

Empires and Encounters 1450-1750

AP World History Notes
European Empires in the Americas

European Empires

Time Period	European Power(s)	Destinations
15 th – 16 th centuries	Spain	Caribbean, mainland Central & South America
16 th century	Portugal	Present-day Brazil
17 th century	England, France, the Netherlands	Eastern coast of North America

European Empires



Map 14.1 European Colonial Empires in the Americas
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European Motivations for Imperialism

- Aware of their low position in the world of Eurasian commerce and wanted to change this
- European rulers driven by competition and rivalries with other countries
- Merchants wanted direct access to Asian wealth; no Muslim intermediaries

European Motivations for Imperialism

- ⦿ Poor European nobles and commoners thought they could gain wealth and status in the colonies
- ⦿ Christian missionaries wanted to spread their faith
- ⦿ Persecuted minorities wanted to start a new life with more freedoms

European Advantages

- Countries and trading companies efficiently mobilized human and material resources
- Seafaring technology allowed them to cross the Atlantic easily

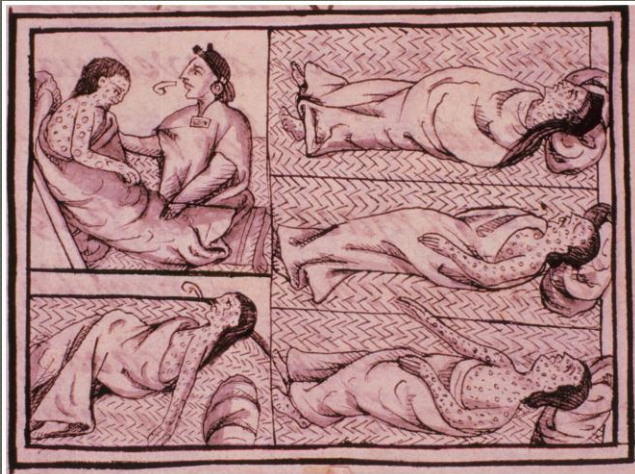


European Advantages

- ◉ Ironworking technology
- ◉ Gunpowder weapons
- ◉ Horses

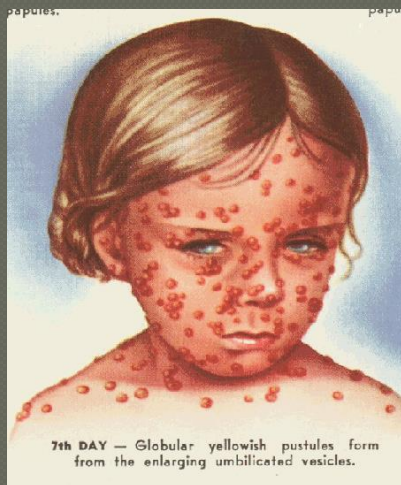


European Advantages



Visual Source 14.5 Smallpox: Disease and Defeat
Biblioteca Medicea Laurentiana, Florence
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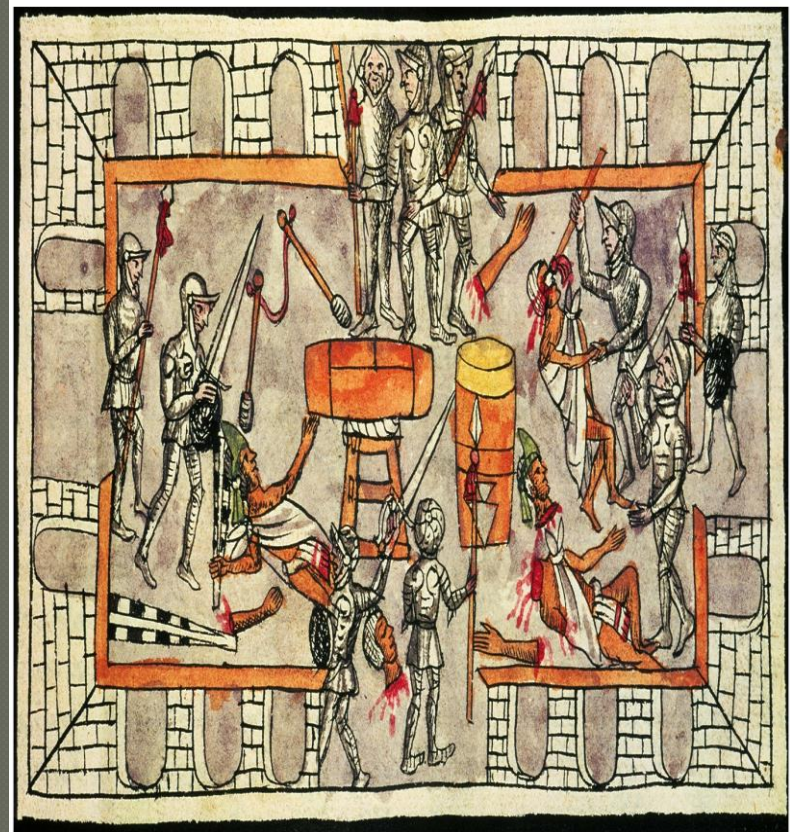
- Germs and diseases!
 - Major ones = Smallpox, measles, typhus, influenza, malaria, yellow fever
 - Native Americans had no immunity to these diseases



