

Encounters with Europe

THE EARLY MODERN WORLD (1450 – 1750)



- The reaction toward European exploration varied in Africa, Indian Ocean states, and in the Americas.
- For example, whereas some saw practical benefits of working with the Europeans, others such as those in the Americas found the whole experience strange and alien.



WITH AFRICA

- Along the West Coast many Africans were eager to deal with the Portuguese because it gave them markets for their exports and an opportunity to import items from Europe and Asia at a cheaper price than the overland routes.
- The Kingdom of Benin was provided copper, brass, textiles, and glass beads in exchange for pepper & ivory.



- The Portuguese mainly wanted to import gold and slaves along with a desire to export Christianity (The rulers of Benin and Kongo did invite Christian missionaries to their kingdoms).
- Over time Benin lost interest in the missionaries and even closed the market in male slaves.
 - Why? No one knows, but it does exhibit the power some African kingdoms had to control their contact with Europeans.



- However, the kingdom of Kongo was deeply impressed with Christianity and even made Catholicism the state's official faith.
- Yet because they had little to trade, they were forced to sell more and more slaves as a means of paying off the Portuguese for their goods and missionaries.



- Along the eastern coast of Africa, Ethiopia (a Christian state) had hoped that continued contact with the Portuguese would fend off Muslim expansion.
- Although some aid was given, a permanent alliance never occurred because the Ethiopians refused to switch their allegiance to the Pope in Rome instead of the Christian patriarch in Alexandria.





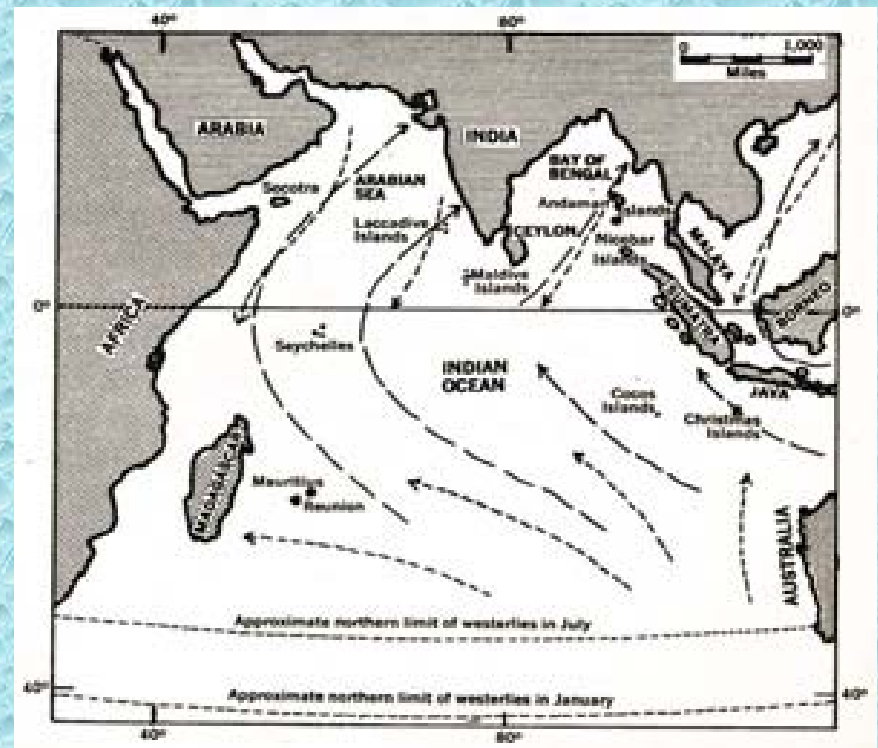
WITH INDIAN OCEAN STATES

- When da Gama arrived in India in 1498, the Portuguese did not make a sizeable impression.
 - The European ships were much smaller than the Chinese “junk” ships that had arrived 65 years earlier.
 - The “gifts” brought by the Portuguese were inferior to the luxuries they were used to from the Far East.



- However, the Portuguese *intended* on dominating the Indian Ocean trade. Whether it was ports in India, along the Swahili coast, or SE Asia.

