2 Voyages of Discovery and the New Empires in the West and East

Reconquista

Crusades

Marco Polo

In the 15th and 16th centuries Western Civilization and began to expand beyond Western Europe

An Age of Expansion had emerged among the European powers contributing greatly to their development of nation states

This expansion resulted in political control of much of North and South America, regions in Africa, India, China, Japan, and many Pacific islands

Political hegemony was accompanied by economic exploitation, religious domination, and the introduction of European patterns of social and intellectual life

After the 1453 conquest of Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman Turks imposed a blockade on eastern Europe

This development forced Europeans attention elsewhere in their desire to acquire various goods from the east

The development of political centralization in Portugal, Spain, France, and England contributed to the outward push by consolidating resources that could be used to support such enterprises

Portugal, on the western edge of Europe got the start on the rest of Europe

Beginning in the 1410s, the Portuguese began making their way out into the Atlantic in an effort to reach Asia around Africa

The Portuguese took Cueta, an Arab city in northern Morocco in 1415

This marked the beginning of European exploration and control of overseas territory

The objectives of the Portuguese included the continuation of the Reconquista, the search for riches, and an overseas route to Asia for spices

The prince of Portugal, Henry the Navigator took the lead in the expansion of Western Civilization by sponsoring exploration of the African coast

As the Portuguese made their way down the coast of Africa in the 15th century, they muscled in on the Muslim dominance of the gold trade in the region

Portuguese ships bring gold from West Africa controlled the flow of gold into Europe by 1500

By the end of the 15th century the Portuguese were importing not only gold, but slaves, and other valuable items from Western Africa and competing with the land routes controlled by Arab traders

The connection with Western Africa was associated with the Portuguese to have direct contact with the far east and gain direct access to the valuable items that were exported from there

Spices, especially black pepper and cloves were in great demand in Europe being used to preserve foods and to enhance their taste

In 1487 Bartholomew Dias approached the southern tip of Africa at the Cape of Good Hope

In 1497 Vasco da Gama reached India and the cargo he brought back to Portugal was worth 60 times the cost of his voyage, demonstrating the worthwhile nature of the voyage and the trade with the east

The Portuguese quickly built an empire in the East in India and Indonesia that gave them control over the European spice trade

Trading posts were set up in India

Convoys were sent out every year, and Lisbon became the entrance port for Asian goods into Europe

In 1500, as Portuguese ships sailed into the Atlantic to make their way around Africa, they spotted Brazil and claimed it for the Portuguese crown

By the late 15th century, the Spanish began to search for an alternate route to Asia by sailing due West

Christopher Columbus’ voyage of the fall of 1492 happened to stumble onto something just as great as what waited to be found in Asia

Columbus, however, remained steadfast in his opinion that he had found Asia

It wasn’t until the later Spanish-sponsored voyages of Amerigo Vespucci and Ferdinand Magellan that the Spanish realized that the discoveries of the west were something different from Asia

Columbus’ voyages began more than three centuries of Spanish exploration in the Western Hemisphere

The English made some initial explorations under the Genoese Giovanni Cabotto (John Cabot) in 1497-1498

And the French made some explorations under Giovanni Verrazano and Jacque Cartier in the early 16th century to the 1540s

These developments transformed societies on both sides of the Atlantic as European technologies and knowledge were introduced into the Americas, and American goods and gold and silver bullion flooded European markets

The people that Columbus met in the western hemisphere were mistakenly called Indians since Columbus thought he was in the East Indies

Human occupation of the western hemisphere goes back to at least 18 thousand years ago

Bering land strait

American Indians developed agriculture around 8 to 6 thousand years ago

They developed civilizations beginning around 1500 BCE in Mexico and 200 BCE in South America

By the time Columbus and subsequent Spanish conquerors and explorers arrived in the western hemisphere the vast majority of American Indians were agriculturalists and most lived in the civilizations of Mexico and Peru

Olmec, Maya, Zapotec, Teotihuacan, Toltec civilizations existed before the development of the Aztec empire in the late 14th century

In South America the Nazca, Moche, Huari-Tianhuanco, and the Chimu predated the Inca empire emerging in the 15th century

Aztec Empire

Triple Alliance

Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, Tlacopan

Conquest beginning in 1428

Religion

Human sacrifice

Pantheon of deities

Huitzilopochli dominant deity

Government

Decentralized city-states with central authority in Tenochtitlan

Economy

Agricultural

Tribute

Specialization and division of labor

Society

Diverse ethnicities

Caste system

Spanish conquest (1521)