7th DAY — Globular yellowish pustules form from the enlarging umbilicated vesicles.

“The Great Dying”

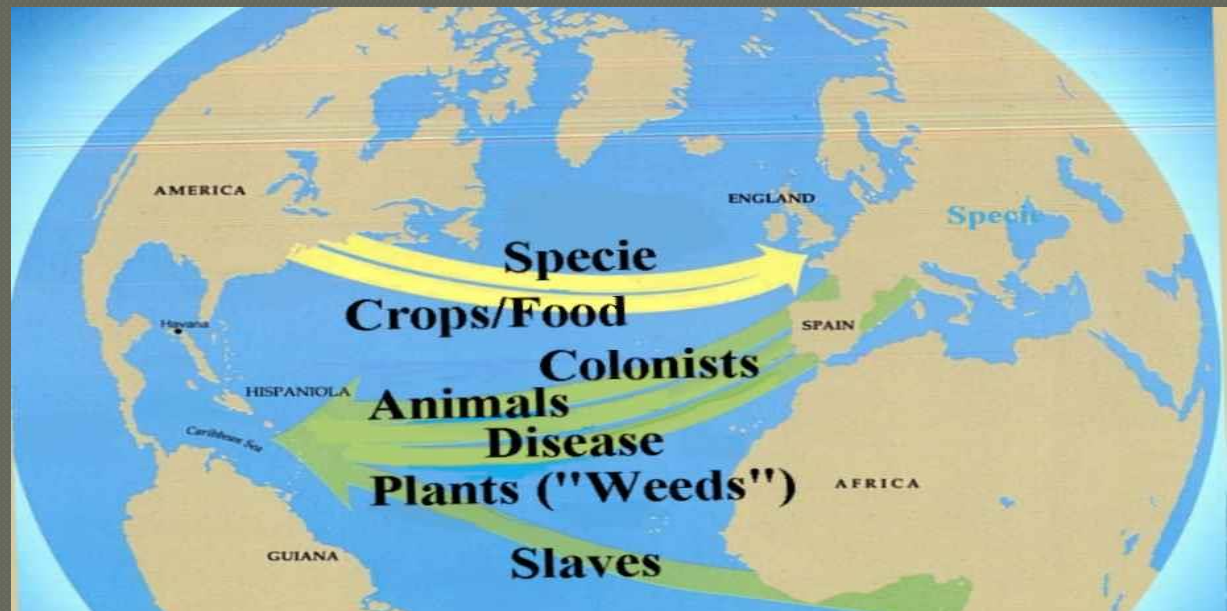
- Result of European conquest = large-scale decimation of Native American populations and societies
- In many cases, up to 90% of the population in a region would die
- Central Mexico = population went from about 20 million people to 1 million people by 1650



Visual Source 14.3 The Massacre of the Nobles
Bridgeman-Giraudon/Art Resource, NY
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The Columbian Exchange

