

Corso di 3 cfu: 10 lezioni, da venerdì 17 aprile fino a
(presumibilmente) mercoledì 13 maggio

(venerdì 1 maggio non ci sarà lezione)

Orario delle lezioni

Mercoledì	16.30/18.30 [18.00]	3 Campagnola
Giovedì	14.30/16.30 [16.00]	3 Campagnola
Venerdì	14.30/16.30 [16.00]	1 Maldura

Parte monografica (3 cfu):

analisi della monografia di John H. Elliott, *Imperi dell'Atlantico. America britannica e America spagnola, 1492-1830*, Torino, Einaudi, 2017

(Sir) John Huxtable Elliott, 1930-2022



Elliott was educated at Eton College and Trinity College, Cambridge. He was an assistant lecturer at Cambridge University from 1957 to 1962 and Lecturer in History from 1962 until 1967, and was subsequently Professor of History at King's College, London, between 1968 and 1973. Elliott was Professor in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, from 1973 to 1990, and was Regius Professor of ~~Modern~~ History, Oxford, between 1990 and 1997

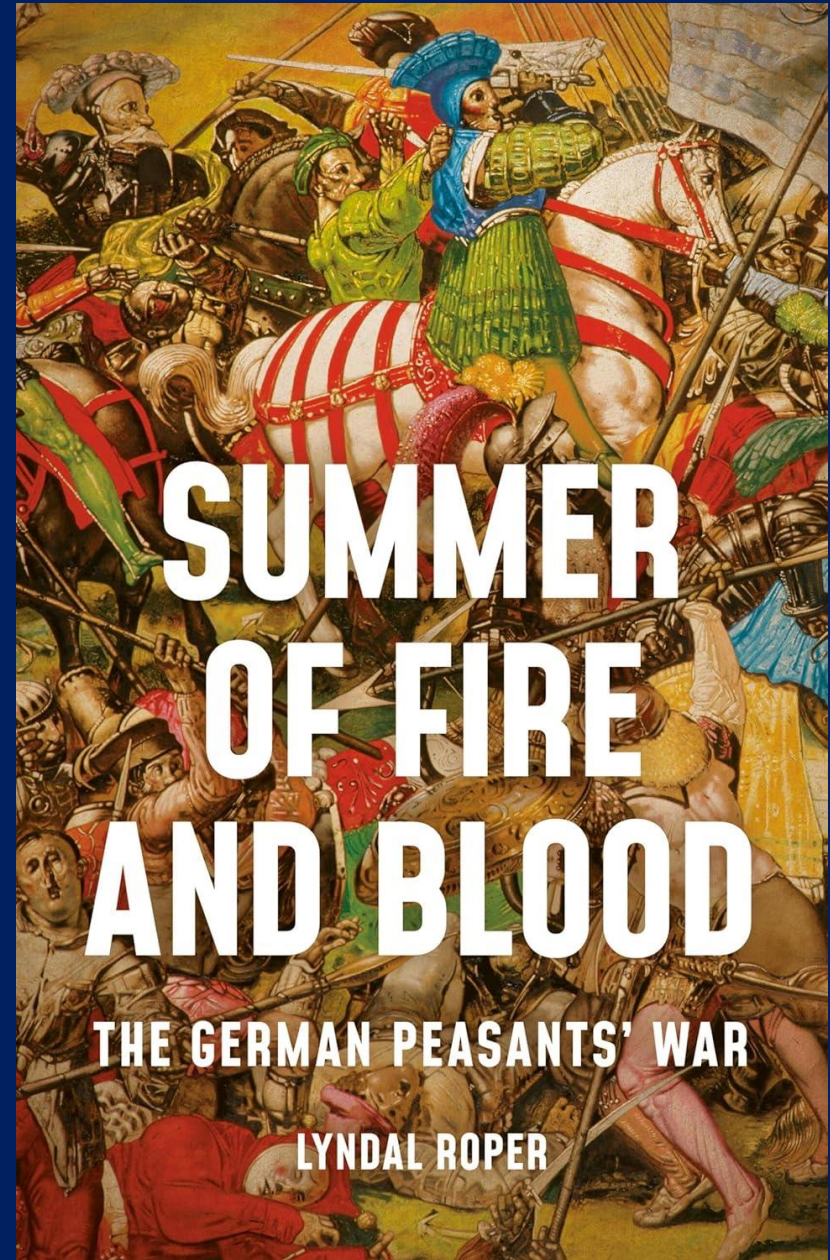
(Knighted - Knight Bachelor - in 1994)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASXbFUQH-98>: intervista in inglese

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_cIUt_Tcl: intervista in spagnolo



Lyndal Roper (1956-),
Regius Professor dal 2011



The Revolt of the Catalans: A Study in the Decline of Spain, 1598–1640
(Cambridge University Press, 1963; pbk reprint, 1984)

Imperial Spain: 1469–1716 (London 1963, revised repr. Penguin Books, 2002)

Europe Divided, 1559–1598 (London 1963; 2nd ed. 2000)

The Old World and The New 1492–1650 (Cambridge University Press, 1970; pbk reprint, 2008)

Richelieu and Olivares (Cambridge University Press, 1984; pbk reprint, 2003)

The Count-Duke Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline (Yale University Press 1986, revised repr. 1989)

Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain, 1492–1830 (Yale University Press, 2006)

Retrato de Gaspar de Guzmán y Pimentel (1587-1645), conde-
duque de Olivares y valido del rey Felipe IV de España,
Velasquez, 1624



Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain, 1492–1830 (Yale University Press, 2006)

Imperi dell'Atlantico. America britannica e America spagnola, 1492-1830 (Torino, Einaudi, 2010 e 2017)

EMPIRES OF THE ATLANTIC WORLD

BRITAIN AND SPAIN IN AMERICA 1492-1830

J. H. ELLIOTT

*Empires of the Atlantic
World: Britain and Spain,
1492–1830*
(Yale University Press,
2006)



Anon., *Union of the Descendants of the Imperial Incas with the Houses of Loyola and Borja* (Cuzco, 1718). The painting commemorates a double union between the Inca and Spanish elites. On the left, St Ignatius Loyola's nephew, Don Martín García de Loyola, governor of Chile, who was ambushed and killed in the Araucanian wars in 1598, and his wife, Doña Beatriz, the daughter of Sairi Tupac, who succeeded to the imperial rights of the Incas. Beside them is St. Ignatius holding the constitutions of the Jesuit Order. Above them to the left are shown the bride's parents, along with Tupac Amaru I, in the centre, who was executed by the Spaniards for rebellion in 1572. In the foreground on the right, the daughter born of this marriage, Doña Lorenza, is depicted with her husband, Don Juan de Borja. The bridegroom was the son of St Francis Borja, who stands behind him holding his emblem, a skull. The painting, depicting marriages that had occurred more than a century before, testifies to the pride of the eighteenth century nobility of Cuzco in their ancestral past





THE LAST INCA PRINCESS

a film by ANA DE ORBEGOSO

Introduzione

P. XIII Differences [*tra spagnoli e inglesi*] of creed and of national origin paled before the universality of experience that brought emigrants three thousand miles or more from their European homelands to a new and strange world on the farther shores of the Atlantic

Fear and relief, apprehension and hope, were sentiments that knew no cultural boundaries

P. XV Having spun off at a given moment from their metropolitan societies of origin, they [le società coloniali] evinced the 'immobilities of fragmentation', and were programmed for ever not only by the place but also by the time of their origin

Their salient characteristics were those of their home societies at the moment of their conception, and when the home societies moved on to new stages of development, their colonial offshoots were caught in a time-warp from which they were unable to break free

p. XVII James Lang, after examining the two empires in turn in his *Conquest and Commerce. Spain and England in the Americas*, defined Spain's empire in America as an 'empire of conquest', and Britain's as an 'empire of commerce', a distinction that can be traced back to the eighteenth century

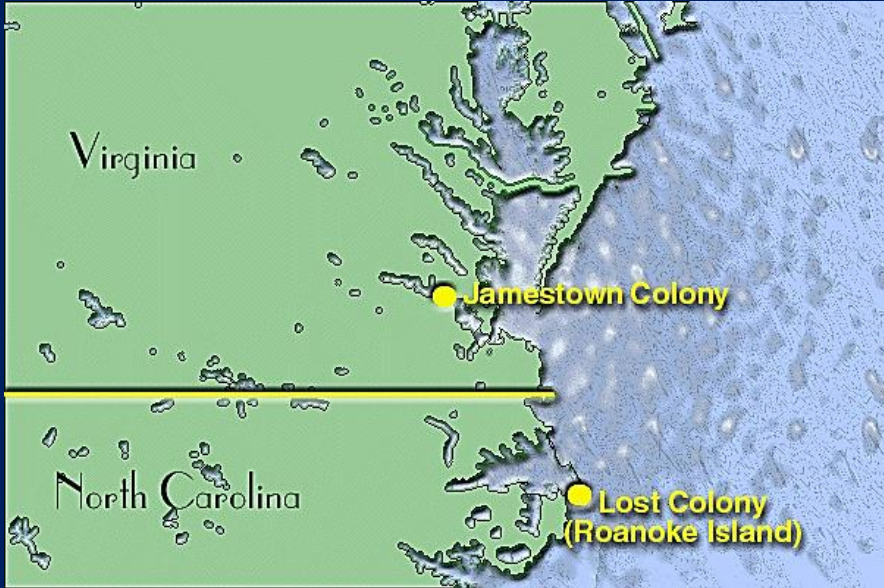
Occupation

Intrusion and empire

Hernán Cortés and Christopher Newport

p.5 A shrewd notary from Extremadura, turned colonist and adventurer, and a one-armed ex-privateer from Limehouse, in the county of Middlesex

