

observer noted that among the Tupi "what belongs to one belongs to all." But they did take great pride in adorning themselves with red and black body paint, necklaces, and bracelets made from stones and shells, and lip plugs fashioned from polished jadeite. Brilliantly colored feathers were also used to make headdresses and other garments worn by shamans and other important people.

Tupi settlements usually had from 400 to 800 inhabitants. Groups of up to 60 interrelated nuclear families lived together in large houses. Leadership at the family level and higher was patrilineal. Councils of male elders made decisions for their tribes and preserved the collective memory. Labor was divided by gender. Men felled trees, hunted, and fished, while women planted and harvested crops. Certain crafts, such as the making of baskets and hammocks, were performed by both men and women. Females as well as males also served as shamans or healers in Tupi society.

The Tupi were aggressive people who often fought among themselves. Young men had to distinguish themselves in battle before they were allowed to marry, and men of all ages earned prestige by taking enemy captives. Prisoners were then sacrificed and eaten, but not before they had been carried back to their captor's home and subjected to public humiliation by the women of the village.

The "Pueblo" Peoples of New Mexico

The people who lived in what is now the northern part of the state of New Mexico received their first foreign "visitors" when Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and his entourage arrived in the early 1540s. The Spanish admired their large apartment-like adobe dwellings, calling them *pueblos*, the Spanish word for town. In time, the name came to be applied to the people as well, even though they were in fact made up of several different groups who spoke mutually unintelligible languages.

The dry climate and cold winters of New Mexico forced the Pueblo peoples to work hard to provide for their basic needs. They developed elaborate irrigation systems to water their fields of maize, squash, cotton, and tobacco. They also obtained buffalo hides and other goods by trading with native peoples who inhabited the plains east of Pueblo territory.

Pueblo society stressed social conformity and subordination of the individual to the group. Younger adults were expected always to defer to their elders in matters of leadership and service. Gender roles were also carefully prescribed. Men were hunters and warriors and performed heavy labor in the fields, while women cooked, cared for children, and made pottery and baskets. Women also constructed and maintained the adobe dwellings. Although people traced their lineage through the female line and observed a gender complementarity somewhat comparable to that of Andeans, males dominated Pueblo religion. At least until after menopause, women were not permitted to enter the *kivas*, the circular buildings where sacred objects were kept and important rituals performed.

The Pueblos developed a highly sophisticated culture in a challenging environment, but nothing on the order of what the Aztecs and Incas achieved. In the 1530s, Spaniards in Mexico heard rumors about them and concluded that *otro México*—another Mexico—lay

deep in the interior of the continent. Immediately, they organized an expedition to the far north. What they found was a bitter disappointment—adobe buildings that scarcely compared with the temples and palaces of the lords of Tenochtitlan and rulers whose political control reached only to the limits of a single "town." The Pueblos provided sixteenth-century Europeans with yet another example to show that the people they lumped together as "Indians" in fact were even more diverse than the societies they had known back in the "old world."

THE SPANISH AND THE PORTUGUESE

Just as the Inca and Aztec rulers were building their power, a similar process was taking place on the Iberian Peninsula as the emerging national monarchies of Spain and Portugal asserted their control over their political rivals. Like their counterparts in Mesoamerica and the Andes, the new monarchs of Iberia achieved greater political centralization than their predecessors and used history, religion, and ideology to buttress their positions. To a much greater degree than the Aztecs or the Incas, however, they insisted that their subjects conform fully to the officially sanctioned religion and eventually expelled religious deviants from their dominions.

Also in sharp contrast to the lords of Cuzco and Tenochtitlan, the Iberian monarchs showed an interest in what might lie beyond the ocean. Members of Portugal's royal family took the lead, experimenting with new navigation techniques and sponsoring expeditions along the coast of Africa from the early fifteenth century onward. By the time that King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella assumed their thrones in the 1470s, Spain was ready for overseas exploration as well. The Iberians' curiosity would have fateful consequences for the peoples of the Americas.

Centuries of Conquest

Iberia's position at the western end of the Mediterranean meant that for hundreds of years it was exposed to outsiders who indelibly shaped its culture. Between 800 and 1100 BCE, Phoenicians from the eastern Mediterranean established colonies along the southern coast. Phoenician merchants sold oil, wine, jewelry, and ivory to Iberians in exchange for gold, silver, copper, and tin. They also brought new techniques of metalworking and a form of writing that archaeologists have found on tombstones in what is now southern Portugal. Greek traders appeared in Iberia by about 600 BCE, followed in turn by the Carthaginians, who conquered the central and southern parts of the peninsula in the third century BCE and set up a naval base at the present-day Spanish port of Cartagena.

