American History I – Exploration and Conquest – Impact on the Americas

Use the source below to help identify *impacts* on the Americas as a result of 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 for the homework assignment.

**The Iroquois Constitution**

In the 15th century, five separate nations of Iroquois – Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, and Onondaga – united to form the League of Five Nations. The purpose of the Iroquois League was to end intertribal warfare and to form a strong alliance against outside enemies. To further their goals, the league created a constitution, called the Great Binding Law, that consisted of 117 individual laws and customs governing all aspects of life – from self-government and war to family relationships, religion, tribal symbolism, and burial rites. In the following excerpt, the speaker Dekanawidah is the great Mohawk leader credited with establishing the Great Peace among the nations. He speaks to Adodarhoh, leader of the Onondago. In this translation, the term “Lord” means “chief.”

1. I am Dekanawidah and with the Five Nations’ Confederate Lords I plant the Tree of the Great Peace. I plant it in your territory, Adodarhoh, and the Onondaga Nation, in the territory of you who are Firekeepers. I name the tree the Tree of the Long Leaves. Under the shade of this Tree of the Great Peace we spread the soft white feathery down of the globe thistle as seats for you, Adodarhoh, and your cousin Lords. We place you upon those seats, spread soft with the feathery down of the globe thistle, there beneath the shade of the spreading branches of the Tree of Peace. There shall you sit and watch the Council Fire of the Confederacy of the Five Nations, and all the affairs of the Five Nations shall be transacted at this place before you, Adodarhoh, and your cousin Lords, by the Confederate Lords of the Five Nations.

2. Roots have spread out from the Tree of the Great Peace, one to the north, one to the east, one to the south and one to the west. The name of these roots is The Great White Roots and their nature is Peace and Strength. If any man or any nation outside the Five Nations shall obey the laws of the Great Peace and make known their disposition to the Lords of the Confederacy, they may trace the Roots to the Tree and if their minds are clean and they are obedient and promise to obey the wishes of the Confederate Council, they shall be welcomed to take shelter beneath the Tree of the Long Leaves. We place at the top of the Tree of the Long Leaves an Eagle who is able to see afar. If he sees in the distance any evil approaching or any danger threatening he will at once warn the people of the Confederacy.

3. I, Dekanawidah, appoint the Mohawk Lords the heads and the leaders of the Five Nations Confederacy. The Mohawk Lords are the foundation of the Great Peace and it shall, therefore, be against the Great Binding Law to pass measures in the Confederate Council after the Mohawk Lords have protested against them. No council of the Confederate Lords shall be legal unless all the Mohawk Lords are present.

4. All the business of the Five Nations Confederacy Council shall be conducted by the two combined bodies of Confederate Lords. First the question shall be passed upon by the Mohawk and Seneca Lords, then it shall be discussed and passed by the Oneida and Cayuga Lords. Their decisions shall then be referred to the Onondaga Lords, (Fire Keepers) for final judgment. The same process shall obtain when a question is brought before the council by an individual or a War Chief.

**Analysis Questions**

1. The Tree of the Great Peace has both literal and figurative meanings. Describe some of the things it might symbolize to the Iroquois.
2. What advantages do you think the Iroquois gained by establishing the constitution? What disadvantages, if any, might there have been?
3. Why is it important to consider the governmental systems of Native American tribes? What does it tell us about their civilization?
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**The Columbian Exchange**

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**The Triangular Trade**

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**Analysis Questions**

1. What items that passed along the Columbian Exchange were *most* consequential (or had the greatest impact) to the Americas?

2. What goods flowed *into* the Americas along the Triangular Trade? What goods flowed *out*? Which "corner" of the triangle benefited most? Why is this important?

3. What is the *most* consequential impact on the Americas of the Triangular Trade?
American History I – Exploration and Conquest – Impact on the Americas

Use the source below to help identify impacts on the Americas as a result of 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 for the homework assignment.

The “Mountain of Silver” and the Mita System: *Compendium and Description of the West Indies* by Antonio Vazquez de Espinosa

In 1545 an Indian herder lost his footing on a mountain in Peru while chasing his llama, and to keep from falling, he grabbed a bush, which he pulled from the ground revealing a rich vein of silver. This is the most widely told story about how the Spaniards learned of the world’s richest silver mine at Potosí, which became the site of the Western Hemisphere’s first and greatest silver rush. The backbone of the Potosí operation was the *mita* system of labor, which had its roots in the Inca Empire when villages had been required to provide an annual quota of laborers for public works projects and military service. The first excerpt describes the mine and facilities a Huancavelica for extracting mercury, a necessary element in refining silver.

