

Exploiting American Resources

Plunder and 'improvement'

[Maggiori risorse nell'America spagnola rispetto a quella inglese]

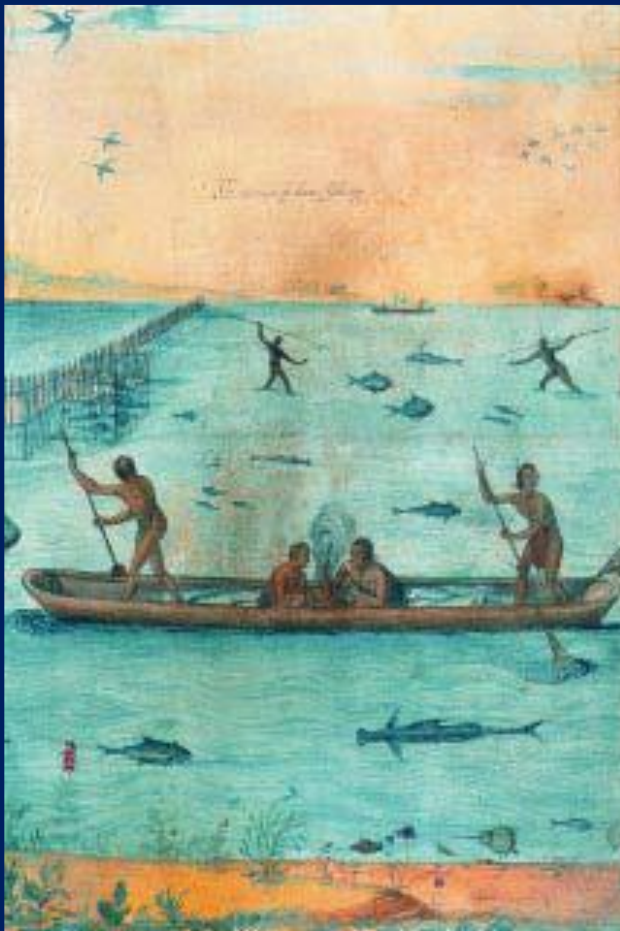
p.132 ...as the humanist chronicler Pedro Mártir de Anglería [Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, 1457-1526] observed, 'it is to the South, not the icy North, that everyone in search of fortune should turn'

The south – the central and southern mainland of America – offered not only the promise, and the reality, of gold and silver, but also the possibility of tapping into the labour supply and surplus production of indigenous societies which had exploited the resources of their local environments in ways that offered more points of convergence with European needs and expectations than were to be found in more northerly parts

The hunters and gatherers of the 'icy North' apparently had little to offer European newcomers, other than the furs which were to become the source of a flourishing Indian-European trade



...[Northern] Indians who moved their village habitats in accordance with the dictates of the seasons and the fertility of the soil, and whose way of life depended on the possession of little more than a few, easily transportable household objects, seemed distinctly unpromising as a source of labour or tribute



4 John White, Indians Fishing (watercolour, 1585?). John White was sent to Roanoke Island in 1585 by Sir Walter Raleigh to record the appearance of the people of Virginia. This watercolour is one of a number of vivid depictions of the life of Virginia Carolina Algonquians, which constitute the best visual record made by a European of any of the indigenous peoples of sixteenth-century America



The town of Roanoke and true forme of their howses, covered and enclosed some wth matts, and some wth barks of trees. All compassed about wth smale poles stuck thick together in stead of a wall.

p.133 It was therefore not surprising that English colonists should have felt a certain sense of bafflement on their arrival...

Much work was needed to 'improve' the land, and there was no indication that the Indians were either willing to undertake it, or capable of doing so

On the other hand, Spaniards arriving in Mexico and Peru found teeming populations organized into polities which, for all their strangeness, functioned in relatively comprehensible ways, and which had learnt how to mobilize large labour forces for the performance of tasks that went beyond meeting basic subsistence needs

...these were peoples whose disciplined polities, agricultural practices, and skills in arts and crafts could be turned into valuable assets for their conquerors

The Spaniards, slipping easily into the position of the privileged elites they had vanquished, took immediate advantage of the glittering opportunities that opened up before them