The Romans began their conquest of Iberia in 218 BCE. Dozens of Roman colonies appeared throughout Hispania, the Roman name for the Iberian Peninsula. The Romans' cultural impact was enormous, ranging from law and architecture to language and religion. Latin evolved on the peninsula into modern Spanish, Portuguese, and



Spain and Portugal in 1492

Catalan. Christianity entered Iberia in the Roman period, by the middle of the third century CE. Under Roman rule, the peninsula carried on a thriving trade with the rest of the Mediterranean, exporting olive oil, horses, wine, wool, and metals. Roman domination ended in the fifth century, as the empire itself crumbled. Vandals, Visigoths, and other Germanic peoples crossed the Pyrenees Mountains and set up kingdoms in what are now Spain and Portugal.

In the early eighth century, Iberia witnessed yet another conquest, as Muslims crossed the Strait of Gibraltar from North Africa, took over most of the peninsula, and eventually set up the Umayyad Caliphate that ruled from their magnificent capital at Córdoba. Only the Basque country and the tiny kingdom of Asturias in the north remained under the control of Christian kings who claimed descent from the Visigoths. The Muslims extended religious toleration to Jews and Christians living in conquered territory, but many of the latter chose to convert to Islam.

Intellectual, artistic, and practical pursuits flourished in Muslim Iberia. The newcomers brought with them Arabic translations of texts on astronomy, mathematics, geography, and medicine from Persia, India, and Greece, including the work of the philosopher Aristotle. Christian scholars later rendered these texts into Latin, and subsequently circulated them to the rest of Europe. The Muslims introduced better irrigation techniques and new crops such as sugarcane and rice. They taught Iberians new craft specialties such as silk weaving and leatherworking. Spain's famous steel industry at Toledo also dates from the Muslim occupation. Arabic became the mostly widely spoken language in Iberia, not only among Muslims but among Christians and Jews as well. Christians even celebrated the mass and other rites in Arabic, and hundreds of Arabic words made their way into the Spanish and Portuguese languages.

Medieval Iberia and the Reconquista

By the mid-eighth century, Christians of the northern kingdoms began the *Reconquista*, a centuries-long process by which they wrested control of the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslims. Religion supplied a powerful driving force, but hunger for land to support a growing population also motivated the Christians' advance. As they gradually expanded their domains, the kingdoms of Castile (so named for the many castles, or *castillos*, built along the enemy frontier)—as well as León, Aragón, and Portugal took shape. But medieval Iberia also witnessed long periods of relatively peaceful coexistence between Christian and Muslim states. Often divided among themselves, Christian kingdoms sometimes struck alliances with Muslims against other Christian kingdoms.

The balance of power began shifting in the Christians' favor with the fragmentation of Muslim political unity after 1031. By the mid-thirteenth century, the Reconquista was nearly complete. The capture of the southern region known as the Algarve in 1249 eliminated the last Muslim power in Portugal. Meanwhile King Fernando III of Castile, later canonized as a saint by the Catholic church, conquered Andalusia in the south, including the great cities of Córdoba and Seville. At Córdoba, the victorious Christians reconsecrated the city's splendid mosque as a Catholic church (see Plate 5). In the east, Aragón took Valencia in 1238. Only the kingdom of Granada in southern Spain remained under Muslim control, and its rulers were forced to pay regular sums of money in tribute to the monarchs of Castile.

Centuries of intermittent war with the Muslims left important marks on Iberian society and culture. Knights who led the southward thrust were rewarded with vast tracts of land, and other Christians willing to settle in newly conquered territories received grants as well, thereby setting a precedent that would later be followed in the Americas. The Reconquista also reinforced traditional gender roles and a double standard of sexual conduct. Men were valued for their fighting abilities, and local authorities tolerated their sexual transgressions. Women, on the other hand, contributed to the Reconquista by recreating Christian family life in the new settlements within the seclusion of their homes and under the patriarchal sway of husbands and fathers.

Iberian Christians believed that the apostle St. James, known in Spanish as Santiago Matamoros, "killer of Moors" (Muslims), had aided in their victories. His reputed burial

place at Compostela in Galicia became a popular pilgrimage site by the tenth century. Mock battles between Christians and Moors became a part of Spanish folklore that would later be transported to America. Spain's national epic, *El Cid*, also dates from the Reconquista. It tells the story of Rodrigo Díaz, known as "the master," or *al-sayyid* in Arabic, who died in Valencia in 1099. He fought at various times as a mercenary for both Muslim and Christian kings, but legend subsequently made him a great champion of the Christian cause.