Eighty-seven years separate the expeditions, led by Hernán Cortés and Captain Christopher Newport respectively [1519-1606], that laid the foundations of the empires of Spain and Britain on the mainland of America



Roanoke colony [NC],
1585 and 1587, Walter
Raleigh



Hernán Cortés (1485-1547)



Christopher Newport (1561-
dopo il 15.8.1617)



Limehouse



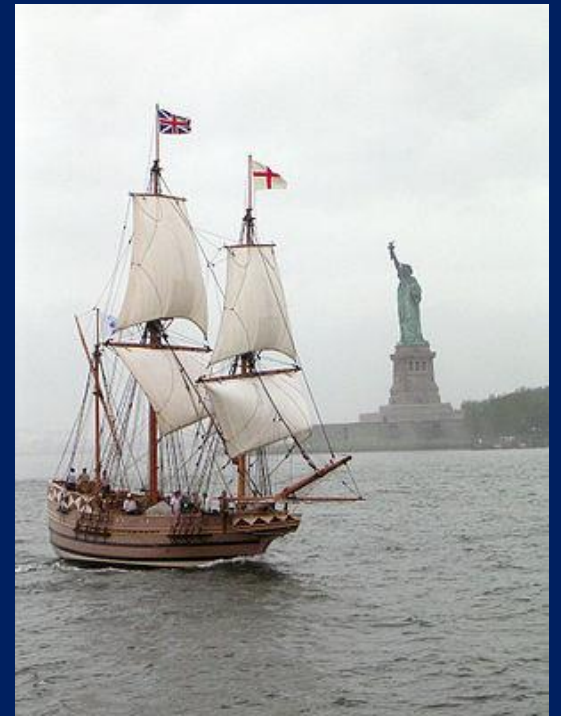
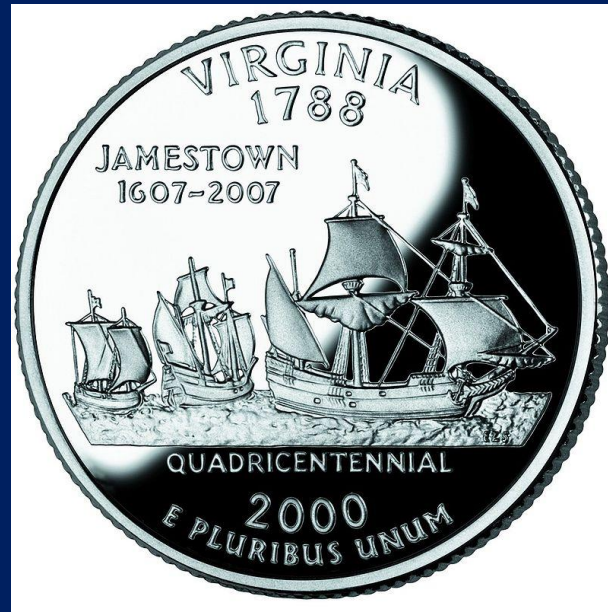
Medelin



[due spedizioni diverse]

The first, consisting of ten ships, set sail from Cuba on 18 February 1519

The second, of only three ships, left London on 29 December 1606, although the sailing date was the 19th for Captain Newport and his men, who still reckoned by the Julian calendar



Replica della
Susan Constant



p.6 ...Cortés, the protégé and one-time secretary of Velázquez [Diego Velázquez, governatore di Cuba dal 1511], proved considerably less faithful [di Newport] to his instructions

The governor of Cuba had specifically ordered that the expedition was to be an expedition for trade and exploration. He did not authorize Cortés to conquer or to settle

Velázquez's purpose was to keep his own interests alive while seeking formal authorization from Spain to establish a settlement on the mainland under his own jurisdiction, but Cortés...had other ideas



Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar
(1465-1524)

EXPEDICIONES ESPAÑOLAS A MÉXICO



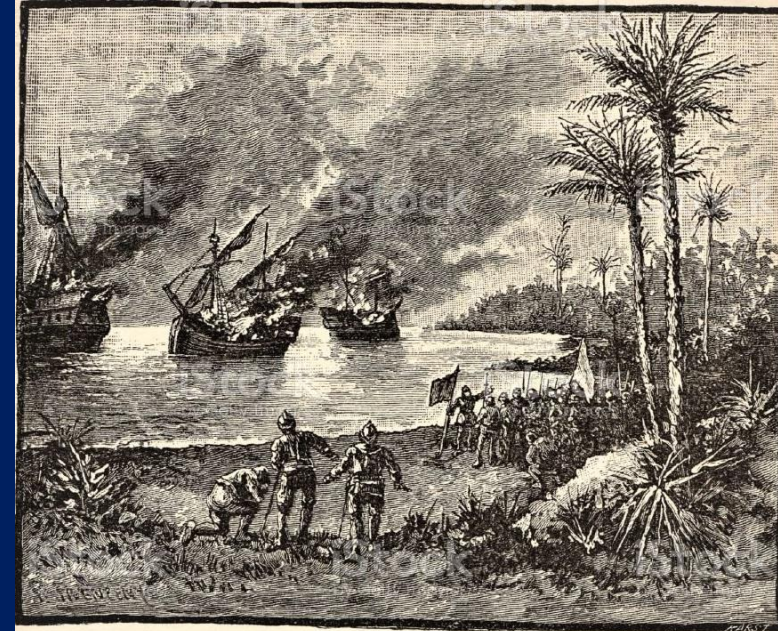
[Invece] Cortés's intention from the first had been to poblar – to settle any lands that he should discover – and this could be done only by defying his superior and securing his own authorization from the crown. This he now proceeded to do in a series of brilliant manoeuvres

By the laws of medieval Castile the community could, in certain circumstances, take collective action against a 'tyrannical' monarch or minister. Cortés's expeditionary force now reconstituted itself as a formal community, by incorporating itself on 28 June 1519 as a town, to be known as Villa Rica de Vera Cruz, which the Spaniards promptly started to lay out and build

The new municipality, acting in the name of the king in place of his 'tyrannical' governor of Cuba, whose authority it rejected, then appointed Cortés as its mayor (*alcalde mayor*) and captain of the royal army

By this manoeuvre, Cortés was freed from his obligations to the 'tyrant' Velázquez. Thereafter, following the king's best interests, he could lead his men inland to conquer the empire of Montezuma...

Puerto es la vera Cruz nueva con La Fuerza dos San de Ulua en el Reino de La Nueva España en el Mar de Norte.
 Tiene La Ciudad Longitud 1200 varas La Fuerza tiene de Longitud 193 varas tiene La Canal desde tierra actual (Fuerza 200 varas).



Cortez burning his Ships.

