

The Spanish Empire



Flag of New Spain
(Cross of Burgundy)



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The European colonial powers

Red: The five early powers (15c/16c onwards), mainly involved in the Caribbean and South America, but also Asia.

Blue: Later powers (19c), mainly involved in Africa and South-West Pacific.

Green: Involved later (Italy) or not significantly at an earlier date (Denmark).



Spain in the late 15th century

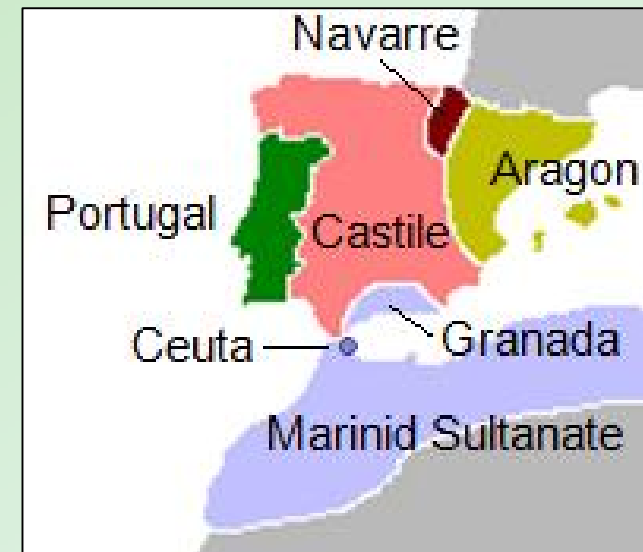
Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand V of Aragón married in 1469 to become the couple known as the Reinos Católicos and joint rulers of their source regions in the 1470s.

Various events took place in their reigns, notably the Inquisition (1478-) and the Cortes de Toledo consolidating royal power in Castile.

A ten-year war against Granada (the last Moorish stronghold in Spain) ended with its fall in 1492 and the subsequent conversion and or expulsion of both the Jews and Muslims.

In this same year, Isabella granted support to a project by an Italian living in Spain, called Cristoforo Colombo (Cristóbal Colón), a seemingly minor matter.

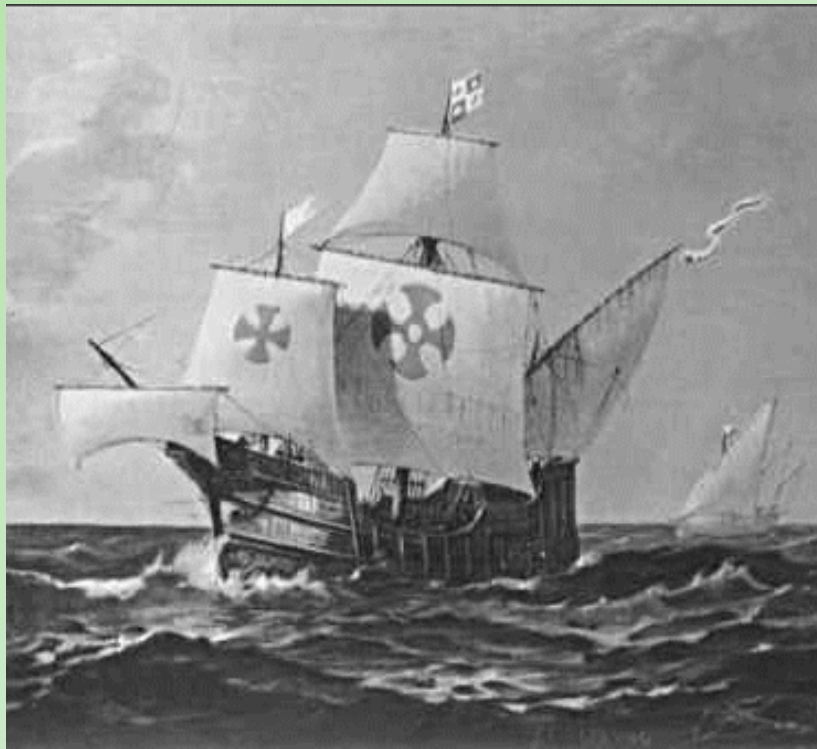
The Iberian peninsula and the north-west of Africa in the mid 15th century



European involvement with the Caribbean began in 1492 when Christopher Columbus arrived in the Caribbean, landing on Cuba and the island of Hispaniola (from Española) on his quest for a shorter route to India. Hence the inaccurate but popular term *West Indies* for the Caribbean.



