

Exploration and Conquest – European Motivations for Exploration

Use the source below to help identify European motivations for exploration. Respond to the questions on your own paper, using a header to identify the source. You will use the information gathered to synthesize responses in a following portion of this assignment.

Source 1: Mercantilism and Colonies

According to the theory of mercantilism, governments wanted to add gold and silver to their nation's treasury. To accumulate that wealth, they hoped to export goods to other countries than they had to import from other countries, usually by selling goods that were worth more than the products they imported. The other countries would then have to pay them the difference in gold or silver.

Colonies played an important role in mercantilism for several reasons. Colonies were supposed to produce resources that companies in the mother country could sell for a profit. They were expected to provide raw materials that could be used by manufacturing companies in the mother country. For example, the numerous forests in North America provided lumber for England, which had fewer trees. The colonies also served as additional markets, buying items manufactured in the mother country.

In some cases, colonies could provide the mother country with gold and silver from mining the land. For example, Spain established colonies in Mexico and South America because of the gold and silver that was found.

These were some of the reasons that colonies were desirable to obtain. In actual practice, colonization had both costs and benefits. These advantages and disadvantages are shown in the chart below.

Benefits of Mercantilism for the Mother Country	Costs of Mercantilism for the Mother Country
+ The colony might have gold or silver that could be added directly to the mother country's treasury	-Gold or silver might be costly to obtain and could be captured during transport
+ The colony could grow crops to feed people in the mother country or be traded at a profit to other countries	-Money was needed to fund armies to protect colonists from native peoples and prevent other countries from taking control of the colony
+ The colony could supply raw materials useful to mother country manufacturers	-Colonists might begin their own manufacturing, which would compete with the mother country's businesses
+ By controlling all shipping to and from the colony, the mother country could increase the number and skill of its sailors, strengthening the country's navy in the event of war	-Colonists might ship goods to or buy goods from other European countries
	-If the manufactured goods colonists bought cost more than the resources they produced, they would not be able to afford the manufactured goods

Analysis Questions

1. Summarize the relationship between the system of mercantilism and the establishment of colonies.
2. In your opinion, explain the **key** benefit and **key** cost of mercantilism. Do the "pros" outweigh the "cons"?
3. What are some specific ways the mother country could prevent colonists from trading with other countries?
4. Why didn't indigenous peoples from the Americas explore and conquer Europe? What is needed to colonize and implement mercantilism?

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Source 2: Why England Should Sponsor Colonies: A Discourse on Western Planting by Richard Hakluyt

Although King Henry VII and a group of Bristol merchants had dispatched Italian explorer John Cabot to North America in 1497 to search for a route to Asia, no further English exploration was undertaken until the reign of Elizabeth I. In 1584, Hakluyt wrote a lengthy memorandum to Queen Elizabeth in support of a proposal by Sir Walter Raleigh to colonize the east coast of North America, known at the time as Norumbega. Elizabeth declined because of a lack of money, and insufficient funding was one of several reasons why the Roanoke Colony failed.

A brief collection of certain reasons to induce her majesty and the state to take in hand the western voyage and the planting there.

1. The soil yields and may be made to yield all the several commodities of Europe...
2. The passage thither and home is neither too long nor too short, but easy, and to be made twice in the year.
3. The passage cuts not near the trade of any prince, nor near any of their countries or territories, and is a safe passage, and not easy to be interfered with...
5. And where England is now for certain hundred years last passed, by the distinctive commodity of wool...has raised itself from meaner state to greater wealth...it comes now to pass that by the great endeavor of the increase of the trades of wool in Spain and in the West Indies...that the wool of England, and the cloth made from the same will become inferior, and every day more inferior than the other...to plant at Norumbega or some other like place, were it not for anything else but for the hope of the sale of wool...
6. ...her Majesty may...have plenty of excellent trees for masts, of goodly timber to build ships and to make great navies, of pitch, tar, hemp, and all things incident for a navy royal, and that for no price, and without money or request.
10. No foreign commodity that comes into England comes without payment of custom once, twice, or thrice, before it comes into the realm...and by this course to Norumbega foreign princes' customs are avoided...
11. At the first trade with the people of those parts, the subjects of this realm for many years shall change many cheap commodities of these parts for thins of high value there not esteemed; and this to the great enriching of the realm...
14. If the sea coast serve for making salt, and the inland for wine, oils, oranges, lemons, figs, etc., and for making iron, all which with much more is hoped, without sword drawn, we shall humble the French, the Spanish, the Portuguese...and to the greater saving of the wealth of the realm...
16. We shall by planting there enlarge the glory of the gospel...
22. The swarm of the wandering beggars of England, that grow up idly, and hurtful and burdenous to this realm, may there be unladed, better bred up...and to their own more happy state...[points 19-21 list pirates, unemployed youth, and soldiers without a war to fight in similar circumstances – potential sources of trouble who could find a better life in Norumbega.]