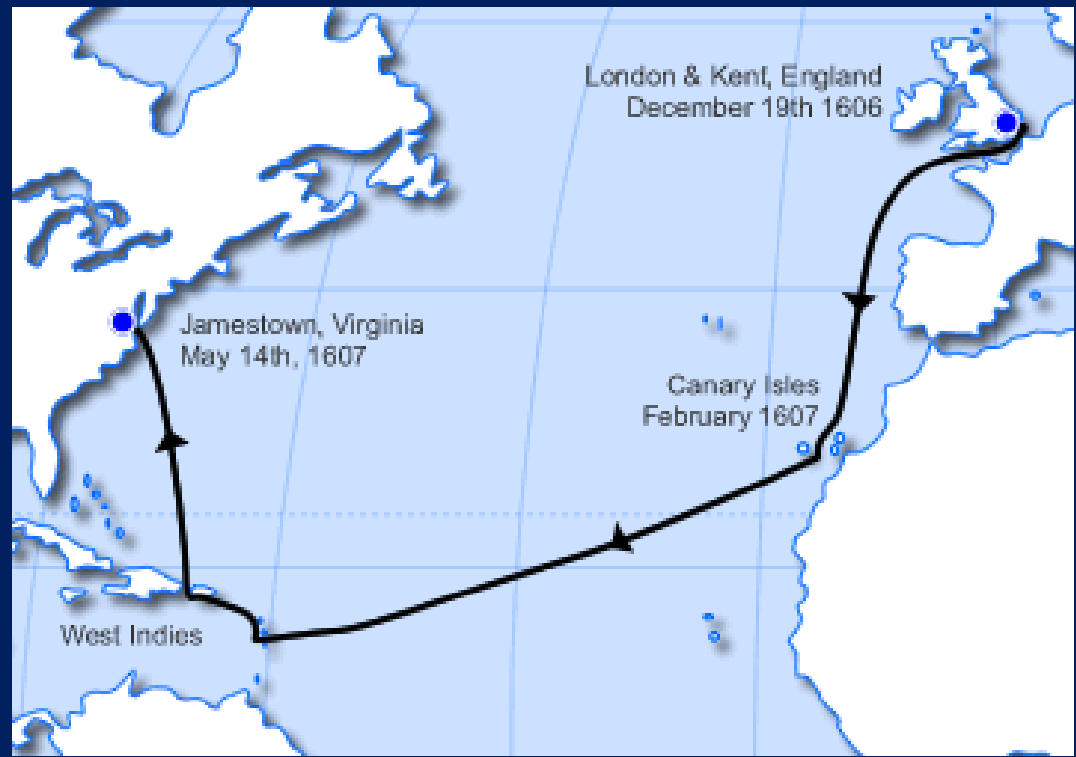


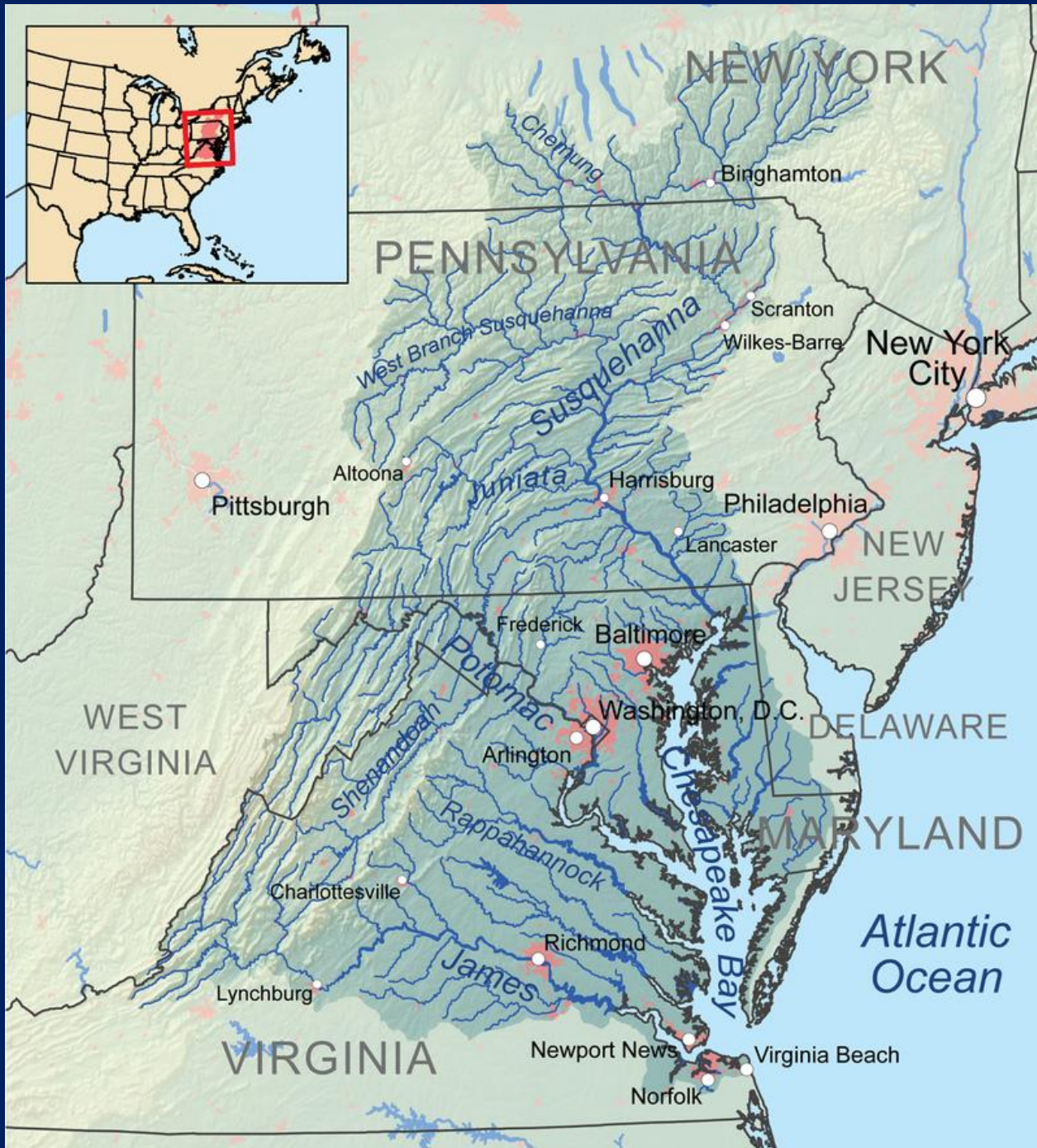
p.11 Newport's expedition, unlike that of Cortés, had to be organized and financed from the home country

The Cortés expedition had been funded in part by Diego Velázquez out of his resources as governor of Cuba, and in part by private deals between Cortés and two wealthy islanders who advanced him supplies on credit

The Newport expedition was financed and organized by a London-based joint-stock company, the Virginia Company, which received its charter [patente] from James VI and I in April 1606, granting it exclusive rights to settle the Chesapeake Bay area of the American mainland

Although funding was provided by the investors, many of whom were City merchants, the appointment of a thirteen man royal council with regulatory powers gave the Company the assurance of state backing for its enterprise





ANCIENT CHARTERS,

RELATING TO THE

FIRST SETTLEMENT OF VIRGINIA.

LETTERS PATENT to Sir Thomas Gates, Sir George Somers, and others, for two several Colonies and Plantations, to be made in VIRGINIA, and other parts and Territories of America.

(Dated April 10th, 1606. 4 James 1st.—Stith's App. No. 1. pa. 1.)

I. JAMES, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. WHEREAS our loving and well-disposed subjects, Sir Thomas Gates, and Sir George Somers. Knights, Richard Hackluit, Clerk, Prebendary of Westminster, and Edward-Maria Wingfield, Thomas Hauham, and Raleigh Gilbert, Esqrs. William Parker, and George Popham, gentlemen, and divers others of our loving subjects, have been humble suitors unto us, that we would vouchsafe unto them our licence, to make habitation, plantation, and to deduce a colony of sundry of our people into that part of America, commonly called Virginia, and other parts and territories in America, either appertaining unto us, or which are not now actually possessed by any

First charter to Sir Thomas Gates, & others.

Preamble

H

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First charter to Sir Thomas Gates, & others.

Preamble

H

Where Cortés, therefore, was nominally serving under the orders of the royal governor of Cuba, from whom he broke free at the earliest opportunity, Newport was a company employee

The company chose more wisely than the governor of Cuba. Cortés was too clever, and too ambitious, to be content with playing second string

[differenze sociali tra le due spedizioni]

p.13 Of the 105 'first planters', as the men who composed Newport's expedition were called, thirty-six were classed as gentlemen. There were also a number of craftsmen, including four carpenters, **two bricklayers, a mason**, a blacksmith, a tailor and a barber, and twelve labourers.

The proportion of gentlemen was high, and would become still higher by the time the new colony had twice been reinforced from England, giving it six times as many gentlemen as in the population of the home country [34% contro 6%?]

It [proportion of gentlemen] was also high in relation to the number in Cortés's band, which was five times as large
Of the so-called 'first conquerors', who were present with Cortés at the founding of Vera Cruz, only sixteen were clearly regarded as *hidalgos* [3%]

But many more had pretensions to gentility, and Bernal Díaz del Castillo goes so far as to claim in his *History of the Conquest of New Spain* [*Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, ca. 1576, ed. 1632] that 'all the rest of us were *hidalgos*, although some were not of such clear lineage as others, because it is well known that in this world not all men are born equal, either in nobility or virtue'

The Cortés expedition included some professional soldiers, and many other men who, during their years in the Indies, had participated in raiding parties to various of the Caribbean islands, or joined previous expeditions for reconnaissance, barter and settlement

[due tradizioni diverse di colonizzazione]

p.14 The fact that the company on board Newport's ships were styled 'planters' was a clear indication of the purpose of the voyage. For the English in the age of the Tudors and Stuarts, 'plantation' – meaning a planting of people – was synonymous with 'colony'



