of the different veins of silver.²⁴

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of the 1840s-1850s. The California Gold Rush lasted for twenty years, and was fairly restricted geographically to a certain quadrant of present-day California. On the other hand, the earlier silver rush started in the early 1520s, plateaued in the 17th century, and picked up again in the 18th century. Geographically, the silver rush started in what is now southern and central Mexico, and expanded through the western slopes along the Pacific; then it moved into the high plateau where some of the richest mines (like Zacatecas) were found, and eventually it got practically all the way to the American Southwest. The geographic distribution of these mines was staggering.

So while Mexico never had a mountain of silver like Potosi (which is why its mines, like Zacatecas, never earned the international reputation that Potosí did), it had a variety of silver mines, and these mines were very impressive in terms of their output. Their total output of silver in terms of kilograms from the 16th-18th centuries was twelve times the output of gold in California in the 19th century.

It is estimated that in the 16th-18th centuries, Spanish silver mines produced roughly 100,000 to 150,000 tons, which was “about 85% of world silver production” over that period. (In the 18th century, Spanish mines “accounted for roughly 90% of world silver production,” producing 51,000 out of the world’s total of 57,000 tons.

Silver clearly became the principal export of Spain’s colonies. “Between 1500 and 1650, the Spanish shipped approximately 181 tons of gold and 16,000 tons of silver to Seville, Spain,” which “tripled Europe’s supply of silver and increased the gold supply by about 20%.”

As a result of China’s thirst for silver, a significant portion of Spanish silver also “moved in the opposite direction

from Acapulco to Manila, and Manila to China.” Beginning in 1565 (when López de Legaspi conquered the Philippines for Spain), and generally going through to 1815, Spain “conducted an annual Mexico-Philippines galleon trade,” in which they exchanged “vast quantities of Spanish silver for Asian goods” such as Chinese silks, rugs, and porcelain, as well as Indian cottons and Indonesian spices.” This annual trade was conducted by one to four state-of-the-art galleons, which were referred to as the China ships, and involved a three-month voyage from Acapulco to Manila, followed by “the six-month return voyage to Mexico.”

“The Manila Galleon trade was big business.” “By the early 17th century, the value of trade between Manila and Acapulco exceeded the value of the Atlantic trade between Spain and its colonies in the Western Hemisphere.” The annual value of the American silver shipped to Asia was equal to the combined amount “of American silver shipped from Europe to Asia by the Portuguese and the Dutch and the English” in the 17th century.

The Francisco Vasquez de Coronado Entrada / Royally-Sanctioned Expedition (1540-1542)

Spanish conquests of Mexico and Peru were so successful that conquistadores hoped to repeat such successes in Florida. However, Spain’s first attempt to settle Florida was a devastating failure. “In early 1527 Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca left Spain as a part of a royal expedition intended to occupy the mainland of North America.” Landing in what is now Tampa Bay in March of 1528, the expedition’s leader, Pánfilo de Narváez, claimed Florida for Spain.

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The party was soon attacked by the Apalachee Indians of northern Florida, whose leader had been taken hostage by the Spanish. Chased out of Florida by the Apalachee (who were renowned archers), the surviving members of the expedition—including Cabeza de Vaca—huddled in a coastal swamp and lived off the flesh of their horses. Finally, in late 1528, they were able to craft a few crude rafts from trees and horse hides, and attempted to sail back to Cuba.

By the time a hurricane dumped Cabeza de Vaca and his companions on the Gulf Coast near what is now Galveston, Texas, there were eighty survivors. That number continued to dwindle as he and “his comrades lived in the complex native world of what is now East Texas.” In this new and strange world, “Cabeza transformed himself from a conquistador into a trader and healer.”

In 1532, with just four members remaining from the original expedition—one of whom was a black slave named Esteban—Cabeza and these other survivors headed towards Mexico, and in July Of 1536 they encountered fellow Spaniards who were on a slave-taking expedition.

When he returned to Spain in 1537, de Vaca published an account of his experiences (he also urged the crown to adopt a more generous policy towards Native Americans). Based on his accounts, many people were drawn to their “rumors of wealthy and populous cities to the north.” Cabeza de Vaca and his companions had lived in the northern Rio Grande Valley, they lived among “well-fed peoples who practiced sedentary agriculture, made textiles, employed pottery, and lived in permanent villages of stone and adobe brick.” Such communities, as

well as alluring reports from Indian merchants of large pueblos to the north with gold and silver, fueled Spanish hopes that there was more gold and silver to be found in the north.

Hoping to find this gold and silver, in 1538, Antonio de Mendoza, the viceroy of New Spain sent a small scouting expedition to the north. The expedition was led by the credulous Franciscan Friar, Fray Marcos de Niza, while the guide to the trip was Esteban, who, like Cabeza de Vaca, had survived the Narváez fiasco.

Esteban led the expedition to “a Zuni village in what is now western New Mexico,” but soon afterwards was killed for abusing the Zuni women.” “Intimidated, Fray Marcos beat a hasty retreat to Mexico,” having never set foot in any of the six Zuni Pueblos at the time. Once back in Mexico, Fray Marcos reported that he had seen the city of Cíbola, a city far more impressive (and wealthy) than Tenochtitlan. This city, he claimed, had massive temples “sheathed in precious metals and studded with valuable gems.” Going even further, Fray Marcos identified Cíbola as merely one of seven great cities that lay in the Zuni region. His account conjured up images of a popular Spanish account of the “Seven Cities of Antilia.” According to this legend, when the Muslims of North Africa had “overwhelmed the Iberian peninsula in the 8th century,” seven bishops from Portugal and Spain had taken their congregations and fled westward across the Atlantic. Once they’d reached their destination somewhere in the Atlantic, they were said to have “founded seven cities in Antilia,” and these cities were said to be rich with gold. According to Spanish lore, Cíbola was said to be the nearest of the seven cities. “Reports of Indian pueblos in the American Southwest and the way the afternoon sun glinted off the pueblos [had] kept alive

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the hope that these ancient golden cities founded by Spanish Christians would yet be located.” So when Fray Marcos claimed to have come across Cibola, it drew immediate attention.

Eager to believe Fray Marcos’s tales, “the viceroy invested in a new, larger expedition capable of conquering the Seven Cities.” Francisco Vasquez de Coronado was appointed commander of the expedition. Coronado was able to recruit and equip about 300 soldiers, “6 Franciscan priests, 800 Mexican Indian auxiliaries, and some 1,500 horses and pack animals.” Fray Marcos was to be the expedition’s guide.

When the expedition reached Zuni country in July 1540, they came across the Zuni Pueblo Hawikuh, which Fray Marcos insisted was the famous city of Cibola that he had sighted the year before. Eagerly anticipating a rich reward, the Spanish soldiers, when denied entry to the city, “stormed Hawikuh,

killing hundreds and expelling the survivors.” While the Spanish found “stores of beans, corn, and turkeys,” they did not find any “of the rumored gold and silver that had lured them across hundreds of miles of hard, dry terrain.” “Cibola” was merely a modest pueblo with “multi-story tenements made of sunbaked brick.” Coronado reported in disgust that Fray Marcos, the friar, had “not told the truth in a single thing.” Apparently the only wealth they found was “two bits of emerald . . . in some paper,” as well as “some very worthless, small, red stones.”

Not content to stop there, and needing to recoup some of his heavy investment, Coronado continued his expedition into the Rio Grande Valley, in what is now New Mexico, pursuing rumors of other Indian peoples “just over the horizon” who possessed the wealth that the Spanish dreamed of finding.

Image Twenty: The Coronado Expedition



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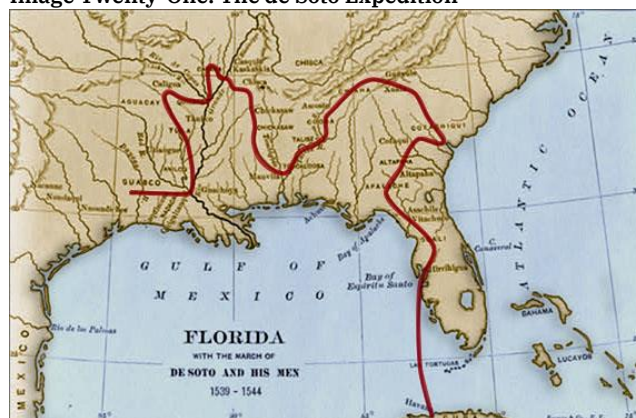
When the Pueblo rebelled against Coronado—a response to their food being plundered and their women being raped—the Spanish “destroyed 13 villages and killed hundreds of natives.” “Coronado [also] ordered 100 captured warriors burned to death at the stake.”

When the Pueblo Indians figured out that they could not defeat the Spanish, they turned to “telling alluring stories of a wealthy kingdom named Quivira,” which they claimed was to the northeast, “on the far side of a great, grassy plain.” Coronado and his men crossed the Great Plains in their search for Quivira. But the only people they came across were “small groups of nomads who subsisted on immense herds of buffalo, which they hunted on foot.” Weeks later, after crossing parts of present-day Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, they finally came across Quivira, which was a modest Wichita Indian village with beehive-shaped, grass-thatched lodges. While the Wichita of Quivira “possessed a productive agriculture,” they did not have gold or silver. The closest thing to gold that the Spanish found among the Quivira was a copper medalion that a “lord” wore “[suspended] from his neck.” When the frustrated Spaniards tortured and strangled their Pueblo guide, he confessed that he had been assigned to “lead the Spanish astray,” so that they would get lost and die. Unfortunately for the Pueblo, the Spaniards used a compass to find their way back to the Rio Grande, where, “they again proved larcenous and violent guests for the winter of 1541-42.” Demoralized by repeated disappointments, Coronado cut his losses and returned to northern Mexico in April 1542.

The Hernando de Soto Entrada (1539-1543)

De Vaca’s report about his travels in North America not

Image Twenty-One: The de Soto Expedition



only inspired Francisco Vasquez de Coronado’s expedition, it also inspired Hernando de Soto’s expedition from Cuba to Florida, and through the American southeast.

Believing that somewhere in the interior north of Florida there was a North American equivalent of the Aztec empire, “in the spring of 1539, Soto led 600 men on a violent rampage through the carefully cultivated and densely populated heartland of the Mississippian culture.” Soto’s expedition took him and his men through “present-day Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and east Texas,” and brought him within three miles of Coronado’s expedition.

Because Soto’s men expected to obtain food from the Indians, they brought little food with them. The arrival of hundreds of Spaniards into Mississippian towns proved “a catastrophic tax” on their food supplies. Soto’s expedition was especially violent. He brought 300 sets of iron collars and chains with him so that he could enslave

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Indians and make them porters for the expedition. When Soto reached a chiefdom, he had his men seize the local chiefs as hostages, using these hostages “to extort a ransom of maize, women, porters and guides.” The published accounts of Soto’s expedition detail “sadism, abuse, rapes, and murders.”

Mississippian villages offered the kinds of clues that led the conquistadors to conclude that the Mississippian people possessed great wealth: “they had large fields of abundant crops, ceremonial centers featuring temple mounds and substantial populations, and powerful chiefs able to mobilize hundreds of warriors.” Still, the Spanish never did find gold or silver. “Frustrated, and feeling betrayed, the conquistadores left a trail of corpses, mutilations, ravaged fields, emptied storehouses, and

charred towns.”

Soto died in May of 1542 on the banks of the Mississippi. While his body had been unceremoniously tossed into the Mississippi River, his successor in command of the expedition, Luis de Moscosco, claimed to the Mississippians that Soto had “ascended into the sky.”

Finally, in 1543, the expedition returned home, reaching Mexico in September of 1543. “About half of the original force survived.” Their reports “did nothing to encourage the belief that the northern coastal region was suitable for settlement.” Both entradas (Coronado’s and Soto’s) “set northern limits to the Spanish empire by limiting further expeditions.”

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Imperial Rivalries: Economic and Military Competition:

Key Concept 1.2.I.A:

European nations' efforts to explore and conquer the New World stemmed from a search for new sources of wealth, **economic and military competition**,²⁶ and a desire to spread Christianity.

Access to Markets

Access to markets is absolutely critical as an engine for history, and it was one of the key driving forces behind the Age of Exploration.

By the 15th century there were two areas of the world that Europeans were most interested in accessing and finding new ways to tap into their trade: Asia and Africa.

Asia possessed the trade goods that most Europeans—especially princes and merchants—wanted. Of especial value and importance were Asian spices, silks, and ceramics. If European princes and merchants could find ways to gain greater access to Asian trade, it would make them phenomenally wealthy and powerful.

By the 15th century Europeans were experiencing a substantial down-turn in access to Asian goods. During the 13th century, most of Asia had been united by the great Mongol empire, the Yuan Dynasty. Under the Mongols, Asian trade had flowed freely to Europe. The Mongols make it an impossibility for local elites to tax trade as it moved across Eurasia, or at least to tax it very much. Consequently, Europe was able to receive goods in quantities and prices that were extremely favorable.

However, the Yuan Dynasty was succeeded by the Ming

Dynasty, which was founded in 1368 (and lasted through to 1644). While Asian spices, silks, and ceramics, continued to be highly sought after in Europe, the Mongol's open trade links largely vanished. It's not to say that jars and silks don't get to Europe; they do. But once they get to Europe they are astronomically expensive, because from their production place all the way to these European markets, they had been taxed at every link of the chain. Ottoman control of the Balkans, the Bosphorous, and much of what is now Eastern Europe, created yet another barrier in terms of accessing Asian goods, because Asian goods entering Europe would go through Ottoman territory and would be taxed by the Ottomans, and the Ottomans would take many of these products for themselves and for their own markets. All this meant that Asian goods arriving in Europe were limited in supply and exorbitantly expensive.

The second big market that Europe really wants to tap into is Africa. For centuries, African elites had ensured that key commodities produced in Africa, like salt, ivory, gold, and spices, found their way to Europe. These goods traveled all the way across the desert, and by the 15th-century, passed through Ottoman-controlled territory when they got to North Africa, who levied substantial taxes on these goods.

Not only that, but most of the trade of costly goods that came out of Asia and Africa went through Italian markets

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before they were disseminated to the rest of the Europe. As a result, Italians were quite wealthy.

As a result, by the beginning of the 15th-century, ambitious (and desperate) western European monarchs and merchants were working hard to find alternative means of accessing these markets directly, as a means of circumventing the exorbitant prices and the smaller quantities that they were dealing with. To improve their access to these goods without having to go through all of these middle-men.

The best way to gain more access to these markets was by way of water, especially taking advantage of the Atlantic Ocean, which, until this time period, had always been regarded as a useless ocean that went nowhere. But they begin to rethink the Atlantic Ocean, as a solution to their access problem.

In a sense, this effort was driven by underdogs; Spain and Portugal had been very poor nations in the late Middle Ages into the Early modern Period. They faced that useless Atlantic Ocean and, due to geography, did not have the commercial opportunities that the Italian states had. As a result, they had to be more inventive, and this is why a lot of the lead in terms of global exploration was taken by Spanish and Portuguese mariners, who had to take the longer and harder or more unlikely routes to try to get to Asia.

The Bull of Donation (1493) and the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)

On his return from his first voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus landed in Lisbon, Portugal, on

March 4th, 1493. While in Lisbon, Christopher Columbus met with the Portuguese monarch, King João. During this meeting, the king informed Columbus that according to the Treaty of Alcaçovas, “which João had signed with Ferdinand and Isabella in 1479, all the lands Columbus had claimed belonged to Portugal.” In this treaty, Spain had dropped its claim to West Africa and renounced its navigation rights in African waters. Columbus’s response was that he had not visited Africa; he had visited the Indies.

On March 13th, Columbus left Portugal, arriving at the Spanish port of Palos de la Frontera two days later. Moving on to Seville, he received a letter from Ferdinand and Isabella, in which he was addressed as “Don Cristóbal Colón, Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Viceroy and Governor of the islands he has discovered in the Indies.”

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella quickly agreed to send Columbus back to Hispaniola, this time with a larger expedition, promising Columbus 10% of all profits made from the islands. They were convinced to do so, in part, by “Columbus’s glowing reports of the Indians’ gold jewelry and their supposed proximity to Asia.” More significantly, in their calculations though, were fears that the Portuguese “would soon send their own expeditions to the west.” Additionally, Ferdinand and Isabella were devout Catholics, and “vowed to convert the Indians to Christianity,” concerned that without being offered the chance to convert, thousands of Indians would spend eternity in hell.