While their first response to conquest was to seize and share out the portable booty, they also moved quickly to make themselves the masters of economic and tributary systems that were still in relatively good working order in spite of the disruptions caused by the conquest

p.134 ...for the first twenty or thirty years after the conquest of Mexico and Peru, the conquerors heedlessly ran a form of plunder economy, although endowing it with a spurious respectability by the institution of the encomienda, which was supposed to carry with it certain spiritual and moral obligations, but was liable to be no more than a licence to oppress and exploit

The number of tributaries in *encomienda* ranged from six to some 20,000. The *encomienda* maintained one group of Indians and their respective *tlatoani* in close contact. The total number of *encomiendas* in the Valley as of the mid-1530's stood at thirty, with an estimated 180,000 tributaries. Indians built the *encomenderos*' houses in Mexico City, where they deposited all goods collected as tribute; they also worked in farming and mining.

If the Spanish conquerors were happy to live off the backs of the peoples they had conquered, they were also anxious to lead a life-style that conformed as closely as possible to that of the privileged classes in their native land

Their tastes and expectations had been formed in Castile, Extremadura or Andalusia, and now that riches had come their way, they were not about to abandon them

They yearned for their glasses of wine, their oranges and other familiar fruits; they wanted dogs and horses, swords and guns; they wanted the luxuries that they had possessed, or at least coveted, at home; and they wanted their traditional staples, meat and bread



The satisfaction of these wants would entail massive changes to the economies they had inherited – changes that in turn would transform the ecologies of the lands they had settled

The civilizations of the Americas were maize-based. It was above all maize, capable of a yield of sixty or more (some chroniclers spoke of as much as 150) to every seed planted, as against a return of six to one for wheat in Early Modern Europe, that had allowed the societies of Mesoamerica and the Andes to sustain such large populations and produce an agricultural surplus



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Cacaxtla

Murals of Cacaxtla



The Spanish settlers, however, although gradually accustoming themselves to maize tortillas, still insisted on having their wheat loaves, to which they retained an obstinate attachment throughout the colonial period. Coarse bread therefore remained the staple of poor colonists, while the better-off ate *pan blanco* at twice the cost



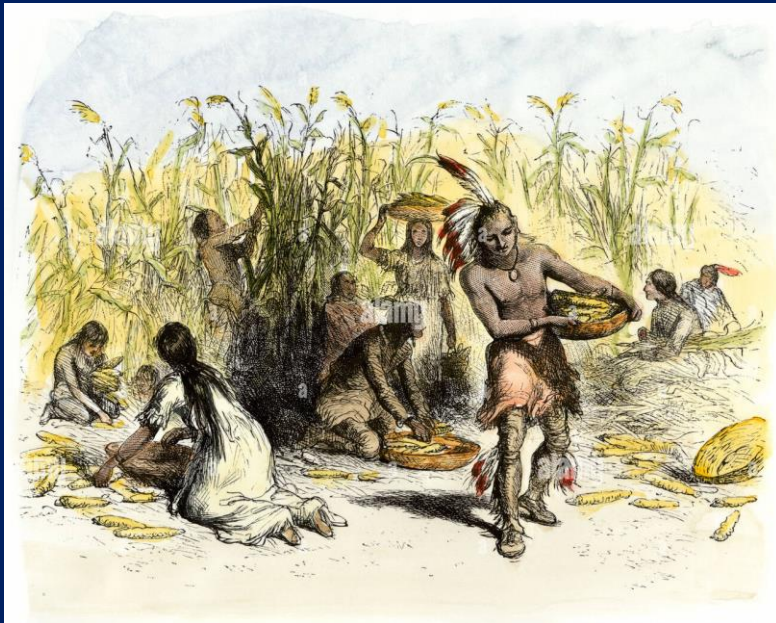
p.135 English settlers to the north seem to have shown a greater degree of adaptability, perhaps by force of circumstance

Indian corn [mais] became an essential part of their diet, and was considered preferable as a crop to English cereals because it was easier to grow and produced a higher yield

The New England climate proved unpropitious for wheat production, and although wheat, barley, oats and rye were beginning to be cultivated in the Chesapeake colonies in the later seventeenth century in sufficient quantities to allow for modest exports, their 'chiefest Diett' consisted of maize, and not wheat