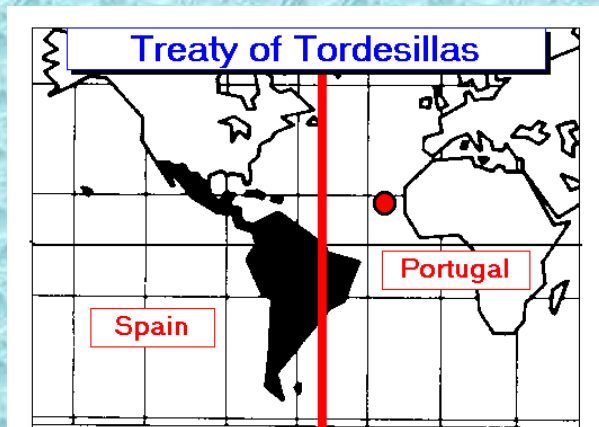
- In 1511, with an army of a thousand men they seized Malacca.
- In 1557, they established a post in Macao, China monopolizing the trade between China and Japan.
- They required traders to use Portuguese ships and forced custom duties on other merchants.



- Reaction to Portugal's attempt to take over the Indian Ocean trade was mixed:
 - The Mughals (Muslim rulers in India) simply ignored Portugal's maritime moves because they were more concerned with land possessions.
 - The Ottomans responded with aggression launching sea expeditions against them, but ultimately failed because the Portuguese had faster better armed ships.
 - Merchants in Calicut put up sustained resistance.
- Although the Portuguese never gained complete control of the Indian trade, they did make large profits (ex: importing spices like pepper) and broke up the Italian cities' monopoly.

WITH THE AMERICAS

- European contact with the Americas was predominately done by the Spanish (except for parts of Brazil, remember the Treaty of Tordesillas!)



Map 13-5
Ways of the World, First Edition
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- The first contact between Europeans and Amerindians was with Columbus.
- Columbus' men (irritated they did not find large quantities of gold) took their aggression out on natives with brutality (slavery, dismemberment).

