PART III

The Emergence of New World Patterns (1500–1800)

14 NEW ENCOUNTERS: THE CREATION OF A WORLD MARKET

15 EUROPE TRANSFORMED: REFORM AND STATE BUILDING

16 THE MUSLIM EMPIRES

17 THE EAST ASIAN WORLD

18 THE WEST ON THE EVE OF A NEW WORLD ORDER

Historians often refer to the period from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries as the early modern era. During these years, several factors were at work that created the conditions of our own time.

From a global perspective, perhaps the most noteworthy event of the period was the extension of the maritime trade network throughout the entire populated world. The Chinese had inaugurated the process with their groundbreaking voyages to East Africa in the early fifteenth century, but the primary instrument of that expansion was a resurgent Europe, which exploded onto the world scene with the initial explorations of the Portuguese and the Spanish at the end of the fifteenth century and then gradually came to dominate shipping on international trade routes during the next three centuries.

Some contemporary historians argue that it was this sudden burst of energy from Europe that created the first truly global economic network. According to Immanuel Wallerstein, one of the leading proponents of this theory, the Age of Exploration led to the creation of a new “world system” characterized by the emergence of global trade networks dominated by the rising force of European capitalism, which now began to scour the periphery of the system for access to markets and cheap raw materials.

Many historians, however, qualify Wallerstein’s view and point to the Mongol expansion beginning in the thirteenth century or even to the rise of the Arab empire in the Middle East a few centuries earlier as signs of the creation of a global communications network enabling goods and ideas to travel from one end of the Eurasian supercontinent to the other.

Whatever the truth of this debate, there are still many reasons for considering the end of the fifteenth century to be a crucial date in world history. In the first place, it marked the end of the long isolation of the Western Hemisphere from the rest of the inhabited world. In so doing, it led to the creation of the first truly global network of ideas and commodities, which would introduce plants, ideas, and (unfortunately) new diseases to all humanity (see the comparative essay in Chapter 14). Second, the period gave birth to a stunning increase in trade and manufacturing that stimulated major economic changes not only in Europe but in other parts of the world as well.

The period from 1500 to 1800, then, was an incubation period for the modern world and the launching pad for an era of Western domination that would reach fruition in the nineteenth century. To understand why the West emerged as the leading force in the world at that time, it is necessary to grasp what factors were at work in Europe and why they were absent in other major civilizations around the globe.

Historians have identified improvements in navigation, shipbuilding, and weaponry that took place in Europe in the early modern era as essential elements in the Age of Exploration. As we have seen, many of these technological advances were based on earlier discoveries that had taken place elsewhere—in China, India, and the Middle East—and had then been brought to Europe on Muslim ships or along the trade routes through Central Asia. But it was the capacity and the desire of the Europeans to enhance their wealth and power by making practical use of the discoveries of others that was the significant factor in the equation and enabled them to dominate international sea lanes and create vast colonial empires in the Western Hemisphere.
European expansion was not fueled solely by economic considerations, however. As in the rise of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries, religion played a major role in motivating the European Age of Exploration in the early modern era. Although Christianity was by no means a new faith in the sixteenth century (as Islam had been at the moment of Arab expansion), the world of Christendom was in the midst of a major period of conflict with the forces of Islam, a rivalry that had been exacerbated by the conquest of the Byzantine Empire by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Although the claims of Portuguese and Spanish adventurers that their activities were motivated primarily by a desire to bring the word of God to non-Christian peoples certainly included a considerable measure of self-delusion and hypocrisy, there seems no reason to doubt that religious motives played a meaningful part in the European Age of Exploration. Religious motives were perhaps less evident in the activities of the non-Catholic powers that entered the competition beginning in the seventeenth century. English and Dutch merchants and officials were more inclined to be motivated purely by the pursuit of economic profit.

Conditions in many areas of Asia were less conducive to these economic and political developments. In China, a centralized monarchy continued to rely on a prosperous agricultural sector as the economic foundation of the empire. In Japan, power was centralized under the powerful Tokugawa shogunate, and the era of peace and stability that ensued saw an increase in manufacturing and commercial activity. But Japanese elites, after initially expressing interest in the outside world, abruptly shut the door on European trade and ideas in an effort to protect the “land of the gods” from external contamination.

In the societies of India and the Middle East, commerce and manufacturing had played a vital role since the emergence of the Indian Ocean trade network in the first centuries C.E. But beginning in the eleventh century, the area had suffered through an extended period of political instability, marked by invasions by nomadic peoples from Central Asia. The violence of the period and the local rulers’ lack of experience in promoting maritime commerce severely depressed urban manufacturing and trade.

In the early modern era, then, Europe was best placed to take advantage of the technological innovations that had become increasingly available. With its political stability, sources of capital, and a “modernizing elite,” it was well equipped to wrest the greatest benefit from the new conditions. Whereas other regions were still beset by internal obstacles or had deliberately turned inward to seek their destiny, Europe now turned outward to seek a new and dominant position in the world. Nevertheless, significant changes were taking place in other parts of the world as well, and many of these changes had relatively little to do with the situation in the West. As we shall see, the impact of European expansion on the rest of the world was still limited at the end of the eighteenth century. Though European political authority was firmly established in a few key areas, such as the Spice Islands and Latin America, traditional societies remained relatively intact in most regions of Africa and Asia. And processes at work in these societies were often operating independently of events in Europe and would later give birth to forces that acted to restrict or shape the Western impact.

One of these forces was the progressive emergence of centralized states, some of them built on the concept of ethnic unity.
CHAPTER 14

New Encounters: The Creation of a World Market

CHAPTER OUTLINE
AND FOCUS QUESTIONS

An Age of Exploration and Expansion
Q How did Muslim merchants expand the world trade network at the end of the fifteenth century?

The Portuguese Maritime Empire
Q Why were the Portuguese so successful in taking over the spice trade?

The Conquest of the “New World”
Q How did Portugal and Spain acquire their empires in the Americas, and how did their methods of governing their colonies differ?

Africa in Transition
Q What were the main features of the African slave trade, and how did European participation in that trade affect traditional African practices?

Southeast Asia in the Era of the Spice Trade
Q What were the main characteristics of Southeast Asian societies, and how were they affected by the coming of Islam and the Europeans?

CRITICAL THINKING
Q Christopher Columbus has recently become a controversial figure in world history. Why do you think this is so, and how would you evaluate his contribution to the modern world?

WHEN THE PORTUGUESE FLEET arrived at the town of Calicut (KAL-ih-kuht) (now known as Kozhikode), on the western coast of India, in the spring of 1498, the fleet commander Vasco da Gama (VAHSH-koh dah GAHM-uh) ordered a landing party to go ashore to contact the local authorities. The first to greet them, a Muslim merchant from Tunisia, said, “May the Devil take thee! What brought thee hither?” “Christians and spices,” replied the visitors. “A lucky venture, a lucky venture,” replied the Muslim. “Plenty of rubies, plenty of emeralds! You owe great thanks to God, for having brought you to a country holding such riches!”

Such words undoubtedly delighted the Portuguese, who sent a landing party ashore and concluded that the local population appeared to be Christians. Although it later turned out that they were mistaken—the local faith was a form of Hinduism—their spirits were probably not seriously dampened, for God was likely of less immediate importance than gold and glory to sailors who had gone through considerable hardship to become the first Europeans since the ancient Greeks to sail across the Indian Ocean. They left two months later with a cargo of spices and the determination to return soon with a second and larger fleet.

Vasco da Gama’s maiden voyage to India inaugurated an extended period of European expansion into Asia, led by merchant adventurers and missionaries, that lasted several hundred years and had effects that are still felt today. Eventually, it resulted in a Western takeover of existing trade routes in the Indian Ocean and the establishment of colonies throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In later years, Western historians would react to these events by describing the era as an “Age of Discovery” that significantly broadened the...
maritime trade network and set the stage for the emergence of the modern world.

In fact, however, the voyages of Vasco da Gama and his European successors were only the latest stage in a process that had begun generations earlier, at a time when European explorations were still restricted to the stormy waters of the North Atlantic Ocean. As we saw in Chapter 10, Chinese fleets under Zhenghe had roamed the Indian Ocean for several years during the early fifteenth century, linking China with societies as distant as the Middle East and the coast of East Africa. Although the voyages of Zhenghe were short in duration and had few lasting effects, the world of Islam was also expanding its reach as Muslim traders blazed new trails into Southeast Asia and across the Sahara to the civilizations that flourished along the banks of the Niger River. It was, after all, a Muslim from North Africa who greeted the Portuguese on their first appearance off the coast of India. In this chapter, we turn our attention to the stunning expansion in the scope and volume of commercial and cultural contacts that took place in the generations preceding and following Vasco da Gama’s historic voyage to India, as well as to the factors that brought about this expansion.

An Age of Exploration and Expansion

**FOCUS QUESTION:** How did Muslim merchants expand the world trade network at the end of the fifteenth century?

Western historians have customarily regarded the voyage of Vasco da Gama as a crucial step in the opening of trade routes to the East. In the sense that the voyage was a harbinger of future European participation in the spice trade, this view undoubtedly has merit. In fact, however, as has been pointed out in earlier chapters, the Indian Ocean had been a busy thoroughfare for centuries. The spice trade had been carried on by sea in the region since the days of the legendary Queen of Sheba, and Chinese junks had sailed to the area in search of cloves and nutmeg since the Tang dynasty (see Chapter 10).

**Islam and the Spice Trade**

By the fourteenth century, a growing portion of the spice trade was being transported in Muslim ships sailing from ports in India or the Middle East. Muslims, either Arabs or Indian converts, had taken part in the Indian Ocean trade for centuries, and by the thirteenth century, Islam had established a presence in seaports on the islands of Sumatra and Java and was gradually moving inland. In 1292, the Venetian traveler Marco Polo observed that Muslims were engaging in missionary activity in northern Sumatra: “This kingdom is so much frequented by the Saracen merchants that they have converted the natives to the Law of Mahomet—I mean the townspeople only, for the hill people live for all the world like beasts, and eat human flesh, as well as other kinds of flesh, clean or unclean.”

But the major impetus for the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia came in the early fifteenth century, with the foundation of a new sultanate at Malacca (muh-LAK-uh), on the strait that today bears the same name. The founder was Paramesvara (pahr-uhr-muss-VAHR-uh), a vassal of the Hindu state of Majapahit (mah-jah-PAH-hit) on Java, whose original base of operations had been at Palembang (pah-lerm-BAHNG), on the island of Sumatra. In 1390, he had moved his base to Tumasik (tuhr-MAH-sik) (modern Singapore), at the tip of the Malay peninsula, hoping to enhance his ability to play a role in the commerce passing through the region. Under pressure from the expanding power of the Thai state of Ayuthaya (ah-yoo-TY-yuh) (see “Southeast Asia in the Era of the Spice Trade” later in this chapter) in the early fifteenth century, Paramesvara moved once again to Malacca. The latter’s potential strategic importance was confirmed in the sixteenth century by a visitor from Portugal, who noted that Malacca “is a city that was made for commerce; . . . the trade and commerce between the different nations for a thousand leagues on every hand must come to Malacca.”

Shortly after its founding, Malacca was visited by a Chinese fleet under the command of Admiral Zhenghe (see Chapter 10). To protect his patrimony from local rivals, Paramesvara agreed to become a tributary of the Chinese and cemented the new relationship by making an official visit to the Ming emperor in Beijing (see the box on p. 392). He also converted to Islam, undoubtedly with a view to enhancing Malacca’s ability to participate in the trade that passed through the strait, much of which was dominated by Muslim merchants. Within a few years, Malacca had become the leading economic power in the region and helped promote the spread of Islam to trading ports throughout the islands of Southeast Asia, including Java, Borneo, Sulawesi (soo-lah-WAY-see), and the Philippines. Adoption of the Muslim faith was eased by the popularity of Sufism, a brand of Islam that expressed a marked tolerance for mysticism and local religious beliefs (see Chapter 7).

**The Spread of Islam in West Africa**

In the meantime, Muslim trade and religious influence continued to expand south of the Sahara into the Niger River valley in West Africa. The area had been penetrated by traders from across the Sahara since ancient times, and contacts undoubtedly increased after the establishment of Muslim control over the Mediterranean coastal regions. Muslim
Malacca, located on the west coast of the Malay peninsula, first emerged as a major trading port in the early fifteenth century, when its sultan, Parameswara, avoided Thai rule with the aid of the emperor of China. This description of the area was written by a naval officer who served in one of the famous Chinese fleets that visited the city in the early fifteenth century.