Flint or Indian corn



In the regions settled by the Spaniards, with the exception of the Caribbean islands, where all attempts to cultivate wheat proved abortive, large areas of land were brought under the plough for the purpose of wheat production

Since the Indians persisted in their diet of maize, the wheat-fields which began to transform the landscapes of Mexico and Peru were exclusively devoted to production for the conquerors and settlers



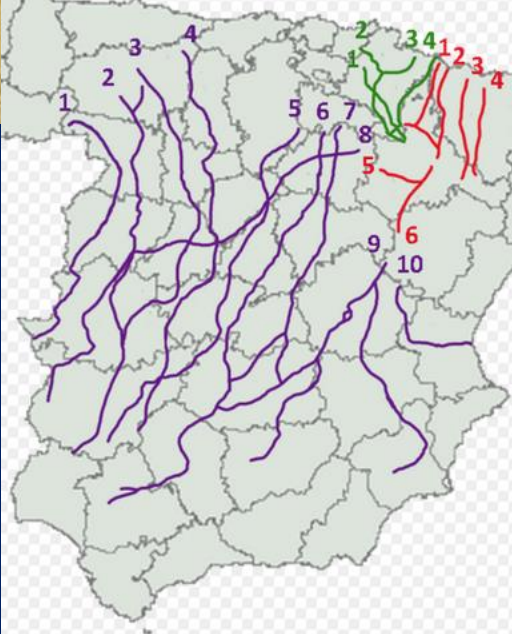
Wheat fields



Simultaneously, the land was transformed even more dramatically by the introduction and proliferation of European livestock – cattle, sheep, horses and goats

The appearance of this livestock, immensely damaging to Indian agriculture as the animals trampled the maize plots and ate the vegetation, provided another set of opportunities for entrepreneurially minded settlers as they took to stock raising, again with the growing domestic market in mind

A pastoral economy was developed in the viceroyalty of New Spain, where the Spanish institution of the *Mesta* [*Honrado Concejo de la Mesta*] was taken as a model for the organization of the sheep-owners. Horse breeding and cattle ranching provided a further stimulus to the formation of great estates – known as *haciendas* or *estancias* – especially in northern Mexico and the Peruvian sierra



Principales cañadas reales de la corona de Castilla

p.136 The development of commercial agriculture, cattle farming and sheep raising, together with viticulture in Chile and Peru, soon began to reduce the initially overwhelming dependence of the settlers on the home country for essential food-stuffs

Until as late as 1570–80, however, Spanish agrarian products – corn, wine and oil – remained the preponderant element in transatlantic shipments from Seville

[prodotti americani da esportazione]

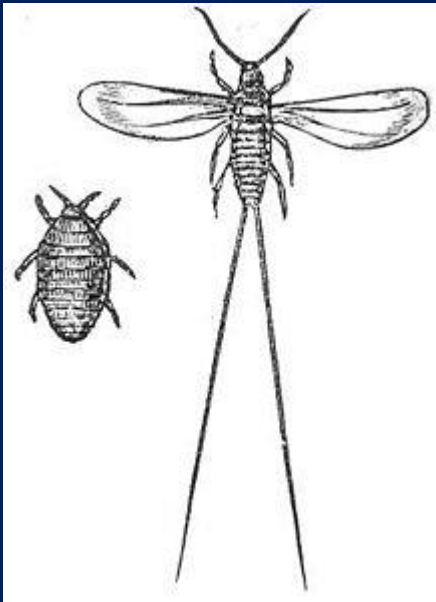
Somehow the settlers had to find ways of paying for these essential commodities, as well as for the luxury items – high-quality textiles and articles of clothing, metal objects, furnishings and books – for which they craved. This required the identification and development of suitable commodities to sustain an export trade

p.137 Their first instinct, having looted what they could, was to go for commodities which required the minimum of processing or development: placer gold, in the first instance, but also pearls, first found by Columbus off the Cumaná coast of Venezuela...