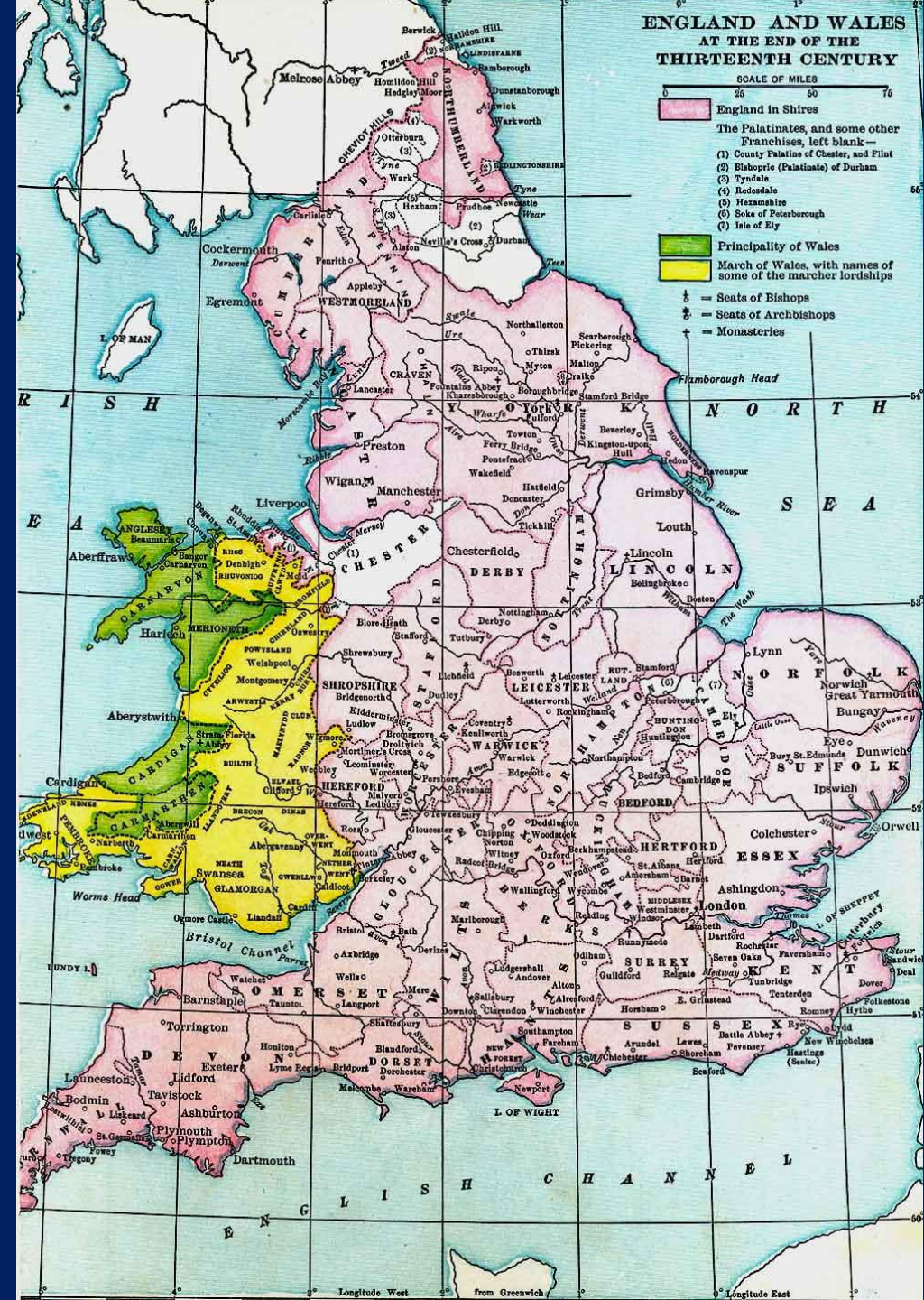
This was standard usage in Tudor Ireland, where 'colonies' or 'plantations' were the words employed to designate settlements of English in areas not previously subject to English governmental control

These people were known as 'planters' rather than 'colonists', a term that does not seem to have come into use before the eighteenth century

**ENGLAND AND WALES
AT THE END OF THE
THIRTEENTH CENTURY**

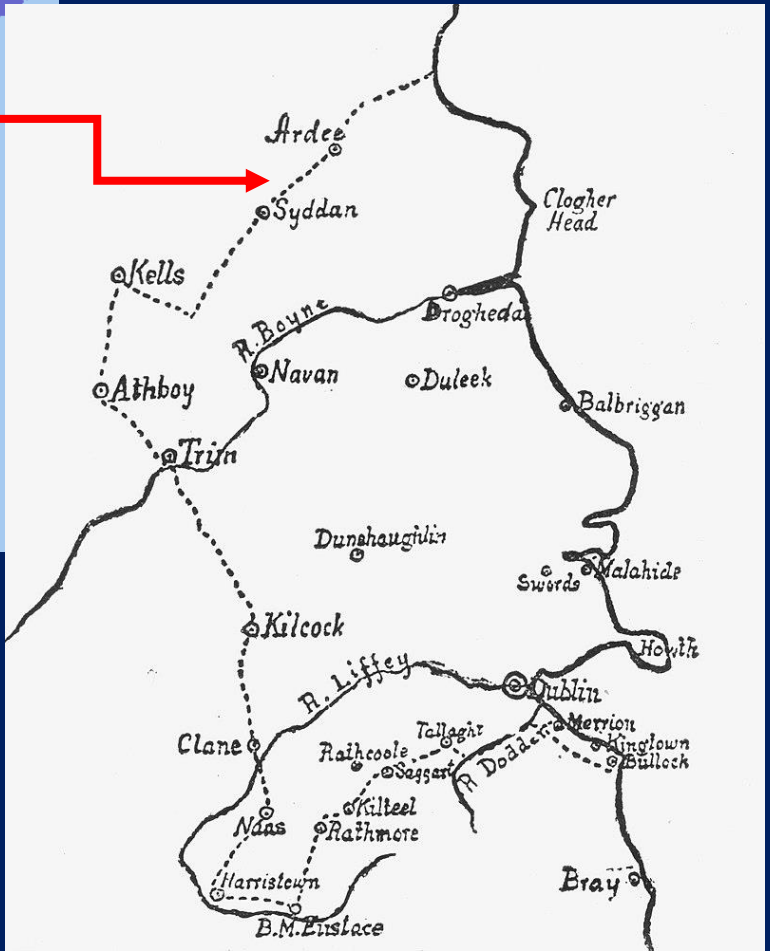
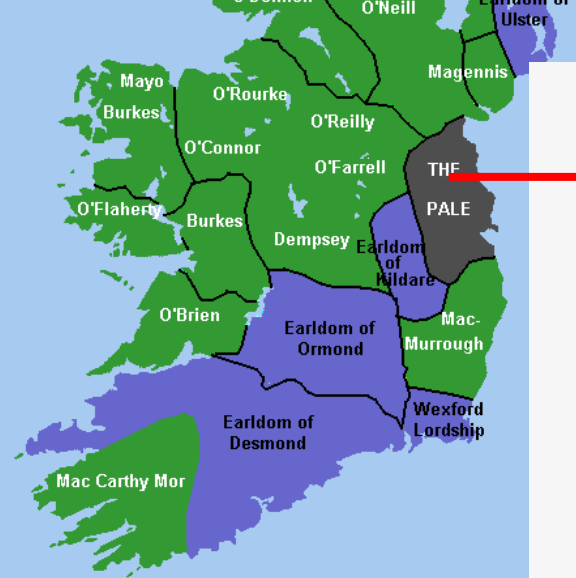
SCALE OF MILES
0 25 50 75

- England in Shires
- The Palatinates, and some other Franchises, left blank—
- (1) County Palatine of Chester, and Flint
- (2) Bishopric (Palatinate) of Durham
- (3) Tyndale
- (4) Redesdale
- (5) Hexamshire
- (6) Soke of Peterborough
- (7) Isle of Ely
- Principality of Wales
- March of Wales, with names of some of the marcher lordships
- ‡ = Seats of Bishops
- ‡ = Seats of Archbishops
- † = Monasteries