Iberian Monarchies in the Fifteenth Century

The defeat of the major Muslim principalities in the thirteenth century failed to bring immediate peace and prosperity to the Iberian Peninsula. Civil wars among the victorious Christian kingdoms continued over the next 200 years. Famines and epidemics added to the misery, especially when the infamous Black Death plague reached Iberia in the late 1340s. Portugal achieved a measure of political stability first. In 1385, King João I of the Avis dynasty defeated a Castilian rival and assured the political independence of his kingdom, even though intermittent wars with Castile continued. João reigned until 1433, permitting him to trim the power of nobles who had sided with Castile and to consolidate his position with help from a cadre of university-trained bureaucrats.

For Spain, the decisive turning point came in 1469 with the marriage of Isabella, a claimant to the thrones of Castile and León, and Ferdinand, heir to the crowns of Aragón, Catalonia, and Valencia. In 1474, Isabella's partisans defeated those of a rival contender, and she became queen. Five years later, Ferdinand came into his legacy as well. In 1516, their grandson Charles I became the first monarch of a united Spain.

Like the kings of the house of Avis in Portugal, Ferdinand and Isabella curbed the political power of the feudal nobility and created a professional bureaucracy. They also reorganized the royal armies and dispatched a cadre of *corregidores*, who asserted crown authority over local municipal councils. Meanwhile, Ferdinand and Isabella became the champions of a militant Catholicism, with dire consequences for the many Jews and Muslims of Iberia.

The Breakdown of Iberian "Convivencia"

Despite the intermittent battles of the Reconquista, medieval Iberia enjoyed a measure of coexistence, or *convivencia*, among Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Jews often occupied positions of trust, serving as tax collectors and physicians to Christian kings and as administrators to Muslim potentates. Jews also figured among the peninsula's most prominent merchants and bankers. Although religious leaders of all three faiths exhorted their followers to refrain from participating in the rituals of "infidels," Christians sometimes visited mosques and synagogues with their Muslim and Jewish friends, and Muslims occasionally shared in Christian religious festivities. Muslim rulers officially forbade Christians living in their kingdoms to build new houses of worship, but as early as the ninth century there were various churches under construction not far from Córdoba.

Mutual toleration had its limits, however. In Christian and Muslim states alike, bloody purges periodically took the lives of many Jews, and Christians were sometimes sold as slaves to Muslims in Morocco. Discrimination against Jews grew noticeably in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In Iberia and just about everywhere in medieval Europe, Jews living in Christian kingdoms had to wear special identifying badges and paid higher taxes. Many towns confined them to specific residential enclaves and restricted their economic activities. All Jews were banished from Aragón in the fourteenth century. In the face of rising persecution, many Spanish and Portuguese Jews nominally converted to Catholicism but often continued to practice their ancestral faith in secret. These "New Christians" became targets of popular prejudice and of restrictive laws barring them from certain occupations.

Ferdinand and Isabella thus assumed their respective thrones in a time of mounting religious intolerance. Known as the "Catholic Kings," they used the power of the crown to enforce conformity. In 1478, they received the pope's permission to establish the Holy Office of the Inquisition to discipline New Christians who persisted in the practice of Judaism, as well as other Catholics who entertained ideas that ran counter to the teachings of the Church. Some 2000 New Christians were reportedly executed under Inquisition auspices in the 1480s, while many others were banished from their hometowns. In 1492, the monarchs ordered all remaining Jews to convert to Catholicism or leave Spanish territory. As a result, the number of superficial converts grew. Many Jews fled to Portugal, only to be faced with the same choice of forced conversion or permanent exile just a few years later. Portuguese authorities proved much more lax than their Spanish counterparts in enforcing these provisions, and those who did convert to Christianity fared somewhat better in Portugal because until 1536 there was no Inquisition to scrutinize their behavior.

The growing concern for religious purity brought fateful consequences for Muslims as well. Castile embarked upon a campaign to capture Granada in the 1480s and succeeded in 1492. Zealous clergy, with support from Queen Isabella, then set about converting Granada's Muslims to Catholicism and ordered the burning of thousands of Islamic books. In 1502, all Muslims living in Spain were told to become Catholics or leave. The Portuguese crown had issued a similar decree a few years before. Many Muslims followed the example of the Jews, converting superficially while continuing to practice Islam in secret.

A key figure in Spain's growing religious militancy was Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, Archbishop of Toledo and head of the Inquisition. While working to eradicate all traces of Islam and Judaism, he also turned his attention to reforming the Spanish Catholic Church from within, exhorting his fellow clergy and the faithful to return to the doctrinal purity and behavioral austerity of the early Christians. The Spanish Church thus purged itself without breaking from Rome and stood ready to defend Catholicism against the Protestant Reformation and to undertake ambitious missionary efforts in the American colonies.

Iberian Society in the Fifteenth Century

Population estimates for Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth century are nearly as uncertain as those for the Americas. The best available figures are about 4 million for the dominions of Castile and another 1 million apiece for Aragón and Portugal. Lisbon, Seville, Barcelona, and Valencia, each with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants, were the only real cities. Most Iberians were farmers, with wheat, wine, and olive oil being the most important products. In the southern part of the peninsula, the warm climate favored the production of citrus fruits and sugarcane. The high and dry central plateau of Castile was best suited for cattle and sheep ranching.