Ma Huan, Description of a Starry Raft

This place did not formerly rank as a kingdom. It can be reached from Palembang on the monsoon in eight days. The coast is rocky and desolate, the population sparse. The country [used to pay] an annual tax of 40 taels of gold to Siam. The soil is infertile and yields [are] low. In the interior there is a mountain from [the slopes of] which a river takes its rise. The [local] folk pan the sands [of this river] to obtain tin, which they melt into ingots called tou. These weigh 1 kati 4 taels standard weight. [The inhabitants] also weave banana fiber into mats. Apart from tin, no other product enters into [foreign] trade. The climate is hot during the day but cool at night. [Both] sexes coil their hair into a knot. Their skin resembles black lacquer, but there are [some] white-complexioned folk among them who are of Chinese descent. The people esteem sincerity and honesty. They make a living by panning tin and catching fish. Their houses are raised above the ground. [When constructing them] they refrain from joining planks and restrict the building to the length of a [single] piece of timber. When they wish to retire, they spread their bedding side by side. They squat on their haunches when taking their meals. The kitchen and all its appurtenances is [also] raised [on stilts]. The goods [used in trading at Malacca] are blue and white porcelain, colored beads, colored taffetas, gold and silver. In the seventh year of Yung-lo [1409], the imperial envoy, the eunuch Cheng-Ho [Zhenghe], and his lieutenants conferred [on the ruler], by Imperial command, a pair of silver seals, and a headdress, girdle and robe. They also set up a tablet [stating that] Malacca had been raised to the rank of a kingdom, but at first Siam refused to recognize it. In the thirteenth year [of Yung-lo, 1415], the ruler [of Malacca, desirous of] showing his gratitude for the Imperial bounty, crossed the ocean and, accompanied by his consort and son, came to court with tribute. The Emperor rewarded him [appropriately], whereupon [the ruler of Malacca] returned to his [own] country.

Why was Malacca such an important center of world trade?

THE EMPIRE OF SONGHAI

With the decline of Mali in the late fifteenth century, a new power eventually appeared: the empire of Songhai (song-GY). The founder of Songhai was Sonni Ali, a local chieftain who seized Timbuktu from its Berber overlords in 1468 and then sought to restore the formidable empire of his predecessors. Rumored to possess magical powers, Sonni Ali was criticized by Muslim scholars for supporting traditional religious practices, but under his rule, Songhai emerged as a major trading state in the region (see Map 14.1). When he died...
The Great City of Timbuktu

After its founding in the twelfth century, Timbuktu became a great center of Islamic learning and a fabled city of mystery and riches to Europeans. In the sixteenth century, Timbuktu was still a major commercial center on the trade route through the Sahara. This description of the city was written in 1526 by Leo Africanus, a Muslim from the Islamic state of Granada and one of the great travelers of his time.

Leo Africanus, History and Description of Africa

Here are many shops of artificers and merchants, and especially of such as weave linen and cotton cloth. And hither do the Barbary merchants bring cloth of Europe. All the women of this region, except the maid-servants, go with their faces covered, and sell all necessary victuals. The inhabitants, and especially strangers there residing, are exceeding rich, insomuch that the king that now is, married both his daughters to rich merchants. Here are many wells containing sweet water; and so often as the river Niger overflowneth, they convey the water thereof by certain sluices into the town. Corn, cattle, milk, and butter this region yieldeth in great abundance: but salt is very scarce here; for it is brought hither by land from Taghaza which is 500 miles distant. When I myself was here, I saw one camel’s load of salt sold for 80 ducats. The rich king of Timbuktu hath many plates and scepters of gold, some whereof weigh 1,300 pounds: and he keeps a magnificent and well-furnished court. When he travelleth any whither he rideth upon a camel which is led by some of his noblemen; and so he doth likewise when he goeth forth to warfare, and all his soldiers ride upon horses. Whoever will speak unto this king must first fall down before his feet, and then taking up earth must first sprinkle it upon his own head and shoulders: which custom is ordinarily observed by... ambassadors from other princes. He hath always 3,000 horsemen, and a number of footmen that shoot poisoned arrows, attending upon him. They have often skirmishes with those that refuse to pay tribute, and so many as they take, they sell unto the merchants of Timbuktu. Here are very few horses bred, and the merchants and courtiers keep certain little nags which they use to travel upon: but their best horses are brought out of Barbary... Here are great store of doctors, judges, priests, and other learned men, that are bountifully maintained at the king's cost and charges, and hither are brought divers manuscripts or written books out of Barbary, which are sold for more money than any other merchandise. The coin of Timbuktu is of gold without any stamp or superscription but in matters of small value they use certain shells brought hither out of the kingdom of Persia, 400 of which are worth a ducat: and $\frac{2}{3}$ pieces of their gold coin weigh an ounce. The inhabitants are people of gentle and cheerful disposition, and spend a great part of the night singing and dancing through all the streets of the city.

What role did the city of Timbuktu play in regional commerce, according to this author? What were the chief means of payment?

in 1492, his son ascended to the throne but was deposed shortly thereafter by one of his military commanders, who seized power as king under the name Askia Mohammed (r. 1493–1528).

Under the new ruler, a fervent Muslim, Songhai increasingly relied on Islamic institutions and ideology to strengthen national unity and centralize authority. Askia Mohammed himself embarked on a pilgrimage to Mecca and was recognized by the caliph of Cairo as the Muslim ruler of the Niger River valley. On his return from Mecca, he tried to revive Timbuktu as a major center of Islamic learning but had less success in converting his subjects. He did preside over a significant increase in trans-Saharan trade (notably in salt and gold), which provided a steady source of income to Songhai and other states in the region (see the box above). Despite the efforts of Askia Mohammed and his successors, however, centrifugal forces within Songhai eventually led to its breakup. The end came in 1591, when Moroccan forces armed with firearms conquered the city to gain control over the gold trade in the region.

A New Player: Europe

For almost a millennium, Catholic Europe had largely been confined to one area. Its one major attempt to expand beyond those frontiers, the Crusades, ultimately had failed. Of course, Europe had never completely lost contact with the outside world. In particular, with the revival of trade in the High Middle Ages, European merchants began to travel more frequently to Africa and Asia. Nevertheless, overall Europe’s contacts with non-European civilizations remained limited until the fifteenth century, when Europeans began to embark on a remarkable series of overseas journeys. What caused European seafarers to undertake such dangerous voyages to the ends of the earth?

Europeans had long been attracted to the East. In the Middle Ages, myths and legends of an exotic land of great riches and magic were widespread. The most famous medieval travelers to the East were the Polos of Venice. In 1271, Nicolò and Maffeo, merchants from Venice, accompanied by Nicolò’s son Marco, undertook the lengthy journey to the court of the great
Mongol ruler Khubilai Khan (see Chapter 10). As one of the Great Khan’s ambassadors, Marco traveled to Japan as well and did not return to Italy until 1295. An account of his experiences, the Travels, proved to be the most informative of all the descriptions of Asia by medieval European travelers. Others, like the Franciscan friar John Plano Carpini, had preceded the Polos, but in the fourteenth century, the conquests of the Ottoman Turks and then the breakup of the Mongol Empire reduced Western traffic to the East. With the closing of the overland routes, a number of people in Europe became interested in the possibility of reaching Asia by sea. As noted in Chapter 10, Christopher Columbus himself possessed a copy of Marco Polo’s Travels.

THE MOTIVES An economic motive thus looms large in Renaissance European expansion (see Chapter 13). The rise of capitalism in Europe was certainly a powerful spur to the process. Merchants, adventurers, and government officials had high hopes of finding precious metals and expanding the areas of trade, especially for the spices of the East. Spices continued to be transported to Europe via Arab intermediaries but were outrageously expensive. Adventurous Europeans did not hesitate to express their desire to share in the wealth. As one Spanish conquistador (kah-n KEESS-tuh-dor) explained, he and his kind went to the Americas to “serve God and His Majesty, to give light to those who were in darkness, and to grow rich, as all men desire to do.”

This statement expresses another major reason for the overseas voyages—religious zeal. A crusading mentality was particularly strong in Portugal and Spain, where the Muslims had largely been driven out in the Middle Ages. Contemporaries of Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal, an outspoken advocate of European expansion, said that he was motivated by “his great desire to make increase in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and to bring him all the souls that should be saved.” Although most scholars believe that the religious motive was secondary to economic considerations, it would be foolish to overlook the genuine desire on the part of both explorers and conquistadors, let alone missionaries, to convert the heathen to Christianity. Hernán Cortés (hay-NAHN kor-TESS or kor-TEZ), the conqueror of Mexico, asked his Spanish rulers if it was not their duty to ensure that the native Mexicans were “introduced into and instructed in the holy Catholic faith.” Spiritual and secular affairs were closely intertwined in the sixteenth century. No doubt grandeur and glory, along with intellectual curiosity and a spirit of adventure, also played some role in European expansion.

THE MEANS If “God, glory, and gold” were the primary motives, what made the voyages possible? First of all, the expansion of Europe was a state enterprise, tied to the growth of centralized monarchies during the Renaissance. By the second half of the fifteenth century, European monarchies had increased both their authority and their resources and were in a position to turn their energies beyond their borders. For France, that meant the invasion of Italy, but for Portugal, a state not strong enough to pursue power in Europe, it meant going abroad. The Spanish scene was more complex, since the Spanish monarchy was strong enough by the sixteenth century to pursue power both on the Continent and beyond.

At the same time, by the end of the fifteenth century, European states had achieved a level of knowledge and technology that enabled them to conduct a regular series of voyages beyond Europe. Although the highly schematic and symbolic medieval maps were of little help to sailors, the portolani (poehr-tuh-LAH-nee), or detailed charts made by medieval navigators and mathematicians in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were more useful. With details on coastal

European Warships During the Age of Exploration. Prior to the fifteenth century, most European ships were either small craft with triangular, lateen sails used in the Mediterranean or slow, unwieldy square-rigged vessels operating in the North Atlantic. By the sixteenth century, European naval architects began to build caravels (left), ships that combined the maneuverability and speed offered by lateen sails (widely used by sailors in the Indian Ocean) with the carrying capacity and seaworthiness of the square-riggers. For a century, caravels were the feared “raiders of the oceans.” Eventually, as naval technology progressed, European warships developed in size and firepower, as the illustration of Portuguese carracks on the right shows.
Contours, distances between ports, and compass readings, they proved of great value for voyages in European waters. But because the *portolani* were drawn on a flat surface and took no account of the curvature of the earth, they were of little use for longer overseas voyages. Only when seafarers began to venture beyond the coasts of Europe did they begin to accumulate information about the actual shape of the earth and how to measure it. By the end of the fifteenth century, cartography had developed to the point that Europeans possessed fairly accurate maps of the known world.

In addition, Europeans had developed remarkably seaworthy ships as well as new navigational techniques. European shipbuilders had mastered the use of the sternpost rudder (an import from China) and had learned how to combine the use of lateen sails with a square rig. With these innovations, they could construct *caravels* (KER-uh-velz), ships mobile enough to sail against the wind and engage in naval warfare and also large enough to be armed with heavy cannons and carry a substantial amount of goods over long distances. Previously, sailors had used a quadrant and their knowledge of the position of the polestar to ascertain their latitude. Below the equator, however, this technique was useless. Only with the assistance of new navigational aids such as the compass (a Chinese invention) and the astrolabe, an astronomical instrument reportedly devised by Arab sailors (see Chapter 7), were they able to explore the high seas with confidence.

A final spur to exploration was the growing knowledge of the wind patterns in the Atlantic Ocean (see Map 14.2). The first European fleets sailing southward along the coast of West Africa had found their efforts to return hindered by the strong winds that blew steadily from the north along the coast. By the late fifteenth century, however, sailors had learned to tack out into the ocean, where they were able to catch westerly winds in the vicinity of the Azores that...
brought them back to the coast of western Europe. Christopher Columbus used this technique in his voyages to the Americas, and others relied on their new knowledge of the winds to round the continent of Africa in search of spices.

The Portuguese Maritime Empire

FOCUS QUESTION: Why were the Portuguese so successful in taking over the spice trade?