Even before Columbus returned to Spain from his first voyage in March of 1493, having already received news of his achievement, Ferdinand and Isabella had immediately sent communications to Rome, seeking papal approval for

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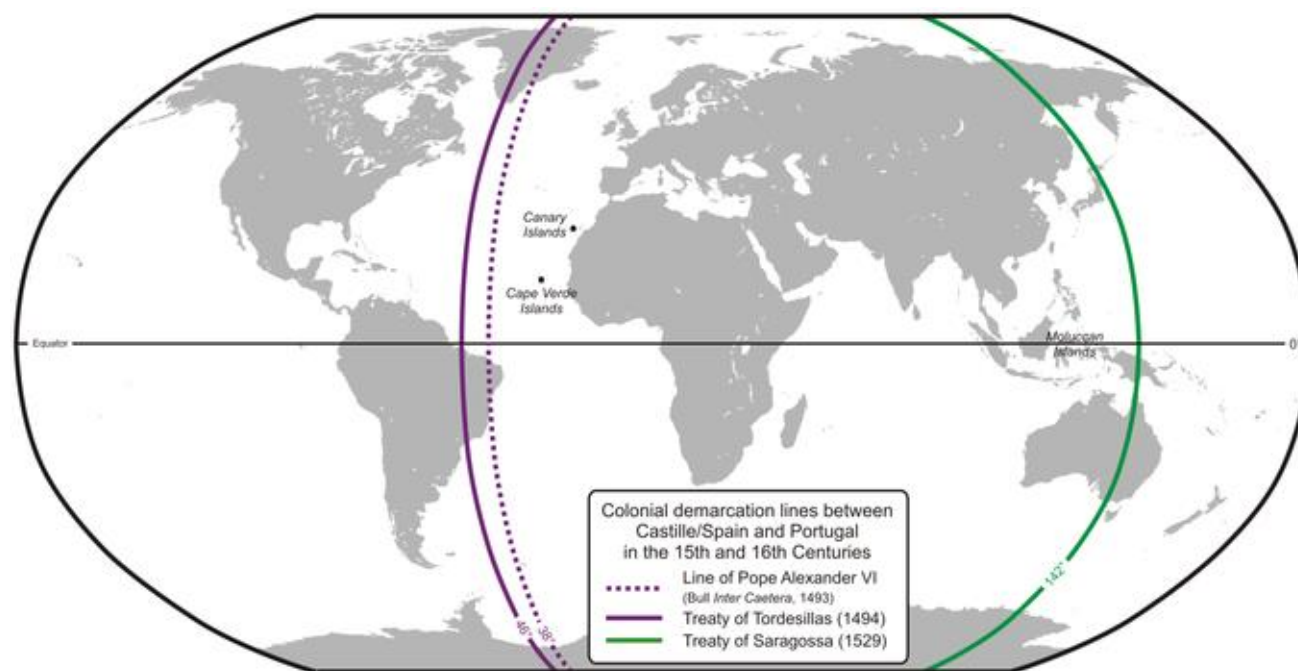
their discoveries. This led to two papal bulls, the Bull of Donation, also called *Inter Caetera*, issued by the Spanish Pope Alexander VI. The first was finalized on May 3rd, 1493, and it “authorized Spain to colonize and exploit” the lands that Columbus had discovered (despite the fact that earlier papal documents had granted Portugal sole control of newly discovered regions).

The second was issued on June 28th, but was backdated to May 4th, and was apparently in response to Portuguese protests that the first bull impinged on that kingdom’s prerogatives. The second *Inter Caetera* added to the first the famous Line of Demarcation; specifically, the Bull created a dividing line that ran from the North and South

Poles, 100 leagues west of the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands (which are off the African coast), and granted Spain “the exclusive right to acquire territorial possessions and to trade in all lands west of that line.” The Bull also forbade anyone else “to approach the lands west of the line without special license from the rulers of Spain”—effectively giving “Spain a monopoly on the lands in the New World.”

Because the Portuguese remained dissatisfied with the 1493 settlement, further negotiations took place, culminating in the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494. In this treaty, Spain and Portugal agreed (with the help, once again, of Pope Alexander VI) that the boundary line in the

Image Twenty-Two: *Inter Caetera* and the Treaty of Tordesillas



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1493 settlement be moved from 100 leagues to 370 leagues (or 1,200 nautical miles) west of the Cape Verde Islands. This line would divide the world into two respective spheres of exploration and conquest, with the Spanish receiving exclusive rights to the lands west of the demarcation line (including the New World and the Pacific Ocean), and Portugal securing the primary right of exploration and conquest to the east of the line (including the coast of Africa and the Indian Ocean).

Further exploration determined that South America bulged eastward beyond the treaty line, placing a land called Brazil in the Portuguese sphere.

These two agreements made in “the early 1490s made

sense in a Europe where the Spanish and the Portuguese were the dominant maritime players.” However, as the 16th century progressed, other European powers recognized the benefits of long-distance commerce and conquest. Some western European kingdoms refused to recognize the Treaty of Tordesillas, denying that the pope had the requisite authority to exclude them from exploring and exploiting new lands. In 1609, the Dutch jurist, Hugo Grotius, attempted to undermine the Treaty of Tordesillas in a tract he wrote entitled *Mare Liberum*, which means the Free Sea. In the tract, Grotius argued that neither the Spanish nor the Portuguese could permanently claim “territories based on a geographical line drawn through the ocean, because no one could own the sea.”

Historical Document: *Inter Caetera*, Pope Alexander VI (4 May 1493)²⁸

Alexander, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to the illustrious sovereigns, our very dear son in Christ, Ferdinand, king, and our very dear daughter in Christ, Isabella, queen of Castile, Leon, Aragon, Sicily, and Granada, health and apostolic benediction. . . .

We have indeed learned that you, who for a long time had intended to seek out and discover certain islands and mainlands remote and unknown and not hitherto discovered by others, to the end that you might bring to the worship of our Redeemer and the profession of the Catholic faith their residents and inhabitants, having been up to the present time greatly engaged in the siege and recovery of the kingdom itself of Granada were unable to accomplish this holy and praiseworthy purpose; but the said kingdom having at length been regained, . . . you, with the wish to fulfill your desire, chose our beloved son, Christopher Columbus, a man assuredly worthy and of the highest recommendations and fitted for so great an undertaking, whom you furnished with ships and men equipped for like designs, . . . to make diligent quest for these remote and unknown mainlands and islands through the sea, where hitherto no one had sailed; and they at length, with divine aid and with the utmost diligence sailing in the ocean sea, discovered certain very remote islands and even mainlands that hitherto had not been discovered by others; wherein dwell very many peoples living in peace, and, as reported, going unclothed and not eating flesh.

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Historical Document: *Inter Caetera*, Pope Alexander VI (4 May 1493), Continued

Wherefore, as becomes Catholic kings and princes, after earnest consideration of all matters, especially of the rise and spread of the Catholic faith, . . . you have purposed with the favor of divine clemency to bring under your sway the said mainlands and islands with their residents and inhabitants and to bring them to the Catholic faith. . . .

And, in order that you may enter upon so great an undertaking with greater readiness and heartiness endowed with benefit of our apostolic favor, we, of our own accord, . . . out of our own sole largess and certain knowledge and out of the fullness of our apostolic power, by the authority of Almighty God conferred upon us in blessed Peter and of the vicarship of Jesus Christ, which we hold on earth, do by tenor of these presents, should any of said islands have been found by your envoys and captains, give, grant, and assign to you and your heirs and successors, kings of Castile and Leon, forever, together with all their dominions, cities, camps, places, and villages, and all rights, jurisdictions, and appurtenances, all islands and mainlands found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered towards the west and south, by drawing and establishing a line from the Arctic pole, namely the north, to the Antarctic pole, namely the south, no matter whether the said mainlands and islands are found and to be found in the direction of India or towards any other quarter, the said line to be distant one hundred leagues towards the west and south from any of the islands commonly known as the Azores and Cape Verde.

With this proviso however that none of the islands and mainlands, found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered, beyond that said line towards the west and south, be in the actual possession of any Christian king or prince up to the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ just past from which the present year [1493] begins. . . .

Furthermore, under penalty of excommunication, . . . should anyone thus contravene, we strictly forbid all persons of whatsoever rank, even imperial and royal, or of whatsoever estate, degree, order, or condition, to dare without your special permit or that of your aforesaid heirs and successors, to go for the purpose of trade or any other reason to the islands or mainlands, found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered, towards the west and south, by drawing and establishing a line from the Arctic pole to the Antarctic pole, no matter whether the mainlands and islands, found and to be found, lie in the direction of India or toward any other quarter whatsoever, the said line to be distant one hundred leagues towards the west and south, as is aforesaid, from any of the islands commonly known as the Azores and Cape Verde; apostolic constitutions and ordinances and other decrees whatsoever to the contrary notwithstanding. .

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“Accessing” Spanish Gold and Silver

Not surprisingly, Spanish silver drew the attention of other western European nations. Europeans were enamored with Chinese goods. The tea that they liked to drink came from China, as did the porcelain in which they served the tea, as well as the silk worn by the people drinking the tea. But this tea, porcelain, and silk had to be paid for. The problem that European merchants faced was that despite Europe’s consumer demand for Chinese goods, because Europe was still a poor and backward corner of Eurasia compared with the rich economies and civilizations of Europe, Europe really had no products that the Chinese wanted to buy or trade for. In fact, Europe would not get a product that China really desired until the 1700s when Captain Cook discovered that the Chinese loved the pelts from sea otters living in the Pacific Northwest.

But China did want American silver. A 14th-century guidebook for Italian merchants in the East explained that there was no point in taking anything to China except silver.

In the early 16th-century silver had been made “China’s official means of exchange,” and all taxes paid to the Chinese government were expected to be paid in silver. Initially, China had gotten the silver it needed from Japan. However, China’s large population, which made up a quarter of the world’s total population, made it impossible for Japan to supply as much silver as China needed. As a result, silver was absolutely necessary for nations hoping to trade with China, meaning that any European government wishing to trade with Asia would have to find

a significant source of silver. The answer to China’s demand for silver was found across the Pacific Ocean with “the apparently inexhaustible supply at Potosí and in Mexico.”

Additionally, Europeans understood American silver could be used for both diplomatic and military purposes: “silver could be used to build ships, to pay soldiers [and] to back paper money,” and it “could be used to buy the assistance of allies and the services of soldiers.”

Finally, American silver could be used to address western Europe’s trade imbalance with nations in the Baltic and the Levant. The Baltic region supplied western Europeans with a variety of commodities, including “grain, lumber, hemp, flax, tallow, wax, bar iron, leather, skins, furs, and potash. For a naval power such as Britain, Norwegian timber, Swedish tar, and Russian hemp proved indispensable for the masts and ropes needed by” her fleet, and British efforts to obtain these supplies from her own colonies in North America had largely failed. Because Britain was unable to “sell enough of its own products to cover its purchases of Baltic commodities,” large quantities of Britain’s bullion had to be used to pay the Baltic for these goods.

If Spanish American silver offered the obvious answer to European statesmen and merchants, the question was how European nations could obtain it? “The quickest way to obtain American wealth was to steal it on the high seas after the Spanish had conveniently mined and packaged the gold and silver and loaded it onto ships.” Spanish galleons carrying American or Asian riches across the Pacific Ocean attracted “the avid attention of” pirates, privateers and state navies. So did “the great fleets that

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Carried all kinds of treasure, especially gold and silver, in convoy from Havana to Seville every summer.”

An important distinction must be made between piracy and privateering. Piracy has historically been defined as unsanctioned plunder of vessels on the high seas, along with the related crimes of kidnapping, extortion, and ransoming of captives. In some instances, unsanctioned pillage of land targets like port towns from these vessels has also been defined as piracy.

Privateering, called corsairing in the 16th and 17th centuries, consisted of sanctioned raiding by private individuals and commercial associations, almost always during wartime. Privateers were privately outfitted sea raiders whose aim was to take profit by capturing commercial vessels flying the flag of declared enemies; a few went after land targets. To be legal, privateering required a letter of marque and reprisal, usually signed by a monarch but at times issued by local governors and other lesser officials. Officially, letters of marque were supposed to be issued to shipowners who had been ravaged by ships from other nations, and thus suffered monetary losses. With this license in hand, the ship-owners were permitted “to attack ships from the nation that had violated their rights” to recover the amount lost. In exchange for the letter of marque, crown officials received a portion of booty taken. In the case of the English, the crown got one-fifth of any plunder taken on such missions.

The line between piracy and privateering could easily be crossed, and many acts of piracy were committed under false pretenses against non-enemies and during peace time. Individuals adept at capturing and plundering ships were likely to act as both pirates and privateers in the course of their careers, as happened with famous figures such as Francis Drake, Henry Morgan, and William Kidd. To encourage these attacks on Spanish ships, the Dutch, English, and French monarchs, not yet wielding substantial navies, “encouraged private investors to send armed ships to attack and plunder” Spanish ships. In reality, privateering was state-sanctioned piracy.

Much of the Gold that Cortés took from the Aztecs in 1523 was taken by French pirates operating in the Atlantic Ocean. A few decades later, in the 1550s, French pirates in the Caribbean plundered and burned Havana, the great port of Cuba. “During the 1580s and 1590s, the English succeeded the French as the leading predators upon the ships and seaports of New Spain,” and maritime attackers affiliated informally, semi-formally, or formally with England succeeded in taking Manila Galleons on four separate occasions before 1800: in 1587, 1709, 1743, and 1762. Granted, this means that vessels in the Manila-Galleon trade were only “taken in four out of the 250 years the trade existed, or in only 1.6 percent of the years in which vessels were at risk.” But keep in mind that “attacks on the galleons represented” only one kind of threat, as other Spanish vessels were attacked, as well as Spanish settlements on both sides of the Pacific Ocean.

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Image Twenty-Three: Scene of Naval Warfare and an Attack By Pirates on a Town



(On May 1, 1669, Captain Henry Morgan sailed a ship purposely set alight into the flagship of the Spanish admiral in the harbor of the town of Maracaibo in present-day Venezuela, causing it to sink. Another ship was scuttled by the Spaniards to keep it from being taken by Morgan's men. A third Spanish ship was captured by the pirates.²⁹

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Spain Expels French Huguenots from Florida and Revive Their Interest in North America (1560s)

The discoveries made by Spain's first American generations were staggering! Their discoveries and conquests in the Central American Isthmus, the Straits of Magellan, Peru, and Mexico generated "quantities of wealth and degrees of status unattainable and almost inconceivable in Europe." But later Spanish explorers who moved into what is now northern Mexico and the United States did not find anything in the north comparable to the empires and the wealth of the Aztecs and the Incas. "The expensive and destructive fiascos of Soto and Coronado . . . discredited conquistador expeditions and dissipated Spanish interest in northern lands." These disappointments to the north "reduced the incentive for future [Spanish] explorers to push into remaining unknown areas" in the north. Despite their lack of interest, Spain continued to use the terms of the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 to claim all of North America.

However, despite their early disappointments, Spain's interest to the north—especially in the region they called La Florida—was revived in the 1560s, as it became ever more clear that the north was strategically vital to Spain's efforts to protect her "treasures produced in Mexico."

Through the mid-16th century, the French were the predominant predator of Spanish gold and silver on the high seas. While the English, French, and Dutch had been content so far to intermittently plunder Spanish shipping or colonial towns, they steadily realized that if they were to "enjoy a steady and enduring share in the trade riches of the Americas," they had to get colonies of their own. In these colonies they could profit by mining their own gold

and silver, or by harvesting various tropical and semitropical cash crops that "had a high market value" because they couldn't grow in the temperate climate of Europe. But the appeal of plundering Spanish treasures still remained strong. So when France, decided to settle the New World, they audaciously set their eyes "in or near the Caribbean," on parts of the American coast like Florida that the Spanish claimed, but had not settled. While they hoped that Florida's subtropical climate "would permit the development of valuable sugar plantations," the French also hoped that its proximity to their rival's American empire would facilitate continued raids on Spanish ships and ports.

In light of France's growing interest in North America in the 1550s, in 1557 Spain decided "to establish a chain of Spanish settlements," starting in Florida and "running as far north as the Point of Santa Elena on today's Parris Island, South Carolina." Two years later, during peace negotiations between the French and Spanish, "the French refused to accept any prohibition on their ships' sailing to areas other than those under Spanish occupation." This French refusal prompted Philip II of Spain to order "the immediate establishment of a Spanish colony at Santa Elena," which was intended to "ward off any French attempt to colonize the Florida peninsula."

But as the Spanish made preparations to occupy Florida, they discovered that the French Admiral Gaspard de Coligny had approved an expedition to Florida by French Huguenots (French Protestants). This expedition was led by Jean Ribaut, and landed in Florida in 1562. There the French built two forts from which they could prey on Spanish shipping: Fort Caroline, which is near modern-day Saint Augustine, and Charlesfort, which is near Port Royal, South Carolina.

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Image Twenty-Four: Fort Caroline, shaped like an arrow, is shown on a river



Decorative elements: ships in the harbor, men in boats fishing with nets, oxen carts, Native Americans, dwellings, cannons, and domestic animals.³⁰

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In 1565, Jean Ribaut learned that the Spanish Adelantado Pedro Menéndez de Avilés had been charged with removing the French and erecting “a permanent military and civilian establishment” in Florida.

Believing “that the French were better off meeting the Spanish at sea,” Jean Ribaut took his fleet out and attempted to find the Spanish ships. Unfortunately, his fleet was hit by a storm that “dispersed the flotilla” and shipwrecked many of the French ships. Meanwhile, On September 20th, 1565, Menéndez and his five hundred soldiers “easily subdued the French fort” at Caroline “and hanged its inhabitants.” Some local Indians that the French had angered led the Spanish to where the shipwrecked French parties lay in hiding. Their hiding place now revealed, and recognizing that they were in an especially difficult position, the shipwrecked Frenchmen determined that they should surrender to the Spanish. The Spanish, who were actually outnumbered by the French contingent, “insisted that the French submit in small parties.” While the Spanish promised no terms to the surviving French Huguenots, the understanding seems to have been that the French would be treated as prisoners of war. But when the Spanish learned that their captives were “heretical” Protestants, they tied them up and proceeded to stab the defenseless French to death. All told, “nearly three hundred French died in the two massacres.” In justifying this brutality to the king, Menéndez claimed that “the French had been spreading ‘the odious Lutheran doctrine in these Provinces and that I had [to make] war [with] fire and blood . . . against all those who come to sow this hateful doctrine.’” Still, Menéndez did spare sixteen of the Huguenots “whose special skills he required.”