Even though they had seen some of their political power undermined by the emerging monarchies of Spain and Portugal, the titled nobility—dukes, counts, marquises, and the like—still stood at the apex of Iberian society. Many of them purported to be descended from the early Visigoth kings, and most asserted that they or their ancestors had distinguished themselves fighting infidels during the Reconquista. They usually had large landholdings and many vassals who owed them tribute and allegiance. Much more numerous, especially in the north, were the untitled nobles, called *hidalgos* (or *hijos de algo*, “sons of something”) in Spain and *fidalgos* in Portugal. These people were often of humble economic status but nonetheless boasted a distinguished lineage. They enjoyed exemption from certain taxes and freedom from arrest by anyone but the monarch’s direct representative. Titled or not, all nobles cited their *limpieza de sangre*—literally, purity of blood, which meant that neither they nor their ancestors had ever been Jews, Muslims, or heretics prosecuted and convicted by the Inquisition.

The percentage of titled nobles and *hidalgos* in the total population varied considerably, from as many as 75 percent, most of them fairly humble *hidalgos*, in some parts of the north, to as few as 2 percent in the south. At most, they comprised about 10 percent of Castile’s total population. The rest were commoners, the most prosperous of whom generally resided in cities and towns. Some were physicians, teachers, lawyers, merchants, and master craftsmen. Others were farmers or day laborers. Africans, both enslaved and free, constituted a small but growing segment of Iberia’s population after Portuguese merchants began trading along the coast of Africa in the fifteenth century. Many were domestic servants in the wealthiest households of Seville, Lisbon, Valencia, and other towns, but some worked as stevedores and artisans. In sixteenth-century Seville, crown officials appointed free blacks to help govern the city’s rapidly growing African community, and black Catholics created their own religious organizations. Resident colonies of foreign merchants, many of them from the Italian city of Genoa, could be found in the most important ports.

Queen Isabella, as we have seen, was a dynamic leader who brought considerable change to Castile during her long reign. But Isabella became queen only because there were no suitable male heirs in line for the throne. She was an exception to the long-entrenched rule of patriarchy, a system of social relations that vested virtually all authority from the household to the highest levels of church and state in male father figures. Priests and judges exhorted wives to obey their husbands and live modestly within the

seclusion of their homes. Denied access to the priesthood, women had no formal roles in official religious ritual comparable to those of their counterparts in Andean society. Even nuns were subject to the discipline of their bishops.

Not all women lived within the rules dictated by patriarchy, however. Lower-class women simply could not remain secluded within their homes; they had to seek whatever work they could find in order to support themselves and their families. More and more women headed their own households, especially as growing numbers of men headed off on the overseas expeditions that began when Portuguese navigators first began probing southward along the African coast. Women also resisted the forced orthodoxy that Catholic authorities tried to impose. It was often mothers who kept Jewish beliefs and rites alive within the privacy of New Christian households, and the Inquisition prosecuted numerous women, old Christians and new alike, for heretical beliefs.

Iberia and the Beginnings of Overseas Expansion

The Mediterranean Sea bustled with commerce in the fifteenth century. At its eastern end, merchants exchanged woolen textiles and other European goods for Asian merchandise transported by caravans along the famous Silk Road of Central Asia or on ships up the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean. Cinnamon, pepper, ginger, cloves, and other spices from India and points eastward had become highly coveted additives to the Western European diet. Asian silks, cotton textiles, sugar, slaves, and precious stones found ready markets in Europe as well. Italians from Genoa and Venice dominated this trade, and they had pioneered sophisticated systems of credit, accounting, contract law, and maritime insurance.

Meanwhile, Europeans were making significant advances in navigation science, including the use of the magnetic compass and new ships that could take better advantage of winds on the open sea. By the fifteenth century, Portugal had taken the lead in these developments, thanks in large part to the initiative of King João I’s son Prince Henry (dubbed “the Navigator” by nineteenth-century historians). He gathered experts in navigation and geography and sponsored voyages along the coast of Africa and out into the Atlantic, voyages that would launch his nation as a world power.

Portugal’s overseas empire officially began with the seizure of the Muslim stronghold of Ceuta on the Moroccan coast opposite Gibraltar in 1415. Over the next several decades, Portuguese merchants and sailors pushed farther south along the coast of Africa, establishing trading posts where they obtained gold, ivory, and slaves from local rulers in exchange for European horses, saddles, clothing, and tools. In 1498, a Portuguese expedition led by Vasco da Gama sailed around Africa and on to India, and over the next few decades his countrymen established trading posts at Goa on the west coast of India, in present-day Malaysia and Indonesia, and at Macao on the coast of China.