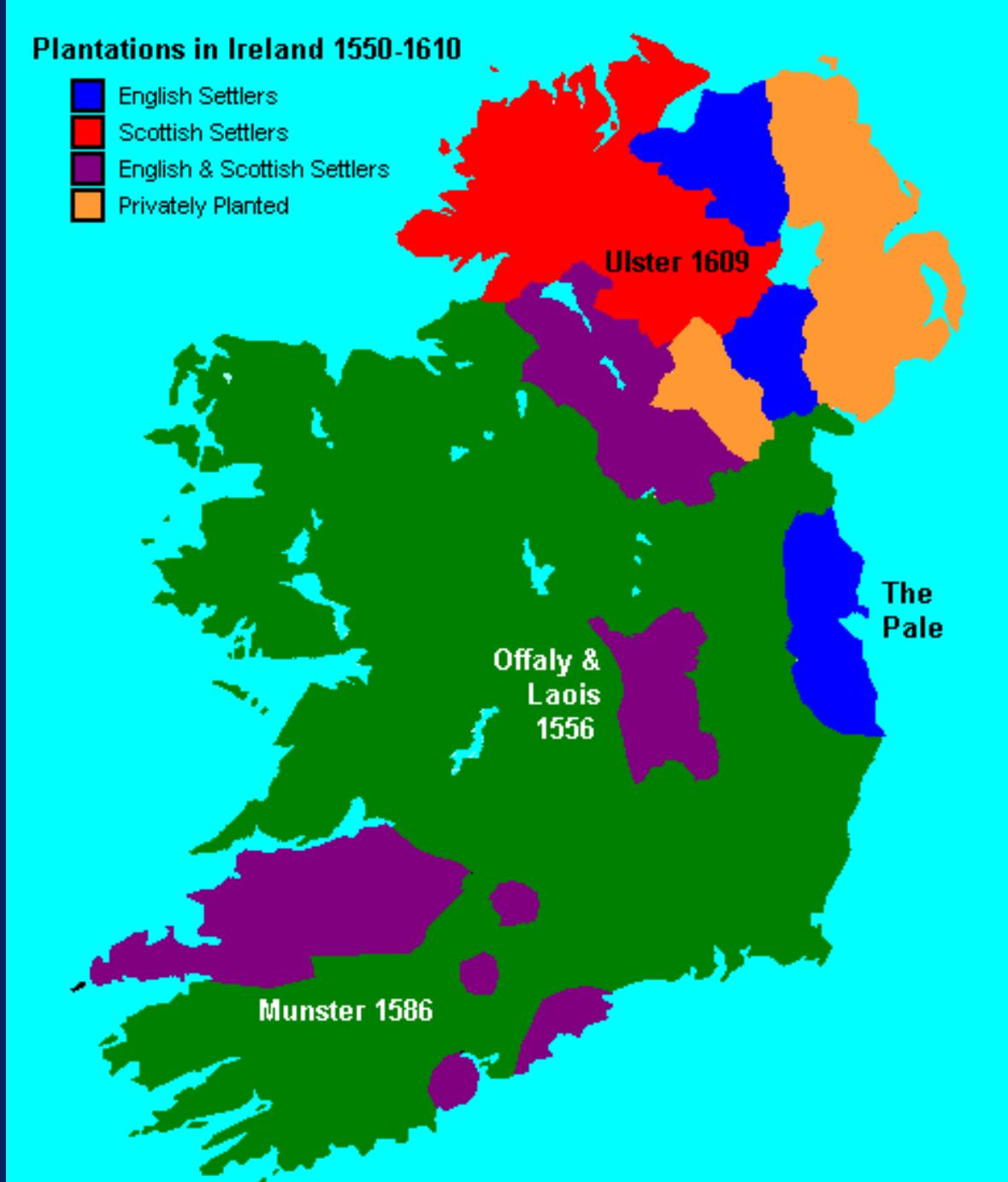
The Island of Ireland 1450

- Land held by native Irish
- Land held by Anglo-Irish Lords
- Land held by English King



Plantations in Ireland 1550-1610

- English Settlers
- Scottish Settlers
- English & Scottish Settlers
- Privately Planted



The Spanish equivalent of 'planter' was poblador

In 1498, when Francisco [not Luis] Roldán rebelled against the government of the Columbus brothers on Hispaniola, he rejected the name of colonos for himself and his fellow settlers of the island, and demanded that they should be known as *vecinos* or householders, with all the rights accruing to vecinos under Castilian law

A colón was, in the first instance, a labourer who worked land for which he paid rent, and Roldán would have none of this. Subsequent usage upheld his stand

During the period of Habsburg rule Spain's American territories, unlike those of the English, were not called 'colonies'

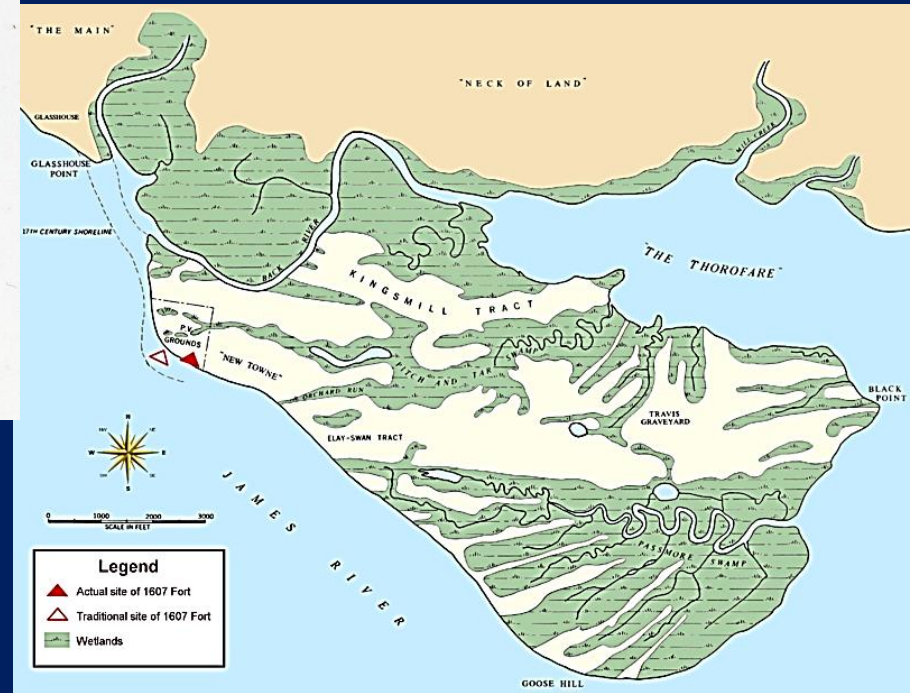
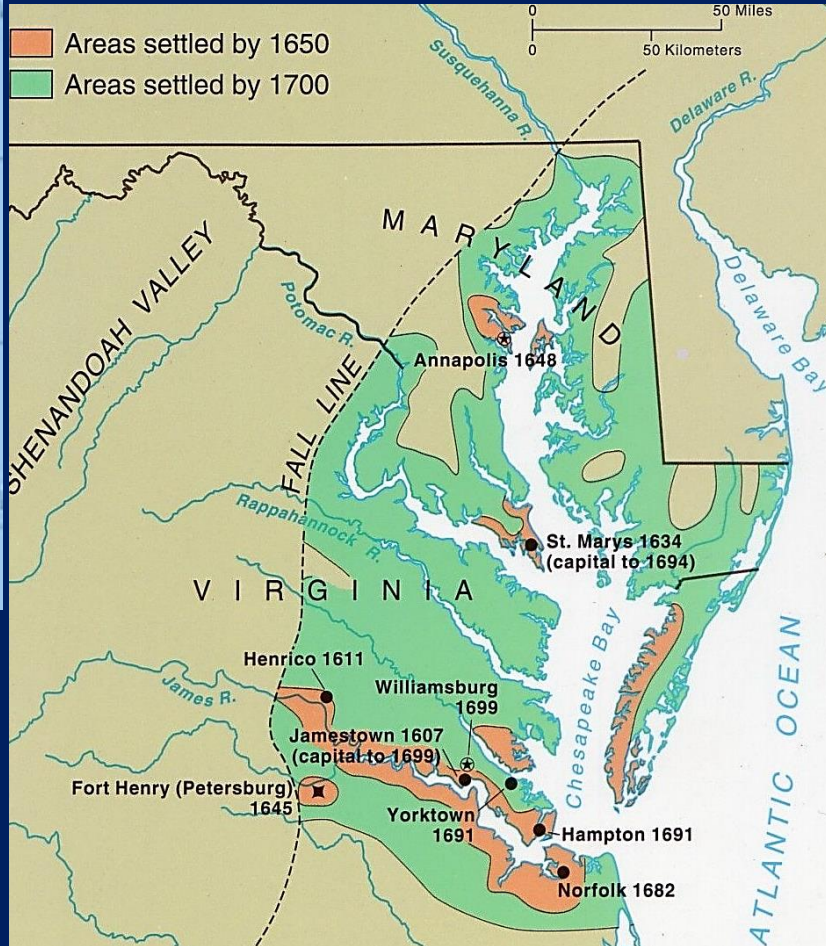
They were kingdoms in the possession of the Crown of Castile, and they were inhabited, not by *colonos*, but by conquerors (conquistadores) and their descendants, and by pobladores, or settlers, the name given to all later arrivals

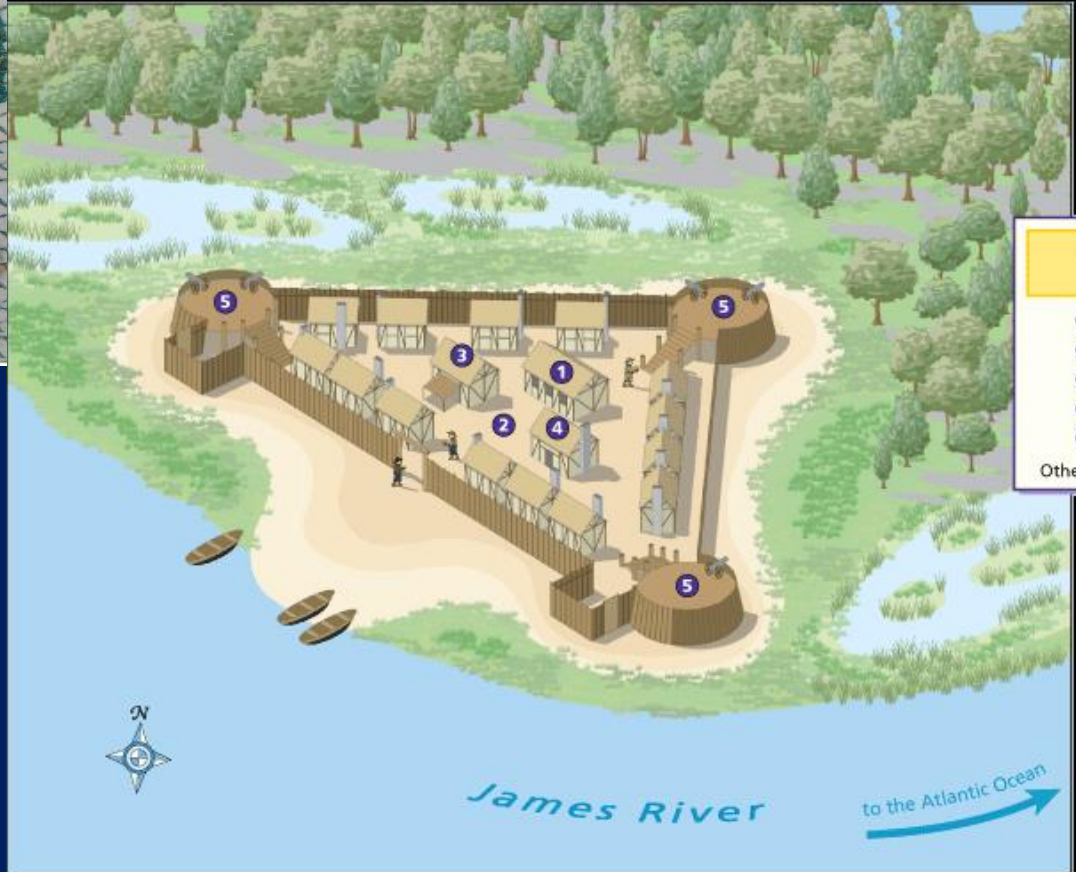
[insediamento fondato da Newport]