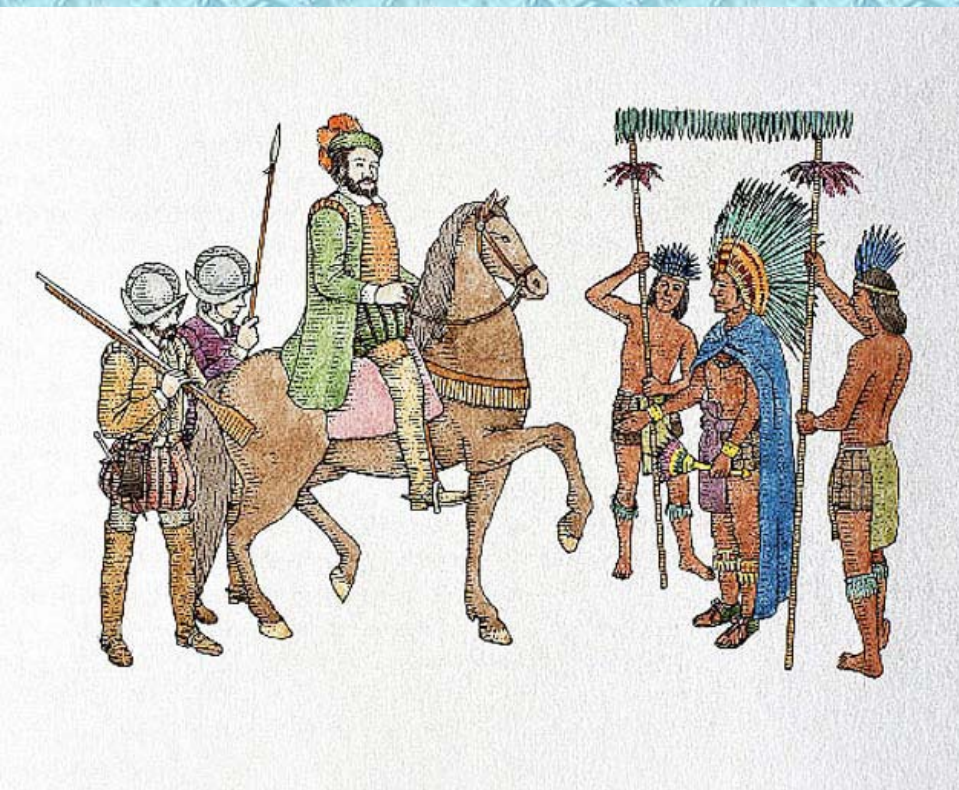


- On his second voyage to the Americas, Columbus & Spain prepared for colonization by bringing 17 ships filled with soldiers, colonists, and missionaries.
- War broke out with the Arawaks, however due to Spain's military superiority (body armor, horses) it became a slaughter and survivors were forced into slavery.
- *“The actions of the Spanish in the Antilles were reflections of Spanish actions and motives during wars against Muslims in Spain in the previous centuries: seeking to serve God by defeating nonbelievers and placing them under Christian control – and becoming rich in the process.”*

- In 1519, Hernando Cortes led an expedition to the mainland of Mexico with roughly 600 men. Within a few weeks he came across the Aztecs (some of whom thought Cortes was a god).



- Cortes was able to form alliances with Amerindian groups that resented the Aztecs for their harsh demands of tribute, forced labor, and people for sacrifices.



- At first the Aztec ruler Montezuma gave the Spanish gifts and gold, but before long fights broke out.

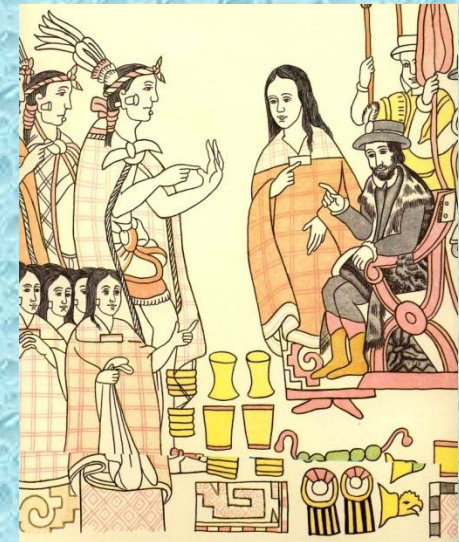
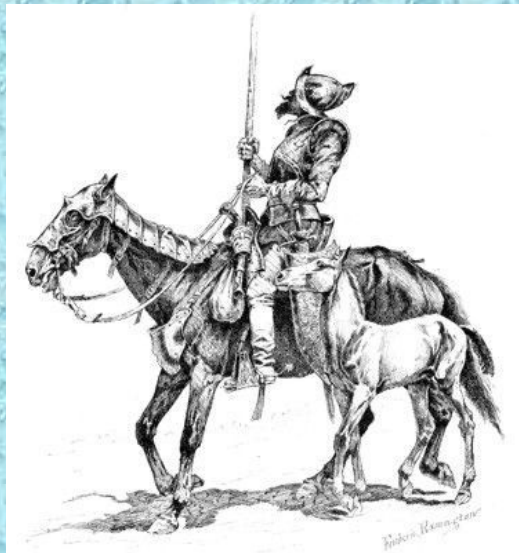
- At first the Aztecs were able to gain the upper hand against the Spanish forces even destroying half of them and sacrificing a number of prisoners.
- However, the Spanish ultimately captured Tenochtitlan and aided with the destructive forces of smallpox.



- By 1521, Cortes was able to conquer the Aztecs.

WHY?

- superior weaponry (the psychological effect of horses and muskets)
- they got help from other native groups
- diseases (measles, smallpox)



- In 1532, the Spanish set their eyes on South America when they sent Francisco Pizarro and a small army of 200 men.



- Although outnumbered 150 to 1, a surprise attack allowed Pizarro to crush the Incas and kidnap the Inca ruler Atahualpa.



- Although the Incas offered to pay a ransom of “rooms full of gold and silver,” Atahualpa was strangled to death.
- The unity of the Inca Empire was lost and the region was quickly dominated by the Spanish.