Portugal took the lead when it began exploring the coast of Africa under the sponsorship of Prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460). Henry had three objectives: finding a Christian kingdom with which to ally against the Muslims, acquiring new trade opportunities for Portugal, and extending Christianity. In 1419, he founded a school for navigators on the southwestern coast of Portugal. Shortly thereafter, Portuguese fleets began probing southward along the western coast of Africa in search of gold, which had for centuries been carried northward from south of the Atlas Mountains in central Morocco. In 1441, Portuguese ships reached the Senegal River, just north of Cape Verde. They found no gold but brought home a cargo of black Africans, most of whom were sold as slaves to wealthy buyers elsewhere in Europe. Within a few years, about a thousand slaves a year were shipped from the area back to Lisbon. Although obtaining slaves had not been one of their original motives for exploring the west coast of Africa, the Portuguese had inadvertently found a way to circumvent the traditional trans-Saharan slave route from Central Africa to the Mediterranean.

Continuing southward, in 1471 the Portuguese discovered a new source of gold along the southern coast of the hump of West Africa (an area that would henceforth be known to Europeans as the Gold Coast). A few years later, they established contact with the state of Kongo, near the mouth of the Congo River in Central Africa, and with the inland state of Benin, north of the Gold Coast. To facilitate trade in gold, ivory, and slaves (not all slaves were brought back to Lisbon; some were bartered to local merchants for gold), the Portuguese leased land from local rulers and built stone forts along the coast. Trade was slow to develop at first, however, because the Portuguese initially did not have many products that appealed to potential African buyers.

The Portuguese in India

Hearing reports of a route to India around the southern tip of Africa, Portuguese sea captains continued their probing. In 1487, Bartolomeu Dias (bar-toh-loh-MAY-oo DEE-uhhs) took advantage of westerly winds in the South Atlantic to round the Cape of Good Hope, but he feared a mutiny from his crew and returned home without continuing further. Ten years later, a fleet under the command of Vasco da Gama rounded the cape and stopped at several ports controlled by Muslim merchants along the coast of East Africa, including Sofala, Kilwa, and Mombasa. Then, having located a Muslim navigator who was familiar with seafaring in the region, da Gama’s fleet crossed the Arabian Sea and arrived off the port of Calicut, on the southwestern coast of India, on May 18, 1498. The Portuguese crown had sponsored da Gama’s voyage with the clear objective of destroying the Muslim monopoly over the spice trade, a monopoly that had been intensified by the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 (see Chapter 16). Calicut was a major entrepôt (ON-truh-poh) on the long route from the Spice Islands to the Mediterranean Sea, but the ill-informed Europeans believed it was the source of the spices themselves. They had also heard that there was a Christian community in the area, supposedly established by the apostle Thomas in the first century C.E.

The Portuguese did not find any Christians, but they did find spices. Although he lost two ships along the way, da Gama’s remaining vessels returned to Europe with their holds filled with ginger and cinnamon, a cargo that earned the investors a profit of several thousand percent.

The Search for Spices

During the next years, the Portuguese set out to gain control of the spice trade. In 1510, Admiral Afonso de Albuquerque

An Ivory Mask from Benin. By the end of the fifteenth century, the West African state of Benin had developed into an extensive and powerful empire enjoying trade with many of its neighbors, as well as with the state of Portugal. With the latter it traded ivory, forest products, and slaves in exchange for textiles and other European manufactured goods. This life-size ivory mask was probably intended to be worn by the king of Benin as a belt ornament in a gesture of gratitude to his mother, who had allegedly used her magical powers to help defeat his enemies. On the crest of the crown are carvings of Portuguese figures, providing one of the first examples in African art of the new trade relationship between that continent and Europe.
(ah-FAHN-soh day AL-buh-kur-kee) established his headquarters at Goa (GOH-uh), on the western coast of India south of present-day Mumbai (Bombay). From there, the Portuguese raided Arab shippers, provoking the following comment from an Arab source: "[The Portuguese] took about seven vessels, killing those on board and making some prisoner. This was their first action, may God curse them." In 1511, Albuquerque attacked Malacca itself.

For Albuquerque, control of Malacca would serve two purposes. It could help destroy the Arab spice trade network by blocking passage through the Strait of Malacca, and it could also provide the Portuguese with a way station en route to the Spice Islands (known today as the Moluccas) and other points east. After a short but bloody battle, the Portuguese seized the city and put the local Arab population to the sword. They then proceeded to erect the normal accoutrements of the day—a fort, a "factory" (warehouse), and a church.

From Malacca, the Portuguese launched expeditions farther east, to China in 1514 and the Moluccas (muh-LUHK-uh). There they signed a treaty with a local sultan for the purchase and export of cloves to the European market. Within a few years, they had managed to seize control of the spice trade from Muslim traders and had garnered substantial profits for the Portuguese monarchy.

Why were the Portuguese so successful? Basically, it was a matter of guns and seamanship. The first Portuguese fleet to arrive in Indian waters was relatively modest in size. It consisted of three ships and twenty guns, a force sufficient for self-defense and intimidation but not for serious military operations. Sixteenth-century Portuguese fleets were more heavily armed and were capable of inflicting severe defeats if necessary on local naval and land forces. The Portuguese by no means possessed a monopoly on the use of firearms and explosives, but their highly maneuverable, light ships enabled them to maintain their distance while bombarding the enemy with their powerful cannons. Such tactics gave them a military superiority over lightly armed rivals that they were able to exploit until the arrival of other European forces several decades later.

New Rivals Enter the Scene

Portugal’s efforts to dominate the trade of the Indian Ocean were never totally successful, however. The Portuguese lacked both the numbers and the wealth to overcome local resistance and colonize the Asian regions. Moreover, their massive investments in ships and laborers for their empire (hundreds of ships and hundreds of thousands of workers in shipyards and overseas bases) proved very costly. Disease, shipwrecks, and battles took a heavy toll. The empire was simply too large and Portugal too small to maintain it, and by the end of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese were being severely challenged by rivals.

THE SPANISH First came the Spanish. Queen Isabella of Spain had already signaled her intent to enter the competition in 1492 when she sponsored the voyage of Christopher Columbus into the Atlantic Ocean in search of a westward route to the Indies. Two years later, in an effort to head off potential conflict between the two countries, the Treaty of Tordesillas (tor-day-SEE-yass) divided the newly discovered world into separate Portuguese and Spanish spheres of influence. Thereafter, the route east around the Cape of Good Hope was reserved for the Portuguese, while the route across the Atlantic (except for the eastern hump of South America) was assigned to Spain (see Map 14.2 on p. 395).

Columbus’s later voyages eventually convinced influential figures at the Spanish court that the lands he had reached were not the Indies but an unknown land that possessed its own attractions. Still seeking a route to the Spice Islands, in 1519 Spain dispatched a fleet under the command of the Portuguese sea captain Ferdinand Magellan that sailed around the southern tip of South America, proceeded across the Pacific Ocean, and landed on the island of Cebu in the Philippine Islands. Although Magellan and some forty of his crew were killed in a skirmish with the local population, one of the two remaining ships sailed on to Tidor, in the Moluccas, and thence around the world via the Cape of Good Hope. In the words of a contemporary historian, they arrived in Cádiz "with precious cargo and fifteen men surviving out of a fleet of five sail."

As it turned out, the Spanish could not follow up on Magellan’s accomplishment, and in 1529, they sold their rights in Tidor to the Portuguese. But Magellan’s voyage was not a total loss. In the absence of concerted resistance from the local population, the Spanish managed to consolidate their control over the Philippines, which eventually became a major Spanish base in the carrying trade across the Pacific. Spanish galleons carried silk and other luxury goods to Acapulco in exchange for silver from the mines of Mexico.

THE ENGLISH AND THE DUTCH The primary threat to the Portuguese toehold in Southeast Asia, however, came from the English and the Dutch. In 1591, the first English expedition to the Indies through the Indian Ocean arrived in
London with a cargo of pepper. Nine years later, a private joint-stock company, the East India Company, was founded to provide a stable source of capital for future voyages. In 1608, an English fleet landed at Surat (SOOR-et), on the northwestern coast of India. Trade with Southeast Asia soon followed.

The Dutch were quick to follow suit, and the first Dutch fleet arrived in India in 1595. In 1602, the Dutch East India Company was established under government sponsorship and was soon actively competing with the English and the Portuguese in the region. In 1641, the Dutch seized the entrepôt of Malacca, one of the linchpins of Portugal’s trading empire in Asia.

The Conquests

The newly discovered territories that Europeans referred to as the New World actually contained flourishing civilizations populated by millions of people. But the Americas were new to the Europeans, who quickly saw opportunities for conquest and exploitation. With Portugal clearly in the lead in the race to exploit the riches of the Indies, the importance of these lands was magnified in the minds of the Spanish, especially these who saw a chance to win fame and fortune for themselves and their families.

The Spanish conquistadors, as they were called, were a hardy lot of mostly upper-class individuals motivated by a typical sixteenth-century blend of glory, greed, and religious crusading zeal. Although sanctioned by the Castilian crown, these groups were financed and outfitted privately, not by the government.

Their superior weapons, organizational skills, and determination brought the conquistadors incredible success. In 1519, a Spanish expedition under the command of Hernán Cortés landed at Veracruz, on the Gulf of Mexico. Marching to Tenochtitlán (teh-nahch-teet-LAHN) at the head of a small contingent of troops, Cortés received a friendly welcome from the Aztec monarch Moctezuma Xocoyotzin (mahk-tuh-ZOO-muh shoh-koh-YAH-ht-seen) (often called Montezuma), who initially believed his visitor was a representative of Quetzalcoat (KWET-sul-koh-AHT-ul), the legendary and godlike “feathered serpent.” The king and his subjects were astounded to see men on horseback, for the horse had disappeared from the Americas at least ten thousand years earlier.

But tensions soon erupted between the Spaniards and the Aztecs, provoked in part by demands by Cortés that the Aztecs renounce their native beliefs and accept Christianity. When the Spanish took Moctezuma hostage and began to destroy Aztec religious shrines, the local population revolted and drove the invaders from the city. Receiving assistance from the state of Tlaxcallan (tuh-lah-SKAH-lahn), Cortés managed to fight his way back into the city. Meanwhile, the Aztecs were beginning to suffer the first effects of the diseases
brought by the Europeans, which would eventually wipe out the majority of the local population. In a battle that to many Aztecs must have seemed to symbolize the dying of the legendary fifth sun, the Aztecs were finally vanquished (see the comparative illustration above). Within months, their magnificent city and its temples, believed by the conquerors to be the work of Satan, had been destroyed (see the box on p. 400).

A similar fate awaited the powerful Inka Empire in South America. Between 1531 and 1536, another expedition, led by a hardened and somewhat corrupt soldier, Francisco Pizarro (frahn-CHESS-koh puh-ZAHR-oh) (1470–1541), destroyed Inka power high in the Peruvian Andes. The Spanish conquests were undoubtedly facilitated by the previous arrival of European diseases, which had decimated the local population. Although it took another three decades before the western part of Latin America was brought under Spanish control (the Portuguese took over Brazil), already by 1535, the Spanish had created a system of colonial administration that made the New World an extension of the old—at least in European eyes.

THE PORTUGUESE IN BRAZIL Although the Spanish had taken the lead in planting their flag in the Western Hemisphere, they were not alone. In 1500, a Portuguese fleet inadvertently discovered the eastern coast of Latin America while en route to the Indies, and the Portuguese crown established the colony of Brazil in the area, basing its claim on the Treaty of Tordesillas, which had allocated that territory to the Portuguese sphere of influence. Like their Spanish rivals, the Portuguese initially saw their new colony as a source of gold and silver, but they soon discovered that profits could be made in
other ways as well. A formal administrative system was instituted in Brazil in 1549, and Portuguese migrants arrived to establish plantations to produce sugar, coffee, and other tropical products for export to Europe.

Governing the Empires
In the sixteenth century, while Portugal came to dominate Brazil, Spain established a colonial empire that included Central America, most of South America, and parts of North America. Within the lands of Central and South America, a new civilization arose that we have come to call Latin America (see Map 14.3).

Latin America rapidly became a multiracial society. Already by 1501, Spanish rulers allowed intermarriage between Europeans and the inhabitants of the Americas, whom the Europeans called Indians. Their offspring became known as mestizos (mess-TEE-zohz). In addition, over a period of three centuries, possibly as many as 8 million African slaves were brought to Spanish and Portuguese America to work the plantations that were established (see “The Slave Trade” later in this chapter). Mulattoes (muh-LAH-tohz)—the offspring of Africans and whites—joined mestizos and descendants of whites, Africans, and local Indians to produce a unique multiracial society in Latin America.

