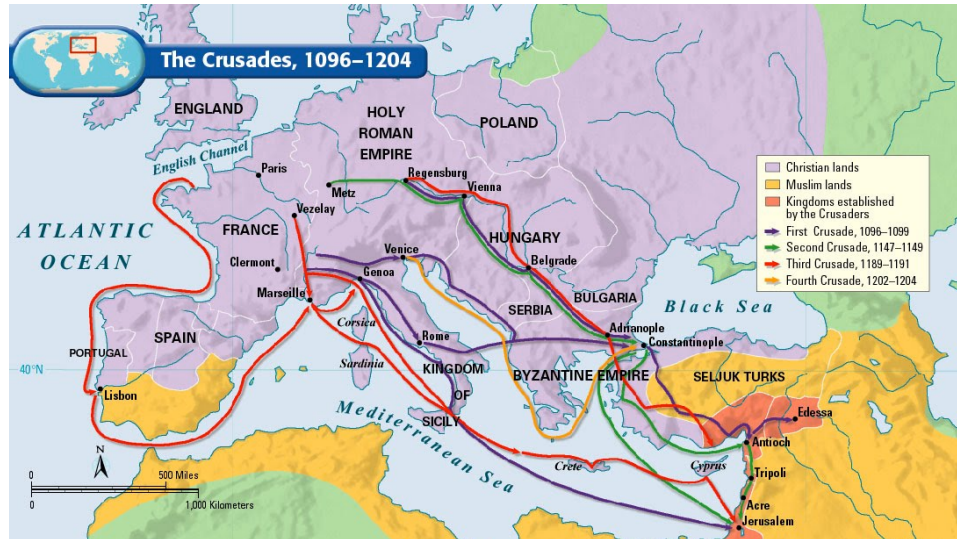


Europe Explores the Americas



Middle Eastern traders brought luxury goods such as spices, sugar, silk, and other items from East Asia to the Arab world

the Crusades brought Europeans to the Arab world, where they became used to having these luxury goods

Europeans wanted to find another way to acquire these trade goods for themselves

Christopher Columbus

Portugal, Spain, England, and France began financing exploration, hoping to find a new route to Asia



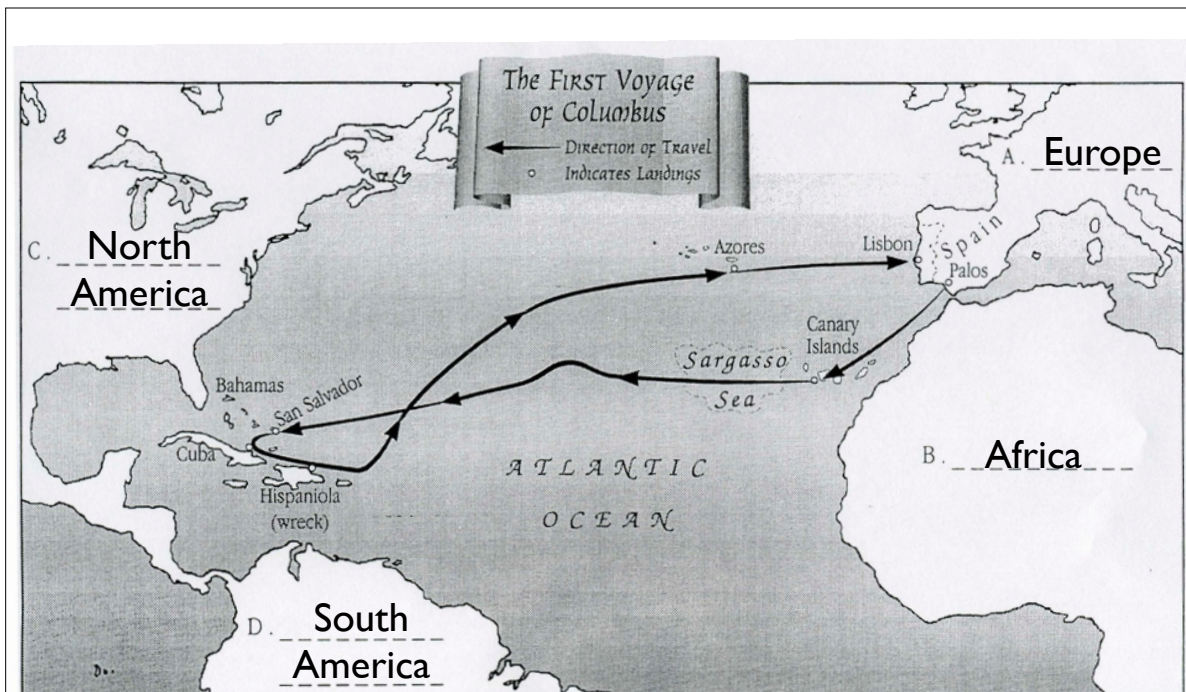
Christopher Columbus believed he could find a trade route to Asia by sailing west