Replay of the Recoquista

Many Indian allies

New Spain

Inca Empire

Expansion and conquest from Cusco beginning around 1438

Religion

Pantheon of deities

Inti was the dominant deity

Government

Decentralized with a central government in Cusco

Economy

Agricultural

Tribute

Specialization and division of labor

Highly regulated, centrally planned economy

Society

6-14 million

Diverse ethnicities

Used the Quechua language as the universal language

It was a language already in wide usage

Caste system

Spanish conquest (1533)

New Granada

Francisco Pizarro was inspired by Cortes’ example and invaded the Incas

With 200 men and Indian allies Pizarro was able to defeat the empire

The Incas had been fighting a civil war and had been weakened by disease brought by the Spanish

The Spanish captured the Inca leader Atahualpa and executed him in 1533

There was an uprising against the Spanish, but it was put down by 1536

Competition over power by the conquerors and continuous frontier wars in the effort to consolidate the conquest over the empire until 1569 when the Spanish crown established unquestioned authority in the Viceroyalty of New Castile or Peru

After the conquests of Mexico and Peru the Western Hemisphere was immediately drawn into the Atlantic and European society and economy

This mean that the peoples of the Americas were subject to Spanish political, social, and economic dominance

Caste system

Encomienda, repartimiento, hacienda in Mexico and Peru

The main components of the economy were mining, agriculture, and shipping

Mining

Although the Spanish were interested in gold, it was silver that was more plentiful and profitable

The main silver mining centers were Potosi in Peru and Zacatecas in Mexico

The crown received 1/5 of all mining revenues and monopolized the materials needed for the silver mining process

Many native inhabitants worked in the mines

African slaves were also brought to work in the mines

Agriculture

A plantation system practiced by the Portuguese was copied by the Spanish in the Caribbean and maintained by the Portuguese in Brazil

Portuguese Brazil and the Spanish Caribbean produced sugar for the European market

On the continental mainland the hacienda developed by the mid 16th century and was the center of agricultural production

Economic impact on Europe

Between 1525 and 1575 the riches of the east and west poured into Lisbon and Sevilla

However, it was ultimately the Flemish city of Antwerp in the low countries and controlled by the Spanish Habsburgs that developed into the great entrepot for overseas bullion and spices

As a result, Antwerp developed into the commercial and financial capital of Europe by the end of the 16th century

The geographic location of Antwerp made it an intersection of trading routes into Europe

English wool, Baltic wheat, fur, and timber, Portuguese spices, German iron and copper, Spanish fruit, French wines and dyestuffs, Italian silk, and glass along with vast amounts of cash were all traded at Antwerp

Most of the Spanish silver found itself drained to the Netherlands to pay for food and luxury goods

These economic developments contributed to Dutch independence movements by the end of the 16th century

By that time, Amsterdam had taken over from Antwerp as the economic center of Europe

The acquired wealth of the Dutch inspired them to challenge the Portuguese in Indian and the East Indies by the early 17th century

The bullion that flowed into Europe increased the amount of money circulating through Spain and created an inflation of 2% per year

Between 1503 and 1650 16 million kilograms and 185,000 kilograms of gold entered the port of Seville

Prices doubled in Spain by 1550 and quadrupled by 1600

Spain saw increasing population, contributing to a rise in the demand for food and goods

The Spanish colonies also represented a demand for European products

Olive oil, wine, wool, utensils, tools, livestock, luxury goods

Spain had expelled some of the best farmers and businessmen at the end of the Reconquista

The Spanish economy could not meet the demands found in Spain and the New World

As prices rose, the cost of manufacturing and other goods increased, and Spanish products could not compete in the international market with products made cheaper elsewhere

Prices rose faster than the Spanish government could impose taxes to dampen the economy by making it harder for people to buy goods and thus bring down prices

As the Spanish government repudiated its debt, the public confidence in the government was undermined

The flow of silver and gold from the Americas destabilized the Spanish agricultural and manufacturing sectors of the economy

By the 17th century the Spanish economy was severely weakened

Spanish inflation was transferred to the rest of Europe as the crown paid their armies and the foreign debt in bullion

In Germany the cost of clothes and food increased almost 100 % between 1519 and 1540

Those who lived on fixed incomes such as the nobility were badly hurt by the inflation because their money bought less

The middle merchant caste and classes owed a fixed sum of money, and they prospered as debts had less value each year

Of course, the poor fared the worst of all

The new inflow of money enabled governments and entrepreneurs to sponsor research and industrial expansion which promoted the growth of market economics

These developments encouraged the development of the beginnings of a class system undermining the caste system

Traditions were starting to be questioned

The discoveries around the world increased skepticism about the wisdom of the ancients and other traditions that guided life and thought

This encouraged the development of new ideas and innovations that promised greater independence and a chance at a better life