- The Columbian Exchange = the enormous network, migration, trade, spread of disease, and transfer of plants of animals between Europe and the Americas



The Columbian Exchange

The Columbian Exchange



Positive Impact on Europe

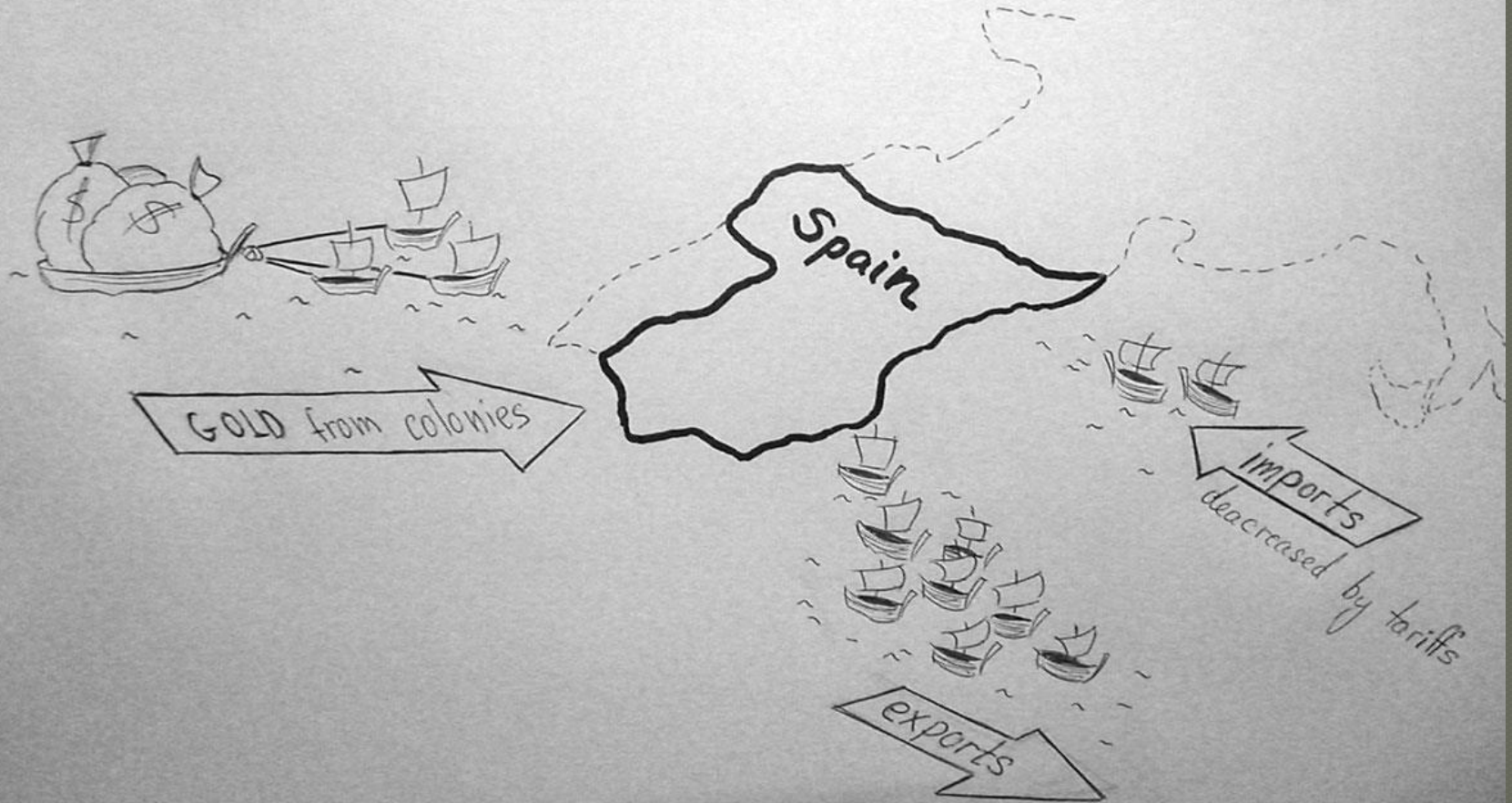
- New information flooded into Europe
 - Led to the Scientific Revolution
- Gained wealth from the colonies → precious metals, natural resources, new food crops, slave labor, financial profits, colonial markets
 - Led to the Industrial Revolution
- Colonies provided an outlet for Europe's growing population