Columbus sailed with three ships, the main Santa Maria and the smaller Niña and Pinta



Columbus takes possession of land in the Caribbean (later romantic picture)



The Voyages of Columbus to the New World



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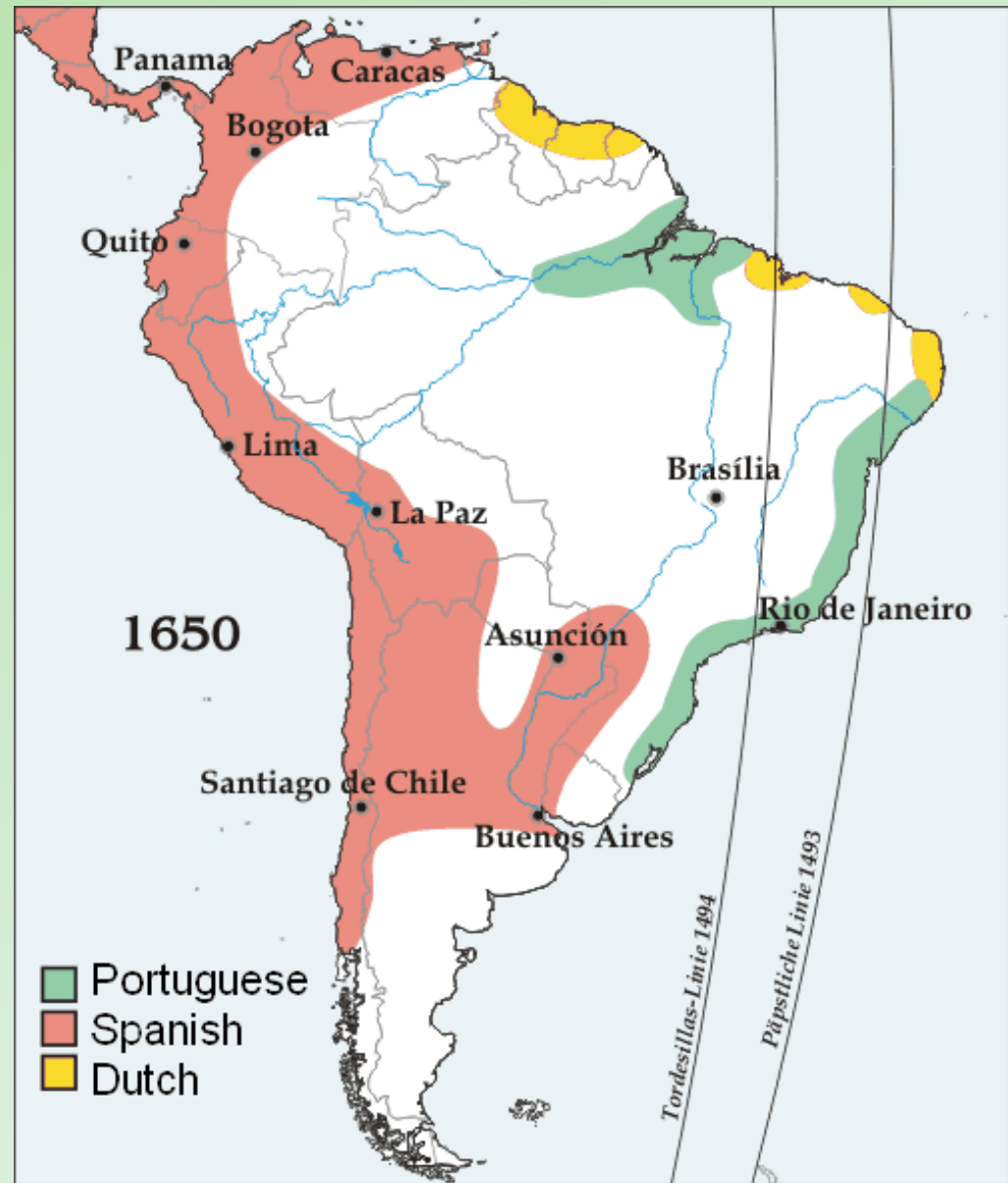


Cortés, Hernán (1485-1547), Spanish explorer and conqueror of the Aztec empire in Mexico under Montezuma II (1519). He built up Mexico City on the ruins of the old capital, Tenochtitlán. Cortés also explored the Pacific coast claiming it for the Spanish crown. He also became governor of New Spain (*Virreinato de Nueva España*) in 1523.