After driving out the French from Florida, Menéndez built

Image Twenty-Five: View of Saint Augustine in Florida



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San Agustin (St. Augustine), a fortified city on the coast of Florida, about forty miles south of the former French fort, Fort Caroline. Menéndez also built seven additional posts along the Gulf and the Atlantic coasts, the most significant of those seven posts being Santa Elena in present-day South Carolina. These additional posts were supposed to “intimidate the Indians and watch for pirates.”

However, most of these “small Spanish posts and missions in greater Florida . . . succumbed to either French or Indian attack.” And collectively, the Florida posts and missions generated virtually no revenue, with no silver mines discovered that could offset the expenses of running a colony. By the time Menéndez died in 1574, Spanish Florida had been reduced to two forts, San Agustin and Santa Elena. In 1587, out of concern that Santa Elena would be attacked by the English, “the Spanish evacuated and destroyed Santa Elena, withdrawing the colonists to San Agustin, which became the sole Spanish settlement in Florida.”

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After their expulsion from Florida, the French abandoned their efforts to colonize the southern reaches of North America, and ultimately moved as far away from New

Spain as they could while still being in North America, and still possessing the ability to exploit the abundant opportunities for profit in North America.

Historical Document: (Spanish) Francisco López de Mendoza Grajales Chaplain of the Expedition

Excerpts of his “Memoir of the Happy Result and Prosperous Voyage of the Fleet Commanded by the Illustrious Capt.-General Pedro Menéndez de Avilés”³²

We concealed ourselves in a hollow between the sand-hills, with the Indians who were with us; and when it became light, we saw a great many of the enemy go down to the river to get shell-fish for food. Soon after, we saw a flag hoisted, as a war-signal. Our general, who was observing all that, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, said to us, “I intend to change these clothes for those of a sailor, and take a Frenchman with me (one of those whom we had brought with us from Spain), and we will go and talk with these Frenchmen. Perhaps they are without supplies, and would be glad to surrender without fighting.” He had scarcely finished speaking, before he put his plan into execution. As soon as he had called to them, one of them swam towards and spoke to him, told him of their having been shipwrecked, and the distress they were in; that they had not eaten bread for eight or ten days; and, what is more, stated that all, or at least the greater part of them, were Lutherans. Immediately the general sent him back to his countrymen, to say they must surrender, and give up their arms, or he would put them all to death. A French gentleman, who was a sergeant, brought back the reply that they would surrender, on condition their lives should be spared. “After having parleyed a long time, our brave captain-general answered, “that he would make no promises; that they must surrender unconditionally, and lay down their arms; because if he spared their lives, he wanted them to be grateful for it; and if they were put to death, that there should be no cause for complaint.” Seeing that there was nothing else left for them to do, the sergeant returned to the camp; and soon after he brought all their arms and flags, and gave them up to the general, and surrendered unconditionally. Finding they were all Lutherans, the captain-general ordered them all to be put to death; but as I was a priest, and had bowels of mercy, I begged him to grant me the favor of sparing those whom we might find to be Christians. He granted it; and I made investigations, and found ten or twelve of the men Roman Catholics, whom we brought back. All the others were executed, because they were Lutherans and enemies of our Holy Catholic faith. All this took place on Saturday (St. Michael’s Day), September 29, 1565.

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The English Attempt to Settle Roanoke (1584-1586)

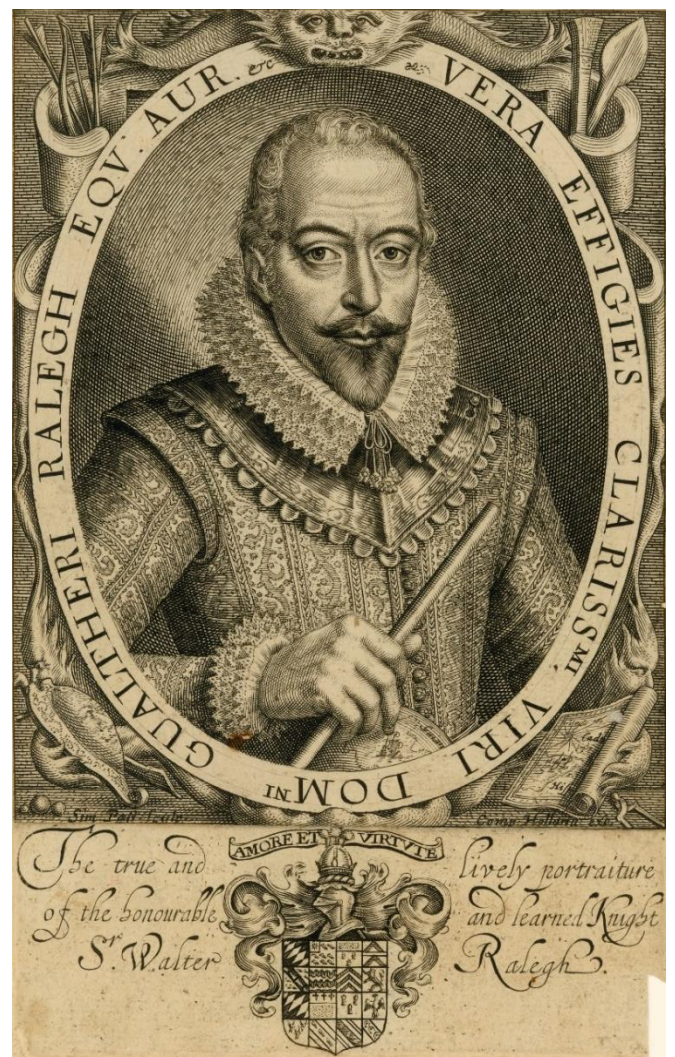
Because Queen Elizabeth's England was relatively small and poor, she "lacked the means to finance and govern an over-seas colony." As a result, she subcontracted colonization by "issuing licenses and monopolies to private adventurers, who assumed the risks in speculative pursuit of profits."

England's earliest colonial promoters "were dreamers and gamblers," with visionary imaginations. The prime movers amongst these promoters were "zealous English patriots and devout Protestants" known as the "West Countrymen," since they were well-connected within the royal court and came from the southwestern counties of England. Among them were "Sir Francis Drake, Sir Richard Grenville, Sir John Hawkins, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Humphrey Gilbert." From this group, Sir Walter Raleigh would dominate the first phase of English settlement in the New World, from 1585 to 1603. His attempts to create settlements in Roanoke from 1584-1586 served as the "prelude to the English intrusion into the Chesapeake Bay in 1607."

The West Countrymen "enticed their audiences with portrayals of the fantastic wealth to be gotten through colonization, lacing their tracts with luscious images of almost unimaginable riches." These pamphlets were designed "to motivate English men and women to cross the ocean."

Beginning as early as the 1570s, with the travel accounts of the Hakluyt cousins (Richard the Elder, and Richard the Younger), several key arguments began to be used in

Image Twenty-Six: Portrait of Sir Walter Raleigh



It's in an ornamental frame with weapons, a map of Canada and Hispaniola, and a golden sun. Decorative elements include Raleigh's coat of arms, hemisphere with a ship, and Guiana.³³

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support of English colonization in North America. The Hakluyts argued) that “settlements in North America would enable the English to spread Protestantism to America’s Indians,” and “find a water route to Asia.”

Sir Walter Raleigh meanwhile, proposed creating an English settlement on Roanoke Island, on the outer banks of present-day North Carolina. The failure of the Spaniards to establish permanent settlements north of Santa Elena made this part of the east Atlantic coast of America a potentially viable area for an English colonial venture. While Spain might claim possession, the nearest Spanish settlements were far away, and the Spanish Crown had failed to make good its territorial claims.

When Sir Walter Raleigh chose Roanoke Island as the site for his proposed English colony, he made three primary arguments for the plan: (1) the creation of a base to attack Spain’s empire of the Indies and the Spanish silver fleets; (2) the search for raw materials and mineral wealth and for new markets for English commodities; (3) and the desire to spread the “true” Gospel message.

(1) The desire for a base for attacks on Spain’s empire of the Indies and the Spanish silver fleets

Colonial promoters like the West Countrymen were bent on expanding the number of privateering voyages meant to rob Spanish ships of their cargoes of gold and silver. Sir Walter Raleigh “called for the English to attack Spain in the New World in order to weaken” Spain. Roanoke, located as it was on the outer banks of present-day North Carolina, towards the southern part of North America’s eastern seaboard, was viewed as an ideal privateering base from which to launch these attacks on Spain’s American empire and silver fleets.

(2) The search for raw materials and mineral wealth and for new markets for English commodities

In addition to finding a water route to the Pacific Ocean, Sir Walter Raleigh hoped to find precious minerals in Roanoke or its surrounding areas. If the Spanish had been able to plunder the wealth of the Aztecs and the Incas, “then why couldn’t the English?” Also, it was hoped that Roanoke would help England develop a fantastically wealthy commercial empire similar to that of the Dutch. In the 1570s and 1580s, “English economic essayists became infatuated with the experience of the Dutch,” who, despite its lack of “great natural advantages” had managed to create a wealthy commercial empire. Roanoke would serve as a center of English trade and commerce.

(3) The desire to spread the “true” Gospel message.

For the English, there was a religious aspect to this rivalry with the Iberian nations. According to the English, if they were able to discover a northerly route to Asia, it would prove that God favored the Reformation, and that he would reward those nations who chose to break away from Rome and the Roman Catholic Church. The religious strife in post-Reformation Europe was clearly present as Protestant European nations acted out their desire “to establish claims in new territories so that they could prevent the spread” of Roman Catholicism.”

Colonization of America also provided Protestant England a chance to contrast Catholic brutality to the Native Americans with Protestant benevolence. The English proposed that in America, they would not use the same brutal tactics that the Spanish had employed against Native Americans. Bear in mind that Bartolomé de Las

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Casas's exposé (see Period One, Topic 5) on Spanish abuse of Native Americans "appeared in London in an English edition" in 1583, just one year prior to when the first England settlers would land on the outer banks of modern-day North Carolina. Las Casas's writings told a story of Spanish conquest "so violent and stomach-churning that any reasonable reader would recoil from the savage tactics employed by the invaders." These actions, Protestant English promoters were keen to point out, were carried out by Catholics, "the logical result of a degenerate form of Christianity." The promoters suggested that the English would rather civilize and convert Americans to Protestant Christianity than kill them. Whereas "the Spanish were uniquely brutal colonizers," the English were, by nature, faire and loving," and would "cover their naked miseries, with civill use of foode, and cloathing, and to traine them by gentle means, to those manual artes and skill, which they so much affect, and doe admire to see in us."

In 1584, Sir Walter Raleigh was granted a royal patent to settle any part of North America not already claimed by a Christian power. In the spring of 1584, Sir Walter Raleigh sent Philip Amadas on a reconnaissance expedition to the coast of North Carolina, during which Roanoke Island was identified as the preferred location for a settlement. According to Arthur Barlowe, an associate of Raleigh's who accompanied Amadas in 1584, "North America was a paradise, abundant with natural resources; the land itself seemed to invite colonization"; "the earth bringeth forth all things in abundance as in the first creation, without toil or labor."

In April of 1585, Sir Walter Raleigh sent a fleet of seven ships and 600 people to Roanoke Island to create a settlement. Of the 600 sent out, 108 were left on Roanoke.

While Roanoke Island had been selected primarily because it was believed that it would provide a secure privateering base, the island proved unsuitable for privateering, as its shallow waters, shoals, and sands "made it difficult for English ships to land supplies or to load commodities."

The island's sandy, infertile soil was also not conducive to the agriculture needed to sustain a permanent population. The colonists, though, expected the local Algonquian Indians to feed them. The local Indians had initially been hospitable to the newly-arrived English, but they quickly ran out of patience as the English demanded more and more maize over the winter, until the "native supply ran perilously low." When Wingina, the local chieftain, refused to give the English any more food in the spring of 1586, Ralph Lane led the English against the Indians, killing both Wingina and his deputy chief. Instead, the Indians departed, removing the prospect of growing new crops for the English to commandeer.

With no new supplies coming to Roanoke Island from England, and with no prospect of further Indian assistance, most of the colonists happily abandoned their settlement in 1586 when Sir Francis Drake, stopped by and "offered to let them hitch a ride back to England." Fifteen of the settlers did remain behind.

Despite the setbacks of 1585-1586, "Raleigh pressed on with plans to dispatch another expedition in 1587." Rather than Roanoke Island, this new settlement would be established to the north in Chesapeake Bay, and was to be led by John White. This site was more suitable than Roanoke Island because it's land was more fertile, it had a deepwater harbor and navigable waterways, and less alienated Indians.

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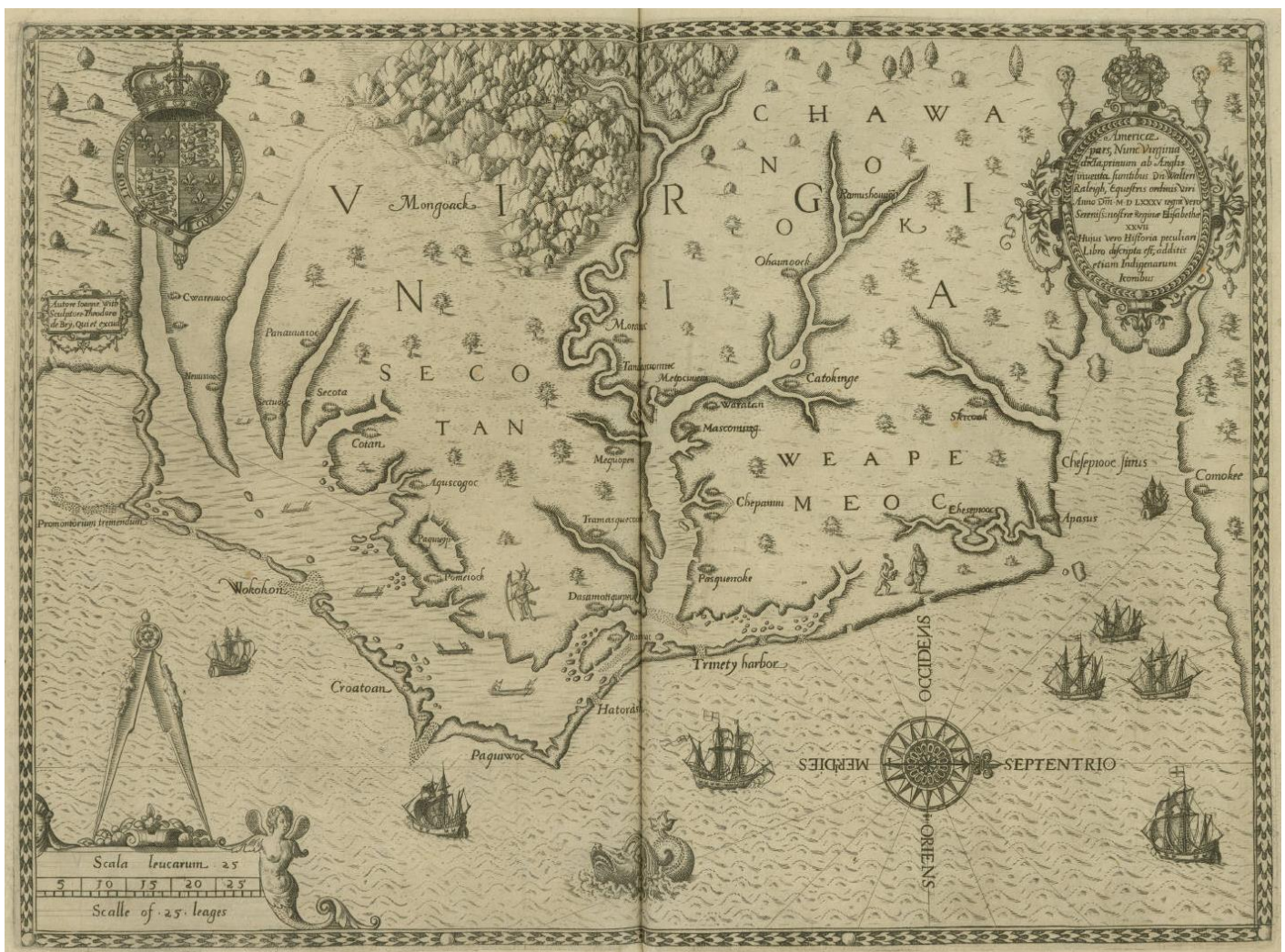
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Image Twenty-Seven: A map of the coast of Virginia and present-day North Carolina (from Chesapeake Bay to Cape Lookout)



With names of Native American villages given in Algonquian. Also included is the royal arms of England, as well as the Raleigh family coat of arms. It is the most accurate map of North America done in the sixteenth century. It shows the first printed use of the name Chesapeake, and the second use of Roanoke. Theodor De Bry (1590)³⁴

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The expedition left in April of 1587, and consisted of 118 men, women, and children. However, they never made it to the Chesapeake, as the mariners manning the ships dropped 94 colonists “off at Roanoke Island and refused to take them any farther.” (The mariners were eager to begin a new season of privateering in the Caribbean.) The former settlement at Roanoke was “overgrown and dilapidated,” and the only sign of the 15 colonists who had been left behind was the “bones of one.” John White led a punitive raid against the Roanoke Indians, but found and attacked Croatan Indians instead.