THE STATE AND THE CHURCH IN COLONIAL LATIN AMERICA
Although the colonial empires of Portuguese Brazil and Spanish America lasted more than three hundred years, the difficulties of communication and travel between the Americas and Europe made it virtually impossible for the home-country monarchs to provide close regulation of their empires. This left colonial officials in Latin America with much autonomy in implementing imperial policies. Nevertheless, the Iberians tried to keep the most important posts of colonial government in the hands of Europeans.

At the head of the administrative system that the Portuguese established for Brazil in the mid-sixteenth century was the position of governor-general. The governor-general (later called a viceroy) developed a bureaucracy but had at best

An Aztec’s Lament

The Spanish conquest of Mexico had an indelible impact on the vanquished local population. Aztec memoirs of the battle were collected by the Spanish a few years after the seizure of Tenochtitlan and were later translated from the original Nahua (NAH-waht-ul), the Aztec language, into Spanish or other European languages. In this passage, an Aztec observer describes the enormous sense of sorrow he felt at the tragedy that had befallen his compatriots. Note that the writer concludes that the defeat was ordained by the “Giver of Life” because of his displeasure with the Aztec people.

Flowers and Songs of Sorrow
Nothing but flowers and songs of sorrow are left in Mexico and Tlatelolco, where once we saw warriors and wise men.

We know it is true
that we must perish,
for we are mortal men.

You, the Giver of Life,
you have ordained it.

We wander here and there
in our desolate poverty.
We are mortal men.
We have seen bloodshed and pain
where once we saw beauty and valor.

We are crushed to the ground;
we lie in ruins.
There is nothing but grief and suffering
in Mexico and Tlatelolco,
where once we saw beauty and valor.

Have you grown weary of your servants?
Are you angry with your servants,
O Giver of Life?

How did the author of this selection respond to the destruction of Aztec culture? Does he appear to be angry or resigned? What role did Aztec religion play in shaping his response?
only loose control over the captains-general, who were responsible for governing the districts into which Brazil was divided.

To rule his American empire, the king of Spain appointed viceroys, the first of which was established for New Spain (Mexico) in 1535. Another viceroy was appointed for Peru in 1543. Much later, in the eighteenth century, two additional viceregalities—New Granada and La Plata—were added. Viceroyalties were in turn subdivided into smaller units. All of the major government positions were held by Spaniards. For creoles—American-born descendants of Europeans—the chief opportunity to hold a government post was in city councils.

From the beginning of their conquest of lands in the Western Hemisphere, Spanish and Portuguese rulers were determined to convert the indigenous peoples to Christianity. Wherever they went in the Americas, Europeans sought gold and silver. One Aztec observer commented that the Spanish conquerors "longed and lusted for gold. Their bodies swelled with greed, and their hunger was ravenous; they hungered like pigs for that gold." Rich silver deposits were found and exploited in Mexico and southern Peru (modern Bolivia). When the mines at Potosí (pohtoh-SEE) in Peru were opened in 1545, the value of precious metals imported into Europe quadrupled. It has been estimated that between 1503 and 1650, some 16 million kilograms (17,500 tons) of silver and 185,000 kilograms (200 tons) of gold entered the port of Seville in Spain.

Although the pursuit of gold and silver offered prospects of fantastic financial rewards, agriculture proved to be a more abiding and more rewarding source of prosperity for Latin America.
The Mission (1986)

Directed by Roland Joffé, The Mission examines religion, politics, and colonialism in Europe and South America in the mid-eighteenth century. The movie begins with a flashback as Cardinal Altamirano (Ray McAnally) is dictating a letter to the pope to discuss the fate of the Jesuit missions in Paraguay. (The Jesuits were members of the Society of Jesus, a Roman Catholic religious order that was founded in the sixteenth century.) He begins by describing the establishment of a new Jesuit mission (San Carlos) in Spanish territory in the borderlands of Paraguay and Brazil. Father Gabriel (Jeremy Irons) has been able to win over the Guarani Indians and create a community based on communal livelihood and property (private property has been abolished). The mission includes dwellings for the Guarani and a church where they can practice their new faith by learning the Gospel and singing hymns. This small band of Jesuits is joined by Rodrigo Mendoza (Robert De Niro), who has been a slave trader dealing in Indians and now seeks to atone for killing his brother in a fit of jealous rage by joining the community at San Carlos. Won over to Father Gabriel’s perspective, he also becomes a member of the Jesuit order.

Cardinal Altamirano now travels to South America, sent by a pope anxious to appease the Portuguese monarch over the activities of the Jesuits. Portuguese settlers in Brazil are eager to use the local people as slaves and to confiscate their communal lands and property. In 1750, when Spain agrees to turn over the Guaraní territory in Paraguay to Portugal, the settlers seize their opportunity. Although the cardinal visits a number of missions, including San Carlos, and obviously approves of their accomplishments, his hands are tied by the Portuguese king, who is threatening to disband the Jesuit order if the missions are not closed. The cardinal acquiesces, and Portuguese troops are sent to take over the missions. Although Rodrigo and the other Jesuits join the Guaraní in fighting the Portuguese while Father Gabriel remains nonviolent, all are massacred. The cardinal returns to Europe, dismayed by the murderous activities of the Portuguese but hopeful that the Jesuit order will be spared. All is in vain, however, as the Catholic monarchs of Europe expel the Jesuits from their countries and pressure Pope Clement XIV into disbanning the Jesuit order in 1773.

In its approach to the destruction of the Jesuit missions, The Mission clearly exalts the dedication of the Jesuit order and praises its devotion to the welfare of the Indians. The movie ends with a small group of Guarani children, now all orphans, picking up a few remnants of debris in their destroyed mission and moving off down the river back into the wilderness to escape enslavement. The final words on the screen illuminate the movie’s message about the activities of the Europeans who destroyed the local civilizations in their conquest of the Americas: “The Indians of South America are still engaged in a struggle to defend their land and their culture. Many of the priests who, inspired by faith and love, continue to support the rights of the Indians, do so with their lives,” a reference to the ongoing struggle in Latin America against the regimes that continue to oppress the landless masses.

America. The American colonies became sources of raw materials for Spain and Portugal as sugar, tobacco, chocolate, precious woods, animal hides, and a number of other natural products made their way to Europe. In turn, the mother countries supplied their colonists with manufactured goods (see Map 14.4). Both Spain and Portugal closely regulated the trade of their American colonies to keep others out, but the English and the French eventually became too powerful to be excluded from this lucrative Latin American market.

To produce these goods, colonial authorities initially tried to rely on local sources of human labor. Spanish policy toward the Indians was a combination of confusion, misguided paternalism, and cruel exploitation. Confusion arose over the nature of the Indians. Queen Isabella declared the Indians to be subjects of Castile and instituted the encomienda system, under which European settlers received grants of land and could collect tribute from the indigenous peoples and use them as laborers. In return, the holders of an encomienda (en-koh-MYEN-duh) were supposed to protect the Indians and supervise their spiritual and material needs. In practice, this meant that the settlers were free to implement the system as they pleased. Three thousand miles from
Spain, Spanish settlers largely ignored their government and brutally used the Indians to pursue their own economic interests. Indians were put to work on sugar plantations and in the lucrative gold and silver mines.

Forced labor, starvation, and especially disease took a fearful toll on Indian lives. With little or no natural resistance to European diseases, the Indians were ravaged by smallpox, measles, and typhus brought by the explorers and the conquistadors (see the comparative essay on p. 405). Although scholarly estimates vary drastically, a reasonable guess is that at least half of the local population in some areas died of European diseases. On Hispaniola alone, out of an initial population of 100,000 when Columbus arrived in 1493, only 300 Indians survived by 1570. In 1542, largely in response to the publications of Bartolomé de Las Casas (bahr-toh-loh-MAY clay lahs KAH-sahs), a Dominican monk who championed the Indians, the government abolished the encomienda system and provided more protection for the Indians (see the box on p. 404). By then, however, the indigenous population had been decimated by disease, causing the Spanish—and eventually the Portuguese as well—to import African slaves to replace the Indians in the sugar fields.

The Competition Intensifies

The success of the Spanish and the Portuguese in exploiting the riches of the Americas soon attracted competition from other European trading states. The Dutch formed the Dutch West India Company in 1621 to compete with Spanish and Portuguese interests in the Americas. But although it made some inroads in Brazil (briefly taking control of the sugar plantations around the port city of Bahia from the Portuguese) and the Caribbean (see Map 14.3), the company’s profits were never large enough to cover its expenditures. Dutch settlements were also established on the North American continent. The mainland colony of New Netherland stretched from the mouth of the Hudson River as far north as present-day Albany, New York.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, however, rivalry and years of warfare with the English and the French—who had also become active in North America, establishing colonies in the Caribbean and in Louisiana at the mouth of the Mississippi River—brought the decline of the Dutch commercial empire in the Americas. In 1664, the English seized the colony of New Netherland and renamed it New York, and the Dutch West India Company soon went bankrupt. In
Las Casas and the Spanish Treatment of the American Indians

Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474–1566) was a Dominican monk who participated in the conquest of Cuba and received land and Indians in return for his efforts. But in 1514, he underwent a radical transformation that led him to believe that the Indians had been cruelly mistreated by his fellow Spaniards. He spent the remaining years of his life (he lived to the age of ninety-two) fighting for the Indians. This selection is taken from his most influential work, Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias, known to English readers as The Tears of the Indians. This work was largely responsible for the reputation of the Spanish as inherently “cruel and murderous fanatics.” Many scholars today feel that Las Casas may have exaggerated his account to shock his contemporaries into action.

**Bartolomé de Las Casas, The Tears of the Indians**

There is nothing more detestable or more cruel than the tyranny which the Spaniards use toward the Indians for the getting of pearl. Surely the infernal torments cannot much exceed the anguish that they endure, by reason of that way of cruelty; for they put them under water some four or five ells deep, where they are forced without any liberty of respiration, to gather up the shells wherein the Pearls are; sometimes they come up again with nets full of shells to take breath, but if they stay any while to rest themselves, immediately comes a hangman row’d in a little boat, who as soon as he hath well beaten them, drags them again to their labor. Their food is nothing but filth, and the very same that contains the Pearl, with small portion of that bread which that Country affords; in the first whereof there is little nourishment; and as for the latter, it is made with great difficulty, besides that they have not enough of that neither for sustenance; they lie upon the ground in fetters, lest they should run away; and many times they are drown’d in this labor, and are never seen again till they swim upon the top of the waves; oftentimes they also are devoured by certain sea monsters, that are frequent in those seas. Consider whether this hard usage of the poor creatures be consistent with the precepts which God commands concerning charity to our neighbor, by those that cast them so undeservedly into the dangers of a cruel death, causing them to perish without any remorse or pity, or allowing them the benefit of the Sacraments, or the knowledge of Religion; it being impossible for them to live any time under the water; and this death is so much the more painful, by reason that by the coarctation of the breast, while the lungs strive to do their office, the vital parts are so afflicted that they die vomiting the blood out of their mouths. Their hair also, which is by nature black, is hereby changed and made of the same color with that of the sea Wolves; their bodies are also so besprinkled with the froth of the sea, that they appear rather like monsters than men.

---

**Q** What forms of cruelty did Las Casas mention in this account? Compare the treatment of the Indians described here with the treatment of African slaves described in the selection on p. 410.

---

1663, Canada became the property of the French crown and was administered as a French province. But the French failed to provide adequate men or money, allowing their continental wars to take precedence over the conquest of the North American continent. By the early eighteenth century, the French began to cede some of their American possessions to their English rival.

The English, meanwhile, had proceeded to create a colonial empire in the Western Hemisphere along the Atlantic seaboard of North America. Early efforts to establish English settlements near Cape Hatteras and the Chesapeake Bay made it evident that colonizing American lands was not necessarily conducive to quick profits. But the desire to escape from religious oppression combined with economic interests did make successful colonization possible, as the Massachusetts Bay Company demonstrated. The Massachusetts colony had only 4,000 settlers in its early years, but by 1660, their numbers had swelled to 40,000. Although the English had established control over most of the eastern seaboard by the end of the seventeenth century, the North American colonies still remained of minor significance to the English economy.