Analysis Questions

1. According to Hakluyt, what are the economic advantages England might expect from colonizing Norumbega?
2. Explain how colonization will strengthen England and weaken its rivals.
3. Explain how colonization will help solve England's domestic issues.
4. How much concrete knowledge of North America does Hakluyt seem to have?

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Source 3: Advances in Mapmaking, Navigation and Shipbuilding

Accurate mapmaking helps navigators better find locations and measure distances. Today, satellite imaging helps cartographers create highly detailed and accurate maps. Old World cartographers, however, created maps without modern technology. Imagine mapping coastlines and inland rivers without a bird's eye view of new lands! Yet, these map-makers were surprisingly accurate given their limited technology and knowledge of the New World. Interestingly, long before the Age of Exploration, Ptolemy mapped the ancient world suggesting that the earth was round, estimating its size, and dividing it into a grid system of latitude and longitude. During the Renaissance, cartographers rediscovered classical Greek and Roman scholarship, paving the way to advances in navigation.

The Portuguese took the early lead in developing navigational techniques. Aided by Prince Henry the Navigator in 1416, the Portuguese developed celestial navigation using quadrants and astrolabes. Celestial navigation determined latitude by observing the sun and stars. Many sailors, however, determined their course by dead reckoning, which used compass readings and measurements of a ship's speed to determine position. Both of these techniques were only effective in measuring latitude; early navigators did have the technology to determine longitude. As early as 1530, Flemish astronomer Gemma Frisius suggested that longitude was related to time. Yet, clocks would not keep time at sea. Not until John Harrison's 1761 seagoing chronometer accurately kept time at sea could sailors mark longitude. For more information on mapmaking and navigation, see the Mariner's Museum of Newport News, Virginia.

Advances in shipbuilding included improved sail designs, stronger hulls, and sleeker lines. New sails made the most efficient use of available winds and even allowed seaman to sail into the wind. Stronger hulls better withstood the tremendous impact of rough Atlantic seas. Sleeker design lines allowed ships to sail faster, slicing through water far more efficiently than older barge-like ship designs.

Analysis Questions

1. How did advances in navigation technology lead to the age of exploration and conquest? Conversely, how did the age of exploration and conquest lead to advances in navigation technology?
2. Who are the "people" depicted in the map? Why are they significant?
3. Why is the positioning of Europe on the map important? What does it tell us of their world view?



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Source 4: The Origins of Portugal's Overseas Empire: *The Chronicle of Guinea* by Gomes Eannes de Azurara

Azurara's history details Portuguese explorations along the coast of West Africa down to 1448. In the following excerpts, Azurara explains why Prince Henry the Navigator sponsored the expeditions and defends the consequent enslavement of West Africans. Trade in enslaved persons from New Guinea became an integral part of Portugal's commercial imperialism.

...after the taking of Ceuta he always kept ships well armed against the Infidel, both for war, and because he had also a wish to know the land that lay beyond the isles of Canary and that Cape called Bojador, for that up to his time, neither by writings, nor by the memory of man, was known with any certainty the nature of the land beyond that Cape... he sent out his own ships against those parts, to have manifest certainty of them all. And to this he was stirred up by his zeal for the service of God and of the King Edward his Lord and brother, who then reigned. And this was the first reason of his action.

