

Chapter 19

An Age of Explorations and Isolation

Voices from the Past

In a letter to the treasurer of the king and queen of Spain, Christopher Columbus reported on his first journey:

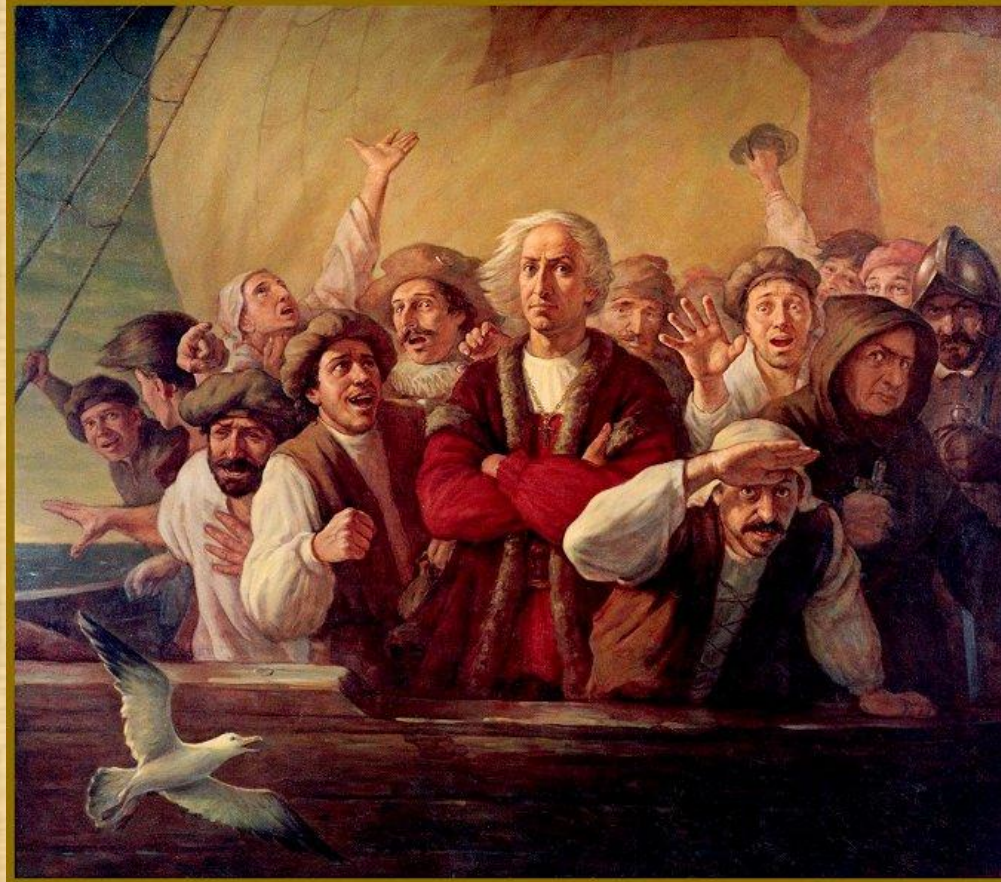
“Believing that you will rejoice at the glorious success that our Lord has granted me in my voyage, I write this to tell you how in thirty-three days I reached the Indies with the first fleet which the most illustrious King and Queen, our Sovereigns, gave me, where I discovered a great many thickly-populated islands. Without meeting resistance, I have taken possession of them all for their Highnesses. . . . When I reached [Cuba], I followed its coast to the westward, and found it so large that I thought it must be the mainland—the province of [China], but I found neither towns nor villages on the sea-coast, save for a few hamlets.”

—*Letters from the First Voyage, edited 1847*

To the end of his life, despite the evidence, Columbus believed he had found a new route to Asia.

Europeans Explore the East

- God, Glory, and Gold
 - Christianity
 - Exploration
 - Lateen sail
 - Astrolabe
 - sextant
 - Compass
 - Gallons
 - Asian trade



To serve God and His Majesty, to give light to those who were in darkness, and to grow rich as all men desire to do.