John White spent six weeks on Roanoke Island, but at the end of August returned to England so that he could raise

funds for the colony as well as pick up more supplies. However, John White was unable to return to Roanoke Island quickly because of the struggle against the Spanish Armada between 1588 and 1590. When John White was finally able to return to Roanoke Island three years later, all of the colonists had mysteriously disappeared, with no trace “of attack by either the Indians or the Spanish.” The lone clue left behind in 1590 was the word “Croatoan,” which was carved into a tree. Croatoan was the name of a nearby island, “but the fearful and impatient English mariners refused to venture through the dangerously shallow waters to Croatoan to investigate.” “Raleigh’s plans had come to nothing, and the first sustained English attempt to establish an American colony had failed.”

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A Desire to Spread Christianity:

Key Concept 1.2.I.A:

European nations' efforts to explore and conquer the New World stemmed from a search for new sources of wealth, economic and military competition, and [a desire to spread Christianity](#).³⁵

Christopher Columbus's Religious Motivations

A devout and militant Catholic, Columbus drew upon the Bible for his geographic theories, and was inspired not only to reach the riches of East Asia, but also to convert Asians to Christianity, with the goal of recruiting Asian soldiers and wealth "in a final crusade to crush Islam and reclaim Jerusalem." Columbus believed that such a victory would initiate the millennium—the thousand-year reign of Christ here on earth.

When Columbus first landed in the New World, he insisted that the inhabitants he encountered (the Taino) were "Indians." Columbus described his initial view of the natives he encountered from the publications of the letter that he sent to Ferdinand and Isabella in March 1493, immediately upon his return to Europe after his first voyage. Columbus's letter was published in Barcelona soon after he sent it, and it became an instant bestseller. In the letter, "Columbus portrayed the Caribbean Indians as peaceful, timid, and eager to part with their possessions while wanting nothing, or almost nothing, in return." Columbus intentionally stressed the fact that the Indians he encountered were naked. He did not draw negative conclusions from their

nakedness; rather, Columbus took the fact that they were naked as a sign that the Indians were untainted by either the accomplishments or the corruptions that came with civilization. In a sense, they were "innocent, unwarlike creatures, uncorrupted by material greed." So naturally good and innocent were the Indians that they could serve as a moral example to wicked Christians.

In addition to pointing out their nakedness, Columbus made repeated comparisons between the natives he encountered and the peoples of the Canary Islands and the blacks of Africa; at the same time, he contrasted them from the monstrous human-like races that Europeans (at least in popular culture) believed inhabited unexplored parts of the earth. Columbus used these comparisons to argue that the natives he had come across were not monsters, but were fully human, possessing both rationality and physical normalcy. Being fully human, they were potential converts to Christianity. He expressed this very idea on October 12th, 1492, the very first day he came across the Taino, writing in his journal that "the people are ingenious, and would be good servants; and I am of the opinion that they would very readily become Christians, as they appear to have no religion. They very quickly learn such words as are spoken to them."

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Historical Document: Christopher Columbus, First Landing of Columbus on the Shores of the New World (14 March 1493)³⁶

A Letter addressed to the noble Lord Raphael Sanchez, Treasurer to their most invincible Majesties, Ferdinand and Isabella, King and Queen of Spain, by Christopher Columbus

... In that island also which ... we name Española. ... The inhabitants of both sexes in this island, and in all the others which I have seen, or of which I have received information, go always naked as they were born, with the exception of some of the women, who use the covering of a leaf, or small bough, or an apron of cotton which they prepare for that purpose.

None of them ... are possessed of any iron, neither have they weapons, being unacquainted with, and indeed incompetent to use them, not from any deformity of body (for they are well-formed), but because they are timid and full of fear. ... As soon however as they see that they are safe, and have laid aside all fear, they are very simple and honest, and exceedingly liberal with all they have; none of them refusing anything he may possess when he is asked for it, but on the contrary inviting us to ask them. They exhibit great love towards all others in preference to themselves: they also give objects of great value for trifles, and content themselves with very little or nothing in return.

... [F]or things of more trifling value offered by our men, especially newly coined blancas, or any gold coins, the Indians would give whatever the seller required; as, for instance, an ounce and a half or two ounces of gold, or thirty or forty pounds of cotton, with which commodity they were already acquainted. Thus they bartered, like idiots, cotton and gold for fragments of bows, glasses, bottles, and jars; which I forbade as being unjust, and myself gave them many beautiful and acceptable articles which I had brought with me, taking nothing from them in return; I did this in order that I might the more easily conciliate them, that they might be led to become Christians, and be inclined to entertain a regard for the King and Queen, our Princes and all Spaniards. ... They practice no kind of idolatry, but have a firm belief that all strength and power, and indeed all good things, are in heaven, and that I had descended from thence with these ships and sailors, and under this impression was I received after they had thrown aside their fears.

Nor are they slow or stupid, but of very clear understanding; and those men who have crossed to the neighboring islands give an admirable description of everything they observed; but they never saw any people clothed, nor any ships like ours. ...

In all these islands there is no difference of physiognomy, of manners, or of language, but they all clearly understand each other, a circumstance very propitious for the realization of what I conceive to be the principal wish of our most serene King, namely, the conversion of these people to the holy faith of Christ, to which indeed, as far as I can judge, they are very favorable and well-disposed.

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A Desire to Spread Christianity, Continued:

Inter Caetera / The Bull of Donation (4 May 1493)

Pope Alexander VI's Bull of Donation of May 1493 introduced what has been called the "Doctrine of Discovery," when it stated that any lands that were not inhabited by Christians were available to be "discovered," claimed, and exploited by Christian rulers. It went further, declaring that "the Catholic faith and the Christian

religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself." In other words, the Spanish monarchs "were charged with the Christianization of the peoples of these newly discovered lands." The Spanish crown took this obligation seriously, although this charge was inconsistently carried out.

Historical Document: "*Inter Caetera*" Pope Alexander VI (4 May 1493)³⁷

Alexander, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to the illustrious sovereigns, our very dear son in Christ, Ferdinand, king, and our very dear daughter in Christ, Isabella, queen. . . .

Among other works well pleasing to the Divine Majesty and cherished of our heart, this assuredly ranks highest, that in our times especially the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself.

. . . . Moreover, as your aforesaid envoys are of opinion, these very peoples living in the said islands and countries [discovered by Christopher Columbus] believe in one God, the Creator in heaven, and seem sufficiently disposed to embrace the Catholic faith and be trained in good morals. And it is hoped that, were they instructed, the name of the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, would easily be introduced into the said countries and islands.

. . . . Wherefore, as becomes Catholic kings and princes, . . . you have purposed with the favor of divine clemency to bring under your sway the said mainlands and islands with their residents and inhabitants and to bring them to the Catholic faith.

Hence, heartily commending in the Lord this your holy and praiseworthy purpose, and desirous that it be duly accomplished, and that the name of our Savior be carried into those regions, we exhort you very earnestly in the Lord . . . that inasmuch as with eager zeal for the true faith you design to equip and despatch this expedition, you purpose also, as is your duty, to lead the peoples dwelling in those islands and countries to embrace the Christian religion; nor at any time let dangers or hardships deter you therefrom. . . .

Moreover we command you in virtue of holy obedience that, employing all due diligence . . . you should appoint to the aforesaid mainlands and islands worthy, God-fearing, learned, skilled, and experienced men, in order to instruct the aforesaid inhabitants and residents in the Catholic faith and train them in good morals. . . .

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A Desire to Spread Christianity, Continued:

The Requerimiento (1513)

Pope Alexander's papal bull, *Inter Caetera*, asserted that the conquest of the Americas "must be an evangelistic mission." One response to this charge was the now-infamous 1513 *Requerimiento*, a document that was probably written by the Spanish jurist, jurist Juan López de Palacios Rubios. This document was to be read to Indians, explaining their rights, especially, that "they had the right to serve the one true God and his vassals on earth the monarchs of Spain. Should they accept this right, all would be well, and no harm would befall them. However, should they refuse or delay in their reply, war would be waged upon them, and they would be enslaved, their lands taken." Witnesses had to be present when this document was read, and a notary provided that certified in writing that that the *requerimiento* had indeed been read, and that it had been ignored by the Indians, thus justifying any resulting deaths and destruction.

Theoretically, the document was supposed to be read to the Indians through interpreters so that they would have the opportunity to submit peacefully and avoid conquest and enslavement. If they failed to do so, then the war against them would be just.

Conquistadores often ignored the spirit of the law, while

technically carrying out the letter of the law. We have reports of conquistadores whispering the words of the *Requerimiento* in the general direction "of a sleeping village in the wee hours" of the morning, or shouting the words of the document into a forest before entering it.

Bartolomé Las Casas, the great advocate for Native American rights, said that when he read the *requerimiento* for the first time, he did not know whether to laugh or cry. Most Spaniards laughed. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo recounted how, during an expedition to South America in 1514 led by Pedrarias Dávila, the Spaniards came up on an empty village, where they were later attacked by Indians:

I should have preferred to have the requirement explained to the Indians first, but no effort was made to do so, apparently because it was considered superfluous or inappropriate. And just as our general on this expedition failed to carry out this pious proceeding with the Indians, as he was supposed to do before attacking them, the captains of many later expeditions also neglected the procedure and did even worse things. . . . Later, in 1516, I asked Doctor Palacios Rubios . . . if the consciences of the Christians were satisfied with the requirement and he said yes, if it were done as the proclamation required. But I recall that he often laughed when I told him of that campaign and of others that various captains later made.

Juan López de Palacios Rubios, *Requerimiento* (1513)³⁸

. . . . One of these Pontiffs [*popes*] who succeeded that St. Peter as Lord of the world . . . made donation of these isles and Tierra-firme to the aforesaid King and Queen and to their successors, our lords [*Inter Caetera*, 4 May 1493], with all that there are in these territories, as is contained in certain writings which passed upon the subject as aforesaid. . . .

So their Highnesses are kings and lords of these islands and land of Tierra-firme by virtue of

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this donation: and some islands, and indeed almost all those to whom this has been notified, have received and served their Highnesses, as lords and kings, in the way that subjects ought to do, with good will, without any resistance, immediately, without delay, when they were informed of the aforesaid facts.

And also they received and obeyed the priests whom their Highnesses sent to preach to them and to teach them our Holy Faith; and all these, of their own free will, without any reward or condition, have become Christians, and are so, and their Highnesses have joyfully and benignantly received them, and also have commanded them to be treated as their subjects and vassals; and you too are held and obliged to do the same.

Wherefore, as best we can, we ask and require you that you consider what we have said to you, and that you take the time that shall be necessary to understand and deliberate upon it, and that you acknowledge the Church as the Ruler and Superior of the whole world, and the high priest called Pope, and in his name the King and Queen Doña Juana our lords, in his place, as superiors and lords and kings of these islands and this Tierra-firme by virtue of the said donation, and that you consent and give place that these religious fathers should declare and preach to you the aforesaid.

If you do so, you will do well, and that which you are obliged to do to their Highnesses, and we in their name shall receive you in all love and charity, and shall leave you, your wives, and your children, and your lands, free without servitude, that you may do with them and with yourselves freely that which you like and think best, and they shall not compel you to turn Christians, unless you yourselves, when informed of the truth, should wish to be converted to our Holy Catholic Faith, as almost all the inhabitants of the rest of the islands have done. And, besides this, their Highnesses award you many privileges and exemptions and will grant you many benefits.

But, if you do not do this, and maliciously make delay in it, I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country, and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their Highnesses; we shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord, and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us. And that we have said this to you and made this Requisition, we request the notary here present to give us his testimony in writing, and we ask the rest who are present that they should be witnesses of this Requisition.

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A Desire to Spread Christianity, Continued:

The Encomienda System

The original form of missionary activity in New Spain was the *encomienda* system. The *encomienda* was a grant of Indians to a Spaniard in return for his services to the crown. Similar to (but not the same as) a feudal relationship, this grant came with two rights, and two obligations. The *encomendero*, the possessor of the grant, had the right to tribute and free labor from his Native Americans, while he was obligated to provide military service during times of emergency, as well as to build a church and provide a priest to the Indians. So while the Indians were supposed to provide the *encomendero* with labor and tribute, the *encomendero* was responsible for defending his Indians against attacks from other Indians, as well as converting his Indians to Christianity—by building them a church and providing them with a priest.

While the *encomienda* system is a clear sign of the crown's intent to take seriously its charge to Christianize the peoples of the New World, in practice, it was subject to the most appalling abuses. The individuals who campaigned on behalf of Native Americans saw the system as the source of all abuses against the Indians, and not surprisingly; as historian Dirk Hoerder points out, this *encomienda* system was de facto slavery—meaning that it was really slavery, even though it was not officially recognized as being so. The crown also disliked the system because, although it was not feudal in the strict sense of the term (it did not, for example, grant rights to rule or administer justice), it was close enough to cause concern. (Note: After 1542 the labor component was removed.)

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New Crops Stimulate European Population Growth:

Learning Objective D:

Explain the causes of the Columbian Exchange and its effects on Europe and the Americas during the period after 1492.

Key Concept 1.2.I.B:

The Columbian Exchange brought new crops to Europe from the Americas, stimulating European population growth,³⁹ and new sources of mineral wealth, which facilitated the European shift from Feudalism to Capitalism.

The Columbian Exchange's Impact on Europe: New Crops

Beginning with Christopher Columbus's first voyage, "the Atlantic Ocean was transformed from a barrier that separated the American continents from Africa and Europe into a highway that united them through the myriad of commodities that traveled on ships in both directions."

To explain this incredible transformation, we have the term "The Columbian Exchange," which was coined by the historian Alfred W. Crosby in his 1972 book, *The Columbian Exchange*. Crosby provides this definition for the term:

In 1491, the world was in many of its aspects and characteristics a minimum of two worlds—the New World, of the Americas, and the Old World, consisting of Eurasia and Africa. Columbus brought them together, and almost immediately and continually ever since, we have had an exchange of native plants, animals and diseases moving back and forth across the oceans between the two worlds.

But while the New World was devastated by this "ecological imperialism," Europe was benefitting tremendously as a result of importing "the most productive food plants developed by the Indians." These new crops from the New World "fueled a population explosion in 17th-and 18th-century Europe."

Once the Atlantic Ocean was opened after Christopher Columbus's voyages of 1492 and 1493, crops were shared one world to the other, as European settlers quickly "discovered the plants that the Indians cultivated: manioc or cassava in the humid tropics, maize or Indian corn in temperate regions, and potatoes in the Andes."

In fact, "the New World's great contribution to the Old is in crop plants," as "maize, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, various squashes, chilies, and manioc have become essential in the diets of hundreds of millions of Europeans, Africans, and Asians," as have beans, squash, tomatoes, avocados, guavas, pumpkins, pineapples, peanuts, cranberries, papayas, and vanilla. These American foods that had previously been unknown in Europe quite literally transformed European and African

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New Crops Stimulate European Population Growth, Continued:

cuisines; in fact, it is difficult to imagine many Old World cuisines today without American peppers, beans, and tomatoes. All told, as Jace Weaver, noted professor of Native American Studies, is fond of pointing out, 46% of “the contemporary world’s table vegetables” originated in the Western Hemisphere,” and were cultivated and eaten by” the people of the Americas.”

The crops that Native Americans domesticated proved “more productive than their Old World counterparts.” The average yield for traditional European crops was 4.2 million for wheat, 5.1 million for barley, and 5.5 million for oats. On the other side of the Atlantic, the average yield for American crops was 9.9 million calories per hectare for cassava, 7.3 million for maize, and 7.5 million for potatoes. The greater productivity of New World crops proved extremely beneficial to European peasants, who could now gain larger yields on smaller plots. So where it had typically taken five acres of grain to support a single family in Europe, now potatoes grown on the same acreage could feed three families. From the 1490s onward, New World crops enabled peasants in Europe to “eat a more calorie-rich diet than ever before.”

Additionally, American crops were generally more flexible than their old world counterparts, which meant the European farmers could now cultivate soils that had proven “hostile to their traditional grains.” For instance, maize can be grown in sandy soils, and it thrives in hot climates; potatoes can prosper in “in cold, thin, damp soils,” which are unsuitable for any grain. Maize also reaches maturity “much more quickly than other grains.” Because maize “produces a crop much faster than the grains it replaced,” in parts of Africa two plantings could be harvested in a single season.

The Old World embraced these new crops. Maize cultivation spread widely across Europe, Africa, and Asia. As maize cultivation spread eastward around the Mediterranean” in the 16th and 17th centuries, it became a fundamental part of the peasant diets in Italy and southern France by 1700. Meanwhile, “Potato cultivation expanded more slowly. One reason for its slow reception in Europe was its perception amongst Europe’s elite: even into the early 19th century, the English regarded the potato as “fit only for the Irish, the poorest inhabitants of Great Britain.” But the potato did spread “after 1680 throughout northern, central, and eastern Europe.”