The second reason was that if there chanced to be in those lands some population of Christians, or some havens, into which it would be possible to sail without peril, many kinds of merchandise might be brought to this realm... and also the products of this realm might be taken there, which traffic would bring great profit to our countrymen.

The third reason was that, as it was said that the power of the Moors in that land of Africa was very much greater than was commonly supposed, and that there were no Christians among them, nor any other race of men...

The fourth reason was because during the one and thirty years that he had warred against the Moors, he had never found a Christian king, nor a lord outside this land... he sought to know if there were in those parts any Christian princes...

The fifth reason was his great desire to make increase in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and to bring to him all the souls that should be saved... And not only did I see the first captives, but their children and grandchildren as true Christians as if the Divine grace breathed in them and imparted to them a clear knowledge of itself.

Analysis Questions

1. What were Henry's motives? What seems to have been the greatest motive – economic, political, or religious gain or simple curiosity?
2. Explain how Azurara justifies the enslavement of African people. Be specific in your answer.
3. How might these kinds of motivations influence explorers in North America?

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Source 5: “England on the Eve of Colonization” by Paul E.J. Hammer

When Elizabeth I died on March 24, 1603, she had been queen for almost forty-five years - longer than a majority of her subjects had been alive. Within a few years, Elizabeth’s reputation would be burnished with nostalgia and her reign would be seen as a golden age. Nevertheless, the last two decades of her rule had been difficult and fraught with anxiety.

For some eighteen years, Elizabeth’s England had been locked in open war with the Spanish empire of Philip II (succeeded by his son, Philip III, in 1598). In many ways, the conflict was about religion. Protestant England had long feared Spain was marshalling the forces of international Catholicism against it. By 1585, Elizabeth felt compelled to send troops to aid the (largely Protestant) Dutch to prevent the Spanish army completing its conquest of the Low Countries—the obvious base for an assault on England. English anxieties were further heightened by the sizeable Catholic minority among the queen’s own subjects and continuing fears they might prove a fifth column for Spain. Philip II was not only determined to crush the English challenge, but was also infuriated by English piracy, not least against Spanish ships and settlements in the New World. The result was Spain’s attempt to invade England by sea in 1588—what is today popularly called ‘the Spanish Armada.

The great clash of 1588 was merely the end of the beginning of the war, not the beginning of its end. In 1589, England launched its own counter-Armada against Spain and Portugal – with almost equally disastrous results. Thereafter, the conflict increasingly became a land war on the continent. Repeated drafts of raw English conscripts were sent to fight in France and the Low Counties, dying in droves. Maimed or unemployed veterans became an increasingly common sight in English towns. At sea, the bold claims that Sir Francis Drake and others had made for naval attacks against Spain and its possessions before the war were repeatedly disappointed. Despite a few striking successes such as the capture and sack of Cadiz, Spain’s chief port serving the Americas, the more common outcome was that of the disastrous attempt to occupy Panama that left Drake among the dead. Spain fared even worse. Two new Armadas in 1596 and 1597 were severely battered by storms and proved total failures. Instead of large fleet actions, the most effective maritime operations involved the legalized piracy of English privateers. This became a huge industry along England’s coastline, embracing vessels ranging from small owner-operated boats to private warships owned by noblemen, courtiers, and many of the same London merchants who were also launching long-range trading expeditions to the Mediterranean, Africa, and Asia.