**Christopher Columbus: Hero or Villain?**

For centuries, the explorer Christopher Columbus has been viewed throughout the world in a positive light. By discovering the Western Hemisphere, he opened up the world and laid the foundations for the modern global economy. Recently, however, some historians have begun to challenge the prevailing image of Columbus as a heroic figure in world history and view him instead as a symbol of European colonial repression and a prime mover in the virtual extinction of the peoples and cultures of the Americas (see the comparative essay “The Columbian Exchange” on p. 405).
The Columbian Exchange

In the Western world, the discovery of the Americas has traditionally been viewed in a largely positive sense, as the first step in a process that expanded the global trade network and eventually led to increased economic well-being and the spread of civilization throughout the world. In recent years, however, that view has come under sharp attack from some observers, who point out that for the peoples of the Americas, the primary legacy of the European conquest was not improved living standards but harsh colonial exploitation and the spread of pestilential diseases that devastated local populations.

There is no doubt that the record of the European conquistadors in the Western Hemisphere leaves much to be desired, and certainly the voyages of Columbus were not of universal benefit to his contemporaries or to later generations. They not only resulted in the destruction of vibrant civilizations that were evolving in the Americas but also led ultimately to the enslavement of millions of Africans, who were separated from their families and shipped to a far-off world in deplorable, inhuman conditions.

But to focus solely on the evils committed in the name of exploration and civilization misses a larger point and obscures the long-term ramifications of the Age of Exploration. The age of European expansion that began with Prince Henry the Navigator and Christopher Columbus was only the latest in a series of population movements that included the spread of nomadic peoples across Central Asia and the expansion of Islam out of the Middle East after the death of the prophet Muhammad. In fact, the migration of peoples in search of survival and a better livelihood has been a central theme in the evolution of the human race since the dawn of prehistory. Virtually all of the migrations involved acts of unimaginable cruelty and the forcible displacement of peoples and societies.

In retrospect, it seems clear that the consequences of such broad population movements are too complex to be summed up in moral or ideological simplifications. The Mongol invasions and the expansion of Islam are two examples of movements that brought benefits as well as costs for the peoples who were affected. By the same token, the European conquest of the Americas not only brought the destruction of cultures and dangerous new diseases but also initiated the exchange of plant and animal species that have ultimately been of widespread benefit to peoples throughout the globe. The introduction of the horse, the cow, and various grain crops vastly increased food production in the Americas. The cultivation of corn, manioc, and the potato, all of them products of the Western Hemisphere, has had the same effect in Asia, Africa, and Europe. The Columbian Exchange, as it is sometimes labeled, has had far-reaching consequences that transcend facile moral judgments.

The opening of the Americas had other long-term ramifications as well. The importation of vast amounts of gold and silver fueled a price revolution that for years distorted the Spanish economy. At the same time, the increase in liquid capital due to this expansion was a crucial factor in the growth of commercial capitalism that set the stage for the global economy of the modern era. Some have even suggested that the precious metals that flowed into the treasuries of major European trading states may have helped finance the Industrial Revolution (see Chapter 19) that is now spreading rapidly throughout the modern world.

Viewed in that context, the Columbian Exchange, whatever its moral failings, ultimately brought benefits to peoples throughout the world. For some, the costs were high, and it can be argued that the indigenous peoples of the Americas might have been better managed the transformation on their own. But the “iron law” of history operates at its own speed and does not wait for laggards. For good or ill, the Columbian Exchange marks a major stage in the transition between the traditional and the modern world.

Certainly, they have a point. As we have seen, the immediate consequences of Columbus’s voyages were tragic for countless peoples in what Europeans innocently called the “New World.” And as historical studies have shown, Columbus himself was not an entirely sympathetic figure. He viewed the indigenous peoples that he encountered with condescension, describing them to his sponsors as naïve innocents who could be exploited for the purpose of bringing wealth and power to Spain. As a consequence, the treatment of the local population by his men was frequently brutal.

How can the costs and benefits of the Columbian Exchange be measured? What standards would you apply in attempting to measure them?
But is it fair to blame Columbus for possessing many of
the character traits and prejudices common to his era? To do
so is to demand that an individual transcend the limitations of
his time and adopt the values of another generation several
hundred years into the future—something that few, if any,
would be able to achieve. Perhaps it is better to note simply
that Columbus and his contemporaries showed relatively lit-
tle understanding and sympathy for the cultural values of
peoples who lived beyond the borders of their own civiliza-
tion, a limitation that would probably apply to one degree or
another to all generations, including our own. Whether
Columbus was a hero or a villain will remain a matter of
debate. That he and his contemporaries played a key role in
the emergence of the modern world is a matter on which
there can be no doubt.

Africa in Transition

FOCUS QUESTION: What were the main features of
the African slave trade, and how did European
participation in that trade affect traditional African
practices?

Although the primary objective of the Portuguese in round-
ing the Cape of Good Hope was to find a sea route to the
Spice Islands, they soon discovered that profits were to be
made en route, along the eastern coast of Africa.

The Portuguese in Africa

In the early sixteenth century, a Portuguese fleet commanded
by Francisco de Almeida (frahn-CHESS-koh duh ahl-MAY-
duh) seized a number of East African port cities, including
Kilwa, Sofala, and Mombasa, and built forts along the coast in
an effort to control the trade in the area. Above all, the Portu-
guese wanted to monopolize the trade in gold, which was
mined in the hills along the upper Zambezi River and then
shipped to Sofala on the coast (see Map 14.4 on p. 403 and
Chapter 8). For centuries, the gold trade had been mono-
lized by local Bantu-speaking Shona peoples at Zimbabwe. In
the fifteenth century, it had come under the control of a
Shona dynasty known as the Mwene Mutapa (MWAY-nay
moo-TAH-puh).

The Mwene Mutapa had originally controlled the region
south of the Zambezi River and may have been the builders
of the impressive city known today as Great Zimbabwe, but
sometime in the fifteenth century, they moved northeastward
to the valley of the Zambezi. Here they encountered the
arriving Portuguese, who had begun to move inland to gain
access to the lucrative gold trade and had established ports on
the Zambezi River. The Portuguese opened treaty relations
with the Mwene Mutapa, and Jesuit priests were eventually
posted to the court in 1561. At first, the Mwene Mutapa
found the Europeans useful as an ally against local rivals, but
by the end of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese had estab-
lished a protectorate and forced the local ruler to grant title
to large tracts of land to European officials and private indi-
viduals living in the area. Eventually, those lands would be
integrated into the colony of Mozambique. The Portuguese,
however, lacked the personnel, the capital, and the expertise
to dominate local trade, and in the late seventeenth century,
a vassal of the Mwene Mutapa succeeded in driving them
from the plateau; his descendants maintained control of the
area for the next two hundred years.

North of the Zambezi River, Bantu-speaking peoples were
coming under pressure not only from the Portuguese but also
from pastoralists migrating southward from the southern
Sudan. The latter were frequently aggressive and began to
occupy the rift valley and parts of the lake district that had
previously been controlled by Bantu-speaking farmers. In
some cases, the conflict between farmers and pastoralists was
fairly clear-cut. In Rwanda and Burundi, immediately west of
Lake Victoria, farming Hutu peoples defended their hilltop
communities against roving Tutsi pastoralists occupying the
surrounding lowlands.

The Dutch in South Africa

The first Europeans to settle in southern Africa were the
Dutch. After an unsuccessful attempt to seize the Portuguese
settlement on the island of Mozambique off the East African
cost, in 1652 the Dutch set up a way station at the Cape of
Good Hope to serve as a base for their fleets en route to the
East Indies. At first, the new settlement was intended simply
to provide food and other provisions to Dutch ships, but
eventually it developed into a permanent colony. Dutch farm-
ers, known as Boers and speaking a Dutch dialect that
evolved into Afrikaans, began to settle in the sparsely occu-
pied areas outside the city of Cape Town. The temperate cli-
mate and the absence of tropical diseases made the territory
near the cape almost the only land south of the Sahara that
the Europeans found suitable for habitation.

The Dutch, like their chief rivals, the English and the
French, also took advantage of the decline of the Songhai
Empire to become active in the West African trade in the
mid-sixteenth century, encroaching particularly on the Portu-
guese spheres of influence. During the mid-seventeenth cen-
tury, the Dutch seized a number of Portuguese forts along
the West African coast while at the same time taking over
the bulk of the Portuguese trade across the Indian Ocean.

The Slave Trade

The European exploration of the African coastline had little
apparent significance for most peoples living in the interior of
the continent, except for a few who engaged in direct or indi-
rect trade with the foreigners. But for peoples living on or
near the coast, the impact was often great indeed. As the
trade in slaves increased during the sixteenth, seventeenth,
and eighteenth centuries, thousands and then millions of
men, women, and even children were removed from their
homes and forcibly exported to plantations in the Western
Hemisphere.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS As we saw in Chapter 8,
there were different forms of slavery in Africa before the
arrival of the Europeans For centuries, slaves—often captives seized in battle or in raids between neighboring villages—had been used in many African societies as agricultural laborers or as household servants. Many served as domestic servants or as wageless workers for the local ruler, and some were permitted to purchase their freedom under certain conditions. After the expansion of Islam south of the Sahara in the eighth century, a vigorous traffic in slaves developed, as Arab merchants traded for slaves along routes snaking across the Sahara or up the Nile River valley. Once transported to the Middle East, most such captives were used as domestic servants or as workers on plantations throughout the region. Slavery also existed in many European countries, where a few slaves from Africa or Slavic-speaking peoples captured in war in the regions near the Black Sea (the English word slave derives from “Slav”) were used for domestic purposes or as agricultural workers in the lands adjacent to the Mediterranean.

With the arrival of the Europeans in Africa in the fifteenth century, the African slave trade changed dramatically, although the change did not occur immediately. At first, the Portuguese simply replaced European slaves with African ones. During the second half of the fifteenth century, about a thousand slaves were taken to Portugal each year; the vast majority were apparently destined to serve as domestic servants for affluent families throughout Europe. But the discovery of the Americas in the 1490s and the subsequent planting of sugarcane in South America and on the islands of the Caribbean changed the situation. Cane sugar was native to Indonesia and had first been introduced to Europeans from the Middle East during the Crusades. By the fifteenth century, it was grown (often by slaves from Africa or the region of the Black Sea) in modest amounts on Cyprus, Sicily, and southern regions of the Iberian peninsula. But when the Ottoman Empire seized much of the eastern Mediterranean (see Chapter 16), the Europeans needed to seek out new areas suitable for cultivation. In 1490, the Portuguese established sugar plantations worked by African laborers at São Tomé, an island off the central coast of Africa. Demand increased as sugar gradually replaced honey as a sweetener, especially in northern Europe.

But the primary impetus to the sugar industry came from the colonization of the Americas. During the sixteenth century, plantations were established along the eastern coast of Brazil and on several islands in the Caribbean. Because the cultivation of cane sugar is an arduous process demanding both skill and large quantities of labor, the new plantations required more workers than could be provided by the Indian population in the Americas, many of whom had died of diseases imported from Europe and Africa. Since the climate and soil of much of West Africa were not especially conducive to the cultivation of sugar, African slaves began to be shipped to Brazil and the Caribbean to work on the plantations. The first were sent from Portugal, but in 1518, a Spanish ship carried the first boatload of African slaves directly from Africa to the Americas.
MAP 14.5 The Slave Trade. Beginning in the sixteenth century, the trade in African slaves to the Americas became a major source of profit to European merchants. This map traces the routes taken by slave-trading ships, as well as the territories and ports of call of European powers in the seventeenth century.

Q What were the major destinations for the slave trade?

GROWTH OF THE SLAVE TRADE During the next two centuries, the trade in slaves increased by massive proportions (see Map 14.5). An estimated 275,000 enslaved Africans were exported to other countries during the sixteenth century, more than two-thirds of them to the Americas. The total climbed beyond a million in the seventeenth century and jumped to 6 million in the eighteenth century, when the trade spread from West and Central Africa to East Africa. Even during the nineteenth century, when Great Britain and a number of other European countries attempted to end the slave trade, nearly 2 million humans were exported. It has been estimated that altogether as many as 10 million African slaves were transported to the Americas between the early sixteenth and the late nineteenth centuries. As many as 2 million were exported to other areas during the same period.

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE One reason for these astonishing numbers, of course, was the tragically high death rate. In what is often called the Middle Passage, the arduous voyage from Africa to the Americas, losses were frequently appalling. Although figures on the number of slaves who died on the journey are almost entirely speculative, during the first shipments, up to one-third of the human cargo may have died of disease or malnourishment. Even among crew members, mortality rates were sometimes as high as one in four. Later merchants became more efficient and reduced losses to about 10 percent. Still, the future slaves were treated inhumanely, chained together in the holds of ships reeking with the stench of human waste and diseases carried by vermin.