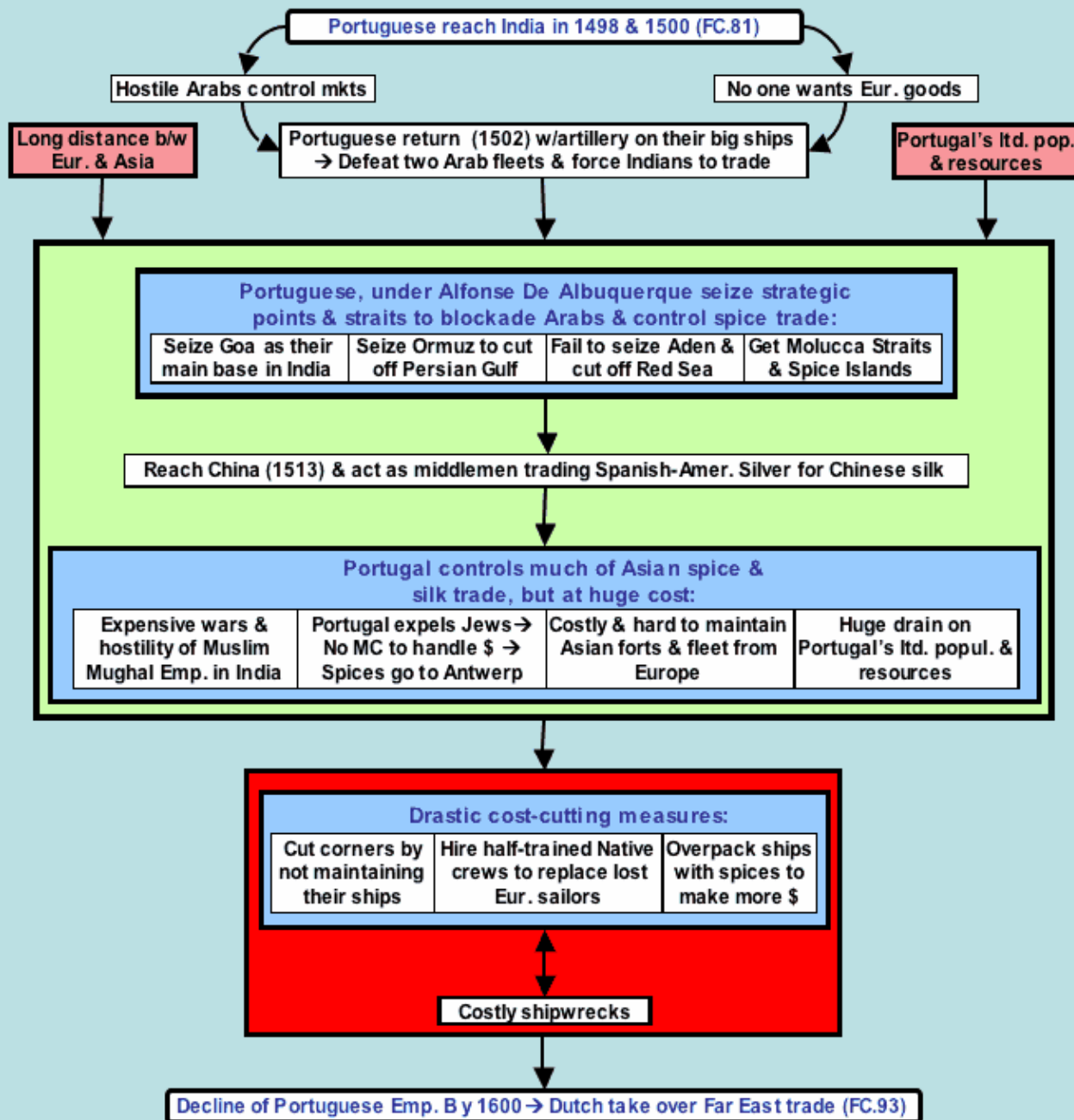
- In contrast to the Portuguese who were more concerned with trade, the Spanish established large territorial empires.
- This was possible because:
 - The isolation of the Americas made natives susceptible to smallpox
 - A superior “psychological edge” was present with horses and gunpowder



- For the Portuguese these advantages were not present in the East (immunity to old world diseases and knowledge of horses & gunpowder), plus a desire to become wealthy through already established trade networks restrained any desire for large territorial conquest.



FC.82 THE PORTUGUESE EMPIRE IN EAST ASIA (1498-c.1600)



The creator of this flowchart is being generous to call what the Portuguese were doing in East Asia “an empire.”

Nonetheless, the chart does show some of the problems they faced and notes their eventual replacement in the region by the Dutch.