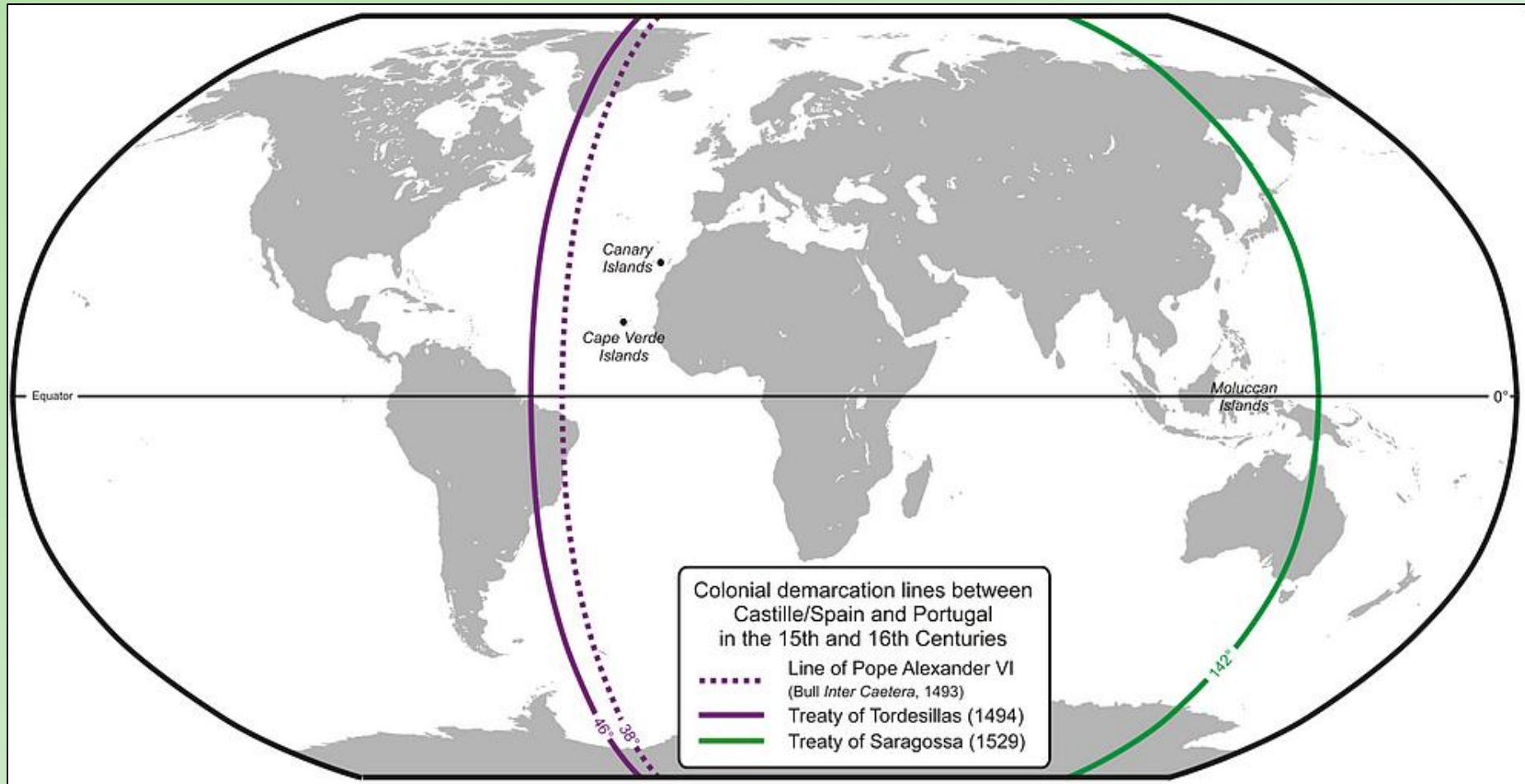




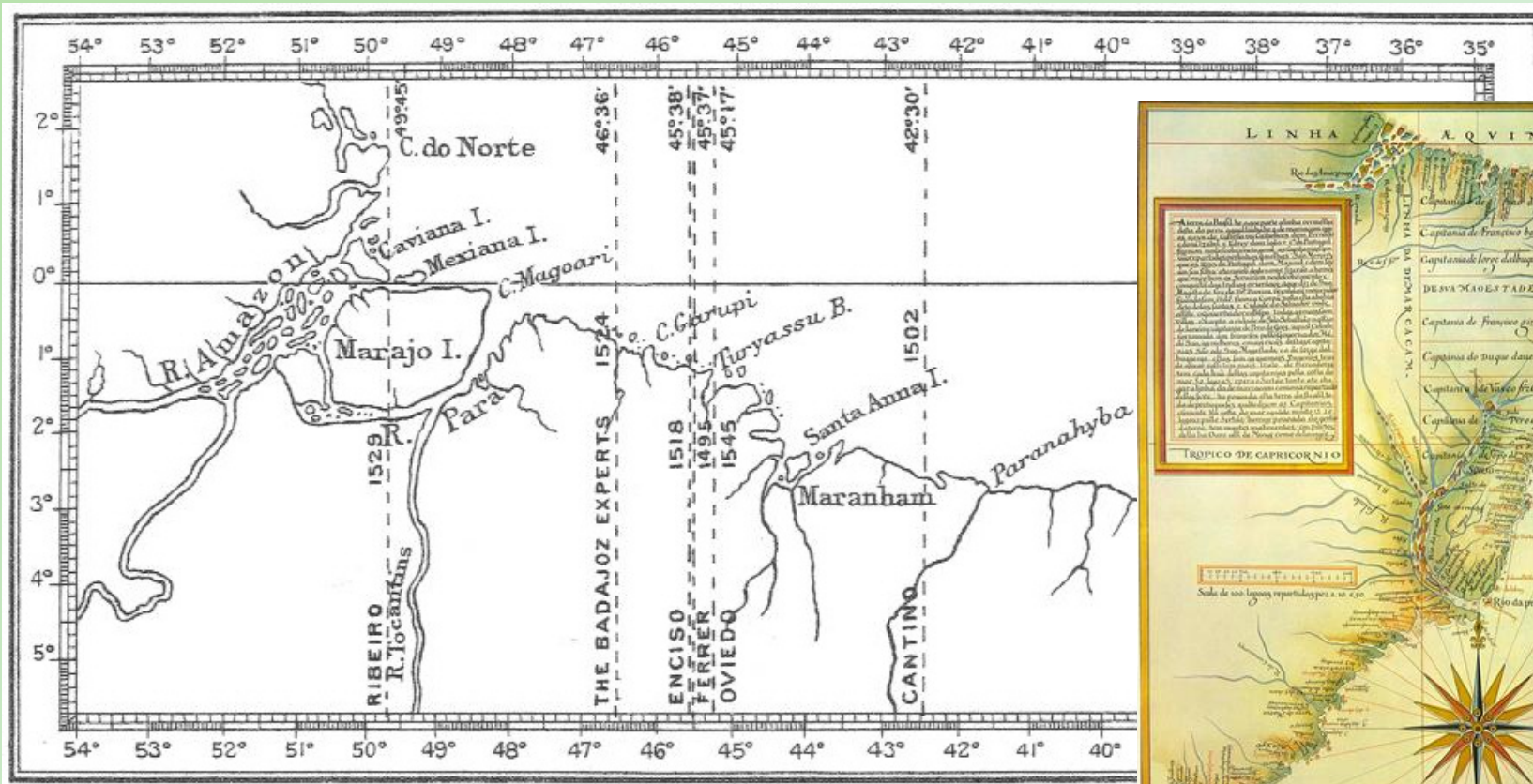
Pizarro, Francisco (c. 1476-1541) explored parts of the New World and laid the basis for Spain's claim to the Pacific Ocean in 1513. In 1529 he was granted the right, by Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, to conquer and rule Peru. He conquered the Incas and founded Peru in 1535. In 1542 the Virreinato de Peru was formed.