Ironically, African slaves who survived the brutal voyage fared somewhat better than whites after their arrival. Mortality rates for Europeans in the West Indies were ten to twenty times higher than in Europe, and death rates for those newly arrived in the islands averaged more than 125 per 1,000 annually. But the figure for Africans, many of whom had developed at least a partial immunity to yellow fever, was only about 30 per 1,000.

The reason for the staggering death rates was clearly more than maltreatment, although that was certainly a factor. As we have seen, the transmission of diseases from one continent to another brought high death rates among those lacking immunity. African slaves were somewhat less susceptible to European diseases than the American Indian populations. Indeed, they seem to have possessed a degree of immunity, perhaps because their ancestors had developed antibodies to diseases common to the Old World from the centuries of contact via the trans-Saharan trade. The Africans would not have had immunity to native American diseases, however.
The mortality rates were higher for immigrants than for individuals born in the Americas, who as children gradually developed at least a partial immunity to many diseases. Death rates for native-born slaves tended to be significantly lower than for recent arrivals, which raises the question of why the slave population did not begin to rise after the initial impact of settlement had worn off. The answer appears to be a matter of economics. In the first place, only half as many women were enslaved as men, birthrates for women living in slavery were low, and infant mortality was high. In the second place, as long as the price of slaves was low, many slave owners in the West Indies apparently believed that purchasing a new slave was less expensive than raising a child from birth to working age at adolescence. After the price of slaves began to rise during the eighteenth century, plantation owners started to devote more efforts to replenishing the supply of workers by natural methods.

**SOURCES OF SLAVES** Slaves were obtained by traditional means. As mentioned earlier, before the coming of the Europeans, most slaves in Africa were prisoners or war captives or had inherited their status. When Europeans first began to take part in the slave trade, they would normally purchase slaves from local African merchants at the infamous slave markets in exchange for gold, guns, or other European manufactured goods such as textiles or copper or iron utensils (see the box on p. 410). At first, local slave traders obtained their supply from nearby regions, but as demand increased, they had to move further inland to find their victims. In a few cases, local rulers became concerned about the impact of the slave trade on the political and social well-being of their societies (see the box on p. 411). As a general rule, however, the local monarchs viewed the slave trade as a source of income, and many launched forays against defenseless villages in search of unsuspecting victims.

Historians once thought that Europeans controlled the terms of the slave trade and were able to obtain victims at bargain prices. Recently, however, it has become clear that African intermediaries—private merchants, local elites, and trading state monopolies—were very active in the process and were often able to dictate the price, volume, and availability of slaves to European purchasers. The majority of the slaves sold to European buyers were males; females, who were in great demand in Africa and on the trans-Saharan trade, tended to be reserved for those markets. The slave merchants were often paid in various types of imported goods, including East Asian textiles (highly desired for their bright colors and durability), furniture, and other manufactured products. Until the end of the seventeenth century, the Portuguese preferred gold to slaves and would sometimes pay for the gold by selling slaves to African kingdoms that were short of labor. In fact, not until the beginning of the eighteenth century did slaves surpass gold and ivory as the continent’s leading exports.

**THE EFFECTS OF THE SLAVE TRADE** The effects of the slave trade varied from area to area. It might be assumed that apart from the tragic effects on the lives of individual victims and...
A Slave Market in Africa

Traffic in slaves had been carried on in Africa since the kingdom of the pharaohs in ancient Egypt. But the slave trade increased dramatically after the arrival of European ships off the coast of West Africa. The following passage by a Dutch observer describes a slave market in Africa and the conditions on the ships that carried the slaves to the Americas.

Slavery in Africa: A Firsthand Report

Not a few in our country fondly imagine that parents here sell their children, men their wives, and one brother the other. But those who think so deceive themselves, for this never happens on any other account but that of necessity, or some great crime; most of the slaves that are offered to us are prisoners of war, who are sold by the victors as their booty.

When these slaves come to Fida, they are put in prison all together; and when we treat concerning buying them, they are brought out into a large plain. There, by our surgeons, whose province it is, they are thoroughly examined, even to the smallest member, and that naked too, both men and women, without the least distinction or modesty. Those that are approved as good are set on one side; and the lame or faulty are set by as invalids.

The invalids and the maimed being thrown out, ... the remainder are numbered, and it is entered who delivered them. In the meanwhile, a burning iron, with the arms or name of the companies, lies in the fire, with which ours are marked on the breast. This is done that we may distinguish them from the slaves of the English, French, or others (which are also marked with their mark), and to prevent the Negroes exchanging them for worse, at which they have a good hand.

I doubt not but this trade seems very barbarous to you, but since it is followed by mere necessity, it must go on; but we take all possible care that they are not burned too hard, especially the women, who are more tender than the men.

When we have agreed with the owners of the slaves, they are returned to their prison. There from that time forward they are kept at our charge, costing us two pence a day a slave; which serves to subsist them, like our criminals, on bread and water. To save charges, we send them on board our ships at the very first opportunity, before which their masters strip them of all they have on their backs so that they come aboard stark naked, women as well as men. In this condition they are obliged to continue, if the master of the ship is not so charitable (which he commonly is) as to bestow something on them to cover their nakedness.

You would really wonder to see how these slaves live on board, for though their number sometimes amounts to six or seven hundred, yet by the careful management of our masters of ships, they are so regulated that it seems incredible. And in this particular our nation exceeds all other Europeans, for the French, Portuguese and English slave ships are always foul and stinking; on the contrary, ours are for the most part clean and neat.

The slaves are fed three times a day with indifferent good victuals, and much better than they eat in their own country. Their lodging place is divided into two parts, one of which is appointed for the men, the other for the women, each sex being kept apart. Here they lie as close together as it is possible for them to be crowded.

We are sometimes sufficiently plagued with a parcel of slaves which come from a far inland country who very innocently persuade one another that we buy them only to fatten and afterward eat them as a delicacy. When we are so unhappy as to be pestered with many of this sort, they resolve and agree together (and bring over the rest to their party) to run away from the ship, kill the Europeans, and set the vessel ashore, by which means they design to free themselves from being our food.

I have twice met with this misfortune; and the first time proved very unlucky to me, I not in the least suspecting it, but the uproar was quashed by the master of the ship and myself by causing the abettor to be shot through the head, after which all was quiet.

What is the author’s overall point of view toward the institution of slavery? Does he justify the practice? How does he compare Dutch behavior with that of other European countries involved in the slave trade?
The Price of Friendship

A Letter to King João

[1526] Sir, your Highness [of Portugal] should know how our Kingdom is being lost in so many ways that it is convenient to provide for the necessary remedy, since this is caused by the excessive freedom given by your factors and officials to the men and merchants who are allowed to come to this Kingdom to set up shops with goods and many things which have been prohibited by us, and which they spread throughout our Kingdoms and Domains in such an abundance that many of our vassals, whom we had in obedience, do not comply because they have the things in greater abundance than we ourselves; and it was with these things that we had them content and subjected under our vassalage and jurisdiction, so it is doing a great harm not only to the service of God, but the security and peace of our Kingdoms and State as well.

And we cannot reckon how great the damage is, since the mentioned merchants are taking every day our natives, sons of the land and the sons of our noblemen and vassals and our relatives, because the thieves and men of bad conscience grab them wishing to have the things and wares of this Kingdom which they are ambitious of; they grab them and get them to be sold; and so great, Sir, is the corruption and licentiousness that our country is being completely depopulated, and Your Highness should not agree with this nor accept it as in your service. And to avoid it we need from those [your] Kingdoms no more than some priests and a few people to teach in schools, and no other goods except wine and flour for the holy sacrament. That is why we beg of Your Highness to help and assist us in this matter, commanding your factors that they should not send here either merchants or wares, because it is our will that in these Kingdoms there should not be any trade of slaves nor outlet for them. Concerning what is referred above, again we beg of Your Highness to agree with it, since otherwise we cannot remedy such an obvious damage. Pray Our Lord in His mercy to have Your Highness under His guard and let you do for ever the things of His service. I kiss your hand many times.

At our town of Congo, written on the sixth day of July. João Teixeira did it in 1526. The King, Dom Afonso.

[On the back of this letter the following can be read: To the most powerful and excellent prince Dom João, King our Brother.]

Q In what ways were the European merchants destabilizing the kingdom of Kongo? What remedy did Afonso propose?

millions of Africans, not only for the individual victims but also for their families. One of the more poignant aspects of the trade is that as many as 20 percent of those sold to European slavers were children, a statistic that may be partly explained by the fact that many European countries enacted regulations that permitted more children than adults to be transported aboard the ships.

Beyond the effects on individual Africans and their families, the slave trade also had a corrosive impact on the structure of society as a whole. Another consequence of the arrival of the Europeans was the introduction of firearms into the African continent. As the European demand for slaves steadily increased, African slave traders began to use their newly purchased guns to raid neighboring villages in search of captives, initiating a chain of violence that rapidly extended into the interior and created a climate of fear and insecurity throughout the region. Old polities were undermined, and new regimes ruled by rapacious “merchant princes” began to proliferate on the coast.

How did Europeans justify cruelty of such epidemic proportions? In some cases, they rationalized that slave traders were only carrying on a tradition that had existed for centuries throughout the Mediterranean and African world. In others, they eased their consciences by noting that slaves brought from Africa would now be exposed to the Christian faith and would be able to replace American Indian workers, many of whom were considered too physically fragile for the heavy human labor involved in cutting sugarcane.
Political and Social Structures in a Changing Continent

Of course, the Western economic penetration of Africa had other dislocating effects. As in other parts of the non-Western world, the importation of manufactured goods from Europe undermined the foundations of local cottage industries and impoverished countless families. The demand for slaves and the introduction of firearms intensified political instability and civil strife. At the same time, the impact of the Europeans should not be exaggerated. Only in a few isolated areas, such as South Africa and Mozambique, were permanent European settlements established. Elsewhere, at the insistence of African rulers and merchants, European influence generally did not penetrate beyond the coastal regions.

Nevertheless, inland areas were often affected by events taking place elsewhere. In the western Sahara, for example, the diversion of trade routes toward the coast led to the weakening of the old Songhai trading empire and its eventual conquest by a vigorous new Moroccan dynasty in the late sixteenth century. Morocco had long hoped to expand its influence into the Sahara in order to seize control over the commerce in gold and salt, and in 1590, Moroccan forces defeated Songhai’s army at Gao, on the Niger River, and then occupied the great caravan center of Timbuktu. Even after the departure of the invaders, Songhai was beyond recovery, and the next two centuries were marked by ongoing strife between divergent states and intense competition between Muslims in the cities and towns and adherents of traditional African religions in rural areas.

European influence had a more direct impact along the coast of West Africa, especially in the vicinity of European forts such as Dakar and Sierra Leone, but no European colonies were established there before 1800. Most of the numerous African states in the area from Cape Verde to the delta of the Niger River were sufficiently strong to resist Western encroachments, and they often allied with each other to force European purchasers to respect their monopoly over trading operations. Some, like the powerful Ashanti kingdom, established in 1680 on the Gold Coast, profited substantially from the rise in seaborne commerce. Some states, particularly along the so-called Slave Coast, in what is now Benin and Togo, or in the densely populated Niger River delta, took an active part in the slave trade. The demands of slavery and the temptations of economic profit, however, also contributed to the increase in conflict among the states in the area.

This was especially true in the region of the Congo River, where Portuguese activities eventually led to the splintering of the state of Kongo and two centuries of rivalry and internal strife among the successor states in the area. A similar pattern developed in East Africa, where Portuguese activities led to the decline and eventual collapse of the Mwene Mutapa. Northward along the coast, in present-day Kenya and Tanzania, African rulers, assisted by Arab forces from Oman and Muscat in the Arabian peninsula, expelled the Portuguese from Mombasa in 1698. Swahili culture now regained some of the dynamism it had possessed before the arrival of Vasco da Gama and his

CHRONOLOGY  The Penetration of Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life of Prince Henry the Navigator</td>
<td>1394-1460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese ships reach the Senegal River</td>
<td>1441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartolomeu Dias sails around the tip of Africa</td>
<td>1487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First boatload of slaves to the Americas</td>
<td>1518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch way station established at the Cape of Good Hope</td>
<td>1652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti kingdom established in West Africa</td>
<td>1680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese expelled from Mombasa</td>
<td>1698</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Manioc, Food for the Millions. One of the plants native to the Americas that European adventurers would take back to the Old World was manioc (also known as cassava or yuca). A tuber like the potato, manioc is a prolific crop that grows well in poor, dry soils, but it lacks the high nutrient value of grain crops such as wheat and rice and for that reason never became popular in Europe (except as a source of tapioca). It was introduced to Africa in the seventeenth century. Because it flourishes in dry climates and can be preserved easily for consumption at a later date, it eventually became a staple food for up to one-third of the population of that continent. Shown at the left is a manioc plant growing in East Africa. On the right, a Brazilian farmer on the Amazon River sifts peeled lengths of manioc into fine grains that will be dried into flour.
successors. But with much shipping now diverted southward to the route around the Cape of Good Hope, the commerce of the area never completely recovered and was increasingly dependent on the export of slaves and ivory obtained through contacts with African states in the interior.