Europeans also embraced the exotic plants of the New World. For example, pineapples (which remained expensive rarities through the colonial period) entranced everyone who tasted them. When the Dutch traveler Pieter de Marees first tasted a pineapple in Africa, he wrote that “it has the best taste one can find among all fruits,” insisting that “one cannot stop eating them.” There is an account of King James of England, upon tasting a pineapple, commenting that “this must be the apple offered to Eve in the Garden of Eve.” As enamored as Pieter de Marees was with pineapples, he disagreed with the English king, arguing that the forbidden fruit must have been the “very delicious” banana.

“The rapid influx of American foods” helped promote a “huge population boom in Europe,” Africa, and China in the 17th and 18th centuries. Estimates place the world’s population in 1500 at 425 million. By 1600 the world’s population had risen 28% to 545 million; by 1710, 12 percent to 610 million; and in 1800, 48 percent to 900 million.

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New Sources of Mineral Wealth Facilitate Europe's Shift to Capitalism:

Key Concept 1.2.I.B:

The Columbian Exchange brought new crops to Europe from the Americas, stimulating European population growth, and **new sources of mineral wealth, which facilitated the European shift from Feudalism to Capitalism.**⁴⁰

The Columbian Exchange's Impact on Europe: New Sources of Mineral Wealth

Note: The first six paragraphs in this section are largely in the words of historian Brian DeLay.

At the beginning of the 15th century, Europe was not really organized in such a way to be a competitor to the Ottomans, and certainly not to Ming China. Europe, for the most part, was divided into a great multiplicity of feudal kingdoms. Real power in Europe during this early period really rested in local and regional levels. And this fragmentation was one of the reasons that Europe was not in a position to compete with these other powers. These feudal powers taxed their people quite heavily, built castles, and fought each other a lot. So this is not a recipe for continental greatness.

From here, Europe didn't really have anywhere to go but up, and they did. As the Black Death subsided, and a stronger, more disease resistant population began to recover, so did commerce of all kinds throughout Europe. And so the economy begins to revive robustly. One of the reasons is that workers find they can command a higher wage than they used to be able to. And with that higher wage they are able to purchase more than they had been able to in times past. And this helps really gather momentum for the economy. Trade started generating

capital, unlike it had before, and now this capital, rather than going to innumerable lords in a variety of mechanisms, is increasingly being concentrated in the hands of the most powerful merchants and the most powerful political leaders in Europe (monarchs). Prior to these terrible calamities, most European monarchies had been notoriously weak. But changes were underway in Europe that were simultaneous with these crises and began to accelerate during the aftermath of these crises that would make European leaders far more powerful. This was an absolute prerequisite to European expansion overseas.

One of the key changes that happens in Europe concerned warfare. In addition to famine and disease, the 14th century was also a time of tremendous warfare, and in the process of waging these wars, European monarchs and their advisers determined that a modern monarch ought to fight a war with trained infantry; rather than having a few knights or even many hundreds of knights, supported by untrained peasants, if you could train thousands of soldiers, turn them into professional fighters, equip them well in the field, and give them the leadership and the resources that they need in order to go on long campaigns, that warfare was far bloodier, casualties were far higher than the older kind of warfare, but more decisive. These wars really ended with major changes. Increasingly, ambitious, forward thinking monarchs were trying to build modern militaries.

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New Sources of Mineral Wealth Facilitate Europe's Shift to Capitalism:

The trouble is that although everybody recognizes that this is the way to fight a war, to maintain infantry in the field for months or years at a time, have them well trained, well equipped and sustained as they move across landscapes, is massively expensive. So there's a pressing need for monarchs that want to survive or even thrive in this new era, to find new access to capital. They have to find ways to boost their state incomes.

As a result, they are going to increasingly find new, creative ways to tax parts of their domain in order to generate revenue. And that's going to require bureaucracies. You have to go after your own elite in order to get the revenue that you're going to need. They're not going to like that; they're going to push back. This is yet another reason why you must have a modern army, because you have to show these people who's in charge.

Now the bottom line is that European kingdoms, as a consequence of this movement, become far more powerful and centralized than they had before, and kings and monarchs are far better equipped to project power than they had been before. So we have military, political, fiscal reforms that all help strengthen monarchs, and ultimately they help lift Europeans out of the miseries of the 14th century.

New World gold and silver further facilitated this shift away from local and regional power to a consolidation of

power in the hands of monarchs. The silver mines of the Americas—especially the Peruvian mines of Potosí and the mines of Zacatecas in northern Mexico—made Spain incredibly wealthy. As we have seen, Spanish America became Europe's "essential source of silver." Spanish New World silver "tripled Europe's supply of silver and increased the gold supply by about 20 percent."

American silver helped Spain emerge "as a wealthy and powerful country," a change that dramatically changed the balance-of-power in Europe. By virtue of the fact that the Spanish crown received a fifth of America's bullion, "by 1585 American bullion amounted to 25% of the crown's total revenue." This newfound wealth enabled Spain to go to war against European countries who "had rejected the authority of the Roman Catholic Church," and become Protestant, culminating in the Thirty Years' War from 1618 and 1648."

Additionally, Spain's newfound access to "so much gold and silver rescued the Spanish . . . from their previous imbalance of trade with Asia," enabling Spain to purchase unprecedented amounts of spices and cloth from the Far East. As we have seen, China did want American silver. The real economic engine during the 16th through the 18th centuries was Asia, particularly China and India." And China's "nearly insatiable demand for silver" shaped the entire world economy, and was the catalyst for Spain's shipping silver to them through the Philippines.

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Improvements in Maritime Technology/New Methods for Conducting International Trade:

Key Concept 1.2.I.C:

Improvements in maritime technology and more organized methods for conducting international trade, such as joint-stock companies, helped drive changes to economies in Europe and the Americas.⁴¹

Image Twenty-Eight: Christopher Columbus Using a Telescope (with armillary sphere, divider, and ship) (1664)



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In terms of navigation, new kinds of ships, new navigational techniques, and new geographic knowledge paved the way for oceanic travel, opening up, for really the first time, the Atlantic Ocean. Collectively, these technologies helped shift the balance of power in the world from China and the Middle East to Western Europe, where, over the 14th through 19th centuries, Western Europeans, ironically borrowing techniques from China and the Middle East, were able to create global empires.

Caravel

New kinds of ships helped make oceanic travel possible. Prior to the development of ships that were suitable for travel on the oceans, Western European ships had been designed for travel in the Mediterranean Sea (which separates Europe from Africa, with its eastern waters

meeting the Levant).

As new long-distance trade routes developed in the stormy waters of the Atlantic Ocean, new vessels were needed that were versatile enough to sail in both Mediterranean and Atlantic conditions. The ships built for these new routes also required larger cargo capacities, in order to carry bulkier commodities, such as grain. In order to facilitate this trade that was now conducted both on the ocean and on the sea, in the fifteenth century Spanish, Portuguese, and Genoese shipbuilders created a new craft. Called a *caravel*, this new ship was capable of navigating any ocean in the world. In addition to its mainmast, “it had a foremast carrying a square sail,” as well as “a mizzenmast at the stern with a lateen [triangular] sail.” Adding a sternpost rudder to the caravel made it maneuverable in any wind. The caravel was the type of ship that Vasco da Gama, Christopher Columbus, and Ferdinand Magellan used.

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Improvements in Maritime Technology/New Methods for Conducting International Trade:

Image Twenty-Nine: Matthew of Bristol Caravel Replica



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The Compass, Astrolabe, and Wind Patterns

In addition to new kinds of ships, new navigational skills and techniques also made oceanic travel possible. One thing that had hindered European voyages into the uncharted ocean was the uncertainty about whether or not sailors who attempted such a trip would return.

However, “a number of technological innovations gradually lifted the fog of uncertainty that had hampered Atlantic navigation.” One of those innovations was the increasing use of the compass by European sailors by the late thirteenth century. Whereas cloudy skies in Mediterranean waters typically hid the stars that sailors relied on for navigation during much of the fall and winter, the introduction of the compass into this region

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Improvements in Maritime Technology/New Methods for Conducting International Trade:

compass into this region enabled ships to sail year-round in the Mediterranean (and elsewhere) “without fear of losing their way.”

In addition to widespread use of the compass, navigation was propelled forward by the discovery of the wind patterns that operated over the North Atlantic Ocean. Here’s Daniel R. Headrick’s explanation of this noteworthy discovery:

South of Lisbon on the 40th parallel, the trade winds (so named because of their importance to merchant ships) blow from northeast to southwest, away from Europe; north of Lisbon, the westerlies blow toward the continent, bringing clouds and rain. Until the mid-fifteenth century, sailors feared that if they sailed out to sea with the trades, they would never return. The geographers who worked for the Portuguese Prince Henry the Navigator realized that the trade winds formed a *volta do mar*, or great circle of the sea, that would allow ships that sailed out with the trades to return with the westerlies. Later, when sailors had crossed the equator, they found a similar circle of winds in the South Atlantic. In the sixteenth century, explorers in the Pacific found another two *voltas*, one north of the equator and the other south of it. Knowing this, sailors felt confident that they could venture into any body of water in the world and find their way back. This knowledge opened the doors of the Age of Exploration.

In order to determine their latitude when they were in uncharted waters, beyond sight of coasts, European sailors adopted “the instruments and methods long used by sailors in the Indian Ocean, such as the astrolabe and the kamal, devices used to measure the angle of the North Star with the horizon.”

Image Thirty: Planispheric Astrolabe (A.D. 1654-55)



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Many of these new ships and navigational techniques (as well as geographic knowledge) were developed by the Spanish and the Portuguese in the 15th century. These improvements “enabled daring Iberian mariners to explore the northwestern coast of Africa and exploit newfound islands in the eastern Atlantic—the Azores,

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Improvements in Maritime Technology/New Methods for Conducting International Trade:

Madeira, and Canary Islands.” “Emboldened by those modest successes,” in the late 1490s, “some mariners attempted two especially bold and risky trips: south-eastward around Africa into the Indian Ocean, and westward across the Atlantic in search of Japan and China.”

It is partly because of this new geographic knowledge that Columbus failed to attract patronage in the late 1480s. Most experts were not convinced about any of his objectives. Theoretically, it was understood that it was possible to sail west and end “up on the East Asian side of the known world.” But learned scholars didn’t think that such a voyage was possible, largely because of the surprisingly accurate understanding of how large the globe was. As far back as the third and second centuries B.C., Eratosthenes, the librarian of Alexandria, had accurately calculated the circumference of the globe to be between 24,000 and 25,000 miles. This meant that Asia was 10,000 to 12,000 miles to the west of Europe, too far for 15th-century Europeans ships to travel to, considering the amount of food and water they’d need to bring in order for the crews to survive such a voyage. No ship during that day was capable of making such a journey.

What Columbus proposed broke with the geographic orthodoxy of the day. Columbus was willing to dare such a westward trip to Asia because he underestimated the world’s circumference. This he did by misreading much of the data he found in geographical books, and misrepresenting the rest. The figure he came up with for the earth’s circumference was 18,000 miles, which,

according to his calculations, meant that Japan was “a mere 3,500 miles west of Europe.” If this was the case, Columbus believed that it would only take a few days to sail from Spain to the eastern rim of Asia.

Needless to say, “Columbus was fortunate indeed” that the continents that Europeans had not anticipated discovering in western waters “cropped up” for Columbus and his crew at the 3,000-mile mark, at about the location he had expected to find Asia.

Joint Stock Companies

European commercial expansion of the 16th and 17th centuries was made easier by new forms of commercial organization, especially the joint-stock company. A joint-stock company allowed people to invest in enterprises without running the risk of losing everything if the business did not succeed. By limiting liability, corporations greatly increased the number of people who could dare to become entrepreneurs by pooling their resources while avoiding the possibility of ruin. Individuals bought shares in a company and received dividends on their investment, while a board of directors ran the company, and made the important business decisions. The joint stock company made it easier to raise large amounts of capital for world trading ventures. Thus the corporation was one of the great inventions of the Renaissance, along with printing, double-entry bookkeeping, and the full-rigged ship.

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Widespread Deadly Epidemics:

Key Concept 1.2.II.A:

Spanish exploration and conquest of the Americas **were accompanied and furthered by widespread deadly epidemics that devastated native populations**⁴⁵ and by the introduction of crops and animals not found in the Americas.

Widespread Deadly Epidemics

The Old World of Europe, Africa, and Asia developed incredibly powerful and deadly pathogens, especially in comparison with those that developed in the Americas. There are three reasons why this was the case.

First, “Old World diseases benefitted from a much larger pool of potential hosts” than existed in the Americas. This was because “long-distance trade and invasions were more routine in Europe and Asia” and Africa than in the New World, and this provided more organisms (humans, insects, domesticated animals, rodents) that transmitted pathogens, all of which heightened “the exchange and mutation of multiple diseases.” While “the peoples of the Old World gradually developed strengthened immunities to these diseases,” they became “especially deadly carriers when they entered locations” where these diseases had not been experienced before—like the Americas.

Second was the “older and more widespread” urbanization that had taken place in the Old World compared with the New. “Especially virulent diseases develop where people live in permanent concentrations.” Additionally, many deadly diseases can only be transmitted by human carriers, and therefore require crowded populations if they are to spread. “Concentrated human populations also accumulate more garbage and

excrement, which breed many microbes that inflict gastro-intestinal diseases.” The filth in Old World cities undoubtedly encouraged and sustained “enlarged populations of vermin—mice, rats, roaches, houseflies, and worms—which serve as carriers for some diseases.”

Third, unlike the peoples of the Americas, Europeans, Africans, and Asians “lived among large numbers of domesticated mammals, including cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses, which share microscopic parasites with humans, encouraging the development of new and especially powerful diseases as viruses shift back and forth between the species.”

While the Old World was especially conducive to the development of virulent diseases, the New World was not, possessing “fewer and less virulent diseases” than Africa, Asia, and Europe.

After Native Americans “migrated from Siberia to North America approximately 12,000 years ago,” the oceans essentially isolated them “from the microbial environment common, and deadly, to the peoples of Europe, Asia, and Africa” for over ten thousand years.

After all of this isolation, and lacking “immunological resistance” to Old World diseases, Native Americans were devastated when they came into contact with Europeans and their deadly diseases. When Europeans first came into contact with Native American tribes, “approximately

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half of the Native Americans in these contact zones died within a decade of contact.” Five decades after contact, native populations were typically reduced “to about a tenth of” their “pre-contact numbers.”

By way of illustration, the Taino, who Columbus first encountered, suffered a rapid population decline, dropping from 300,000 in 1492, to 33,000 in 1510, to a mere 500 by 1548. The primary cause of this population depletion was the virulent diseases that the Spanish unintentionally introduced into the Americas.

The deadly European and Asian diseases that Native Americans encountered post-contact were “smallpox, typhus, diphtheria, bubonic plague, cholera, and influenza,” while those diseases that were unintentionally imported from Africa via the slave trade were *falciparum* malaria and yellow fever. Among these diseases, smallpox was “the most conspicuous and devastating.” “A highly communicable virus, smallpox passes through the air on

moisture droplets or dust particles to enter the lungs of a new host.” This means that those with smallpox passed it on to the people around them simply by breathing. Following a twelve-day incubation period, smallpox victims experienced a high fever and began to vomit. Three to four days later, gruesome sores spread across the entire body of the victim.

Unfortunately, for Native Americans the “exchange of infectious diseases . . . was remarkably one-sided,” as American pathogens simply did not kill colonizers” at anywhere near the rate that European diseases claimed Native Americans. In fact, there was really only one major disease that moved from the Americas to Europe. This “painful and sometimes fatal” disease, venereal syphilis, was carried across the Atlantic Ocean by “returning explorers and sailors.” Syphilis was not deadly enough “to stem Europe’s population growth during the sixteenth century,” and shortly after 1600, “the disease lost much of its virulence” in Europe.

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The Introduction of Crops and Animals Not Found in the Americas:

Key Concept 1.2.II.A:

Spanish exploration and conquest of the Americas were accompanied and furthered by widespread deadly epidemics that devastated native populations and by **the introduction of crops and animals not found in the Americas.**⁴⁶

Columbus and his crew did not voyage alone. They were accompanied by a menagerie of insects, plants, mammals, and microorganisms. Beginning with Columbus's settlement at La Isabela, European expeditions brought cattle, sheep, and horses, along with crops like sugarcane (originally from New Guinea), wheat (from the Middle East), bananas (from Africa), and coffee (also from Africa). Equally important, creatures the colonists knew nothing about hitchhiked along for the ride. Earthworms, mosquitoes, and cockroaches; honeybees, dandelions, and African grasses; rats of every description—all of them poured from the hulls of Columbus's vessels and those that followed.—Charles C. Mann

The “environmental revolution” of the Columbian Exchange “worked disproportionately in favor of Europeans and to the detriment of native populations.” European colonists and their microbes, plants, and livestock erased the biological and cultural distinctions between the Old World and the New World that had previously been enforced by the Atlantic Ocean. As the New World started to look more and more like Europe, colonization “literally alienated the land from its native inhabitants.”

In addition to intentionally introducing domesticated animals and plants to the New World, European colonists “accidentally introduced despised weeds, detested vermin and deadly microbes,” and all three of these blights devastated the New World and its inhabitants.