Portuguese merchants no longer needed Italian or Muslim intermediaries to access the wealth of what fifteenth-century Europeans called the “Indies,” a term that included not only India but all of Asia and, by extension, any far-off land that might yield exotic merchandise and handsome profits. By no means did they believe that sailing around the

tip of Africa was the only way to the lucrative markets of Asia, however. Most knowledgeable people understood that the world was round and that one could sail westward and eventually reach the Orient.

In fact, Iberian navigators had already begun to venture out into the uncharted waters of the Atlantic. During the course of the fifteenth century, Portugal settled the previously uninhabited Azores and Madeira. Both Spain and Portugal fought over the rights to the Canary Islands until the dispute was settled in favor of Castile in 1479. The Guanches, native to the Canaries, were all but destroyed in the process, sharing the fate that would later befall Native Americans. Spanish and Portuguese sugar plantations in the Atlantic islands also foreshadowed the ones they would later set up in Brazil and the Caribbean.

CONCLUSION

The fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries of the Christian calendar witnessed the rise of four great monarchies—the Aztecs and the Incas in the Americas and Spain and Portugal on the southwestern fringe of Europe. As neighbors, Spain and Portugal of course were well aware of one another. Portugal had fought many battles to avoid being absorbed by Castile. The lords of Tenochtitlan and Cuzco may have heard sketchy rumors of one another's existence but devoted their attention entirely to people closer to home that might become new subjects for their expanding dominions.

No one in Iberia or America knew what lay across the Atlantic. The Portuguese and the Spanish, however, were open to the possibility that venturing out to sea might yield great wealth and untold adventure. For many generations, they had heard the tales of China brought back by the thirteenth-century Italian traveler, Marco Polo, and they were familiar with exotic merchandise to be had from Asia. Their religious traditions taught them something of far-off lands as well. Many believed that the apostle Thomas had carried the teachings of Jesus to India, and legends of Christian kingdoms in the east circulated throughout medieval Europe. Their knowledge of distant lands, both real and fictional, spread even more quickly following the invention of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century.

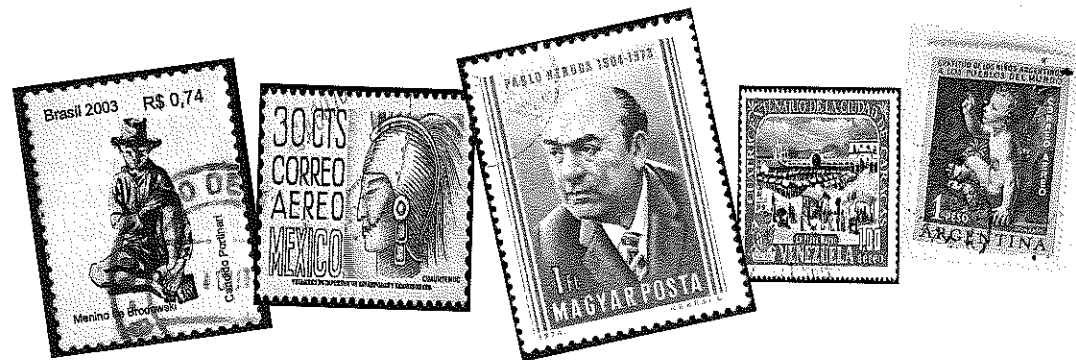
In matters of geography, the people of Mesoamerica and the Andes had narrower horizons than their European contemporaries. Many of Europe's greatest cities in the fifteenth century—Genoa, Venice, Barcelona, Seville, Lisbon—lay close to the sea, while the most imposing settlements of North and South America were located inland. The Aztecs and the Incas accumulated vast riches from distant places, but these goods came to them chiefly by land, on the backs of llamas and other camelids in the Andes, and of human carriers in Mesoamerica. Waterborne transport was limited to canoes that plied the coast of Central America and the great inland lakes, such as Texcoco in Mexico and Titicaca in Peru.

It was not that the priests and rulers of Cuzco and Tenochtitlan lacked curiosity about distant worlds or kingdoms unseen. Like their forebears, they possessed detailed knowledge of the movements of the stars and the planets, in many ways superior to what Europeans of their time could boast. They maintained, elaborated, and passed on stories that explained the origins of the world they knew and the demise of worlds that had gone before. The underworld, the afterlife, and the realms of their many gods all occupied the attention of the best minds of the ancient Americas.

Nezahualcoyotl, ruler of Texcoco in the mid-fifteenth century, was a philosopher and poet as well as a king. Inside his 300-room palace compound were a library and archive, as well as special quarters for poets, philosophers, and historians. Many of his verses speculated on what awaited humans' discovery in the afterlife. It was not for want of intellectual prowess or curiosity, then, that the existence of flesh-and-blood human beings across the ocean caught the peoples of the Americas by surprise.