p.16 In search of a safer landing-place, Newport's expedition moved across the bay and up river, finally putting ashore on 13 May 1607 at what was to be the site of Jamestown, the colony's first settlement

The London Company had named a resident council of seven to govern the colony, and ground-clearing and the construction of a fort began immediately under its supervision

Jamestown, with its deep anchorage, was to be the English Vera Cruz, a base for reconnaissance and for obtaining supplies by sea

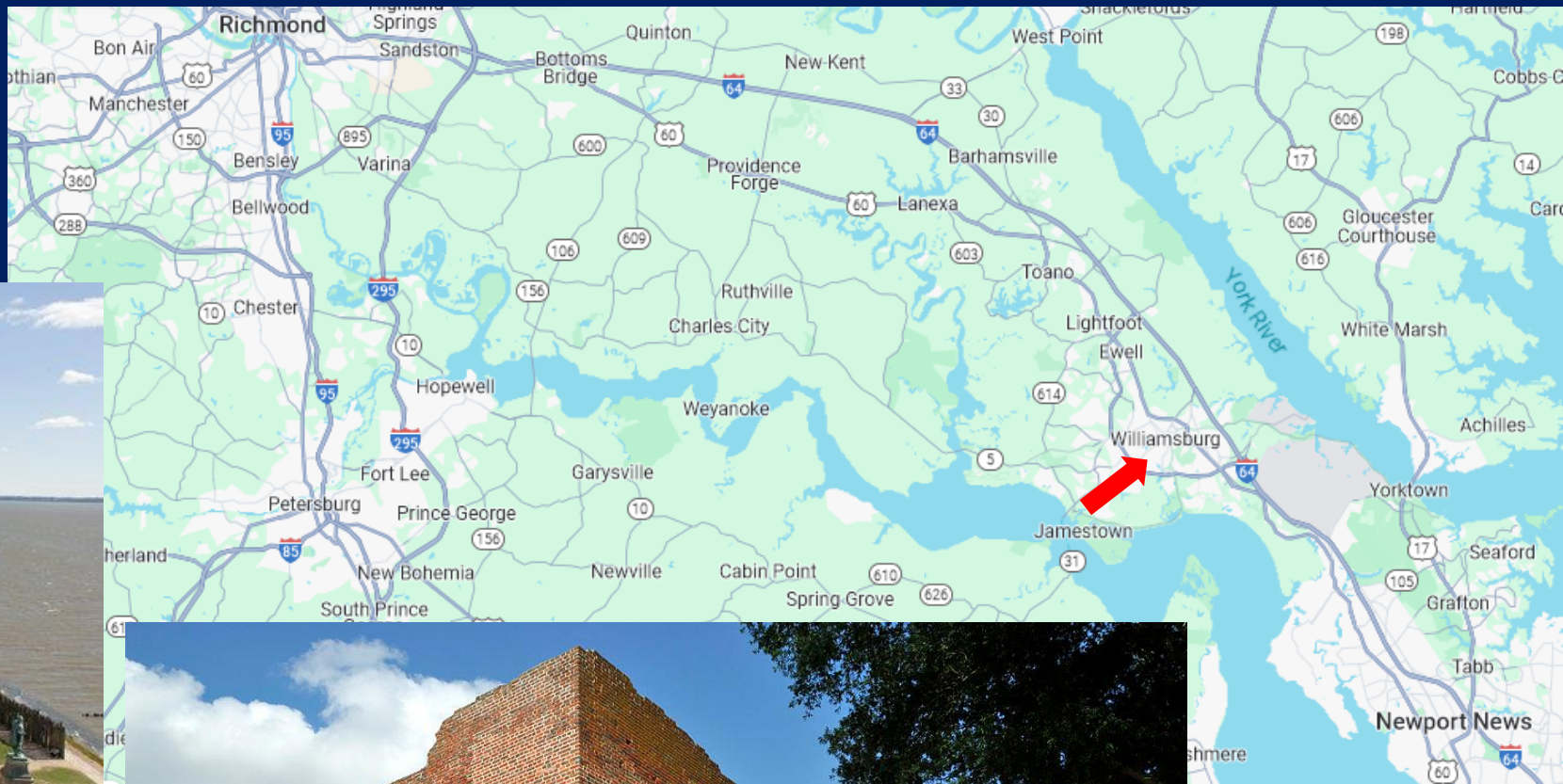


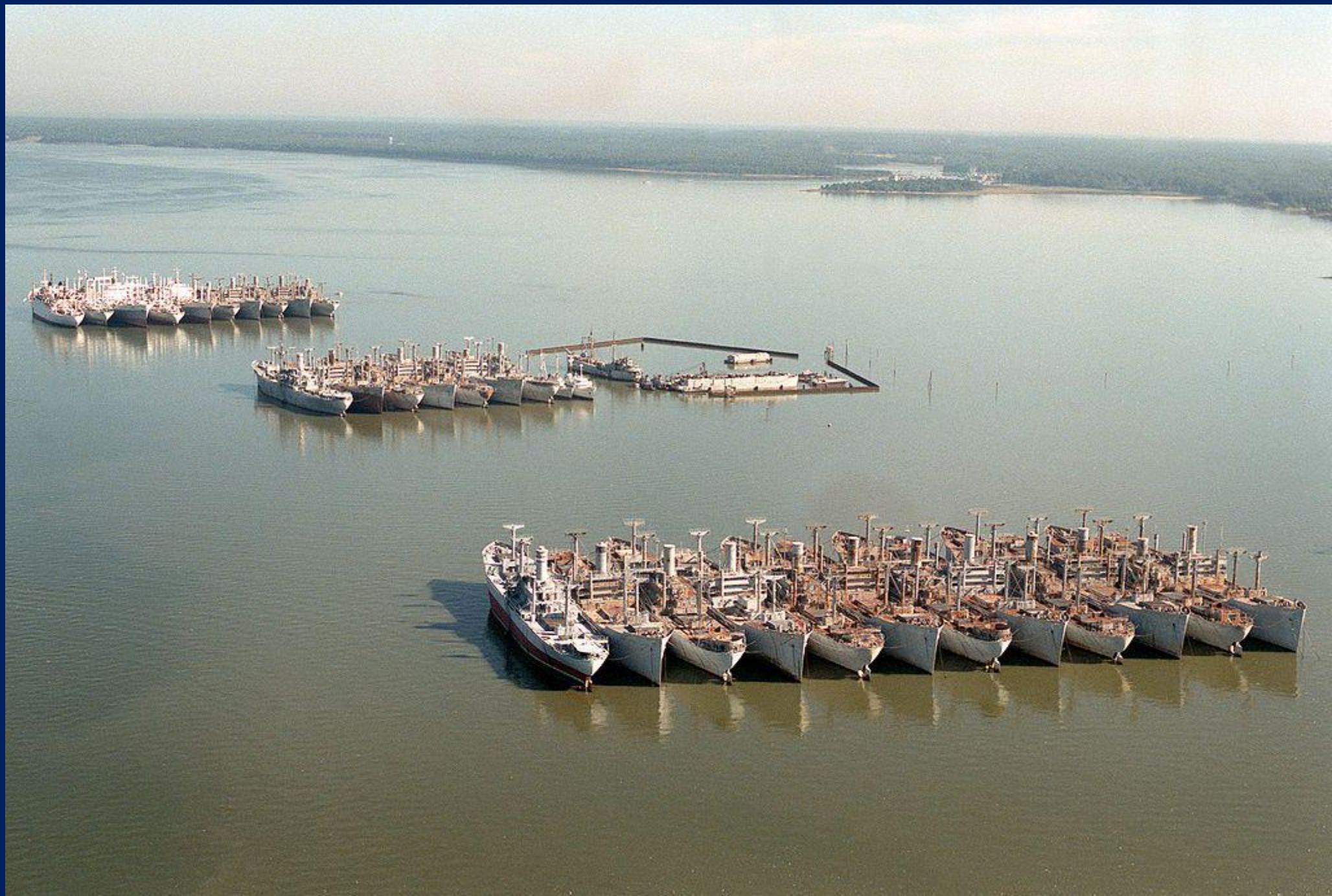


**Jamestown
1607**

- 1 Church
- 2 Market area
- 3 Storehouse
- 4 Courthouse
- 5 Cannon

Other buildings are houses.





p.17 Newport took a party to explore the higher reaches of the river, and, after passing 'divers small habitations . . . Arrived at a town called Powhatan, consisting of some 12 houses pleasantly seated on a hill'. Beyond this were falls, which made the river unnavigable for their boat

On one of the 'little islets at the mouth of the falls', Newport 'set up a cross with this inscription *Jacobus Rex. 1607*, and his own name below. At the erecting hereof we prayed for our king and our own prosperous success in this his action, and proclaimed him king, with a great shout.'