Lines of division between Spain and Portugal



Lines laid down by the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) and the Treaty of Zaragoza (1529). Basic result: Spanish to the West in South America, Portuguese to the East.



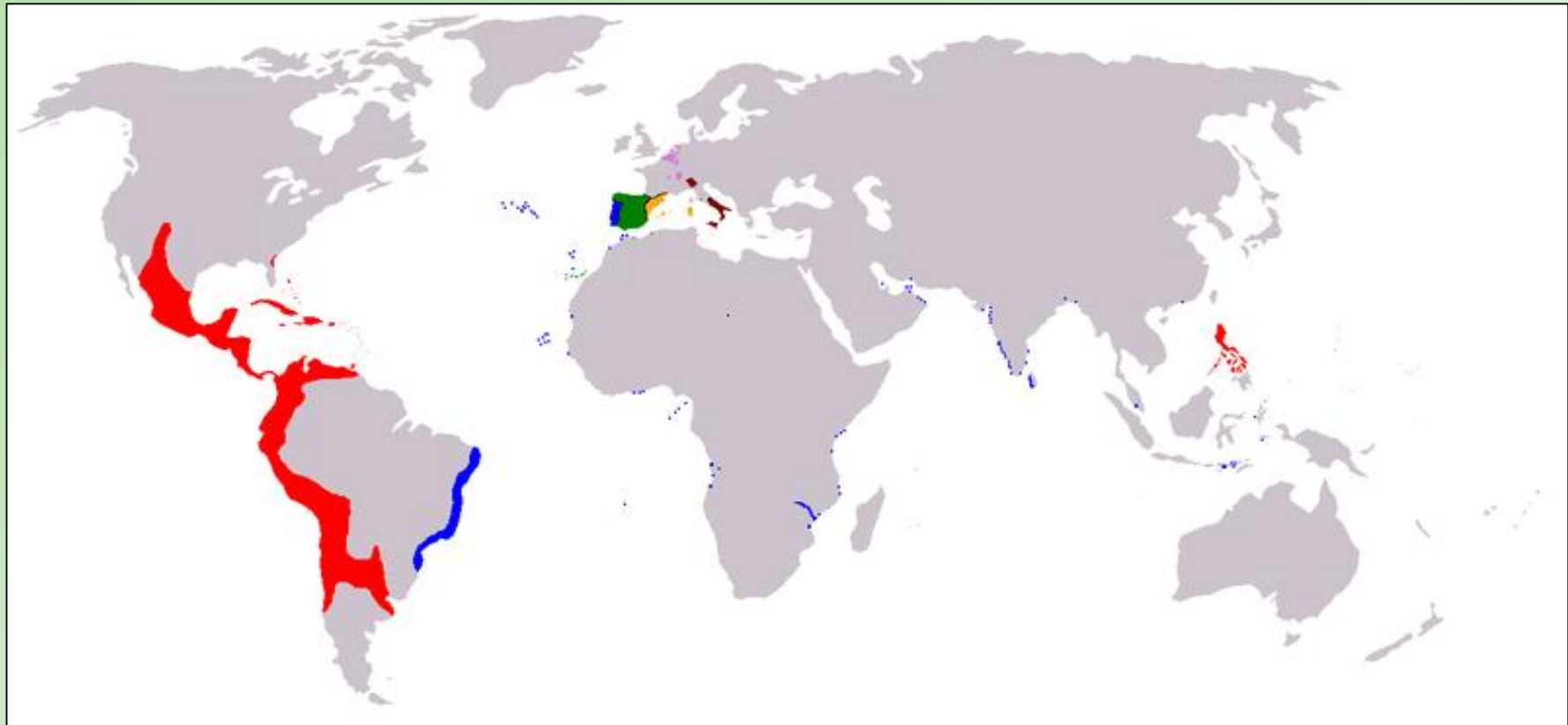
Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)