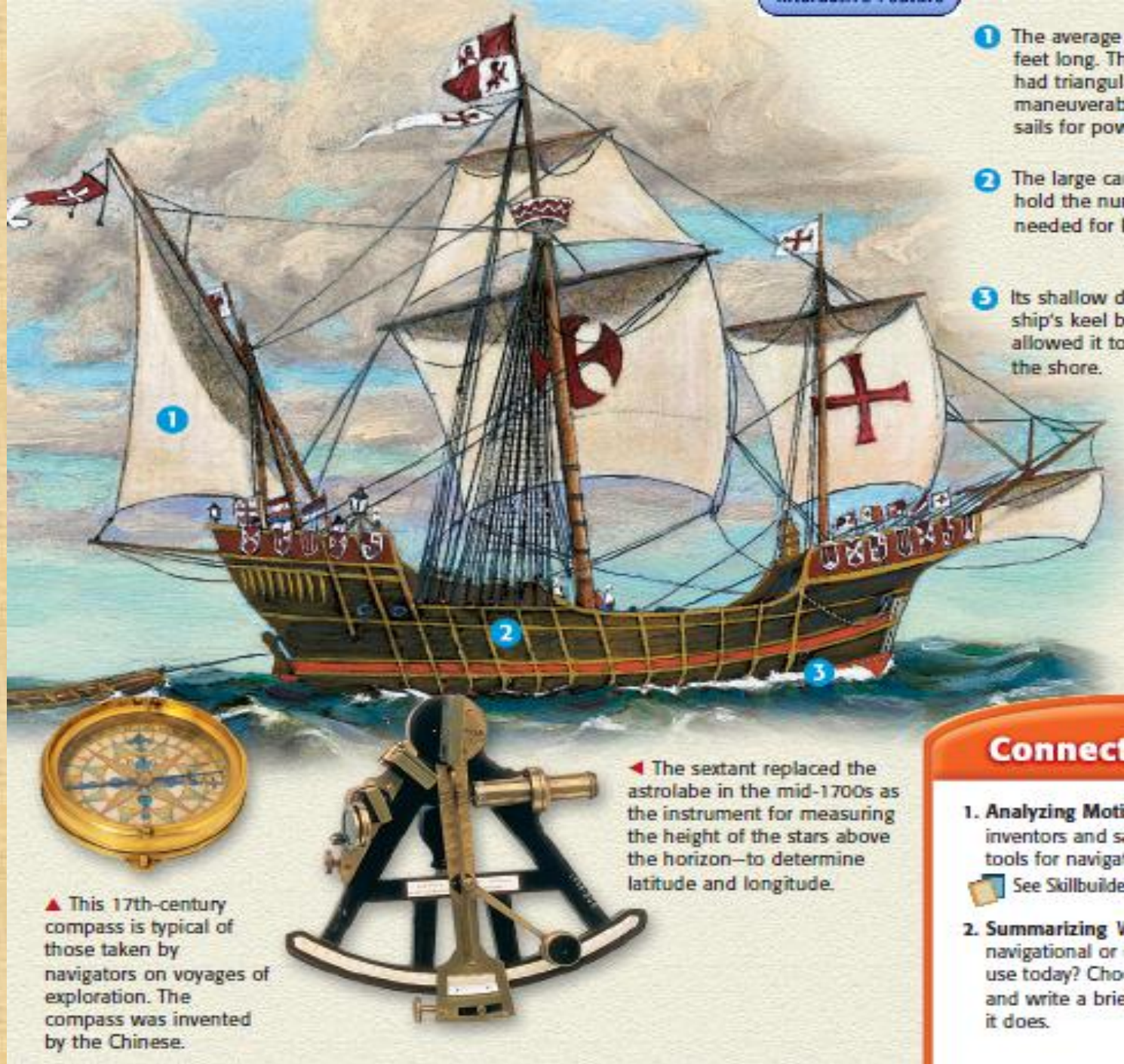
-Bartolomeo Dias

- Portugal
 - Asia
 - Africa
 - India
 - East Indies
 - Prince Henry
 - Explorers
 - Bartolomeo Dias
 - Vasco da Gama

If we deprive them [Muslims] of this their ancient market there, there does not remain for them a single port in the whole of these parts, where they can carry on their trade in these things. . . . I hold it as very certain that if we take this trade of Malacca away out of their hands, Cairo and Mecca are entirely ruined, and to Venice will no spiceries . . . [be] . . . conveyed except that which her merchants go and buy in Portugal.
-AFONSO DE ALBUQUERQUE