The English, like the Spaniards in Mexico, had formally taken possession of the land

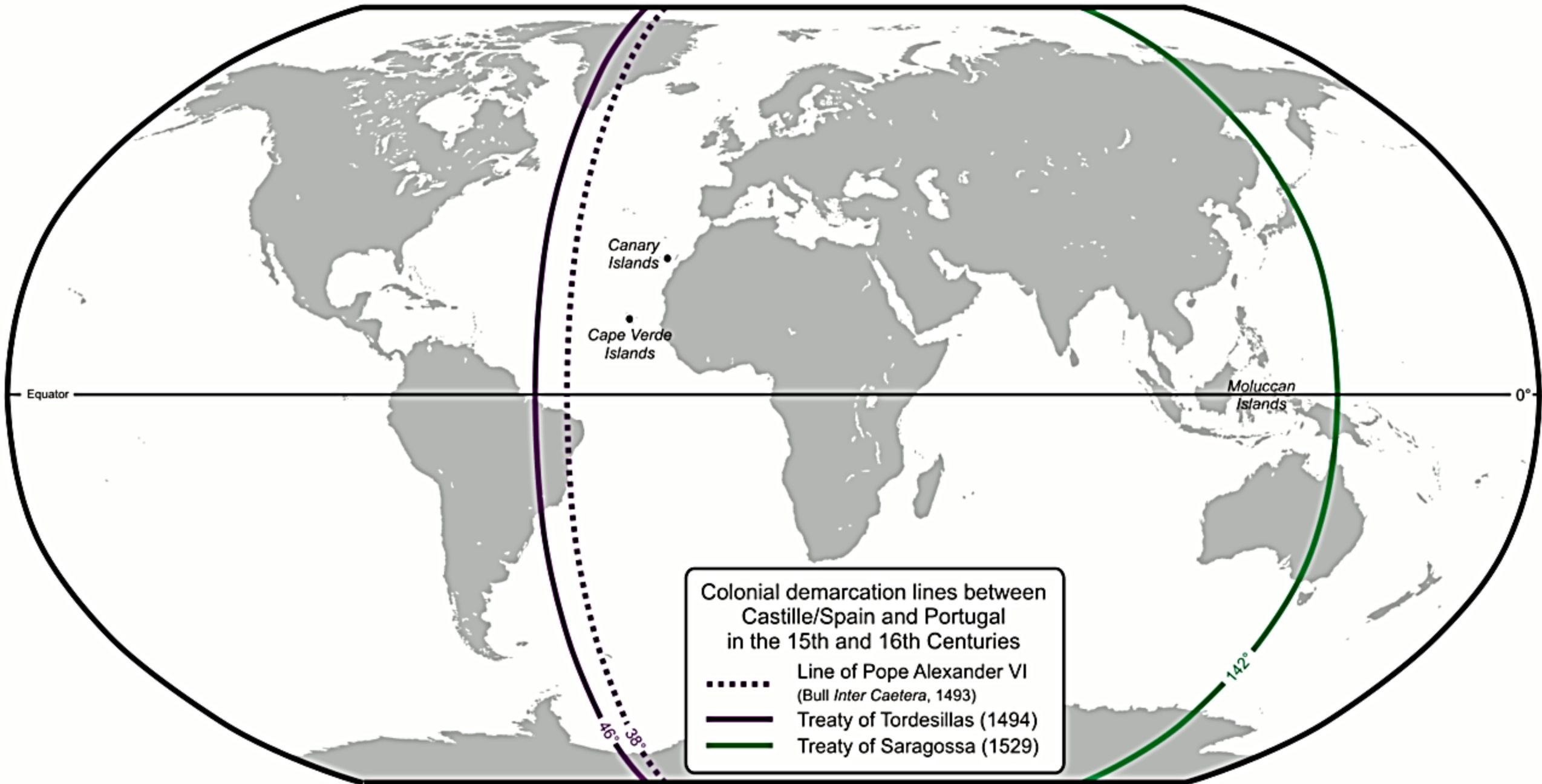
[giustificazioni legali per le nuove conquiste]

In both instances tender consciences might question their right to do so. 'The first objection', Robert Gray was to observe in *A Good Speed* [buon viaggio] *to Virginia* (1609), 'is, by what right or warrant we can enter into the lands of these savages, take away their rightful inheritance from them, and plant ourselves in their places, being unwronged or unprovoked by them.'

This was a problem with which the Spaniards had long had to wrestle. Spanish claims to New World dominion were based primarily on the Alexandrine bulls of 1493–4 [papa Alessandro VI Borgia]

These, following the precedent set by papal policy towards the Portuguese crown in *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) [dopo la caduta di Costantinopoli, 1453], gave the monarchs of Castile dominion over any islands or mainland discovered or still to be discovered on the westward route to Asia, on condition that they assumed responsibility for protecting and evangelizing the indigenous inhabitants

...noi vi doniamo, concediamo e destiniamo - per nostra propria volontà, non in seguito a vostre richieste od a suppliche presentateci da altri in tal senso a vostro nome, ma esclusivamente per la nostra liberalità, sicura conoscenza e pienezza del potere Apostolico, per l'autorità dell'Onnipotente Iddio conferitaci nella persona di san Pietro, e per il Vicariato di Gesù Cristo che noi assolviamo in terra, tutte le isole e le terre, esplorate o da esplorare, scoperte o da scoprirsi verso occidente e verso sud, che si trovano tracciando e stabilendo una linea, che va dal Polo Artico a quello Antartico [dal Polo nord al Polo sud], un centinaio di leghe ad ovest e a sud da quelle isole comunemente chiamate Azzorre e del Capo Verde, indipendentemente dal fatto che tali terre ed isole siano in direzione dell'India o di qualche altro paese; con la clausola tuttavia che queste terre ed isole esplorate o da esplorarsi, scoperte o da scoprire situate ad ovest o a sud di detta linea, non siano appartenute ad alcun altro principe o re cristiano fino al giorno, dalla natività di nostro Signore Gesù Cristo da poco trascorso, in cui inizio questo anno millequattrocento novantatre,...



p.18 Since a favourable reaction of the indigenous population to such a take-over could hardly be taken for granted, their willingness to submit peacefully came to be tested by the formal reading aloud to them of the requerimiento [ingiunzione], the notorious legal document drawn up in 1512 [leggi di Burgos] by the eminent jurist Juan López de Palacios Rubios, and routinely used on all expeditions of discovery and conquest, including that of Hernán Cortés

The document, after briefly outlining Christian doctrine and the history of the human race, explained that Saint Peter and his successors possessed jurisdiction over the whole world, and had granted the newly discovered lands to Ferdinand and Isabella and their heirs, to whom the local population must submit, or face the waging of a just war against them

«De todas estas gentes Dios nuestro Señor dio cargo a uno, que fue llamado san Pedro, para que de todos los hombres del mundo fuese señor y superior a quien todos obedeciesen, y fue cabeza de todo el linaje humano, dondequiera que los hombres viniesen en cualquier ley, secta o creencia; y diole todo el mundo por su Reino y jurisdicción, y como quiera que él mandó poner su silla en Roma, como en lugar más aparejado para regir el mundo, y juzgar y gobernar a todas las gentes, cristianos, moros, judíos, gentiles o de cualquier otra secta o creencia que fueren. A este llamaron Papa, porque quiere decir admirable, padre mayor y gobernador de todos los hombres.»

Zenú o Sinú

«Quando diceva che il papa era signore di tutto l'universo al posto di Dio, e che aveva fatto dono di quella terra al re di Castiglia, dissero che il papa doveva essere ubriaco quando lo fece, visto che dava ciò che non era suo, e che il re che chiedeva e riceveva quel dono doveva essere un folle, visto che chiedeva ciò che era di altri. Che venisse lì a prendersela, la terra, e avrebbero infilato la sua testa su un palo, come già ne avevano altre, di loro nemici.»