Signed by King John II of Portugal and Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile.

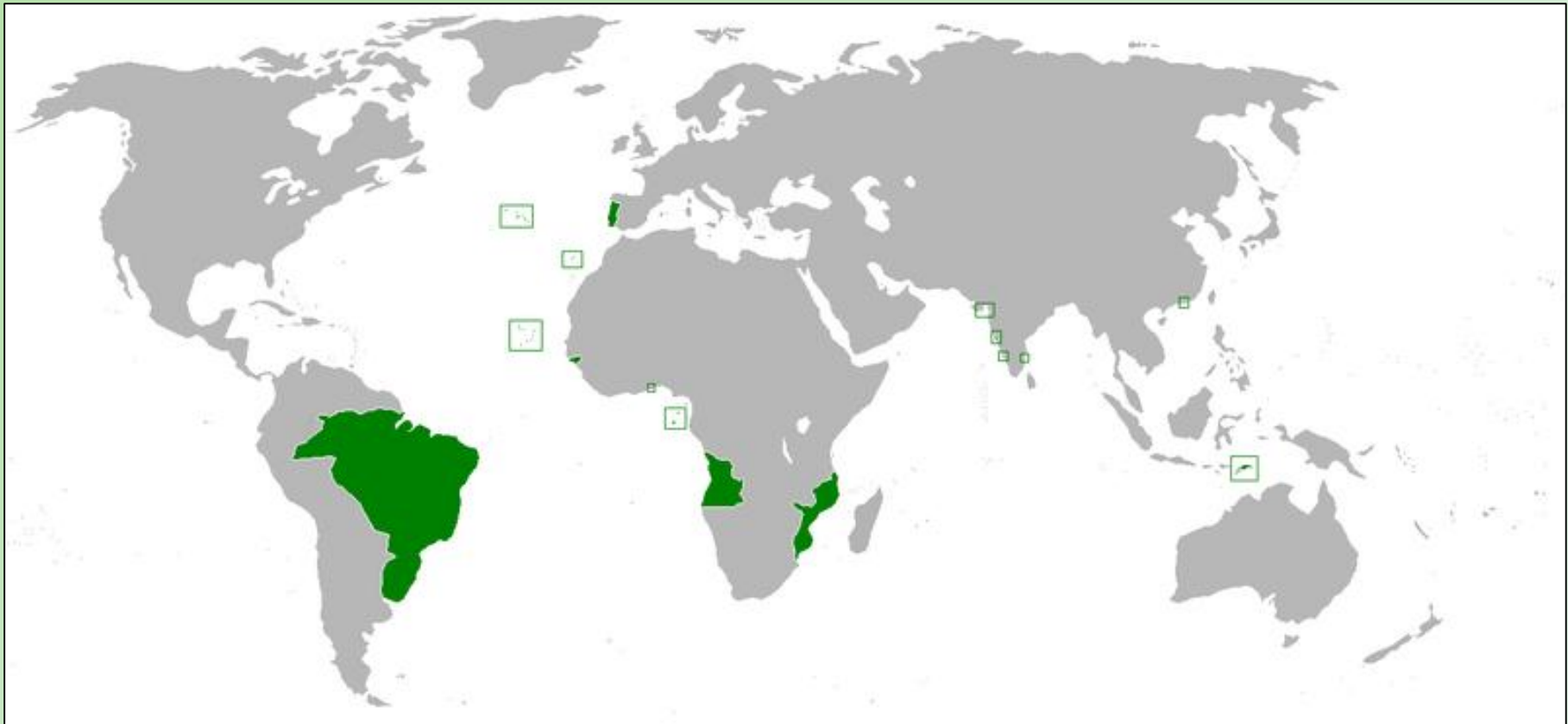
The demarcation line ran from north to south 100 leagues (about 483 km) west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands. All new lands lying east of this line were to belong to Portugal; all those to the west to Spain.