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3

THE EUROPEAN CONQUEST OF AMERICA

WHEN CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS stepped ashore on the island of Guanahani in the Bahamas on October 12, 1492, he believed that the continent of Asia could not be far off. Sailing along the north coast of Cuba a few weeks later, he was convinced he had reached Cipango (Japan). His dream of shipping valuable silks and spices to Europe now lay at hand, and he would be Queen Isabella's viceroy, her personal representative, there in what he called "the Indies."

Over the next several decades, it became clear that Columbus had not reached Asia but instead had found a "new world." Isabella and Ferdinand and their grandson King Charles I accordingly expanded their ambitions far beyond the handful of trading posts envisioned in 1492. They now saw the Indies as new kingdoms to enhance the power, wealth, and prestige of Spain, and the natives of these lands—the "Indians"—as dutiful, tax-paying subjects. To administer this vast empire they dispatched a cadre of loyal bureaucrats to supplant the unruly explorers and conquistadors. Meanwhile, the monarchs sponsored a vigorous campaign to convert the natives of this new world to Christianity. By the mid-sixteenth century, the Portuguese crown had set up a colonial government in Brazil and Catholic missionaries had begun working there as well.

Isolated from Europe, Africa, and Asia for thousands of years, the natives of the Americas now became part of emerging empires that spanned the globe. They not only had to swear allegiance to new sovereigns and accept a new religion but also had to contend with the grandiose plans of thousands of Spaniards and Portuguese who followed Columbus across the Atlantic. These settlers saw the "Indians" as a source of labor to help them build their colony and exploit the natural resources of the new continent. When Indians resisted their political, religious, or economic demands, the Europeans resorted

to war, killing thousands and enslaving many more. Countless others died of smallpox, measles, and other "old world" diseases to which they had no previous exposure.

The natives who encountered Columbus and his crew on Guanahani could not have known it, but these travel-weary sailors constituted the advance guard of a massive and brutal occupation of the Americas. The people of this hemisphere did not simply become passive victims of conquest, however. Some persistently fought back or retreated to remote deserts, mountains, and jungles beyond the intruders' reach. Others forged tactical alliances with the invaders in hope of gaining an advantage over long-standing enemies or to assure their personal survival and advancement under the new regime. The result was a colonial society built on indigenous accommodation and resistance as well as on European greed, military prowess, political drive, and religious fervor.

THE EUROPEANS ARRIVE

The people of the Caribbean and coastal Brazil were the first to experience the European invasion. Their settlements, their material culture, and their political organization bore little resemblance to Columbus's hometown of Genoa or the highly sophisticated societies of Asia that the European sailors knew at least by reputation. But ambitious Spanish and Portuguese colonists quickly found other ways to profit from their accidental landfall—gold in the interior of Hispaniola, Cuba, and Puerto Rico and dyewoods in Brazil. Their pursuit of these commodities inaugurated a chain of events that would have profound consequences for the native Caribbeans and Brazilians.

Columbus and the First Encounters

Queen Isabella of Castile was a busy monarch in the early months of 1492. In January, she accepted the surrender of the last Muslim ruler of Granada, and 3 months later she signed a contract with Christopher Columbus, who had finally persuaded her to sponsor a voyage to the west, across the "Ocean Sea." Both the queen and Columbus had high expectations for what the voyage might yield. Isabella accordingly named him admiral, viceroy, and governor of whatever lands he might encounter, and guaranteed him "one-tenth of all merchandise, whether pearls, gems, gold, silver, spices, or goods of any kind, that may be acquired by purchase, barter or any other means, within the boundaries of said Admiralty jurisdiction."

Columbus then proceeded to outfit three ships and 90 men for his voyage. They set sail in early August of 1492. Arriving at Guanahani, he claimed the island for Castile before heading on to the north coast of Cuba and then eastward to the island of Hispaniola. A triumphant Columbus arrived back in Spain in early March 1493. With him sailed several Tainos he had taken into custody. Eager to persuade the monarchs to finance a return voyage, Columbus gave a glowing report on his discoveries. "I found very many islands, inhabited by numberless people," he proclaimed. Cuba and Hispaniola

TIMELINE

1492
Columbus's first voyage

1500
Cabral's expedition lands in Brazil

1502
Nicolás de Ovando arrives as governor of Hispaniola, with 2500 colonists

1508–1511
Spanish settlement of Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and Cuba

1516
Charles I becomes first monarch of a united Spain

1518
First recorded outbreak of smallpox in the Americas; first direct slave imports from Africa to Spanish America

1519–1521
Conquest of Mexico

1532
Pizarro and Atahualpa meet

1536
Revolt of Manco Inca

1537–1548
Civil wars in Peru

1539–1542
Expeditions of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and Hernando De Soto