The right of the papacy to dispose of non-Christian lands and peoples in this way was in due course to be contested by Spanish scholastics like Francisco de Vitoria, but papal concession was to remain fundamental to Spanish claims to possession of the Indies, although it might be reinforced or supplemented, as Cortés tried to supplement it, by other arguments

Papal authorization was obviously not an option for Protestant England when it found itself faced with identical problems over rights of occupation and possession, although the general tenor of the argument based on papal donation could easily be adapted to English circumstances, as it was by Richard Hakluyt: 'Now the Kings and Queens of England have the name of Defenders of the Faith; by which title I think they are not only charged to maintain and patronize the faith of Christ, but also to enlarge and advance the same.'

England, therefore, like Spain, acquired a providential mission in America, a mission conceived...in terms of 'reducing the savage people to Christianity and civility . . .'

Motives and methods

p.25 Cortés, outmanoeuvred by royal officials, returned to Spain in 1528 to put his case to the Emperor, who confirmed him as captain-general, but not governor of New Spain. He returned there in 1530, but after costly and exhausting expeditions to the Pacific coast searching for a route to China and the Moluccas, he moved back to Spain in 1540, never again to return to the land he had conquered for Castile

Christopher Newport, for his part, left the service of the Virginia Company in 1611, apparently as a result of his dissatisfaction with its efforts to keep the Jamestown settlement supplied, and died in Java in 1617 on the third of a series of voyages on behalf of the East India Company

Both men had cause to feel disappointment with their treatment, but each, in his own way, had laid the foundations for an empire

p.26 The Spanish and British empires in America have been described respectively as empires of 'conquest' and of 'commerce', but even these two expeditions would seem to indicate that motivations are not easily compartmentalized into neat categories, and that approaches to colonization resist straightforward classification

Was Cortés, with his almost obsessive determination to settle the land, no more than a gold-hungry conqueror? And were the promoters of the Virginia enterprise purely concerned with commercial opportunities, to the exclusion of all else?

The aspirations and activities of both the planters of Jamestown and the conquerors of Mexico can only be fully appreciated within the context of a national experience of conquest and settlement which, in both instances, stretched back over many centuries

For historically, Castile and England were both proto-colonial powers long before they set out to colonize America

Medieval England pursued a policy of aggressive expansion into the non-English areas of the British Isles, warring with its Welsh, Scottish and Irish neighbours and establishing communities of English settlers who would advance English interests and promote English values on alien Celtic soil

p.27 The process of the settlement and subjugation of Ireland by the England of Elizabeth, pursued over several decades, absorbed national energies and resources that might otherwise have been directed more intensively, and at an earlier stage, to the founding of settlements on the other side of the Atlantic

In medieval Spain [Castilla], the land of the Reconquista, the pattern of combined conquest and colonization was equally well established. The Reconquista was a prolonged struggle over many centuries to free the soil of the Iberian peninsula from Moorish domination



La Península en 1031.



La Península en 1100.



La Península en 1200.



La Península en 1300.

At once a military and a religious enterprise, it was a war for booty, land and vassals, and a crusade to recover for the Christians the vast areas of territory that had been lost to Islam

But it also involved a massive migration of people, as the crown allocated large tracts of land to individual nobles, to the military-religious orders engaged in the process of reconquest, and to city councils, which were given jurisdiction over large hinterlands

Diego Velasquez, 1599-1660

Ordine militare di Santiago

Orden de Santiago



Emblema dell'Ordine



p.28 Neither Portuguese resources, nor local conditions, were conducive to the seizure of vast areas of territory in Africa and Asia. Manpower was limited, local societies were resilient, and climate and disease tended to take a heavy toll of newly arrived Europeans. As a result, the overseas empire established by the Portuguese in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries consisted largely of a string of fortresses and factories (*feitorias*) – trading posts and enclaves – on the margins of the unconquered continents of Africa and Asia

By contrast, the Spaniards began constructing for themselves, from the very early stages of their movement overseas, something more akin to an empire of conquest and settlement

p.29 ...as he [Colombo] returned from his first voyage in 1492, to have had something more in mind than the establishment of an overseas trading base.

‘Be sure’, he wrote in his Journal, addressing Ferdinand and Isabella, ‘that this island [Hispaniola] and all the others are as much your own as is Castile, for all that is needed here is a seat of government and to command them to do what you wish’; and he went on to say of the inhabitants of Hispaniola, whom he described as ‘naked and with no experience of arms and very timid’, that ‘they are suitable to take orders and be made to work, sow and do anything else that may be needed, and build towns and be taught to wear clothes and adopt our customs’

Here already can be discerned the outlines of a programme which would today be regarded as that of the archetypal colonial regime:

the establishment of a seat of government and of rule over the indigenous population;

the induction of that population into the working methods of a European-style economy, producing European-style commodities;

and the acceptance on behalf of the colonizing power of a civilizing mission, which was to include the wearing of European clothes and the adoption of Christianity

This would in due course become the programme of the Spaniards in America

p.31 The Cortés expedition – an expedition conceived in terms of subjugation and settlement – ... fitted into a general pattern of behaviour developed in the course of the Iberian Reconquista and transported in the wake of Columbus to the Caribbean



Traditionally, the *Reconquista* had relied on a combination of state sponsorship and private initiative, the balance between them being determined at any given moment by the relative strength of crown and local forces

The monarch would 'capitulate' with a commander, who in turn would assume responsibility for financing and organizing a military expedition under the conditions outlined in the agreement

The expectation was that the expedition would pay for itself out of the booty of conquest, and the followers of the captain, or *caudillo*, would receive their reward in the form of an allocation of land, booty and tribute-paying vassals

None of this would have been foreign to Cortés, whose father and uncle took part in the final stages of the Granada campaign. Not surprisingly, he pursued his conquest of Mexico as if he were conducting a campaign against the Moors. He tended to refer to Mesoamerican temples as 'mosques'...

...He [Cortés] was scrupulously careful to follow traditional Reconquista practice, meticulously setting aside the royal fifth before distributing any booty among his men

pp.32-33 It was to encourage settlement that he [Cortés] arranged the *repartimiento* of Indians among his companions, who were to hold them in trust, or encomienda, and promoted the founding or refounding of cities in a country which already had large ceremonial complexes and urban concentrations

And it was to encourage conversion that he invited the first Franciscans – the so-called ‘twelve apostles’ – to come to Mexico
Conquest, conversion and colonization were to be mutually supportive

p.34 Spain’s empire of the Indies, then, cannot be summarily categorized as an empire of conquest, reflecting exclusively the military and seigneurial values of the metropolitan society that founded it

p.36 While Spain served as stimulus, exemplar, and sometimes as warning, English empire-builders could equally well look to precedents in their own backyard

Ireland, like the reconquered kingdom of Granada, was both kingdom and colony, and, like Andalusia, constituted a useful testing-ground of empire

It is therefore no accident that the Elizabethans most active in devising the first American projects – Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Sir Walter Raleigh, Ralph Lane, Thomas White – were deeply involved in the schemes for Irish plantation

p.41 The fact that the English were embarking on overseas colonization at a time when their society was acquiring a more commercial orientation in response to internal pressures and to a changing climate of national and international opinion about the relationship of profit and power, inevitably gave a slant to the English colonial enterprise that was not to be found in the opening stages of Castile's overseas expansion

The founding of the Virginia Company in 1606 under royal charter reflected the new determination of merchants and gentry to combine personal profit and national advantage by means of a corporate organization which owed more to their own energy and enthusiasm than to that of the state. The very fact that the agent of colonization was to be a trading company pointed towards a future English 'empire of commerce'

Yet the tensions that bedevilled the Company from the outset suggest that an empire of commerce was by no means foreordained

The seigneurial aspirations that nearly wrecked the Jamestown settlement were to recur frequently in English colonizing projects of the seventeenth century

Indigenous labour might be in short supply, but the introduction of a slave labour force would in due course allow for the growth in the British Caribbean of societies characterized by the same kind of attitude to conspicuous consumption as was to be found in the Hispanic-American world

If large quantities of silver had indeed been found in Virginia, there is little reason to doubt that the development of an extractive economy would have created a high-spending elite which would have more than lived up to the dreams of the gentlemen settlers of Jamestown

But the lack of silver and indigenous labour in these early British settlements forced on the settlers a developmental path as against an essentially exploitative rationale; and this in turn gave additional weight to those qualities of self-reliance, hard work and entrepreneurship that were assuming an increasingly prominent place in the national self-imagining and rhetoric of seventeenth-century England

If, then – as the Cortés and Jamestown expeditions suggest – many of the same aspirations attended the birth of Spain's and Britain's empires in America, accidents both of environment and of timing would do much to ensure that they developed in distinctive ways

But in the early stages of settlement, the creators of these Spanish and British transatlantic communities found themselves confronted by similar problems and challenges

They had to take 'possession' of the land in the fullest sense of the word;

they had to work out some kind of relationship with the peoples who already inhabited it;

they had to sustain and develop their communities within an institutional framework which was only partly of their own devising;

and they had to establish an equilibrium between their own developing needs and aspirations, and those of the metropolitan societies from which they had sprung

At once liberated and constrained by their American environment, their responses would be conditioned both by the Old World from which they came, and by the New World which they now set out to master and make their own