Spain's King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella agreed to finance Columbus's voyage in 1492

in October of 1492 Columbus and his men reached the Bahamas and traveled on to the islands of Cuba and Hispaniola

in March 1493, Columbus returned to Spain with gold, parrots, spices, and Native Americans

Columbus sailed back three more times, mapping part of the coastline of South America and Central America



Label the following locations on the map above:

- North America
- South America
- Europe
- Africa

A Letter From Christopher Columbus

1 In thirty-three days I passed from the Canary Islands to the Indies. I
 2 found very many islands filled with people . . . and of them all I have
 3 taken possession for Their Highnesses, by proclamation . . . and no
 4 opposition was offered to me.
 5 This island and all the others . . . are most beautiful . . . filled with trees of
 6 a thousand kinds and tall, and they seem to touch the sky. And I am told
 7 that they never lose their foliage . . . I saw them as green and as lovely as
 8 they are in Spain in May, and some of them were flowering, some bearing
 9 fruit.
 10 They [the Indians] have no iron or steel or weapons, nor are they fitted to
 11 use them . . . because they are very marvelously timorous. After they have
 12 been reassured and have lost their fear, they are . . . so generous . . . They
 13 never refuse anything which they possess.
 14 As soon as I arrived in the Indies, in the first island which I found I took
 15 by force some of them, in order that they might learn and give me
 16 information of that which there is in those parts. And so it was they soon
 17 understood us, and we them, either by speech or signs, and they have been
 18 very serviceable. I still take them with me. They are always assured that
 19 I come from Heaven . . . they were the first to announce this wherever I
 20 went . . . with loud cries of, "Come! Come to see the people from Heaven!"
 21 I have taken possession of a large town, to which I gave the name Villa
 22 de Navidad. And in it I have made fortifications and a fort . . . I have
 23 left in it sufficient men . . . with arms and artillery and provisions for
 24 more than a year.
 25 I will give them as much gold as they may need, if Their Highnesses will
 26 render me very slight assistance; moreover, spice and cotton . . .

timorous:
afraid

El Almirante

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE INDIES 1540s

-----Bartolomé de Las Casas-----



The Spanish quickly conquered the land and people of the Caribbean in the 16th century through military force and European diseases. In 1542, the Spanish missionary Bartolomé de Las Casas wrote this description of the brutal treatment of Native Americans forced to mine gold for the Spanish. It was part of his attempt to convince the Spanish court to improve the treatment of native peoples under Spanish rule.

Among these gentle sheep . . . the Spaniards entered . . . and since forty years they have done nothing else; nor do they otherwise at the present day, than outrage, slay, afflict, torment, and destroy them. . . . To such extremes has this gone that, whereas there were more than 3 million souls, whom we saw in Hispaniola, there are today, not 200 of the native population left.

We are assured that our Spaniards, with their cruelty and execrable works, have depopulated and made desolate the great continent, and that more than ten kingdoms, larger than all Spain . . . although formerly full of people, are now deserted.

The reason why the Christians have killed and destroyed such infinite numbers of souls is solely because they have made gold their ultimate aim, seeking to load themselves with riches in the shortest time. . . .

These lands, being so happy and so rich, and the people so humble, so patient, and so easily subjugated, they have . . . taken no more account of them . . . than—I will not say of animals, for would to God they had considered and treated them as animals—but as even less than the dung in the streets.

And it is . . . admitted . . . by all . . . that the Indians throughout the Indies never did any harm to the Christians; they even esteemed them as coming from heaven, until they and their neighbors had suffered the same many evils, thefts, deaths, violence, and visitations at their hands. . . .