**HUANCAVELICA**

And so at the rumor of rich deposits of mercury...in the years 1570 and 1571, they started the construction of the town of Huancavelica de Oropesa in a pleasant valley at the foot of the range. It contains 400 Spanish residents...Up on the range there are 3,000 to 4,000 Indians working in the mine; it is colder up there than in the town, since it is higher. The mine where the mercury is located is a large layer which they keep following downward. When I was in that town (which was in the year 1616) I went up on the range and down in the mine, which at that time was considerably more than [16 miles] deep. The ore was very rich black flint, and the excavation so extensive that it held more than 3,000 Indians working away hard with picks and hammers, breaking up that flint ore; and when they have filled their little sacks, the poor fellows, loaded down with ore, climb up those ladders or rigging, some like masts and others like cables, and so trying and distressing that a man empty-handed can hardly get up them. That is the way they work in this mine, with many lights and the loud noise of the pounding and great confusion...As that great vein of ore keeps going down deeper and they follow its rich trail, in order to make sure that no section of that ore shall drop on top of them, they keep leaving supports or pillars of the ore itself...there are men so heartless that for the sake of stealing a little rich ore, they go down out of hours and deprive the innocent Indians of this protection by hollowing into these pillars to steal the rich ore in them, and then a great section is apt to fall in and kill all the Indians...

**POTOSÍ**

According to His Majesty’s warrant, the mine owners on this massive range have a right to the mita of 13,300 Indians in the working and exploitation of the mines...These Indians are sent out every year under a captain whom they choose in each village or tribe, for him to take them and oversee them for the year each has to serve...This works out very badly, with great losses and gaps in the quotas of Indians, the villages being depopulated; and this gives rise to great extortions and abuses on the part of the inspectors...towards poor Indians, ruining them and thus depriving the...chief Indians of their property and carrying them off in chains because they do not fill out the mita assignment which they cannot do...

After each has eaten his ration, they climb up the hill, each to his mine, and go in, staying there from that hour until Saturday evening without coming out of the mine; their wives bring them food, but they state constantly underground...They all have tallow candles, lighted day and night; that is the light they work with, for as they are underground, they have need of it all the time.

So huge is the wealth which has been taken out of this range since the year 1545, when it was discovered, up to the present year of 1628, which makes 83 years that they have been working and reducing its ores, that merely from the registered mines, as appears from an examination of the accounts in the royal records, 326,000,000 assay pesos have been taken out...not counting the great amount of silver secretly taken from these mines...to Spain, paying no 20 percent or registry fee, and to other countries outside Spain...

**Analysis Questions**

1. What were the major hazards of the work connected with the extraction and production of mercury and silver?
2. What evidence does Espinosa provide of Spanish concern for the welfare of American Indian workers? What evidence is there of unconcern?
3. What appears to have been the impact of the mita system on native Peruvian society?
**Native Americans Describe Traditional Views of Land Ownership**

The great -- and good, I believe -- White Chief sends us word that he wants to buy land. But he will reserve us enough that we can live comfortably. This seems generous, since the red man no longer has rights he need respect....

So your offer seems fair, and I think my people will accept it and go to the reservation you offer them. We will live apart, and in peace..... It matters little where we pass the rest of our days. They are not many. The Indians' night will be dark. No bright star shines on his horizons. The wind is sad. Fate hunts the red man down. Wherever he goes, he will hear the approaching steps of his destroyer, and prepare to die, like the wounded doe who hears the step of the hunter....

We will consider your offer. When we have decided, we will let you know. Should we accept, I here and now make this condition: we will never be denied to visit, at any time, the graves of our fathers and our friends.

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every clearing and wood, is holy in the memory and experience of my people. Even those unspeaking stones along the shore are loud with events and memories in the life of my people. The ground beneath your feet responds more lovingly to our steps than yours, because it is the ashes of our grandfathers. Our bare feet know the kindred touch. The earth is rich with the lives of our kin.

— Chief Seattle’s response to President Pierce’s offer to purchase land

I wish all to know that I do not propose to sell any part of my country, nor will I have whites cutting our timber along the rivers, more especially the bark. I am particularly fond of the little groves of oak trees. I love to look at them, because they endure the wintry storm and the summer’s heat, and—not unlike ourselves—seem to flourish by them.