1542–1543
New Laws issued

1549
Tomé de Sousa arrives as governor of Brazil

1556
Philip II becomes king of Spain

1559–1562
Smallpox epidemic in coastal Brazil

1560s
Taqi Onkoy rebellion in Peru

1572
Defeat of the neo-Inca state at Vilcabamba in Peru

1580
Philip II of Spain becomes king of Portugal

1607–1608
Permanent English and French colonization of North America begins

1610s
Portuguese authorities defeat santidade movement in Brazil

1630–1654
Dutch control northeastern Brazil

1640
Portugal declares independence from Spain

constituted nothing short of a tropical paradise, with fertile soil, fine harbors, lush vegetation, fresh water, succulent fruits, and exotic birds. The people of the islands were "exceedingly straightforward and trustworthy and most liberal with all that they have." The natives of Hispaniola, he noted in particular, willingly traded gold for whatever trinkets his crewmen offered. Columbus also found the islanders timid, "readily submissive," and not given to idolatry. He therefore concluded that they would make ideal candidates for conversion to Catholicism.

Columbus's account convinced the queen to outfit 17 ships that set out for the islands in late 1493. Some 1500 people, mostly men, were aboard, along with domestic animals, sugarcane and other plants, seeds, and tools needed to establish a permanent colony on Hispaniola. Meanwhile, word of the new lands spread quickly in Europe, and others hastened to join in the adventure. Columbus and others traveling under Spanish auspices soon reconnoitered the coasts of Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Central America, and

Venezuela, while Portuguese navigators landed on the northeast tip of Brazil in 1500. Within a quarter century of Columbus's first voyage, European explorers and cartographers had sketched a remarkably complete outline of the Caribbean, as well as the eastern coasts of North, Central, and South America, and had crossed the Isthmus of Panamá to the Pacific Ocean. The Italian Amerigo Vespucci's accounts of his journeys circulated so widely in Europe that a form of his first name, "America," began appearing on maps of the new continent.

The Caribbean Colonies

Only Spain and Portugal were at this point ready to form permanent colonies in the Americas. Spanish settlement remained confined to Hispaniola for nearly two decades following Columbus's voyage. The city of Santo Domingo, founded in 1496, became the capital of the new colony. Queen Isabella soon reneged on the broad concessions she had made to Columbus, as the potential riches of Hispaniola became more evident and he proved incapable of establishing order there. In 1500, a new governor took command and promptly had Columbus arrested. Two years later, another 2500 colonists arrived. Between 1508 and 1511, other Spaniards began the permanent occupation of Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and Cuba.

Early settlers in the Caribbean supported themselves by panning for gold in the islands' interior highlands. Adapting practices employed during the reconquest of Iberia from the Muslims, they commandeered local natives to work and raided outlying islands and the southeastern mainland of North America for slaves. Popular legend holds that Juan Ponce de León, a veteran of Columbus's second voyage and conqueror of Puerto Rico, was looking for a "fountain of youth" when he landed in Florida in 1513. In truth, he sought gold and slaves. He never found the former, but native peoples from Florida were forcibly taken off to work in the Caribbean islands. Spaniards who engaged in slave raids assuaged their consciences by arguing that these Indians had resisted Christianity and thus had been legitimately captured.

The indigenous population of the Caribbean region declined dramatically during the first two decades after 1492. Some natives died in battles with the Spaniards, while others succumbed to the exploitive new labor regime. The demands of the European colonists disrupted native agriculture. Sickness, aggravated by malnutrition, also played a significant part. Although the first recorded outbreak of smallpox did not come until 1518, influenza and bacterial infections afflicted Spaniards and natives alike from the 1490s onward.

A few Spaniards rallied to the natives' defense. Foremost among them were a handful of Dominican friars. In 1511, Antonio de Montesinos delivered a fiery sermon to the leading Spanish settlers in Santo Domingo, warning that they faced eternal damnation if they continued in their ways. Later, another Dominican, Bartolomé de Las Casas, took up the cause. In response to pressure from the Dominicans and other clerics, King Ferdinand issued laws codifying the *encomienda* (the practice of distributing Indian workers to individual Spaniards) and stipulated that the holders of these grants, called *encomenderos*, were to protect and Christianize the natives allotted to them.

The Portuguese in Brazil

Like Columbus in the Caribbean, Portuguese navigators were on their way to Asia when they first made landfall in Brazil. Pedro Alvares Cabral's fleet of 13 vessels set sail in 1500 intending to follow up on Vasco da Gama's successful voyage around the southern tip of Africa to India 2 years earlier. By design or by accident, Cabral pursued a more westward course and landed on the coast of Brazil. He and his crew spent 8 days ashore before heading on to their original destination, while one ship hastened back to Portugal with news of the discovery.