Spanish (red) and Portuguese (blue) possessions in the sixteenth century



Later Portuguese overseas territories



Central
and South
America
at the
beginning
of the 19th
century



Spanish and Portuguese dominate South America excepts for the Guyanas:

- 1) Guyana (former British Guyana)
- 2) Suriname (former Dutch Guyana)
- 3) French Guiana

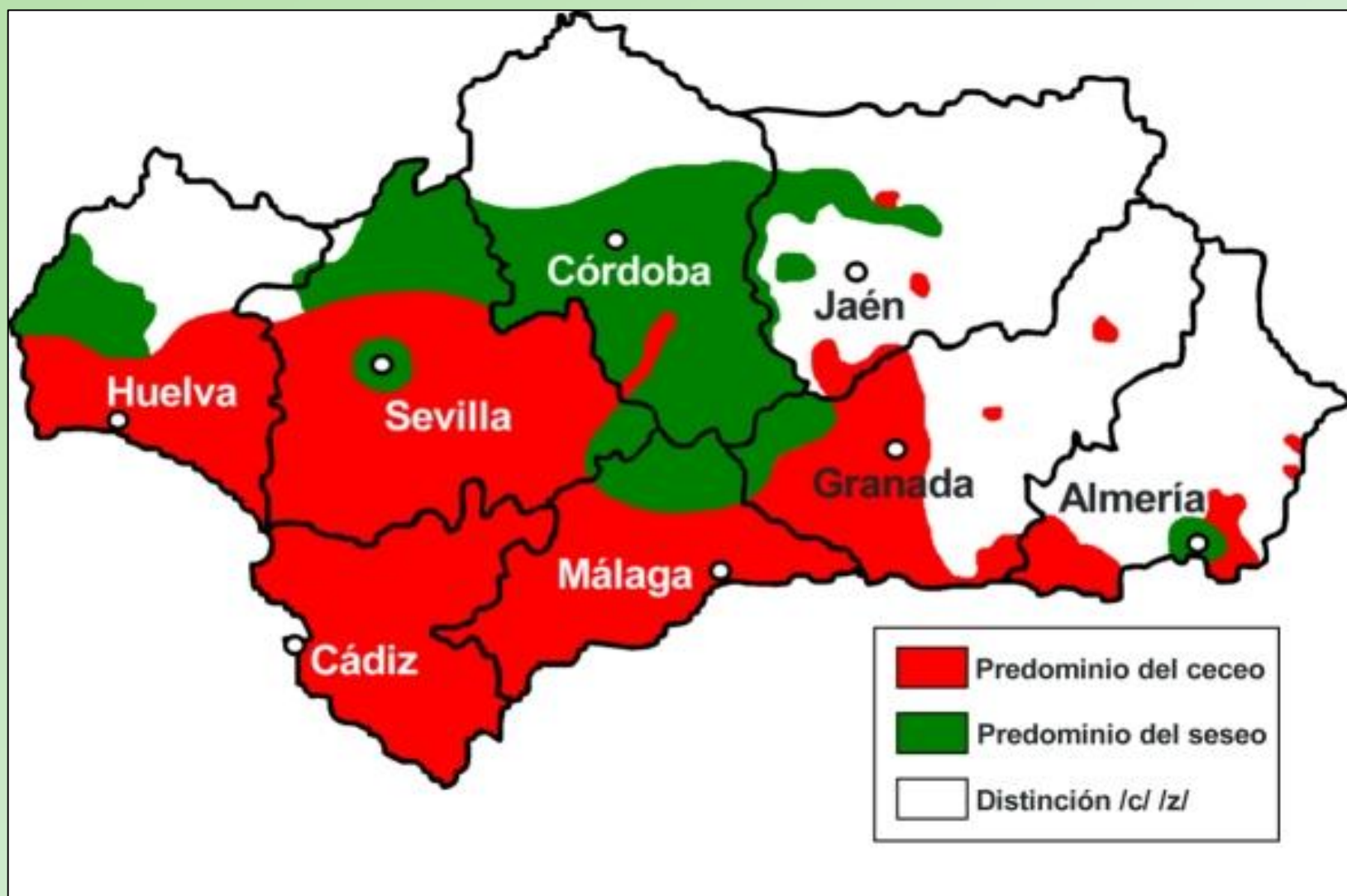


The development of colonial Spanish in the New World

Colonial Spanish: 'Out of Andalucía'



The source of Colonial Spanish: Ceceo versus Seseo



Most Spaniards involved in (early) colonialism left from the region of Seville and either came from the hinterland or spent time there before leaving for the New World, via Seville. However, leaders of expeditions may have come from other areas, e.g. Cortés and Pizarro were both from Extremadura. Seville was the center of the early colonial trade as the Guadalquivir was navigable through Las Marismas up to the city itself.