Domesticated Plants

Although Europeans and Africans “admired the vibrant

plant life they encountered in the Americas,” they “longed to have the food they were accustomed to at home;” they hoped to “replicate the basic elements of the cuisines they had known at home.” As a result, beginning with Columbus's second voyage, every European transatlantic voyage carried the seeds of familiar plants like wheat, rye, and peaches. In 1493 Christopher Columbus “brought seeds and cutting of plants familiar to the Spaniards who planned to settle on the island of Hispaniola: wheat, grapevines, olive trees, sugar cane, and various fruits or vegetables.” Certainly not all of these plants grew successfully in the Caribbean, “but bananas, figs, melons, cabbages, and citrus fruits thrived.” As Spaniards began to settle Mexico, Peru, and Chile, they found, to their delight, that wheat (useful for bread), olives (useful for oil), and grapes (useful for wine) thrived in these locations. Similarly, “Europeans who settled on the east coast of the United States cultivated crops like wheat and apples,” that they brought with them from their homelands.

Of all the Old World crops introduced into the New World, “sugar made the greatest impact.” Sugar was introduced

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by Portuguese entrepreneurs into the Atlantic islands, and Brazil. Soon, the Spanish began producing sugar on their Caribbean islands, and the English developed their own sugar plantations on Barbados and Jamaica.

There was great demand for sugar. “Between 1768 and 1772, Britain’s sugar imports from the West Indies were worth over twice as much as total commodity imports from North America, and four times as much as tobacco which was North America’s leading commodity.

Sugar started off as a luxury that only the rich could enjoy. But, as sugar “became more widely available and especially as its price fell, people further and further down the social and income scale were able to enjoy it.” Prior to sugar, “honey had been the principal sweetener in Europe.” “During the 18th century, the amount of sugar each person in England consumed annually went up more than 400%. “Sugar promoted the consumption of inferior grains in England (such as oats and rice).”

Like sugar, rice was a key Old World crop that was sent westward across the Atlantic to be grown on plantations. Because rice had long been cultivated “in the wet low-lying areas” of the West African coast, “many historians believe that the knowledge of enslaved Africans led to the design of the intricate water-management systems that allowed rice to become such a valuable crop in similar environments in America.”

Domesticated Animals

European colonists intentionally introduced an array of new animals to the Americas; others were brought by accident. Because colonists “were determined to farm in a

European manner,” they intentionally introduced the domesticated livestock that they were familiar with: “honeybees, pigs, horses, mules, sheep, and cattle.” Unfortunately, Native Americans were not adequately prepared to deal with the impact of the colonists’ domesticated livestock. “There were no horses, cattle, sheep, or goats in the New World, and Native Americans had only domesticated a few animals—llama, alpaca, dog, fowl, and guinea pig—who generally leave nowhere near the environmental footprint as the domesticated animals of the Old World.

Europeans intentionally introduced honeybees to the Americas. According to Alfred W. Crosby, “the European has probably taken” honeybees “to every colony he has ever established, from Arctic to Antarctic Circle.” Honeybees were one of the first European imports to the New World, and they quickly “took up pollinating duties for plants both imported and native.”

Europeans’ ranging animals—cattle, horses, pigs, and, to a lesser extent, chickens—“wreaked havoc on an American environment that the Indians depended upon,” as “grazing animals in large numbers could turn lush meadows into deserts by their close cropping of new shoots.” In this way, wild game in North America, already threatened by the farming practices of Europeans, found their ecological niches taken over by these new ranging animals, who left little for their wild competitors to eat. For example, pigs consumed “everything that deer, elk, moose, or bear might have dined on,” like nuts and berries (humans relied on these as well). As a result, wild game numbers declined.

Additionally, when “cattle and sheep ground American vegetation between their flat teeth,” it ensured that native

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shrubs and trees would not grow. In place of the natural vegetation that had been cropped by grazing animals, grew grasses from Africa that had been introduced (most likely) from the bedding on slave ships. These new grasses grew thick, and choked out native vegetation. Similar processes occurred with trees. For example, native Caribbean, palm mahogany, and ceiba disappeared and were replaced by “forests of Australian acacia, Ethiopian shrubs, and Central American logwood.”

Pigs eat almost anything, and do not have to be fed, since they can fend or forage for themselves. As they are really only used for food, they don’t have to be “yoked, milked, or egged daily.” As a result, settlers simply allowed their pigs to roam freely and survive off of wild plants, and so their pigs often ranged far afield, without being seen by the owners for weeks. In fact, as the Age of Exploration began, Spanish and Portuguese navigators would routinely drop a breeding pair of pigs off on islands that they passed, trusting “that the pigs would provide a food supply for future fleets, an expectation that was often fulfilled.”

When pigs wandered onto beaches, they would dig up clams before Indian women could collect them. For instance, in New England, the pigs brought in by the Puritans “thrived on the inter-tidal shellfish that the Indians gathered for their own subsistence.” Pigs also wreaked havoc in Native fields of corn, beans, and squash, which were typically left unfenced. “In the Caribbean islands, Spanish pigs consumed the manioc tubers, sweet potatoes, guavas, and pineapples that the Taino Indians cultivated.”

In addition to pigs were cattle. Southern Spain, which provided most of the colonists to New Spain, was noted

for its cattle ranches and *caballeros*, or cowboys. The Spanish from these regions soon introduced their longhorn breed of cattle to the New World, and “within a few decades of their introduction, vast herds of semi-wild cattle populated the plains of northern Mexico, the llanos of Venezuela, and the pampas of Argentina.” Like pigs, these cattle “overran the fields of the Indians, adding hunger to the miseries of imported diseases.”

The pride of the Spaniards, though, was their horses. When a few horses escaped (perhaps they were stolen) from Mexican and Chilean ranches, as well as from Spanish forts and settlements in the mid-16th century, they formed feral bands that thrived and multiplied in the open grasslands. Indians in the grasslands then captured and tamed horses from these herds. Adapting their culture to these horses, Indians in the grasslands regions became ferocious warriors.”

Detested Weeds and Vermin

It wasn’t just the honey bees and ranging animals intentionally introduced by Europeans that affected the natural environment of the New World; also at play were the pathogens, weeds, and rats that colonists inadvertently brought to America. Similar to the pigs, cattle, and horses, these “unwanted imports” worked “to the detriment of native plants, animals, and peoples.”

One unwanted import was European rats, who arrived, uninvited, in almost every ship that arrived in the New World. These tended to be “larger and more aggressive than their North American counterparts,” and once in the New World, they reproduced and spread rapidly, afflicting colonists and Indians. Native American storage pits

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“proved woefully inadequate to repel such novel, voracious, numerous, and resourceful pests,” and the resulting destruction of Indian food supplies sometimes led to famine.

Another unwanted set of imports were weeds, “fast-growing and hardy plants that compete with edible domesticated plants.” The problem with weeds is that they “reproduce and grow rapidly, filling any piece of open, disturbed ground.” Now weeds were not unknown in America, as Indian farmers had to cope with native weeds like ragweed, goldenrod, and milkweed. But these “indigenous weeds were not as tough as those that came from Europe, which included dandelions, thistles, plantain, nettles, nightshade, and sedge.” European weeds had evolved into persistent and hardy ones, having had to deal with “the heavy trampling and voracious grazing of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses.”

Old World weeds spread rapidly through the New World. Their infiltration of the New World has been so successful that “today botanists estimate that 258 of approximately

500 weed species in the United States originated in the Old World.” The spread of these weeds was facilitated by colonists and their livestock, who destroyed native plants and exposed “great swaths of soil to the sun, wind, and rain.” This was accomplished specifically when colonists “hacked down the forests to procure lumber and to make farms,” and when they plowed fields or let their herds graze freely. Needless to say, the weeds of the Old World far outdid their New World counterparts “in reclaiming the bare and battered ground.”

All in all, this European invasion “effected an ecological revolution.” “By a mix of design and accident, the newcomers triggered a cascade of processes that alienated the land, literally and figuratively,” from Native Americans. Put another way, “the arrival of European farmers—with their roaming livestock, their concepts of fixed property, and their single-crop plow agriculture” transformed “utterly the material environment of much of eastern North America and made traditional patterns of life impossible anywhere in the vicinity of European settlements.”

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Marshaling Native American Labor:

Learning Objective E:

Explain how the growth of the Spanish Empire in North America shaped the development of social and economic structures over time.

Key Concept 1.2.II.B:

In the *encomienda* system, Spanish colonial economies marshaled Native American labor to support plantation-based agriculture and extract precious metals and other resources.⁴⁷

The Encomienda System and Repartimiento

In the New World, conquistadores received grants known as *encomiendas*. With this grant, the *encomendero* (the person with the grant) obtained “a share in the forced labor and annual produce of the inhabitants of several Indian villages.” So native families were forced to work as laborers on haciendas or plantations. As historian Dirk Hoerder points out, this *encomienda* system was de facto slavery—meaning that it was really slavery, even though it was not officially recognized as being so. There was supposed to be an almost feudal relationship between the *encomendero* and the Indians within his grant, meaning that there were mutual responsibilities on both parties. While the Indians were supposed to provide the *encomendero* with labor and tribute, the *encomendero* was responsible for defending his Indians against attacks from other Indians, as well as for converting his Indians to Christianity—which he was supposed to accomplish by building his Indians a church and by providing them with a priest.

Mining was probably the principal “employment” of Indian slaves. In the words of historian Andrés Reséndez, extracting silver was extremely laborious, “because with silver “you actually had to follow the veins, which usually

led way down. Some of these mines ended up producing some of the deepest man-made shafts in the world. You have to bring the ore up, crush that to a powder, mix that with fairly dangerous reactives, like mercury (in order to get the mercury to amalgamate to the silver and stick to the bottom), and finally boil that to leave the pure silver. All of that required untold amounts of labor at a time when the Spanish crown prohibited anyone from outside the Spanish empire to come and work in these mines.”

Europeans, especially Mediterranean Europeans, had a longstanding practice of enslavement. So prior to getting to the New World, peoples in the Iberian peninsula and the Italian peninsula held slaves (from Africa, the eastern Mediterranean, the Levant, or sometimes the islands off the coast of Africa). So the possibility of enslaving Native Americans was not something that was foreign to them.

Columbus himself, prior to going to the New World had visited the main Portuguese trading hub in what is now the coast of Ghana, and had witnessed firsthand how the trade of gold and other commodities, as well as humans, could become a viable option for a colony. As a result, Columbus had a clear model of indigenous slavery in mind when he traveled to the New World, believing that this was a possibility for economic development.

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When Columbus found only limited amounts of gold in the New World, and certainly no precious spices, Chinese silks, or any of the goods that he thought would actually make his venture profitable, he offered his sponsors, the Spanish monarchs, the possibility of sending slaves. He actually wrote very candid letters saying how Indian slaves were so much better than the slaves that were being procured from Guinea. And, in part to recoup some of the costs of his first two expeditions, he started sending slaves back to Spain (he shipped 550 Indian slaves to Spain in 1495), something that eventually caused friction between himself and the Spanish monarchs, who ended up banning Indian slavery.

While all of the colonial powers participated in both African and Indian slavery, there were a number of key incentives for Spain to rely more heavily on Indian slaves. One was that Spain did not have possessions in western Africa that it could use as a launching off point to bring in African slaves. In essence, it had to subcontract its African slaves from the neighboring Iberian kingdom of Portugal. Plus, there were very significant price differentials. African slaves had to be imported from halfway around the world, and subcontracted with a different monarchy. Therefore, they were very expensive by the time they got to the New World. In contrast, Indian slaves were a lot cheaper. For example, in the 17th century you could get three, sometimes four Native Americans for the price of one African slave.

Everywhere Native Americans came into direct contact with Spanish colonists and explorers, disease, slaving and warfare drastically reduced their populations. Spaniards had initially met their labor needs in the New World by exploiting “Indian slaves captured in ‘just wars.’” “Within a few decades” after Columbus’s discovery of the New World, “the Spanish expanded the slave trade in

American Indians from the island of Hispaniola to Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Cuba, and the Bahamas.” As the indigenous populations of these islands declined drastically, the Spanish resorted to raiding Indians in Central America for slaves. For example, it is said that “650,000 Indians in coastal Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras were enslaved in the 16th century.”

Spanish authorities abolished the *encomienda* in 1542 with The New Laws, and replaced it with the *repartimiento*. Intended as a milder system, the *repartimiento* replicated many of the abuses of the older *encomienda* system.

Under the *repartimiento* system, natives were forced to migrate so that they could work on public works projects and plantations, or in the mines. (They worked in the silver mines, and built forts, roads, and housing for the army, church and government. “They performed agriculture and domestic labor in support of civilians, government contractors, and other elements of Spanish society.”) Early forms of this practice were in place as early as 1499, but the system was given more definite shape about 1575. As articulated in 1575, about 5% of the Indians in a given district were subjected to working in the mines; an additional 10% or so performed seasonal agricultural work. Officially, Native Americans were not supposed to work more than five weeks in the mines at any one time, although they could be asked (or forced) to work in the mines about 3-4 times each year. Officially, the Native Americans working the mines were also required to be paid. This system was modified in 1601/1609, in order to address some of the abuses of the system. According to these new rules, “25% of the Indians in a given district were required to work for the Spaniards, but they were free to choose their own employers and term of service.” This reformed and legal system remained in place until around 1820.

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Forcibly Extracting Slave Labor for the Americas:

Key Concept 1.2.II.C:

European traders partnered with some West African groups who practiced slavery to forcibly extract slave labor for the Americas. The Spanish imported enslaved Africans to labor in plantation agriculture and mining.⁴⁸

The African Slave Trade

The need for African slaves in the Americas became readily apparent as Native American slaves proved unable to provide the labor necessary on New World plantations and in American mines. Everywhere Native Americans came into direct contact with Spanish colonists and explorers, disease, slaving and warfare drastically reduced their populations. In response to this drastic population decline, Europeans imported growing numbers of African slaves as a substitute for Indian labor, a source of labor that was both (relatively) cheap, and less susceptible to disease. (Also encouraging the use of Africans as slaves was the belief that Africans were “fit for hard and degrading work.”)

“By the middle of the 16th century, most slaves in the Spanish Americas originated” from Africa, coming from either Upper Guinea (by way of the Cape Verde Islands) or Lower Guinea and West Central Africa (by way of São Tomé). It is known that the first slave trade voyage that “sailed directly from Africa to the Americas” occurred in 1525, and landed on Hispaniola bearing nearly 200 captives who had been purchased in São Tomé. Other slave ships carried African slaves to Hispaniola, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica in the late 1520s and 1530s. From the mid-1540s to 1580, “an average of about 1,200 African captives were transported to the Americas each year,” although the numbers were likely considerably higher than this. By 1600, some 150,000 African slaves

had been shipped to Spanish America. They worked in the mines, on sugar plantations, and as street vendors, domestic servants, and artisans, and in construction, maritime labor, agriculture, and animal husbandry.

After 1600, Portugal supplied Spanish America’s African slaves. Initially, the Portuguese had raided for slaves in Africa themselves, which was definitely lucrative, but also inherently dangerous, as “Africans resisted, counter-attacking with punishing blows.” And so the Portuguese learned that rather than kidnapping slaves on their own, it would be far more efficient, profitable, and safe to trade directly with cooperative African rulers. These African rulers would provide the Portuguese with the desired

Image Thirty-One: Sugar Mill Driven by Oxen



Slaves grind the canes, collect juice, and stir evaporating juice (1665)⁴⁹

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commodities from the African interior, namely gold, ivory, wax, pepper, and slaves. Having come to this realization, the Portuguese began to negotiate commercial treaties with African rulers after 1450, which enabled the Portuguese to construct trading factories at strategic locations along the coast of Africa at “Arguin, the Cape Verde Islands, Elmina, and São Tomé. These fortified trading posts were built on uninhabited islands, and the survival of these forts “depended heavily on the goodwill and tolerance of neighboring African societies.” Portugal was never able to control the African interior.

The rise of sugar plantations played a significant role in the increasing number of slaves employed by Europeans, as well as in the racialization of slavery. The sugar plantation was first developed in the Mediterranean around the 15th century, and required “huge numbers of workers” to do particularly labor intensive work. As European entrepreneurs faced the difficult task of securing the labor necessary “to sustain the vast economic enterprise” of sugar production, they “turned to enslaved labor,” common in the 15th-century Mediterranean, but not yet employed on a massive scale.

Labor, Slavery, and Caste in the Spanish Colonial System

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The Spanish Caste System:

Key Concept 1.2.II.D:

The Spanish developed a caste system that incorporated, and carefully defined, the status of, the diverse population of Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans in their empire.⁵⁰

The Castas

An elaborate racial hierarchy marked Spanish life in the New World. Regularized in the mid-1600s, the *castas* organized individuals into various racial groups based on their supposed “purity of blood.” *Peninsulares*—Iberian-born Spaniards, or *españoles*—occupied the highest levels of administration and acquired the greatest estates. Their descendants, New World-born Spaniards, or *criollos*, occupied the next rung and rivaled the *peninsulares* for wealth and opportunity.

The next category were *mestizos*. Because transatlantic emigration was dangerous and full of hardships (which deterred women from migrating), most emigrants in the early 16th century were young single men. While the number of emigrant women increased over the years, by the 1750s women remained less than a third of the total of emigrants.