— Sitting Bull, Lakota warrior, quoted in 1932

Our land is more valuable than your money. It will last forever. It will not even perish by the flames of fire. As long as the sun shines and the waters flow, this land will be here to give life to men and animals. We cannot sell the lives of men and animals; therefore we cannot sell this land. It was not put here for us by the Great Spirit and we cannot sell it because it does not belong to us. You can count your money and burn it within the nod of a buffalo's head, but only the great Spirit can count the grains of sand and the blades of grass of these plains. As a present to you, we will give you anything we have that you can take with you, but the land never!

— Crowfood, chief of the Blackfeet, circa 1885

You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it and be rich like white men. But dare I cut off my mother's hair?

— Anonymous Native America, circa 1880s

**Analysis Questions**

1. Summarize the Native American beliefs about land ownership. Do you agree or disagree with these beliefs? Why?
2. Faced with beliefs like these, why didn’t Europeans respond, “Okay! Thanks anyway!” How did Native American beliefs and European motives clash?
3. Was the resulting conquest inevitable given Native American beliefs about land ownership? Why or why not?
American History I – Exploration and Conquest – Impact on the Americas

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The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vasso, the African, 1791

Vol. 1

One day, when all our people were gone out to their work as usual, and only I and my sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both; and, without giving us time to cry out, or to make resistance, they stopped our mouths, and ran off with us into the nearest wood. Here they tied our hands, and continued to carry us as far as they could, till night came on, when we reached a small house...The next morning we left the house, and continued traveling all day...

The next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I had yet experienced, for my sister and I were then separated; while we lay clasped in each other's arms. It was in vain that we besought them not to part us; she was torn from me, and immediately carried away, while I was left in a state of distraction not to be described. I cried and grieved continually; and for several days did not eat anything but what they forced into my mouth. At length, after many days' traveling, during which I had often changed masters, I got into the hands of a chieftain, in a very pleasant country. This man had two wives and some children, and they all used me extremely well..

Equiano describes the horrors of a slave ship.

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, that was soon converted into terror...when I was carried on board...

I now saw myself deprived of all chance of returning to my native country, or even the least glimpse of gaining the shore, which I now considered as friendly; and I even wished for my former slavery, in preference of my present situation, which was filled with horrors of every kind, still heightened by my ignorance of what I was to undergo. I was not long suffered to indulge my grief. I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables, and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across, I think, the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely. I had never experienced anything of this kind before, and although not being used to the water, I naturally feared the element the first time I saw it, yet, nevertheless, could I have got over the nettings, I would have jumped over the side, but I could not; and besides the crew used to watch us very closely who were not chained down to the decks, lest we should leap into the water; and I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating. This indeed was often the case with myself.

Analysis Questions

1. Why is Equiano beaten for refusing to eat? Does this reveal concern on the part of the slavers?
2. How does Equiano's initial enslavement by an African family differ from his subsequent enslavement by Europeans?
3. Why does Equiano publish this narrative under both his African and European names?
American History I – Exploration and Conquest – European Motives

Use the source below to help identify European motives 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 for the homework assignment.

Mercantilism and Colonies

According to the theory of mercantilism, governments wanted to add gold and silver to their treasuries. To get that gold and silver, they hoped to export goods to other countries 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 under mercantilism for several reasons. Colonies were supposed to produce crops that companies in the home country could sell for a profit. They were expected to provide raw materials that could be used by manufacturing companies in the home country. For example, the numerous forests in North America provided lumber for England, which had fewer trees. The colonies also were supposed to provide markets for items manufactured in the home country.

In some cases, colonies could provide the home country with gold and silver. For example, Spain established colonies in Mexico and South America because of the gold and silver in those areas.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ The colony might have gold or silver that could be added directly to the home country’s treasury.</td>
<td>– Gold or silver might be costly to obtain and could be captured during transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ The colony could grow food to feed people in the home country or to be traded at a profit to the other countries.</td>
<td>– Money was needed to fund armies to protect colonists from native peoples and to prevent other countries from taking control of the colonies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ The colony could supply raw materials useful to home-country manufacturers.</td>
<td>– Colonists might begin their own manufacturing companies and compete with home country companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Colonists would buy manufactured goods produced in the home country.</td>
<td>– Colonists might ship goods to or buy goods from other European countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ By controlling all shipping to and from the colony, the home country could increase the number and skill of its sailors, who would strengthen the country’s navy in the event of war.</td>
<td>– If the manufactured goods colonists bought cost more than the food and raw materials they produced, they would not be able to pay for them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis Questions

1. Summarize the relationship between the system of mercantilism and the establishment of colonies.
2. In your opinion, what is the key benefit and key cost of mercantilism?
3. Suppose you were in charge of the government of a country that had colonies. What are some specific ways you would prevent people in your colonies from trading with other countries?
4. Why wasn’t it the other way around? Why didn’t Native Americans explore and conquer Europe? What else (besides mercantilism) is needed?
American History I – Exploration and Conquest – European Motives

Use the source below to help identify European motives 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 for the homework assignment.