Mercantilism



- Belief held by all European powers
- Mercantilism = governments served their countries' economic interests best by exporting more than they import and by accumulating bullion
 - Bullion = precious metals like silver and gold
- Roles of the colonies:
 - 1) Supplied resources for European factories
 - 2) Provided closed markets = they could only buy products from their “mother country”

Mercantilism



Types of Colonial Economies

- ◉ Settler-dominated commercial agriculture
- ◉ Slave-based plantations
- ◉ Ranching
- ◉ Mining

In the Lands of the Aztecs and Incas

AZTECS = CONQUERED BY
HERNAN CORTES IN 1519



In modern-day Mexico

INCAS = CONQUERED BY
FRANCISCO PIZARRO IN 1532



In modern-day Peru

Mexico and Peru

- Economic foundations for these colonial societies:
 - Commercial agriculture on large rural estates
 - Silver and gold mining
- Both = used native peoples as forced laborers



Social Order of Spanish Colonies

Peninsulares = Spaniards born in Spain

Creoles = Spaniards born in the Americas

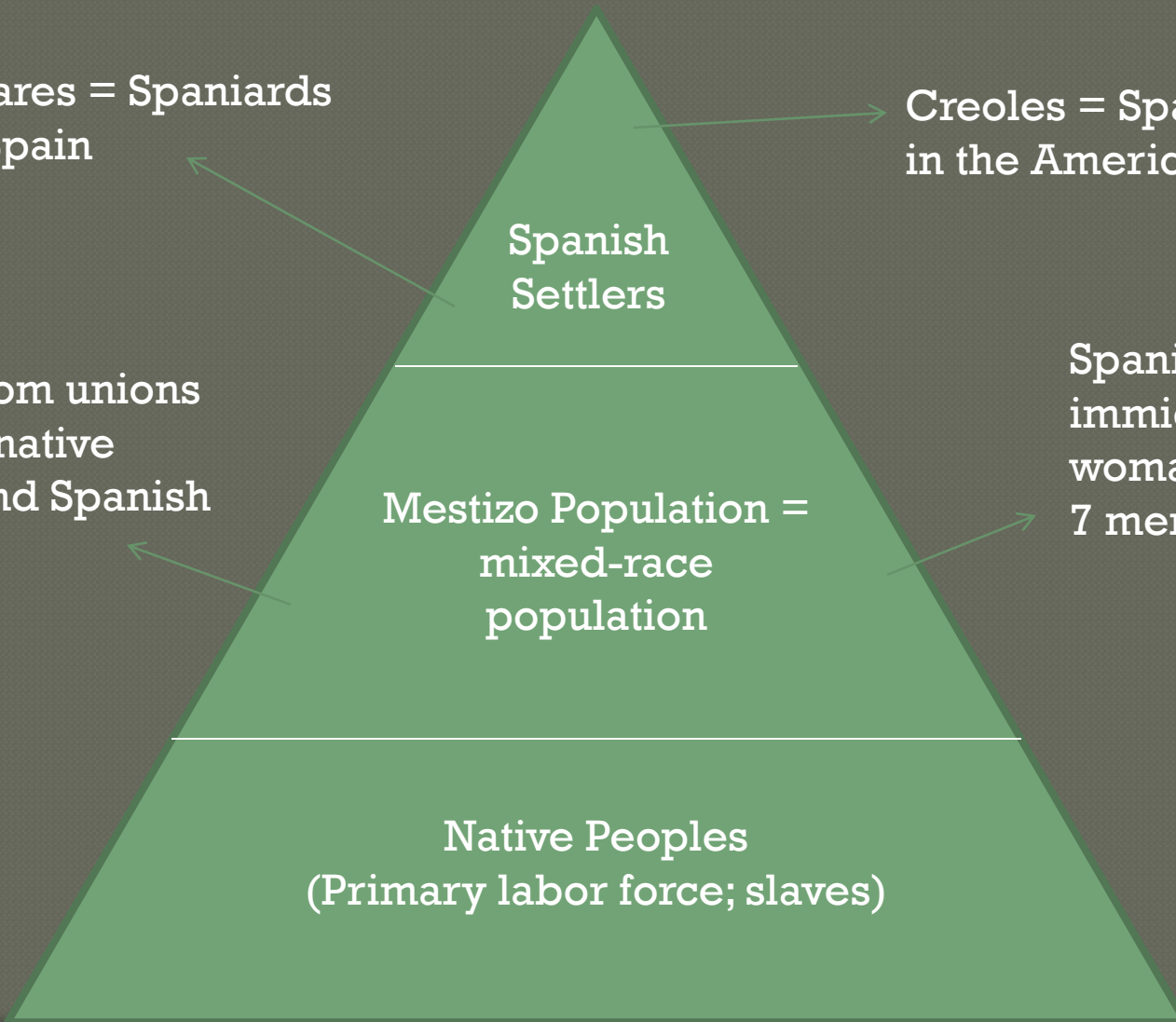
Spanish Settlers

Started from unions between native women and Spanish men

Spanish immigration = 1 woman for every 7 men

Mestizo Population = mixed-race population

Native Peoples
(Primary labor force; slaves)



Mestizos



- Largely Hispanic in culture
- Many looked down upon by “pure” Spaniards
- Worked as artisans, clerks, supervisors of workers, and lower-level officials in church and government organizations

Colonies of Sugar

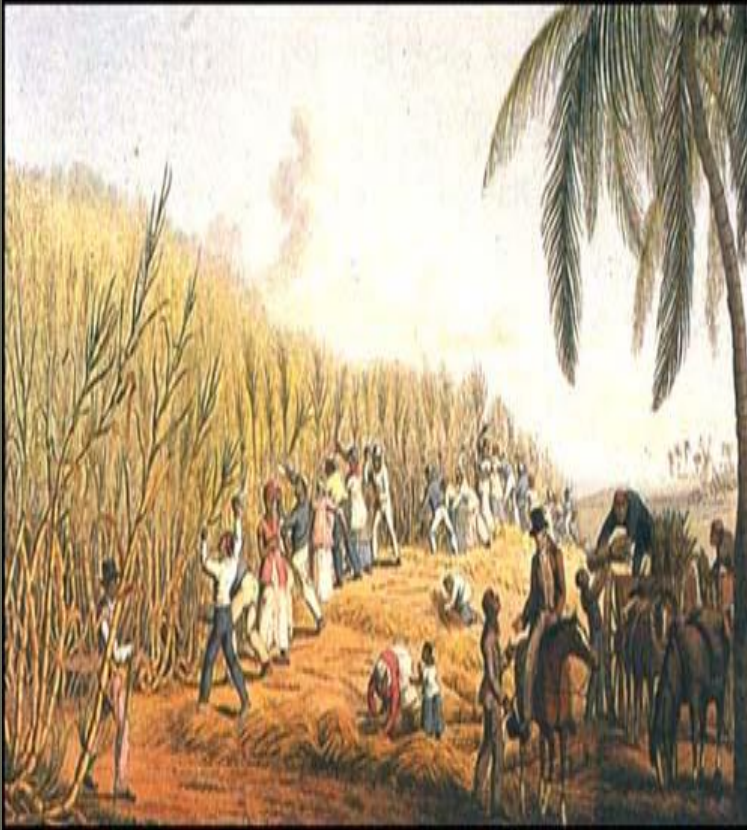
Location	Controlled By
Brazil	Portugal
Caribbean	Spanish, British, French, and Dutch

Uses for sugar in Europe:

- A Medicine
- A Spice
- A Sweetener
- A Preservative
- In sculptured forms as a decoration → indicated high status and wealth



Production of Sugar



- Involved growing the sugarcane AND processing it into usable sugar
- Very labor-intensive
- Most profitable if done on a large-scale
- Massive use of slave labor → imported Africans
 - Native population had been wiped out