Because of the “shortage” of Spanish women, “male emigrants usually took wives and concubines among the Indians, producing mixed offspring known as *mestizos*.” The Catholic Church endorsed interracial marriage as a moral bulwark against bastardy and rape. The *mestizos* became especially numerous (especially in the cities and towns of New Spain), ultimately “eclipsing Mexico’s purely Indian population by the start of the 18th century.”

By the early 1700s, more than one third of all marriages bridged the Spanish-Indian divide. Separated by wealth

Image Thirty-Two: Casta Painting



Casta paintings illustrated the varying degrees of intermixture between colonial subjects, defining them for Spanish officials. Race was less fixed in the Spanish colonies⁵¹

and influence from the *peninsulares* and *criollos*, *mestizos* typically occupied a middling social position in Spanish New World society. They were not quite *Indios*, or Indians, but their lack of “pure blood,” removed them from the privileges of full-blooded Spaniards. Spanish fathers of sufficient wealth and influence might shield their *mestizo* children from racial prejudice, and some wealthy *mestizos* married *españoles* to “whiten” their family lines. Mostly, though, *mestizos* were confined to a middle station in the Spanish New World.

As imported African slaves replaced Indian laborers, their offspring were called *mulattoes*, sired by their Spanish masters. Slaves and Indians, meanwhile, occupied the lowest rungs of the social ladder.

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Divergent World Views of Europeans and Native Americans:

Learning Objective F:

Explain how and why European and Native American perspectives of others developed and changed in this period.

Key Concept 1.2.III:

In their interactions, Europeans and Native Americans asserted divergent worldviews regarding issues such as religion, gender roles, family, land use, and power.⁵²

Religion

To Indians, the world was alive, animated by a spiritual force that was both universal and intelligent. Social ties based on fictive kinship and reciprocal trade linked all creatures—human and nonhuman—together into a common cosmos. These connections were maintained through ritual, which often involved the exchange of ceremonial items believed to have spiritual value.

In their minds, spiritual power permeated their world and was both tangible and accessible. It could be appealed to and harnessed.

For instance, the Ancestral Puebloans' leaders conducted ceremonies meant to mobilize the powers of the sun, the rain, and the earth, so that their crops would grow and their people would thrive. To accomplish this, their Great Houses were designed "to serve as astronomical observatories, where they could track the passage of the sun and moon and the rotation of the skies around a northern axis. Ceremonies marking the seasons and

important points in the agricultural calendar would have drawn thousands of pilgrims from the countryside to the open spaces and kivas of the Great Houses."

Similarly, Mississippian priests and chiefs, "Great Suns," conducted rituals that were centered on the solar cycle and the seasons. These rituals were performed as a means of ensuring successful crop yields, and of promoting their power.

Gender Roles and Family

Kinship bound most Native North American people together. Most peoples lived in small communities tied by kinship networks. Many Native cultures understood ancestry as matrilineal: family and clan identity proceeded along the female line, through mothers and daughters, rather than fathers and sons.

For example, the Iroquois were matriarchal societies, with power inherited through female lines of authority. Women were influential in local councils, though men served as sachems, made war, and conducted diplomacy.

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Divergent World Views of Europeans and Native Americans:

Similarly, Native southerners traced their ancestry exclusively through their mothers' bloodlines. In contrast to Europeans, who emphasized paternity rather than maternity, southern Indians did not count their fathers as blood relatives. Their matrilineal kinship system made women rather than men central figures in reckoning descent. Still, although Native southern women may have used their power as creators and sustainers of life to influence the political decisions of their male relatives, they rarely enjoyed direct rule. Usually, the office of chief passed from uncle to maternal nephew.

Native southern women traditionally controlled agricultural production, farming family plots with other female relatives. Likewise, in Mississippian societies, farming became women's work. Female kin groups controlled the fields, the food produced in those fields, and the houses. Men, on the other hand, were responsible for the animal-protein portion of the diet. Most male labor took place during seasonal hunts, while fishing, and at fowling camps. In general, the forest belonged to the men; the "clearing," to women.

Similarly, throughout the eastern woodlands, women tended crops, gathered plants, and oversaw affairs within the community, while men were responsible for activities beyond it, especially hunting, fishing, and warfare.

Native American culture, meanwhile, generally afforded greater sexual and marital freedom than European cultures. Women, for instance, often chose their husbands, and divorce often was a relatively simple and straightforward process.

Land Use

Most Native peoples' notions of property rights differed markedly from those of Europeans. Native Americans generally felt a personal ownership of tools, weapons, or other items that were actively used, and this same rule applied to land and crops. Groups and individuals exploited particular pieces of land and used violence or negotiation to exclude others. But the right to the use of land did not imply the right to its permanent possession. When Europeans offered spiritually significant objects in exchange for land on which to build, farm, or hunt, Indians did not understand the offer as a contract transferring ownership.

Additionally, when Europeans came to the New World, they wanted to farm in the ways that they were familiar with. As in Europe, they built fences around the fields in which they grew their crops. They "plowed vast expanses clean, sowed a single crop per field, removed the stubble or allowed their grazing livestock to consume it, and planted repeatedly until the soil was exhausted." Trees were cut down or burned away to create these fields, and this stripping of forests exposed "the native minor flora to direct sunlight and to the hooves and teeth of Old World livestock." Meanwhile, single-cropping encouraged specialized weed and insect pests that now attacked Native fields as well as European. This European practice of clearing fields and building fences threatened the existence of wild game in North America. It was also a distinct shift away from how Native Americans interacted with the natural environment in North America.

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Divergent World Views of Europeans and Native Americans:

Power

One of the key ways in which European and Native American conceptions of power differed was in the purpose of war. For instance, seven months after Cortés seized Moctezuma, the Mexica ruler, the Mexica mounted a counterattack, led by their new tlatoani, Cuitlahuac. During this counterattack, Cortés and his men were forced to retreat to the mainland; Cortés lost three-quarters of his men during the attack. However, because “the Mexica did not view the goal of warfare as wiping out enemies to the last man, they did not hunt down the last Spaniards.” This turned out to be a costly mistake, as Cortés was able to “assemble a force of as many as 200,000 men,” and “in August 1521, the Spanish and their native allies reduced Tenochtitlan to a bloody rubble.” The Mexica capitulated on August 21st, 1521.

Another example of the difference between Native American and European conceptions of war is in the Pequot War in May 1637. Puritan forces in New England, with the help of Narragansett and Mohegan warriors, went deep into Pequot territory and surprised a palisaded village beside the Mystic River. The village contained about 70 wigwams and 400 inhabitants, mostly women, children, and old men. The New English and their Indian allies surrounded the sleeping village and set it ablaze shortly before dawn. The Pequot died either in the flames or in flight from the inferno as they ran into the gunfire and onto the swords of their enemies. Only about 5 inhabitants survived. The indiscriminate slaughter contradicted Indian custom and shocked the Narragansett and Mohegan allies, who had expected to

capture and adopt the women and children. They bitterly complained that the New English mode of war was “too furious and slays too many people.”

The Narragansett and Mohegan allies had expected to capture and adopt the women and children of the Pequot, because one of the ways they conceived of warfare (as did many Native Americans in the American Northeast) was as a mourning war. Becoming especially prevalent in the aftermath of the devastating effects of Europe’s deadly pathogens, Native Americans sought to replenish their losses to disease and war by going to war against neighboring tribes, for the purpose of obtaining captives and then adopting those captives into their own tribe, either as family members or as slaves.

For example, in 1648 and 1649, the Iroquois Five Nations, reeling from their recent losses to disease and war, targeted the Huron in order to obtain captives for adoption into Iroquois families and villages. They stormed Huron villages, killing and capturing hundreds. The Iroquois eliminated the Huron villages to deter their thousands of captives from running away home. Indeed, the Iroquois systematically hunted down for death or capture groups of Huron refugees, no matter how far they ran. But the great majority of the Huron survived only as adopted captives among the Iroquois.

During the 1650s, the Iroquois ravaged the three independent Iroquoian living along Lake Erie and Lake Huron: The Erie, Petun, and Neutral. As with the Huron, the victors killed most of the defeated warriors, captured their women and children for adoption, and burned the villages to discourage their flight homeward.

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Europeans and Native Americans Adopt Useful Aspects of Each Other's Culture:

Key Concept 1.2.III.A:

Mutual misunderstandings between Europeans and Native Americans often defined the early years of interaction and trade as each group sought to make sense of the other. Over time, Europeans and Native Americans adopted some useful aspects of each other's culture.⁵³

Social Rituals Centered on Tobacco and Chocolate

Noted historian Karen Kupperman has written that “many American commodities led to the creation of new kinds of meeting places and new ways of consuming foods and drink.” Most of these commodities actually created new tastes rather than replacing goods people already consumed, and, as prices fell with greater production, consumers down the income chain were able to join the wealthy in eating, drinking, and smoking the new luxury products. For example, social rituals developed in Europe that centered on tobacco and chocolate.

Chocolate drew Europeans together in cultural meeting houses. “From the earliest contacts in Mexico, Spanish newcomers were introduced to chocolate” through various ceremonies—a drink unlike anything they had ever experienced before. Another New World commodity that became extremely popular in the Old World was tobacco. Often tobacco and chocolate consumption went together. When Moctezuma hosted Hernán Cortés at a banquet, both chocolate and tobacco were served.

When European venturers first saw Indians smoking, they were fascinated by what they called “drinking smoke.” However, despite early fascination with the plant, it would take over a century for tobacco to take hold in European

Image Thirty-Three: Jan Havicksz. Steen, 'Family scene', 1670



Here, Jan Steen exposes the spectacle of a rowdy family gathering. At the centre of the chaos, a mother restrains her toddler who stands on the table and reaches towards the plume of smoke curling up from the father's pipe. It's a clever illustration of the Dutch proverb: 'as the old pipe, so pipe the young', meaning that children mimic their parents' behaviour. And here, the behaviour is less than ideal.⁵⁴

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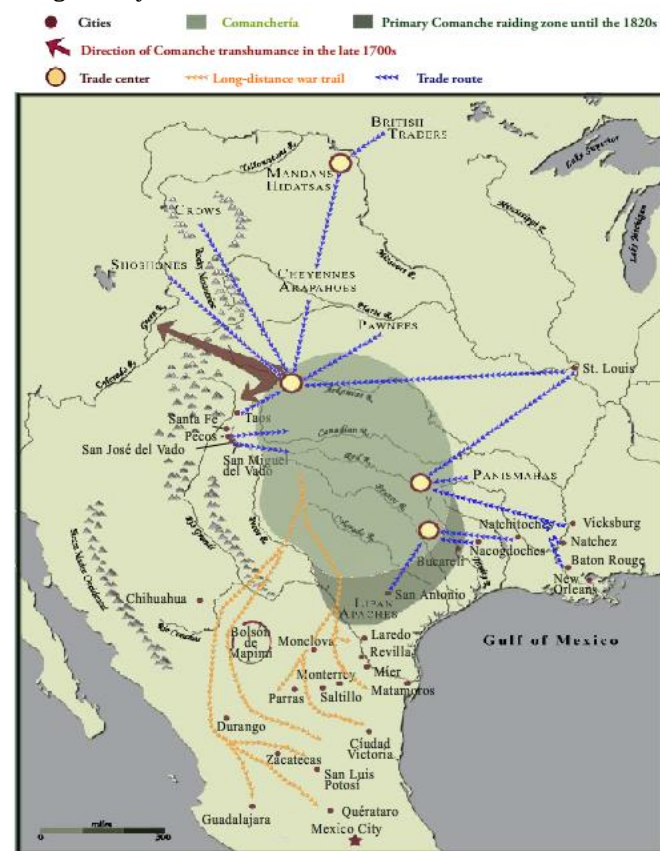
markets. But eventually the popular classes of Europe embraced it, and soon, “tobacco in pouch,” smoking and snuff was transformed into a good consumed by European elites, tavern goers, and people of littler consideration; tobacco spread to places like Seville, London, and Flanders. In the early stages, the tobacco sold in Europe was so expensive that only the wealthy could enjoy it. “But in the early 17th century it very quickly went from being a luxury to becoming an item of mass consumption.” In reality, tobacco was the first consumer craze, as indicated in “the genre paintings of the Dutch Golden Age, where scenes in taverns and other gathering places included people smoking tobacco in pipes.”

Horses and Comancheria

Horses were introduced in the Spanish colony of New Mexico in the late 16th-century and gradually dispersed across the plains. When a few horses escaped, or were stolen, from Mexican and Chilean ranches, as well as from Spanish forts and settlements in the mid-16th century, they formed feral bands that thrived and multiplied in the open grasslands. Indians in the grasslands then captured and tamed horses from these herds. Adapting their culture to these horses, Indians in the grasslands regions became ferocious warriors.

During the 18th century, the Indian peoples of the Great Plains gained greater mobility and prowess as buffalo hunters by acquiring large herds of these horses. The biggest winners on the southern Great Plains had been the Comanche, who, during the 17th century, had lived as mere hunter-gatherers “in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.” However, during the 18th century, as they

Image Thirty-Four: Comancheria



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traded and raided to obtain horses, they were able to “push south and east onto the plains to hunt buffalo.” Better positioned as traders and warriors, they preyed on the weaker Apaches, capturing their women and children “for trade and adoption.” Comanche expansion led to the migration of their defeated rivals. “Reeling from Comanche raids, Apache bands headed westward across

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the Rio Grande into western New Mexico, or they pushed southward deeper into Texas.” These adopted captives from their rivals, in addition to an improved diet (the result of abundant buffalo meat), fueled a population explosion: “by 1800 the Comanche numbered about 20,000—twice as many as all other native peoples on the southern Great Plains.”

“On the southern plains, European imperialism . . . was eclipsed by indigenous imperialism.” Texas and the southwest were subject to the expansion of Comancheria, the great empire of the region through the early 1800s. During the early 19th century, Comancheria “controlled more of the continent than did the United States itself,” as it “spanned the fictitious lines that Mexico, Texas, and the United States had drawn on maps. Their skill in making war on horseback transformed the Comanches from a small group to one of the region’s most formidable peoples.

Native Americans Adopt European Goods

One of the reasons that Indians found it beneficial to welcome European newcomers into their midst was because Europeans served as trading partners bearing new tools.

Initially, European trade goods closely resembled Native Americans’ precious ceremonial objects and prestige goods. At first contact, these goods tended to be glass beads, mirrors, brass bells. And Native Americans adopted these goods more for their mystical, spiritual

qualities or their ability to prop up the power and prestige of their rulers.

However, as European coastal traders multiplied, their goods became cheaper, more extensive, and demystified. Indians came to value the trade goods more for their utility than for their shine. Natives appreciated the superior strength and cutting edge of metal arrowheads, axes, knives, and hatchets—all useful as both tools and weapons. Iron or brass kettles facilitated cooking, and metal hoes eased the work of tilling maize, beans, and squash. All these items eased the strain and reduced the duration of native work.

However, while trade goods offered great advantages, the more Indians used them, the more reliant on them they became. Unable to make the wonderful new things themselves, the Indians could get them by increasing their hunting. For example, the northern Algonquian peoples began to hunt throughout the year. By the mid-17th century, the trade goods were sufficiently common that the north-eastern Algonquian peoples had forsaken their stone tools and weapons—and the craft skills needed to produce them. If cut off from trade, natives faces deprivation, hunger, and destruction by their enemies.

By enhancing the Indians’ needs, trade increased their demands upon the environment. No longer hunting only to feed and clothe themselves but also to supply an external market, the Indians had to kill more animals, especially beaver. As market incentives overwhelmed the inhibitions of animism, the Indian hunters killed animals at an unprecedented rate that depleted their numbers.

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Key Concept 1.2.III.B:

As European encroachments on Native Americans' lands and demands on their labor increased, native peoples sought to defend and maintain their political sovereignty, economic prosperity, religious beliefs, and concepts of gender relations through diplomatic negotiations and military resistance.⁵⁶

NOTE: You will see more examples to illustrate this key concept in Period Two.

Don Luís, Jesuits, and the Chesapeake (1570-1572)

In 1561, the viceroy of New Spain, Don Louis de Velasco, sent a reconnaissance expedition north of Santa Elena (present-day Parris Island in South Carolina). Quite by chance, this expedition, led by Antonio Velázquez, discovered today's Chesapeake Bay. When Velázquez's caravel left the Chesapeake Bay, there were two young Algonquian-speaking Indians on board. One of the two Indians, Paquiquineo, was a person of high standing in his own society, and was treated by the Spanish as a prince. Likely, he was the son of a petty chief in the region. It was Paquiquineo who informed the Spanish that the land they had visited was known by its inhabitants as Ajacán. When the governor of Florida, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, heard Velázquez's report about the Chesapeake Bay and its inhabitants, he concluded that the Chesapeake was a particularly promising region for a Spanish settlement.