- Spain

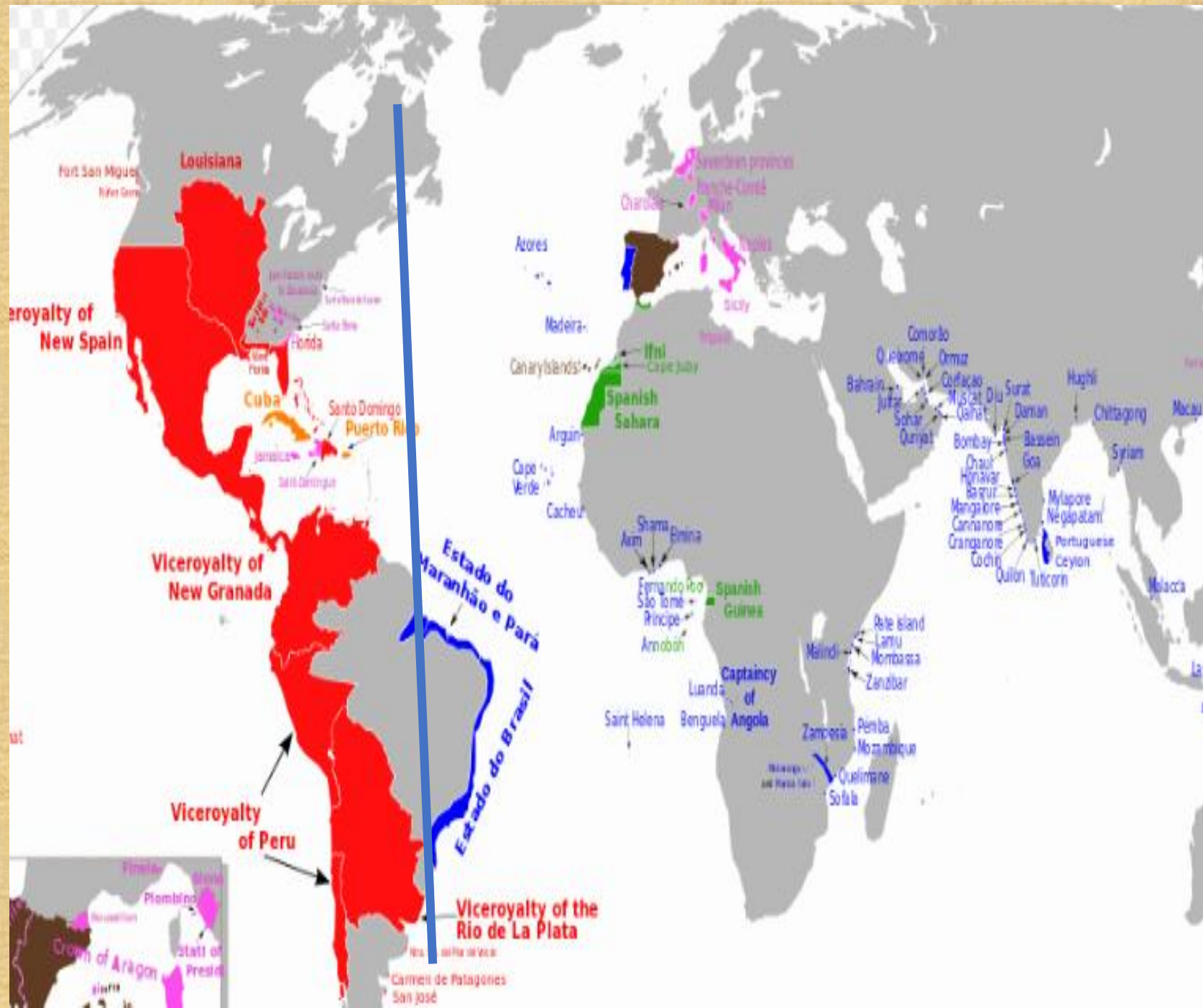
- Asia via west
 - West Indies
 - America
- Christopher Columbus



- Portugal vs. Spain Controversy

- Catholic Pope's Treaty of Tordesillas 1494

- Spain, west
- Portugal, east



- Other nations
 - Netherlands (Dutch)
 - British
 - French



Voices from the Past

In the sixteenth century, an Italian named Matteo Ricci expressed a great appreciation of Chinese printing:

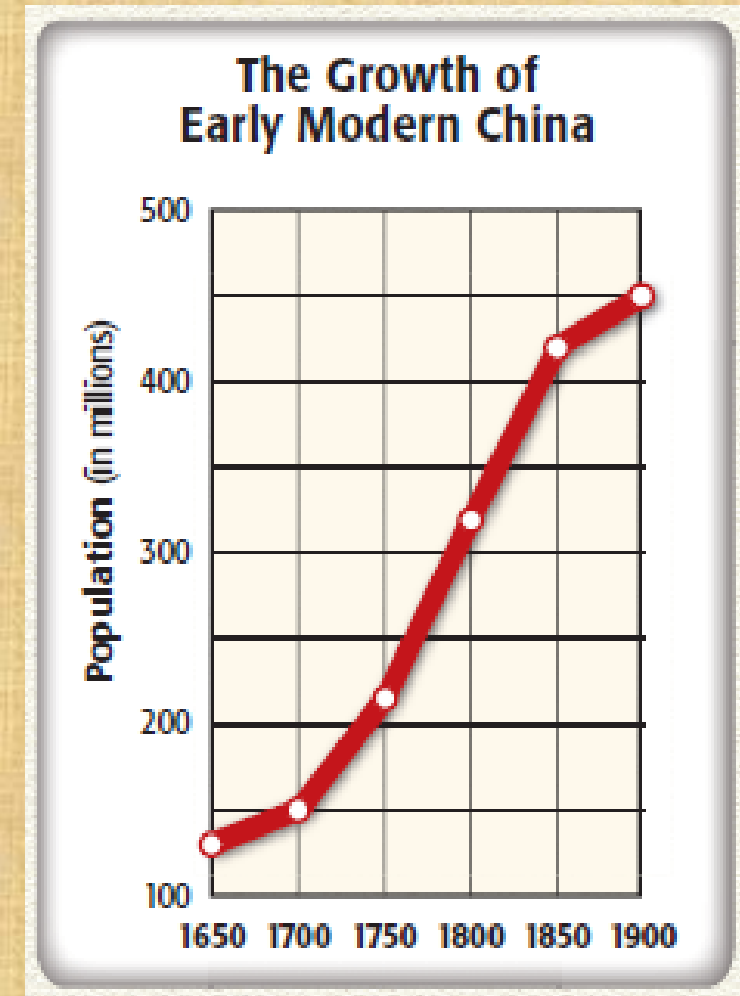
“The Chinese method of printing has one decided advantage, namely, that once these tablets are made, they can be preserved and used for making changes in the text as often as one wishes. . . . The simplicity of Chinese printing is what accounts for the exceedingly large numbers of books in circulation here and the ridiculously low prices at which they are sold.”

—*China in the Sixteenth Century*, Louis J. Gallagher, trans., 1942

Europeans who lived in China found much to admire in Chinese civilization.

- Ming China
 - 1400s-1600s
 - Forbidden City
 - Gov. Foreign trade only
 - Canton
 - Macao
 - Ningbo
- Manchu (Qing) China
 - 1600s-1800s
 - Great Wall
 - Population increase
 - Isolationism

There is nothing we lack, as your principal envoy and others have themselves observed. We have never set much store on strange or ingenious objects, nor do we need any more of your country's manufactures.
---Qian-Long



Voices from the Past

In 1649, the Japanese government issued an edict to be read in every village:

“Peasants are people without sense or forethought. Therefore they must not give rice to their wives and children at harvest time, but must save food for the future. They should eat millet, vegetables, and other coarse food instead of rice. Even the fallen leaves of plants should be saved. The husband must work in the fields, the wife must work at the loom. However good-looking a wife may be, if she neglects her household duties by drinking tea or sightseeing or rambling on the hillsides, she must be divorced. Peasants must wear only cotton or hemp. They may not smoke tobacco. It is harmful to health, it takes up time and costs money.”

—*A History of World Societies*, J.P. McKay, B.D. Hill, and J. Buckler, eds., 1996

The life of the Japanese peasant was a difficult one, and there were many peasant revolts between 1500 and 1800.

Feudal Japan



- Japan

- civil war 1467-1568

- Emperor

- Daimyo

- Shogun

- Samurai

- Tokugawa

Zen Buddhism

The form of Buddhism that had the greatest impact on Japanese culture was Zen Buddhism. It especially influenced the samurai. Zen Buddhists sought spiritual enlightenment through meditation. Strict discipline of mind and body was Zen path to wisdom. Zen monks would sit in meditation for hours. If they showed signs of losing concentration, a Zen master might shout at them or hit them with a stick.

- Japanese:
 - Culture
 - Haiku
 - Kabuki theater
 - Foreign relations
 - only in Nagasaki
 - Isolationism
 - European weapons
 - Christian missionaries

***In their hands they carried something two or three feet long, straight on the outside with a passage inside and made of a heavy substance...The thing with one blow can smash a mountain of silver and a wall of iron. If one sought to do mischief in another man's domain and he was touched by it, he would lose his life instantly.
----anonymous Japanese writer***