Southeast Asia in the Era of the Spice Trade

FOCUS QUESTION: What were the main characteristics of Southeast Asian societies, and how were they affected by the coming of Islam and the Europeans?

As we noted earlier, Southeast Asia would be affected in various ways by the expansion of the global trade network that began to accelerate in the early fifteenth century with the arrival of Chinese fleets under the command of Admiral Zhenghe. Although the Chinese threat soon receded, the Muslim faith, introduced by merchants from the Middle East, now began to make inroads on the Malay peninsula and in the Indonesian archipelago. The seizure of Malacca by a Portuguese fleet in 1511 inaugurated a period of intense conflict among various European competitors for control of the regional spice trade. At first, the rulers of most of the local states were able to fend off these challenges from abroad and maintain their independence. As we shall see in a later chapter, however, the reprieve was only temporary.

The Arrival of the West

As we have seen, the Spanish followed the Portuguese into Southeast Asia. By the seventeenth century, the Dutch, English, and French had begun to join the scramble for rights to the lucrative spice trade.

Within a short time, the Dutch, through the aggressive and well-financed Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, or VOC), which possessed ten times the capital of the English East India Company, had not only succeeded in elbowing their rivals out of the spice trade but had also begun to consolidate their political and military control over the area. On the island of Java, where they established a fort at Batavia (today’s Jakarta) in 1619 (see the illustration on p. 389), the Dutch found that it was necessary to bring the inland regions under their control to protect their position on the coast. Rather than establishing a formal colony, however, they tried to rule as much as possible through the local landed aristocracy. On Java and the neighboring island of Sumatra, the VOC established pepper plantations, which soon produced massive profits for Dutch merchants in Amsterdam. Elsewhere they attempted to monopolize the clove trade by limiting cultivation of the crop to one island. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Dutch had succeeded in bringing almost the entire Indonesian archipelago under their control.

Competition among the European naval powers for territory and influence continued to intensify throughout the region, however, and prospects for the future were ominous. In the countless island groups scattered throughout the Pacific Ocean, local rulers were already finding it difficult to resist the growing European presence. The results were sometimes tragic, as indigenous cultures were quickly overwhelmed under the impact of Western material civilization, often leaving a sense of rootlessness and psychic stress in their wake (see the box on p. 414).

CHRONOLOGY

The Spice Trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vasco da Gama lands at Calicut in southwestern India</td>
<td>1498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albuquerque establishes base at Goa</td>
<td>1510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese seize Malacca</td>
<td>1511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese ships land in southern China</td>
<td>1514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magellan’s voyage around the world</td>
<td>1519–1522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English East India Company established</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch East India Company established</td>
<td>1602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English arrive at Surt at northwestern India</td>
<td>1608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch fort established at Batavia</td>
<td>1619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch seize Malacca from the Portuguese</td>
<td>1641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burmese sack of Ayuthaya</td>
<td>1767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Europeans began to explore new parts of the world in the fifteenth century, they were convinced that it was their duty to introduce civilized ways to the heathen peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Such was the message of Spanish captain Vasco Núñez de Balboa (BAHS-koh NOON-yez day bal-BOH-uh) one September morning in 1513, when from a hill on the Isthmus of Panama he first laid eyes on the Pacific Ocean. Two centuries later, however, the intrepid British explorer James Cook, during his last visit to the island of Tahiti in 1777, expressed in his private journal his growing doubts that Europeans had brought lasting benefits to the Polynesian islanders. Such disagreements over the alleged benefits of Western civilization to non-Western peoples would continue to spark debate during the centuries that followed and remain with us today (see “Imperialism: The Balance Sheet” in Chapter 21).

**OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS**

**The March of Civilization**

**INTERACTION & EXCHANGE**

As Europeans began to explore new parts of the world in the fifteenth century, they were convinced that it was their duty to introduce civilized ways to the heathen peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Such was the message of Spanish captain Vasco Núñez de Balboa (BAHS-koh NOON-yez day bal-BOH-uh) one September morning in 1513, when from a hill on the Isthmus of Panama he first laid eyes on the Pacific Ocean. Two centuries later, however, the intrepid British explorer James Cook, during his last visit to the island of Tahiti in 1777, expressed in his private journal his growing doubts that Europeans had brought lasting benefits to the Polynesian islanders. Such disagreements over the alleged benefits of Western civilization to non-Western peoples would continue to spark debate during the centuries that followed and remain with us today (see “Imperialism: The Balance Sheet” in Chapter 21).

**Gonzalo Fernández de Ovieda, Historia General y Natural de las Indias**

On Tuesday, the twenty-fifth of September of the year 1513, at ten o’clock in the morning, Captain Vasco Núñez, having gone ahead of his company, climbed a hill with a bare summit, and from the top of this hill saw the South Sea. Of all the Christians in his company, he was the first to see it. He turned back toward his people, full of joy, lifting his hands and his eyes to Heaven, praising Jesus Christ and his glorious Mother the Virgin, Our Lady. Then he fell upon his knees on the ground and gave great thanks to God for the mercy He had shown him, in allowing him to discover that sea, and thereby to render so great a service to God and to the most serene Catholic Kings of Castile, our sovereigns. . . .

And he told all the people with him to kneel also, to give the same thanks to God, and to beg Him fervently to allow them to see and discover the secrets and great riches of that sea and coast, for the greater glory and increase of the Christian faith, for the conversion of the Indians, natives of those southern regions, and for the fame and prosperity of the royal throne of Castile and of its sovereigns present and to come. All the people cheerfully and willingly did as they were bidden; and the Captain made them fell a big tree and make from it a tall cross, which they erected in that same place, at the top of the hill from which the South Sea had first been seen. And they all sang together the hymn of the glorious holy fathers of the Church, Ambrose and Augustine, led by a devout priest Andrés de Vera, who was with them, saying with tears of joyful devotion *Te Deum laudamus, Te Dominum confitemur.*

**Journal of Captain James Cook**

I cannot avoid expressing it as my real opinion that it would have been far better for these poor people never to have known our superiority in the accommodations and arts that make life comfortable, than after once knowing it, to be again left and abandoned in their original incapacity of improvement. Indeed they cannot be restored to that happy mediocrity in which they lived before we discovered them, if the intercourse between us should be discontinued. It seems to me that it has become, in a manner, incumbent on the Europeans to visit them once in three or four years, in order to supply them with those conveniences which we have introduced among them, and have given them a predilection for. The want of such occasional supplies will, probably, be felt very heavily by them, when it may be too late to go back to their old, less perfect, contrivances, which they now despise, and have discontinued since the introduction of ours. For, by the time that the iron tools, of which they are now possessed, are worn out, they will have almost lost the knowledge of their own. A stone hatchet is, at present, as rare a thing amongst them, as an iron one was eight years ago, and a chisel of bone or stone is not to be seen.

**Q** Why did James Cook express regret that the peoples of Tahiti had been exposed to European influence? How might Captain Núñez de Balboa have responded?
The arrival of the Europeans had somewhat less impact on mainland Southeast Asia, where cohesive monarchies in Burma (modern Myanmar), Thailand, and Vietnam resisted foreign encroachment. In addition, the coveted spices did not thrive on the mainland, so the Europeans’ efforts there were far less determined than in the islands. The Portuguese did establish limited trade relations with several mainland states, including the Thai kingdom at Ayuthaya, Burma, Vietnam, and the remnants of the old Angkor kingdom in Cambodia. By the early seventeenth century, other nations had followed and had begun to compete actively for trade and missionary privileges. As was the case elsewhere, the Europeans soon became involved in local factional disputes as a means of obtaining political and economic advantages. In Burma, the English and the French supported rival groups in the internal struggles of the monarchy until a new dynasty emerged and threw the foreigners out. A similar process took place at Ayuthaya, which was eventually destroyed by a Burmese army in 1767.

In Vietnam, the arrival of Western merchants and missionaries coincided with a period of internal conflict among ruling groups in the country. After their arrival in the mid-seventeenth century, the European powers characteristically began to intervene in local politics, with the Portuguese and the Dutch supporting rival factions. By the end of the century, when it became clear that economic opportunities were limited, most European states abandoned their trading stations in the area. French missionaries attempted to remain, but their efforts were hampered by the local authorities, who viewed the Catholic insistence that converts give their primary loyalty to the pope as a threat to the legal status and prestige of the Vietnamese emperor (see the box on p. 416).

State and Society in Precolonial Southeast Asia

Between 1500 and 1800, Southeast Asia experienced the last flowering of traditional culture before the advent of European rule in the nineteenth century. Although the coming of the Europeans had an immediate and direct impact in some areas, notably the Philippines and parts of the Malay world, in most areas Western influence was still relatively limited. Europeans occasionally dabbled in local politics and modified regional trade patterns, but they generally were not a decisive factor in the evolution of local political or social systems.

Nevertheless, Southeast Asian societies were changing in several subtle ways—in their trade patterns, their means of livelihood, and their religious beliefs. In some ways, these changes accentuated the differences between individual states in the region. Yet beneath these differences was an underlying commonality of life for most people. Despite the diversity of cultures and religious beliefs in the area, Southeast Asians were in most respects closer to each other than they were to peoples outside the region. For the most part, the states and peoples of Southeast Asia were still in control of their own destiny.

RELIGION AND KINGSHIP During the early modern era, both Buddhism and Islam became well established in South- east Asia, although Christianity began to attract some converts, especially in port cities directly occupied by Europeans, such as Malacca and Batavia, and in the Philippines (see the comparative illustration on p. 417). Buddhism was dominant in lowland areas on the mainland, from Burma to Vietnam. At first, Muslim influence was felt mainly on the Malay peninsula and along the northern coasts of Java and Sumatra, where local merchants encountered their Muslim counterparts from foreign lands on a regular basis. At the same time, traditional religious beliefs continued to survive, especially in inland areas, where the local populations either ignored the new doctrines or integrated them into their traditional forms of spirit worship. Buddhists in rural Burma and Thailand, for example, might also believe in nature spirits. On Java and Sumatra, where Islam was slow to penetrate into the interior, the result was a division between devout Muslims in the cities and essentially animist peasants in the rural villages.

Both Buddhism and Islam brought other changes in their train—temple education for Buddhists and schools for Islamic scholars and new religious and moral restrictions on human behavior such as refraining from eating pork and drinking wine for Muslims (though some foreign Muslims complained that the latter rule was not always followed). Because Islam discouraged the traditional tattooing of the body, Muslim converts turned to the technique of decorating textiles called batik (buh-TEEK).

Buddhism and Islam also helped shape Southeast Asian political institutions. As the political systems began to mature, they evolved into four main types: Buddhist kings, Javanese kings, Islamic sultans, and Vietnamese emperors (for Vietnam, which was strongly influenced by China, see Chapter 11). In each case, institutions and concepts imported from abroad were adapted to local circumstances.

The Buddhist style of kingship took shape between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries as Theravada Buddhism spread throughout the area. It became the predominant political system in the Buddhist states of mainland Southeast Asia—Burma, Ayuthaya, Laos, and Cambodia. Perhaps the most prominent feature of the Buddhist model was the godlike character of the monarch, who was considered by virtue of his karma to be innately superior to other human beings and served as a link between human society and the cosmos. Court rituals stressed the sacred nature of the monarch, and even the palace was modeled after the symbolic design of the Hindu universe. In its center was an architectural rendering of sacred Mount Meru, the legendary home of the gods.

The Javanese model was a blend of Buddhist and Islamic political traditions. Like their mainland counterparts, Javanese monarchs possessed a sacred quality and maintained the balance between the sacred and the material world, but as Islam penetrated the Indonesian islands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the monarchs began to lose their semidivine quality.