Paquiquineo was taken to Mexico City, where he was baptized and given a new Spanish name, Don Luís de Velasco—in honor the viceroy of New Spain, who served as Paquiquineo's sponsor at the baptism. Whether Don Luís was kidnapped, or sent as an emissary to Spain by his

own people, is unknown. But he spent ten years abroad with the Spanish, traveling from Mexico to Spain, "where he was presented at court to Philip II." Don Luís was especially appealing to the Dominicans, and later the Jesuits, who believed that God had granted them this Indian so that they could more effectively evangelize the Indians living off the Atlantic coast in North America. As a result, Spain began to devote significant attention to settling Ajacán. Don Luís seems to have encouraged this newfound emphasis on a Chesapeake Bay mission, persuading the Spanish king and officials that he longed to return home to convert his people to Christianity. There is some thought that he made this case because he hoped that such a mission might lead to his return to his homeland.

Don Luís, then, was part of the 1570 effort to create a Jesuit mission in the Chesapeake, an endeavor that was sponsored by Florida governor Menéndez, and led by Father Juan Baptista de Segura, the vice-provincial of the Jesuit order in Florida at the time. In order to avoid provoking the Indians, the Jesuit priests on the expedition "declined Menéndez's offer to provide a company of soldiers." Instead, they relied on Don Luís to be their entry-point into the Indian hearts at Ajacán.

It is said that when Don Luís returned to the Chesapeake in 1570 with the Jesuits, the land was vastly different than

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the one he had left in 1561. Departing from a fertile, lush landscape, it was now “a famine-stricken land depopulated by the epidemics that the earlier Spaniards must have brought along with them.” When Don Luís arrived back home, he deserted the Jesuits and rejoined his own community. Back with his own people, he warned them to “dread and resist the newcomers,” and he actually led the party of Indians who, in February 1571, wiped out the Jesuit mission by massacring the eight Jesuits and destroying their chapel. It is hard to know if the terrible transformation that he witnessed in his homeland prompted this decision to massacre the Jesuits in February 1571.

Whatever his reasoning, Don Luís’s actions attracted the attention of Spanish authorities, who promptly sent a punitive expedition (led by Menéndez himself) to the Chesapeake in 1572. “Unable to capture Don Luís, Menéndez settled for killing twenty Indians in combat and hanging another fourteen. But after eking out his revenge of the natives of Ajacán, Menéndez and the Spanish abandoned the Chesapeake Bay, leaving it available for other Europeans to settle, which the English did in 1607 with the founding of the Jamestown colony.

Image Thirty-Five: Martyrdom of Fr. Juan Baptista de Segura



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Key Concept 1.2.III.C:

Extended contact with Native Americans and Africans fostered a debate among European religious and political leaders about how non-Europeans should be treated, as well as evolving religious, cultural, and racial justifications for the subjugation of Africans and Native Americans.⁵⁸

Ferdinand and Isabella Ban Indian Slavery (1500)

Apparently Queen Isabella was outraged at Christopher Columbus's slaughter and enslavement of her Indian subjects—in large part because she and Ferdinand were concerned about the potentially negative effects of slavery on the Indians' conversion to Christianity. As a result, after judicial proceedings, Ferdinand and Isabella declared in a royal decree in 1500 that Indians were “free and not subject to servitude.”

This formal rejection of slavery was fairly limited: it only applied to the importation of slaves into Spain from the New World. Additionally, the decree provided some notable exceptions that allowed the enslavement of Native Americans to persist. Native Americans could still be enslaved if they resisted Spanish occupation, rebelled against Spanish authority, or committed crimes according to Spanish law.

The Laws of Burgos (1512-1513)

By 1511, the *encomienda* had deteriorated into wanton exploitation; Spaniards demanded higher tributes and more labor (especially in the gold and silver mines). Native populations, meanwhile, were “being rapidly decimated.”

The Spanish crown was never fully at ease with the *encomienda*, albeit not entirely for humanitarian reasons. While not truly a feudal grant (unlike feudal grants, an *encomienda* didn't grant any judicial rights), it closely resembled a feudal grant, and the crown had spent decades neutralizing the feudal nobility of Spain. However, after Isabella's death in 1504, Ferdinand effectively became the ruler of all of Spain, and the New World supplied the money that he needed for his European ventures. As a result, neither Ferdinand, nor his chief counselor, Juan de Fonseca, bishop of Burgos, were inclined to stop the exploitation of the natives or alienate Spanish settlers.

Nonetheless, when two delegations arrived in Spain to present their cases regarding forced Indian labor to the king, Ferdinand turned the matter over to a commission of theologians, whose job it was to come up with a compromise between the freedom of the Indians and the need for some sort of compulsory labor system. The resulting compromise was the Laws of Burgos, issued in 1512 and amended in 1513. While the Laws of Burgos sought to ensure the spiritual and material welfare of the Indians, it also gave legal status to the *encomienda* and identified it as the economic basis of colonial society. By initiating the official use of the term *encomienda*, which was an old Spanish legal term, the decision implied that *encomenderos* didn't just have privileges to natives' labor and tribute, but that they also had responsibilities—

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defending Indians against attacks from other Indians, as well as converting Indians to Christianity—by building them a church and providing them with a priest. However well intentioned, the Laws of Burgos did not stop the spread of conquest or the numerous slave-raiding expeditions of the Spaniards.

Bartolomé Las Casas's Conversion to Advocacy

Bartolomé Las Casas arrived on Hispaniola (the island that today contains the states of Dominican Republic and Haiti) in 1502 with his father. Four or five years later, Bartolomé journeyed to Rome where he was ordained to the priesthood. In 1508, Las Casas was granted an encomienda on Hispaniola and became somewhat prosperous. In 1513 he served as chaplain to the expedition that conquered Cuba, during which “he witnessed Pánfilo Narváez’s massacre at Caonao, where ‘hundreds, if not thousands’ of unoffending Indians were put to the sword.” Despite Las Casas’s efforts to prevent the slaughter, Narváez was ruthless. “Las Casas reported that he saw ‘a stream of blood running . . . as if a great number of cows had perished.’” As reward for his participation in the pacification of Cuba, Las Casas was awarded a second encomienda, this one in Cuba. He then settled down to the comfortable life of a gentleman farmer and landowning cleric. He always maintained that he treated his Indians well, but neglected their religious instruction.

Between 1508 and 1515, on both Hispaniola and Cuba, Las Casas saw little contradiction between his life as an encomendero and his commitment as a Christian and priest. But in August 1514, as he was preparing a sermon,

he came across a passage in Ecclesiasticus (now called Sirach), 34:18: “The sacrifice of an offering unjustly acquired is a mockery; the gifts of impious men are unacceptable.” A few days of meditation on these words, his memories of the teachings of the Dominicans, and his own experiences brought about a conversion. The following Sunday he announced from the pulpit that he had divested himself of his encomienda and was beginning a life of advocacy on behalf of oppressed Indians.

(In 1516, in an attempt “to protect his Indian ‘lambs,’” from enslavement, Las Casas “advocated the importation of African slaves,” believing that Africans were inferior to Indians. Las Casas later rejected this position, believing that his suggesting such a thing may ultimately result in his going to hell.)

Papal Bull *Sublimis Deus* (1537)

In 1536, with Bishop Zumárraga and Bishop Julián Garcés of Tlaxcala, Las Casas drew up some petitions on behalf of the Indians to be forwarded to the pope. Out of these came the landmark papal bull *Sublimis Deus* of Paul III (1537), which proclaimed the Indians truly men and capable of Christianization. The bull became a powerful weapon in the hands of the pro-Indian forces, although it was never formally published in the Spanish dominions.

The Lectures of Dominican Francisco de Vitoria

At about the same time the pro-Indian movement was receiving support on a theoretical level, led by the most

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influential Spanish theologian of the century, the Dominican Francisco de Vitoria (1583-1546), holder of the principal chair of theology at the University of Salamanca. In two of his most important lectures given about 1538 or 1539, *De Indis prior* (first lecture on the Indies) and *De Indis posterior seu jure bellie Hispanorum in barbarous* (later lecture on the Indies; on the Spaniards right to make war against less civilized peoples), he elaborated for the first time a theory of international law, binding on all nations. Strongly influenced by the Scots theologian John Major, who taught in Spain, Vitoria vigorously defended the rights of the Indians, including that of property. He rejected those justifications for conquest that he regarded as unlawful, such as the savage condition of the natives, their idolatry and unbelief, or sins against nature. He denied that the pope or emperor had any authority to judge the Indians for any crimes they might have committed because that right belonged to their rulers. He also denied any right of the pope or the emperor to grant sovereignty over pagan nations to Christian rulers, for they had no temporal power over Indians or unbelievers. Consequently, their refusal to accept the overlordship of either pope or emperor did not justify war against them.

He did, however, find reasons that justified conquest. These included the spread of the Christian religion, especially if rulers forcibly prevented their subjects who wished to convert from doing so. He also believed that tyrannical laws and practices that harmed the innocent, such as human sacrifice or cannibalism, justified conquest, a position Las Casas rejected. His teachings were invaluable to Las Casas in defending the Indians.

The New Laws of 1542

Las Casas was an avid critic of the *encomienda* system. He argued that the Indians were free subjects of the Castilian crown, and their property remained their own. He believed that evangelization and conversion should be done through peaceful persuasion and not through violence or coercion. Between 1531 and 1540, he wrote several texts attacking the *encomenderos* and accusing persons and institutions of the sin of oppressing the Indians.

In 1547, Las Casas returned to Spain where he became an influential advisor to the emperor and the Council of the Indies. Along with other churchmen and laymen, he began to lobby in favor of the Indians at the court of Charles I. As a result of their agitation, the crown issued the famous New Laws of 1542, a striking combination of political reality and humanitarian idealism. The laws forbade all further enslavement of Indians for any reason whatever. Before 1542, the enslavement of Native Americans had generally been illegal, except for a few loopholes. But because these loopholes proved to be very wide, many were actually sent to Europe. The New Laws of 1542 closed these loopholes. Additionally, European holders who kept their slaves were required to come forward and show the titles that they had, and those titles had to be reviewed by lawyers, whose job it was to determine whether these Indians were held legally or not. If not, they would be set free immediately.

The *encomienda*, as a private enterprise, was condemned to ultimate extinction in the New Laws of 1542:

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“Henceforth no encomienda is to be granted to anyone, and when the present holders of encomiendas die their Indians will revert to the crown.” The extinction set up the crown as eventually the only encomendero. For the colonials, the most appalling prospect was that of not being able to leave their encomiendas to their children, and hence of being unable to establish family fortunes, something of surpassing importance to Spaniards of that age.

The reaction of the Spanish colonists was predictably hostile. Within a few years the more stringent of the laws were repealed. Still, enough remained on the books to spell the virtual, though not total, end of the encomienda as an important economic institution.

Las Casas, Sepúlveda, and the Junta/Council of Valladolid (1550-1551)

Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, a famed Renaissance humanist, was the crown’s official historian. He was encouraged to enter the fray by Cardinal Garcia de Loaysa, the archbishop of Seville and an opponent of the New Laws. As a result, Sepúlveda composed a scholarly Latin treatise in dialogue form called *The Second Democrates* or *Reasons That Justify War against the Indians*, which circulated in manuscript. Among the reasons cited by Sepúlveda as justifying war were the practice of human sacrifice and cannibalism—the Spaniards, he wrote, had an obligation to come to the aid of the oppressed victims—and the refusal of the natives to accept the universal rule of the emperor and pope. Christianity, he asserted, could be introduced by force, the famous *compelle intrare* (make them come in) of the gospel (Luke 14:24).

Since Sepúlveda was one of the foremost classical scholars of his time, he naturally fell back on Aristotle’s theory of natural slavery in the fifth book of the *Politics*: that some peoples, by reason of their superior intellect and endowments, are naturally fitted to rule while others, because of their brutishness and limited reasoning, are apt only for subordinate or servile roles. For Sepúlveda and the Spanish colonials, Aristotle’s words agreed perfectly with their concepts of the Indians’ place in society.

At the basis of Sepúlveda’s theories, and explicitly stated in his treatise, was the supposition of Spanish cultural and intellectual superiority. Sepúlveda did not go so far as to deny the humanity of the Indians—he conceded that they were not quite on the same level as monkeys—but he clearly placed them in an inferior order. This was an interesting position for a man who had probably never seen an Indian.

Las Casas, who returned to Spain in 1547 (never to see the New World again), counterattacked immediately.

The *Second Democrates* made the rounds of the universities, where it was almost universally condemned. The uproar that followed caused Charles I to convoke the Junta of Valladolid of 1550-1551, where a committee or panel of 14 distinguished judges (among them lay people and theologians) were to hear the competing arguments and arrive at some sort of conclusion. In preparation for this, Charles I ordered that all further raids and expeditions into Indian lands be halted.

Sepúlveda appeared on the first day and gave a three-hour summary of the doctrine of *The Second Democrates*.

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Las Casas appeared on the following day and proceeded to read the Latin text of his rebuttal, *Argumentum Apologiae*, for five full days. It was a point-by-point refutation of Sepúlveda's accusations. Even if the Indians were guilty of human sacrifice and cannibalism, he said, that could be explained as a rational step in the development of religious thought. He strongly defended the right of pagan rulers to have jurisdiction in their lands without interference by Christians, ecclesiastic or lay. Peaceful persuasion was the only permissible means of evangelization. If Aristotle believed in natural slavery, then Aristotle was to be rejected. The pope had no right to parcel out pagan lands to Christian rulers. Ruling authority in any nation came from God, but it came through the consent of the governed—no ruler could be imposed on a people against their will. The domestic crimes of a nation, no matter how heinous, were not justification for invasion of subjugation by an outside power.

After the judges recessed, they were apparently unable or unwilling to come to a final judgement. So far as is known, nothing specific came from the junta or its discussions. Notably, *The Second Democrates* was not allowed to be published in Sepúlveda lifetime—in fact, it did not see print until 1892.

Las Casas's *The Very Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552)

In 1552 Las Casas published *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, in which he gave an account of the cruelty Spaniards had eked out against Native Americans. For instance, Las Casas told of how Spaniards

would hang Indians in groups of 13, with 12 representing the 12 apostles, and one representing the Lord Jesus Christ; elsewhere in the book, he told of how the Spanish would baptize Indians and then immediately kill them. While parts of his account were based on events he had witnessed personally, or on the eyewitness reports of others, much of the book was based on hearsay. And in order to make his argument more persuasive, he often exaggerated the number of Indians who died.

The English “would eventually gain control of the Atlantic coast between Canada and Florida.” As the English anticipated conquering and colonizing parts of the eastern seaboard of North America, they made their contest with Roman Catholicism a central part of their arguments. Their case against Catholicism was aided by the Dominican priest, Las Casas. In his 1552 book, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, Las Casas exposed “lurid details about torture and murder perpetrated by Spanish conquistadores in the Indies.” Las Casas intended for this exposé to help the Spanish court recognize that this abuse was taking place, with the goal of persuading the crown to halt such violent tactics. The English, though, used Las Casas's book for a very different purpose. “When the book appeared in an English language translation in London in 1583,” “it became a testimony to the inherently barbarous nature of Iberian Catholics.” This “Black Legend,” which emphasized in Spain's despicable cruelty in the Americas, was harped upon by other English authors throughout the 1580s and 1590s. “Inadvertently, Las Casas probably did more than any other person to create and cement the Black Legend of Spanish cruelty in the Americas.” The goal of these English authors in driving home this theme was to help persuade Protestants, who would otherwise be reluctant

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Image Thirty-Six: Spanish Tyranny and Cruelties in the West Indies (1710)



Spanish soldiers are shown beating, shooting, and stabbing native Americans. Includes natives in tree houses, scenes of warfare, bodies roasting on spits over fires, people being flung onto spikes, and in the background volcanoes are erupting and earthquakes are occurring.⁵⁹

to do so, to “commit precious resources to the creation of overseas colonies.” This propaganda also helped the

English justify their colonization efforts as morally superior to those of the Spanish.

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Conclusion

The Spanish humanitarian movement had no counterpart in the rest of the New World. French, Portuguese, and British America saw nothing like it. The Spanish, and to a lesser extent the Portuguese, were unique among all colonizing and imperialistic peoples in having a formidable movement in favor of the oppressed natives. Unlike the British, and later the Germans and Dutch, the Iberian nations had an institutionalized conscience in the form of a church that had a clearly defined place in society. In addition, Spain enjoyed a rather wide freedom of speech and protest. Clerics, officials, and private citizens wrote to the king (through the Council of the Indies), with amazing frequency. Their letters were noted and evaluated with bureaucratic thoroughness.

The pro-Indian lobby was never an organized, clearly defined group. Some of its participants were hostile to each other. There were varying opinions about the Indian and how he should be helped. More important than the differences, however, is the fact that the movement on the whole had an impact, despite setbacks, failures, and the overwhelming “American reality” that laws and theories

could never entirely affect conditions on the ground. The frenzied reactions of the colonists demonstrates that clearly.

The fact that many of the specific provisions of The New Laws of 1542 were quickly repealed does not lessen their impact, for the crown was able to maintain the principle that the encomienda would not create a New World nobility. The Valladolid dispute, despite its disappointing outcome, is remarkable for ever having taken place at all. There is nothing comparable in the history of any other nation. It is essential to remember that Anglo-America never produced a single figure comparable to the great Spanish defenders of the Indians of the sixteenth century.

Because of these efforts, the natives under Spanish rule were surrounded with a network of protective legislation. It is unwise to believe that the existence of laws guaranteed good treatment of the Indians who lived thousands of miles from the lawgivers. Still, the very existence of the laws gave pro-Indian agitators and natives a weapon with which to fight oppression.

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