Later Cádiz was important as a port as were others in regions outside of Andalucía, e.g. A Coruña in Galicia or various Basque ports.

Another important point is that the early emigration to central and south America was through the Caribbean and early features of Spanish there were probably continued in the mainland of the Americas.



Some assumptions about the rise of colonial varieties

- 1) The early forms of a language taken to new locations are most important as they determine the path of development for the language there (called the 'Founder Principle' in pidgin and creole studies).
- 2) Input features which are associated with a written standard tend not to be favoured at the new locations. For instance, the loss of final /-s/ in southern Spain is also characteristic of New World Spanish, e.g. *dos chicos* is [do tʃiko]. Note this loss of inflection does not lead to a decrease in comprehensibility (linguistically speaking the inflectional /s/ is redundant).
- 3) Phonetic forms which are maximally perceptual are favoured in dialect contact and second-language scenarios. For instance, the alveolar fricatives /s, z/ are favoured over the dental fricatives /θ, ð/ as they are more clearly audible. This fact would have supported the survival of seseo over ceceo in New World Spanish, e.g. *cerveza* is [serveza] and not [θerbeθa].

Other features of New World Spanish

- 1) Other features of Spanish have survived overseas, e.g. *yeísmo* where former palatal /ʎ/ became /j/, e.g. *calle* [kaje]. There would be no preference of /ʎ/ over /j/. Further developments can, and indeed have, taken place in the New World, e.g. /j/ has become /ɟ/ in some areas.
- 2) Overseas forms of Spanish have developed their own vocabulary from native words (typically for flora and fauna) or from the extension of existing Spanish words to new meanings, e.g. *chifla* 'whistle' to 'bad mood' in Mexican Spanish. In other cases one has creations when the European word was probably not known, e.g. European Spanish *las fresas* 'strawberries', New World Spanish *las frutillas* 'small fruit'.

Later Spanish in the New World

After the 15th century – during *El Siglo de Oro* – Spanish continued to expand in Central and South America with the establishment of the *Virreinato de Nueva Granada* (far north of South America) the *Virreinato de Peru* (north-west of South America) and the *Virreinato del Rio de la Plata* (later the *Intendencia de Buenos Aires* with expansions to the south).



Later Spanish in the New World

These extensions into South America happened in the 17th and 18th centuries after the basic contours of New World Spanish were already established. The large numbers of later emigrants, e.g. Germans, Italians, etc. to Argentina did not re-shape New World Spanish.



A comparison with overseas forms of English

- 1) Colonial English shows some similarities with colonial Spanish, e.g. the dental fricatives of both languages have not been continued in the Caribbean (or the Central and South America for Spanish), most probably for the same reasons.
- 2) Many inflections of English disappeared, in both dialects and vernacular forms of overseas English, e.g. the plural after numerals as in *twenty pound* instead of *twenty pounds* (elimination of redundancy).
- 3) Certainly areas show similar variation in the overseas varieties of both languages, e.g. second person personal pronouns vary greatly in dialects of English and in overseas Spanish voseo (the use of various forms in different functions ultimately deriving from Latin *vos* 'you-pl') is a prominent feature.

However, there are major differences in the colonial history of both languages.

Differences between colonial English and colonial Spanish

1) English: In the early days of colonialism substantial numbers of English people settled in the new colonies (the Caribbean). This pattern continued well into the 19th century in other colonies.

Spanish: Large numbers of settlers did not move to the New World.

2) English: Many groups left England and Ireland because they wished to gain religious freedom (different sects of Protestantism).

Spanish: The entire colonial population was Catholic so religion was not an issue.

3) English: Emigration often took place for economic reasons, e.g. during and after the Great Famine in Ireland and similar events in Scotland.

Spanish: This situation never applied in Spain which was a much larger country with fewer people and so had no population congestion.

Differences between colonial English and colonial Spanish

- 4) English: Due to the slave trade, many pidgin forms of English arose which on the early plantations became creoles.

Spanish: Practically no pidgins arose, though mixtures of Spanish and Portuguese, such as *fronterizo* in northern Uruguay did develop.

- 5) English: Very diverse forms of English were transported, from different regions of England, from Scotland and from Ireland (all in the early phase).

Spanish: A predominance of southern Spanish applied to early forms of colonial Spanish.