The Islamic model was found mainly on the Malay peninsula and along the coast of the Indonesian archipelago. In this pattern, the head of state was a sultan, who was viewed as a mortal, although he still possessed some magical qualities. The sultan served as a defender of the faith and staffed his
In 1681, King Louis XIV of France wrote a letter to the "king of Tonkin" (the Trinh family head, who was serving as viceroy to the Vietnamese ruler) requesting permission for Christian missionaries to proselytize in Vietnam. The latter politely declined the request on the grounds that such activity was prohibited by ancient custom. In fact, Christian missionaries had been active in Vietnam for years, and their intervention in local politics had aroused the anger of the court in Hanoi.

**A Letter to the King of Tonkin from Louis XIV**

Most high, most excellent, most mighty, and most magnanimous Prince, our very dear and good friend, may it please God to increase your greatness with a happy end!

We hear from our subjects who were in your Realm what protection you accorded them. We appreciate this all the more since we have for you all the esteem that one can have for a prince as illustrious through his military valor as he is commendable for the justice which he exercises in his Realm. We have even been informed that you have not been satisfied to extend this general protection to our subjects but, in particular, that you gave effective proofs of it to Messrs. Deydier and de Bourges. We would have wished that they might have been able to recognize all the favors they received from you by having presents worthy of you offered you; but since the war which we have had for several years, in which all of Europe had banded together against us, prevented our vessels from going to the Indies, at the present time, when we are at peace after having gained many victories and expanded our Realm through the conquest of several important places, we have immediately given orders to the Royal Company to establish itself in your kingdom as soon as possible, and have commanded Messers. Deydier and de Bourges to remain with you in order to maintain a good relationship between our subjects and yours, also to warn us on occasions that might present themselves when we might be able to give you proofs of our esteem and of our wish to concur with your satisfaction as well as with your best interests.

By way of initial proof, we have given orders to have brought to you some presents which we believe might be agreeable to you. But the one thing in the world which we desire most, both for you and for your Realm, would be to obtain for your subjects who have already embraced the law of the only true God of heaven and earth, the freedom to profess it, since this law is the highest, the noblest, the most sacred, and especially the most suitable to have kings reign absolutely over the people.

We are even quite convinced that, if you knew the truths and the maxims which it teaches, you would give first of all to your subjects the glorious example of embracing it. We wish you this incomparable blessing together with a long and happy reign, and we pray God that it may please Him to augment your greatness with the happiest of endings.

Written at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the 10th day of January, 1681,

Your very dear and good friend,

Louis

**Answer from the King of Tonkin to Louis XIV**

The King of Tonkin sends to the King of France a letter to express to him his best sentiments, saying that he was happy to learn that fidelity is a durable good of man and that justice is the most important of things. Consequently practicing of fidelity and justice cannot but yield good results. Indeed, though France and our Kingdom differ as to mountains, rivers, and boundaries, if fidelity and justice reign among our villages, our conduct will express all of our good feelings and contain precious gifts. Your communication, which comes from a country which is a thousand leagues away, and which proceeds from the heart as a testimony of your sincerity, merits repeated consideration and infinite praise. Politeness toward strangers is nothing unusual in our country. There is not a stranger who is not well received by us. How then could we refuse a man from France, which is the most celebrated among the kingdoms of the world and which for love of us wishes to frequent us and bring us merchandise? These feelings of fidelity and justice are truly worthy to be applauded. As regards your wish that we should cooperate in propagating your religion, we do not dare to permit it, for there is an ancient custom, introduced by edicts, which formally forbids it. Now, edicts are promulgated only to be carried out faithfully; without fidelity nothing is stable. How could we disdain a well-established custom to satisfy a private friendship? . . .

We beg you to understand well that this is our communication concerning our mutual acquaintance. This then is my letter. We send you herewith a modest gift, which we offer with a glad heart.

This letter was written at the beginning of winter and on a beautiful day.

Q How does the king of Tonkin’s response to Louis XIV’s request compare with the answer given to the pope by the Mongol emperor Kuyuk Khan in 1244 on p. 284? Which response do you think was more conciliatory? Why?
As European colonial officials and missionaries began to spread through the Americas and Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the churches that they built reflected the styles that had become popular in their own countries. The photograph on the left shows a baroque cathedral in Mexico City, the headquarters of Spanish rule in Central America. It was erected on the site of the Aztec temple to the sun god at Tenochtitlán, using materials from the dismantled Aztec pyramids.

The Dutch preferred a less ornate approach, as seen in the rose-colored church in Malacca shown at the right, erected after their takeover of that trading port in 1641.

How did the spread of Christianity in America and Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries compare with the expansion of Islam in earlier times?

In a Buddhist Wonderland. The Shwedagon Pagoda is the most sacred site in Myanmar (Burma). Located on a hill in today’s capital of Yangon (formerly Rangoon), the pagoda was originally erected on the site of an earlier Buddhist structure sometime in the late first millennium C.E. Its centerpiece is a magnificent stupa covered in gold leaf that stands more than 320 feet high. The platform at the base of the stupa contains a multitude of smaller shrines and stupas covered with marble carvings and fragments of cut glass. It is no surprise that for centuries, the Buddhist faithful have visited the site, and the funds they have donated have made the Shwedagon stupa one of the wonders of the world.
bureaucracy mainly with aristocrats, but he also frequently relied on the Muslim community of scholars—the ulama—and was expected, at least in theory, to rule according to the Shari’a.

**THE ECONOMY** During the early period of European penetration, the economy of most Southeast Asian societies was based on agriculture, as it had been for thousands of years. Still, by the sixteenth century, commerce was beginning to affect daily life, especially in the cities that were beginning to proliferate along the coasts or on navigable rivers. In part, this was because agriculture itself was becoming more commercialized as cash crops like sugar and spices replaced subsistence farming of rice or other cereals in some areas.

Regional and interregional trade were already expanding before the coming of the Europeans. The central geographic location of Southeast Asia enabled it to become a focal point in a widespread trading network. Spices, of course, were the mainstay of the interregional trade, but other products were exchanged as well. The region exported tin (mined in Malaya since the tenth century), copper, gold, tropical fruits and other agricultural products, cloth, gems, and luxury goods in exchange for manufactured goods, ceramics, and high-quality textiles such as silk from China (see the comparative illustration below). Although on balance the region was an importer of manufactured goods, it produced some high-quality goods of its own. The ceramics of Vietnam and Thailand, though not made with the high-temperature firing techniques used in China, were still of good quality. The Portuguese traveler Duarte Barbosa (DWAR-tay bar-BOH-suh) observed that the Javanese were skilled cabinetmakers, weapons manufacturers, shipbuilders, and locksmiths. The royal courts were both the main producers and the primary consumers of luxury goods, most of which were produced by highly skilled slaves in the employ of the court.

In general, Southeast Asians probably enjoyed a somewhat higher living standard than their contemporaries elsewhere in Asia. Although most of the population was poor by modern Western standards, hunger was not a widespread problem. Several factors help explain this relative prosperity. In the first
place, most of Southeast Asia has been blessed with a salubrious climate. The uniformly high temperatures and the abundant rainfall enable two or even three crops to be grown each year. Second, although the soil in some areas is poor, the alluvial deltas on the mainland are fertile, and the volcanoes of Indonesia periodically spew forth rich volcanic ash that renews the mineral resources of the soil of Sumatra and Java. Finally, with some exceptions, most of Southeast Asia was relatively thinly populated. According to one estimate, the population of the entire region in 1600 was about 20 million, or about 14 persons per square mile, well below levels elsewhere in Asia. Only in a few areas such as the Red River delta in northern Vietnam was overpopulation a serious problem.

**SOCIETY** Social institutions tended to be fairly homogeneous throughout Southeast Asia. Compared with China and India, there was little social stratification, and the nuclear family predominated. In general, women fared better in the region than anywhere else in Asia. Daughters often had the same inheritance rights as sons, and family property was held jointly between husband and wife. Wives were often permitted to divorce their husbands, and monogamy was the rule rather than the exception. In some cases, the family of the groom provided the dowry in marriage, and married couples often went to live in the wife’s village. Although women were usually restricted to specialized work, such as making ceramics, weaving, or transplanting the rice seedlings into the main paddy fields, and rarely possessed legal rights equal to those of men, they enjoyed a comparatively high degree of freedom and status in most societies in the region and, as we saw in Chapter 9, were sometimes involved in commerce. In the Indonesian islands, for example, women apparently devised a simple fourteen-character alphabet based on the Indian script to record their business transactions. This written language was often passed on to their daughters, while their sons were trained to read sacred works in religious schools.

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

During the fifteenth century, the pace of international commerce increased dramatically. Chinese fleets visited the Indian Ocean while Muslim traders extended their activities into the Spice Islands and sub-Saharan West Africa. Then the Europeans burst onto the world scene. Beginning with the seemingly modest ventures of the Portuguese ships that sailed southward along the West African coast, the process accelerated with the epoch-making voyages of Christopher Columbus to the Americas and Vasco da Gama to the Indian Ocean in the 1490s. Soon a number of other European states had entered the fray, and by the end of the eighteenth century, they had created a global trade network dominated by Western ships and Western power that distributed foodstuffs, textiles, spices, and precious minerals from one end of the globe to the other.

In less than three hundred years, the expansion of the global trade network changed the face of the world. In some areas, such as the Americas and the Spice Islands, it led to the destruction of indigenous civilizations and the establishment of European colonies. In others, as in Africa, South Asia, and mainland Southeast Asia, it left native regimes intact but had a strong impact on local societies and regional trade patterns. In some areas, it led to an irreversible decline in traditional institutions and values, setting in motion a corrosive process that has not been reversed to this day.

At the time, many European observers viewed the process in a favorable light. Not only did it expand world trade and foster the exchange of new crops and discoveries between the Old and New Worlds, but it also introduced Christianity to “heathen peoples” around the globe. Many modern historians have been much more critical, concluding that European activities during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries created a “tributary mode of production” based on European profits from unequal terms of trade that foreshadowed the exploitative relationship characteristic of the later colonial period. Other scholars have questioned that contention, however, and argue that although Western commercial operations had a significant impact on global trade patterns, they did not—at least not before the nineteenth century—usher in an era of Western dominance over the rest of the world. Muslim merchants were long able to evade European efforts to eliminate them from the spice trade, and the trans-Saharan caravan trade was relatively unaffected by European merchant shipping along the West African coast.

In the meantime, powerful empires continued to hold sway over the lands washed by the Muslim faith. Beyond the Himalayas, Chinese emperors in their new northern capital of Beijing retained proud dominion over all the vast territory of continental East Asia. We shall deal with these regions, and how they confronted the challenges of a changing world, in Chapters 16 and 17.
CHAPTER TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Chinese fleets visit East Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1450</td>
<td>Bartolomeu Dias sails around southern tip of Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>First boatload of slaves to the Americas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1550</td>
<td>Portuguese seize Malacca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td>Dutch establish port at Batavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Portuguese expelled from Mombasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>Sack of Ayuthaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>Ashanti kingdom established in West Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER REVIEW

Upon Reflection

Q What were some of the key features of the Columbian Exchange, and what effects did they have on the world trade network?

Q How did the expansion of European power during the Age of Exploration compare with the expansion of the Islamic empires in the Middle East a few centuries earlier?

Q Why were the Spanish conquistadors able to complete their conquest of Latin America so quickly when their contemporaries failed to do so in Africa and Southeast Asia?

Key Terms

- portolani (p. 394)
- caravels (p. 395)
- conquistadors (p. 398)
- mestizos (p. 400)
- mulattoes (p. 400)
- viceroy (p. 400)
- creoles (p. 401)
- encomienda system (p. 402)
- encomienda (p. 402)
- Columbian Exchange (p. 405)
- Boers (p. 406)
- Middle Passage (p. 408)

Suggested Reading


COUNTRY-SPECIFIC STUDIES  A gripping work on the conquistadors is H. Thomas, Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico (New York, 1993).


THE SPICE TRADE  The effects of European trade in Southeast Asia are discussed in A. Reid, Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680 (New Haven, Conn., 1989). On the spice trade, see A. Dalby,


WOMEN  For a brief introduction to women’s experiences during the Age of Exploration and global trade, see S. Hughes and B. Hughes, Women in World History, vol. 2 (Armonk, N.Y., 1997). The native American female experience with the European encounter is presented in R. Gutierrez, When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846 (Stanford, Calif., 1991).

Go to the CourseMate website at www.cengagebrain.com for additional study tools and review materials—including audio and video clips—for this chapter.