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 thin funding was one of several reasons why the Roanoake 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]...
4. And where England now for certain hundred years last passed, by the distinctive commodity of wool...has raised itself from meainer state to greater wealth...it comes now to pass that by the great endeavor of the increase of the trade 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 like place, were it not for anything else but for the hope of the sale of our wool...
5. ...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.
6. 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...
7. 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 things of high value there not esteemed; and this to the great enriching of the realm...
8. If the sea coast serve for making of 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
9. We shall by planting there enlarge the glory of the gospel...
10. The [swarm] of the wandering beggars of England, that grow up idly, and hurtful and burdensome to this realm, may there be unladen, 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 America.]

Analysis Questions

1. According to Hakluyt, what are the economic advantages England might expect from colonizing Norumbega?
2. How will colonization strengthen England and weaken its rivals?
3. How will colonization help solve England's domestic problems?
4. How much concrete knowledge of the Americas does Hakluyt seem to have?
**American History I – Exploration and Conquest – European Motives**

Use the source below to help identify European *motives* 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 for the homework assignment.

**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 Marriner’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”?
American History I – Exploration and Conquest – European Motives

Use the source below to help identify European motives 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 for the homework assignment.

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 New Guinean slaves became an integral part of Portugal’s commercial imperialism.

...after the taking of Ceuta (a Muslim naval base in Morocco) 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 Kind 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 (broad European term for Muslims) 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 reasons was because during the one and thirty years that he had warred against the Moors, he had never found a Christian king, nor 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 (West African slaves who had been captured and transported to Portugal by licensed slave hunters) 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?
3. How might these kinds of motivations influence explorers in North America?
American History I – Exploration and Conquest – European Motives

Use the source below to help identify European motives 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 for the homework assignment.


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.” Famously, English cannon and fireships won the day, damaging the huge Spanish fleet so badly that many vessels were lost to storms in its desperate bid to escape home around the British Isles and back into the North Atlantic.

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 Countries, 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 even 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 overstretched 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 adversary?
2. Why were English pirates set loose on Spanish ships? What were they after? Why (and how) did Spain have it?
3. How did England’s financial troubles prompt the country towards colonization? Pay particular attention to the sections regarding land distribution, grants, etc.
American History I – Exploration and Conquest – European Motives

Use the source below to help identify European motives 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 for the homework assignment.

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

Among the many factors that contributed to Europe’s expansion, perhaps none was more important than simple human ambition. There is no better example of this truth than Christopher Columbus (Cristóforo Colombo in Italian; Cristóbal Colón in Spanish), the Genoese mariner credited with the discovery of the New World. In two “capitulations,” excerpts from which follow, Ferdinand and Isabella in April 1492 promised Columbus a large share of any economic benefits that might come from his voyage and extensive authority over lands he might discover. Preparations could now begin for Columbus’s historic voyage that departed the Spanish port of Palos on August 3, 1492.

AGREEMENT OF APRIL 17, 1492

The things [asked] and which your Highnesses give and declare to Christopher Columbus...for the voyage which now, with the aid of God, he is about to make...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 by his hand and industry shall be discovered or acquired in the said oceans...

Likewise, that your Highnesses make the said Don Christopher your Viceroy and Governor General in all the said islands and mainlands which as has been said, he may discover or acquire in the said seas...

Item, that all and whatever merchandise, whether it be pearls, precious stones, gold, silver, spices, and other things whatsoever, and merchandize of whatever kind, name, and manner it may be, which may be bought, bartered, discovered, acquired, or obtained...your Highnesses grant henceforth to the said Don Christopher, and will that he may have and take for himself, the tenth part of all of them, deducting all the expenses which may be incurred...the other nine parts remaining for 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...will be discovered and acquired by your pains and industry...it is our will and pleasure that you, the said Christopher Columbus, after you have discovered and acquired the said islands and mainlands...shall be our Admiral of the said islands and mainland and Viceroy and Governor therein...you may have the power to use and exercise the said office...and to hear and determine all the suits and causes civil and criminal...and may have power to punish and chastise delinquents...and that you shall have and levy the fees...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 benefits do Columbus and the monarchs expect to gain from Columbus’s promised discoveries? How will these gains be divided?