In 1501, the Portuguese returned, this time with the express purpose of reconnoitering the land. Early Portuguese impressions of the Brazilian natives were as glowing as Columbus's reports from the Caribbean: "In every house they all live together in harmony, with no dissension between them. They are so friendly that what belongs to one belongs to all." The only commodity of any value the Portuguese found was brazilwood, a dyewood long used by the Tupi to color their cotton fabrics. For the next two decades, the European presence in Brazil consisted of simple trading posts, permanently staffed by just a few individuals, similar to those they had set up in Africa. Natives cut the dyewoods and traded them for European tools, while a few Portuguese men settled in native communities, married local women, and served as cultural intermediaries between Europeans and native Brazilians.

The crown's attention focused on its developing commercial empire in Asia, and there was little reason to set up an elaborate government for a colony that yielded only dyewoods. Kings Manuel I (1495–1521) and João III (1521–1557) relied instead on private enterprise to explore and defend their American claims, awarding monopoly contracts to dyewood merchants willing to take on these added responsibilities. Such initiatives proved ineffective at keeping French interlopers from setting up fortified trading posts along the coast. After a series of naval expeditions failed to dislodge the French, King João sent a large expedition to establish a more permanent Portuguese presence at São Vicente, about 300 miles southwest of present-day Rio de Janeiro.

Meanwhile, King João attempted to promote colonization along the entire length of Brazil's coastline. He divided the coast into 15 captaincies, and granted them to proprietors known as *donatários*, who had proven their loyalty to the crown through government service or participation in the establishment of Portugal's settlements in India. The donatário could recruit colonists, make land grants, found cities, administer justice, collect taxes, and receive a percentage of the profits from the trade in native slaves and dyewoods within his jurisdiction. Most of the captaincies failed for reasons that included hostility from local Indians, poor administration, and internal dissension among the colonists.

A few of the proprietary colonies prospered, however. As donatário at São Vicente, Martim Afonso de Sousa fostered the development of sugar mills, partially financed by northern European investors. A short distance inland from São Vicente, the new town of São Paulo became a base to provide food and supplies for the sugar industry. The captaincy of Pernambuco in the north also succeeded in solidifying the Portuguese

presence in Brazil. Proprietor Duarte Coelho Pereira, a former soldier and diplomat in India, recruited numerous settlers and expanded the region's economic base, previously centered on dyewoods, to include sugar production. He also cultivated good relations with Indians in Pernambuco. His brother-in-law married the daughter of a local chief, and the proprietor encouraged other colonists to do likewise.

In other respects, however, the development of these captaincies proved disastrous for the indigenous peoples of Brazil. During the first 30 years after Cabral's arrival, when Portuguese settlers were few in number, the natives retained substantial control over the terms of their interaction with the foreigners. They cut dyewood when and where they pleased and exchanged the logs for knives and other useful tools brought from Europe. The successful donatários and their accompanying entourages disrupted this simple barter economy, as aspiring sugar planters enslaved the natives and appropriated their lands.

THE SPANISH IN MESOAMERICA AND THE ANDES

Meanwhile, the Spanish established sizable permanent colonies, well stocked with familiar plants and domestic animals, and forced indigenous peoples to extract gold from the islands' interior highlands. Almost overnight, the natives of the Caribbean went from trading partners to slaves. At the same time, explorations along the coast of Mesoamerica yielded tantalizing rumors of fabulous kingdoms on the mainland. In 1517 and 1518, two separate expeditions landed in Yucatán. Even in decline, the Mayan city-states were far more impressive than anything Europeans had seen thus far in the Americas. Then in 1519, Hernán Cortés led several hundred of his countrymen over the mountains to the great city of Tenochtitlan. The discovery of the Inca empire followed 13 years later.

Given the formidable military prowess and imperial grandeur of the Aztecs and the Incas, conflict with the invaders was all but inevitable. Victory in battle, almost always with the help of native allies, transformed the Spanish colonial project once again. The mainland held riches far greater than the islands of the Caribbean. The large and highly disciplined populations of Mexico and Peru appeared to be potential subjects of the Spanish crown, converts to Christianity, workers in the colonists' new enterprises, and active collaborators in building a new society.

Cortés and the Aztecs

By 1518, Cuba had become the center of Spanish operations in the Caribbean, and it was from there that the expeditions to Mesoamerica were launched. With word of promising discoveries in Yucatán, Cuba's governor, Diego Velázquez, commissioned a local encomendero, Hernán Cortés, to lead an expedition to the mainland. Cortés prepared energetically for his new assignment, so much so that the governor began to see him as a rival and rescinded his commission. Ambitious and headstrong, Cortés set sail anyway, with 11 ships and about 500 men under his command.