During the mid-1590s, the burden of sustaining the war effort became even more difficult. After outbreaks of plague in 1593, the country was wracked by a succession of disastrous harvests during the middle years of the decade. London saw riots in 1595 and some of the queen’s subjects may have starved to death in more distant regions in the following years. Elizabeth’s government was forced into a delicate balancing act, demanding heavy taxes to fund the war each year but also seeking to minimize the burden on her poorest subjects. Underlying this policy was a fear that excessive financial demands might provoke the sort of popular rebellions that had nearly torn the realm apart in 1549. While commanders bemoaned the military consequences of penny-pinching, Elizabeth sought to eke out her over-stretched finances by selling crown lands and pawning old jewels. Instead of rewarding courtiers with grants of land or titles, she also increasingly issued patents and monopolies. These royal grants cost her nothing and sometimes generated annual fees. They allowed the lucky recipients to reap their rewards by entering into partnerships with merchants to ensure control over some specific product, such as the collection of import duty on sweet wines, the printing of Latin primers, or the manufacture of salt or starch. The queen’s subjects had to pay inflated prices to guarantee a suitably large profit to the monopolist and his partners. The proliferation of this crown-endorsed exploitation provoked widespread anger and prompted furious complaints when new parliaments met in 1597 and 1601.

Analysis Questions

1. According to Hammer, what role did religion play in creating rivalries among European powers? How did the powers seek to gain the upper hand against their religious adversaries?
2. Where were English pirates set loose on Spanish ships? What were they after? Why (and how) did Spain have what they were after?
3. How did England’s financial troubles prompt the country towards colonization (pay particular attention to the sections regarding land distribution, grants, etc.)?

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Source 6: What Columbus Hoped to Gain: King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, Agreements with Columbus of April 17 and April 30, 1492

AGREEMENT OF APRIL 17, 1492

The things supplicated and which your Highnesses give and declare to Christopher Columbus in some satisfaction...for the voyage which now, with the aid of God, he is about to make therein, in the service of your Highnesses, are as follows:

Firstly, that your Highnesses as Lords that are of the said oceans, make from this time the said Don Christopher Columbus your Admiral in all those islands and mainlands which by his hand and industry shall be discovered or acquired in the said oceans, during his life, and after his death, his heirs and successors, from one to another perpetually, with all the preeminences and prerogatives belonging to the said office....

Likewise, that your Highnesses make the said Don Christopher your Viceroy and Governor General in all the said islands and mainlands and islands which as has been said, he may discover or acquire in the said seas; and that for the government of each one and of any one of them, he may make selection of three persons for each office, and that your Highnesses may choose and select the one who shall be most serviceable to you, and thus the lands which our Lord shall permit him to discover and acquire will be better governed, in the service of your Highnesses....

AGREEMENT OF APRIL 30, 1492

Forasmuch as you, Christopher Columbus, are going by our command, with some of our ships and with our subjects, to discover and acquire certain islands and mainland in the ocean, and it is hoped that, by the help of God, some of the said islands and mainland in the said ocean will be discovered and acquired by your pains and industry; and therefore it is a just and reasonable thing that since you incur the said danger for our service you should be rewarded for it...it is our will and pleasure that you, the said Christopher Columbus, after you have discovered and acquired the said islands and mainland in the said ocean, or any of them whatsoever, shall be our Admiral of the said islands and mainland and Viceroy and Governor therein, and shall be empowered from that time forward to call and entitle yourself Don Christopher Columbus, and that your sons and successors in the said office and charge may likewise entitle and call themselves Don, and Admiral and Viceroy and Governor thereof; and that you may have power to use and exercise the said office of Admiral, together with the said office of Viceroy and Governor of the said islands and mainland...and to hear and determine all the suits and causes civil and criminal appertaining to the said office of Admiralty, Viceroy, and Governor according as you shall find by law,...and may have power to punish and chastise delinquents, and exercise the said offices...in all that concerns and appertains to the said offices...and that you shall have and levy the fees and salaries annexed, belonging and appertaining to the said offices and to each of them, according as our High Admiral in the Admiralty of our kingdoms levies and is accustomed to levy them.

Analysis Questions

1. What assumptions underlie Columbus's and the monarchs' statements about the authority they expect to exercise in the land Columbus discovers?
2. What role will each side play – what authority will Columbus exercise in the new lands he discovers and what role will be played by the monarchs?
3. What kind of material benefit do Columbus and the monarchs expect to gain from Columbus's promised discoveries? How will these gains/profits be divided?