Differences between colonial English and colonial Spanish

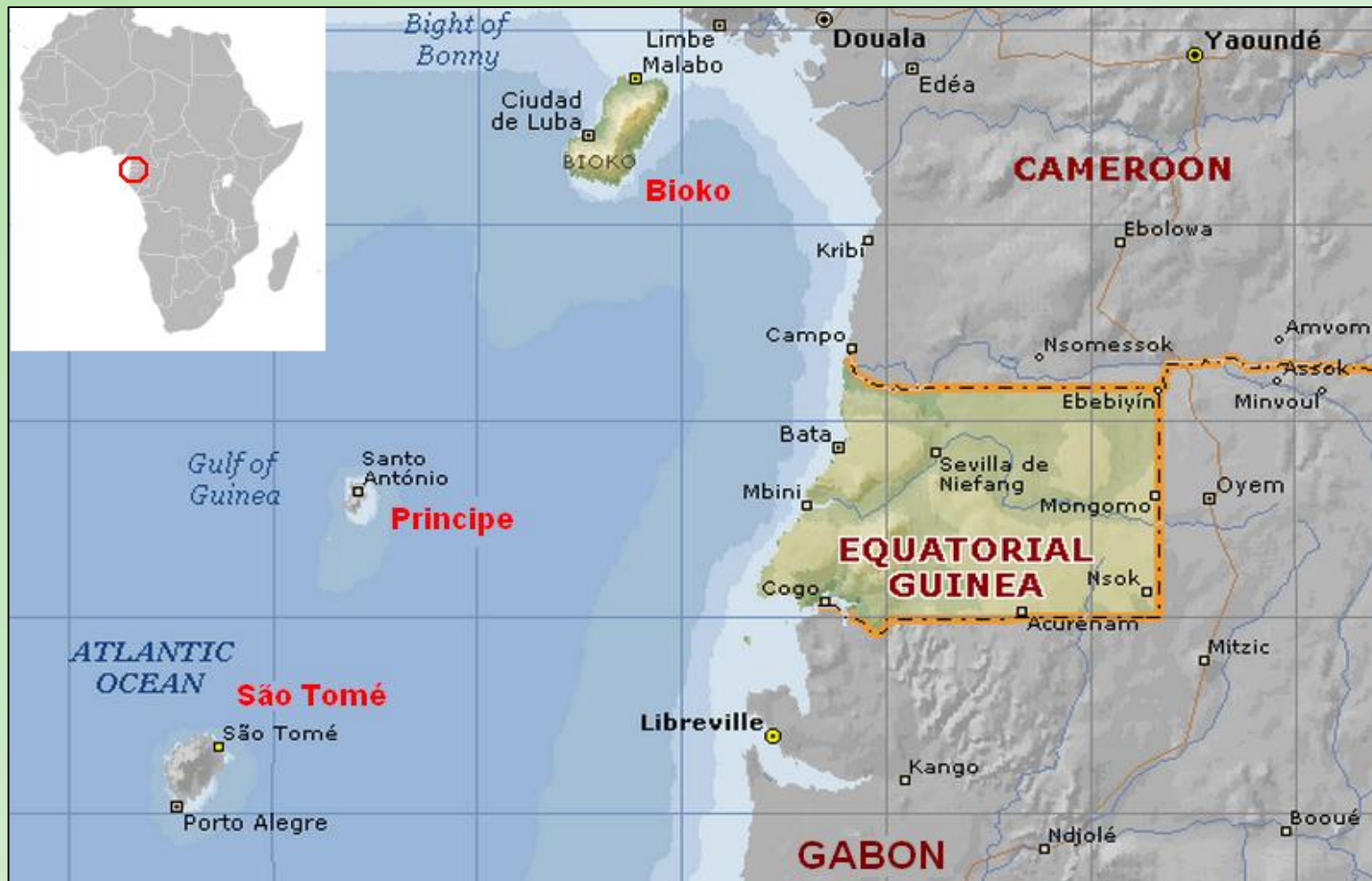
6) English colonialism continued well into the 19th century with the peak of the British Empire at the end of this century.

Spanish: The imperial enterprise began to decline with the defeat of the Spanish Armada of Philip II by the British in 1588. For instance, Argentina, which as a colony went back to the founding of Buenos Aires by Pedro de Mendoza in 1536, claimed independence from Spain in 1816, a much earlier date than any comparable event in the British Empire (apart from the United States in 1776).



Spanish outside the New World

In the 1840s the Spanish settled this region which later became known as Spanish Guinea. It became fully independent in 1973. Spanish is the official language, however, an English- and a Portuguese-based pidgin are spoken on the islands off Equatorial Guinea (on Bioko and on São Tomé & Príncipe respectively).



The Philippines was the only Spanish colony in Asia, established in 1542 after Spain asserted its claim over Portugal. The islands were named after Philip II (1527-1598) who was later to become king (1556). Manila was established as the centre of the Spanish colonial presence in 1572. By the Treaty of Paris (1898), Spain ceded the Philippines to the USA for \$20m.



Literature on the history of Spanish

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