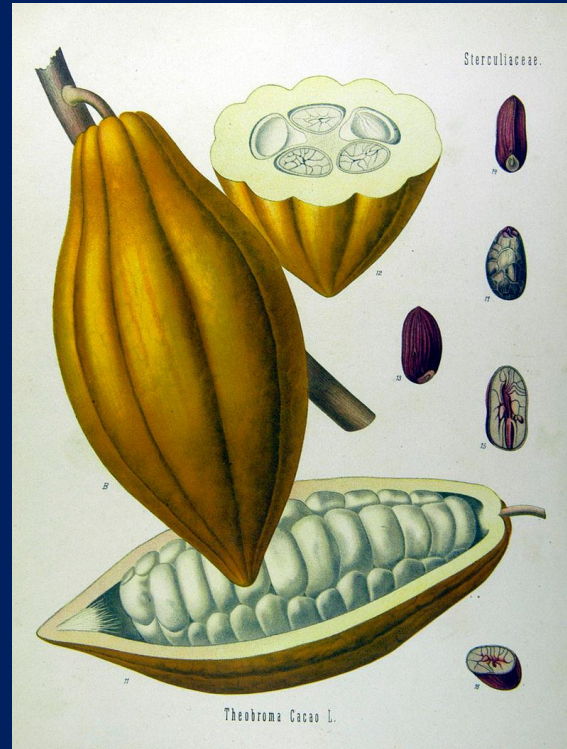
Dyestuffs, too, were in much demand at home. In 1526 the first shipment from Mexico of cochineal, the source of a red dye greatly superior to the traditional 'Venetian scarlet', marked the beginnings of what was to become a highly profitable transatlantic trade

This was followed later in the century by the development in central America of indigo as an export crop, although indigo production, unlike that of cochineal, required mechanical processing



Other indigenous crops, too, began to find a European market, and most notably cacao. Early settlers in New Spain acquired from the indigenous population a taste for chocolate...

...by the end of the sixteenth century New Spain in turn was exporting cacao to metropolitan Spain, where Mexican chocolate became an addiction among the elite...



Goya, *La feria de Madrid*.



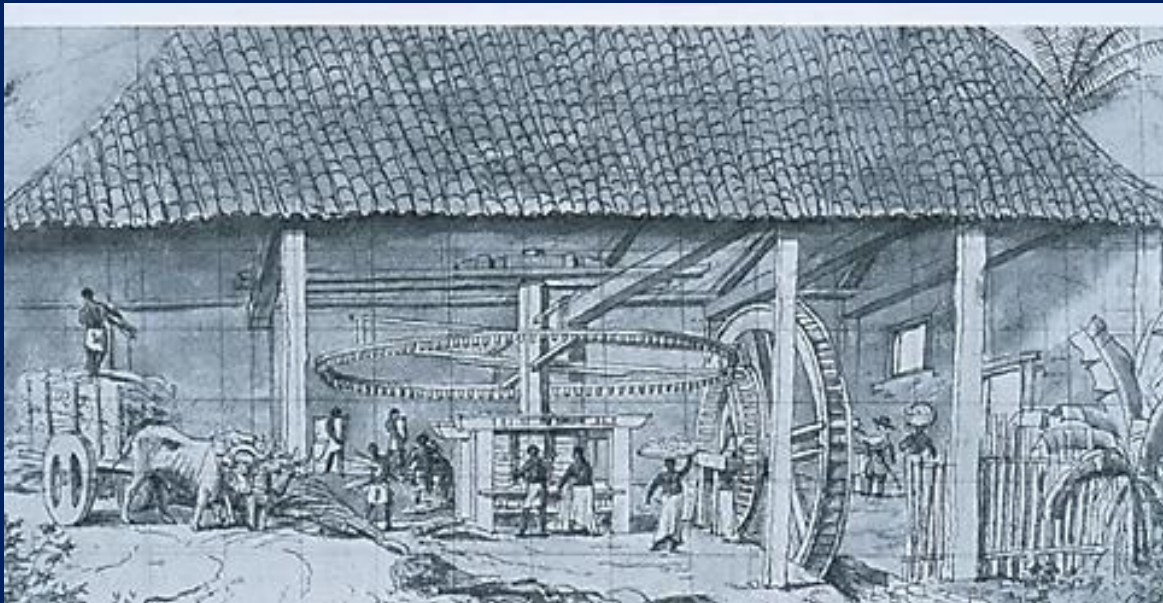
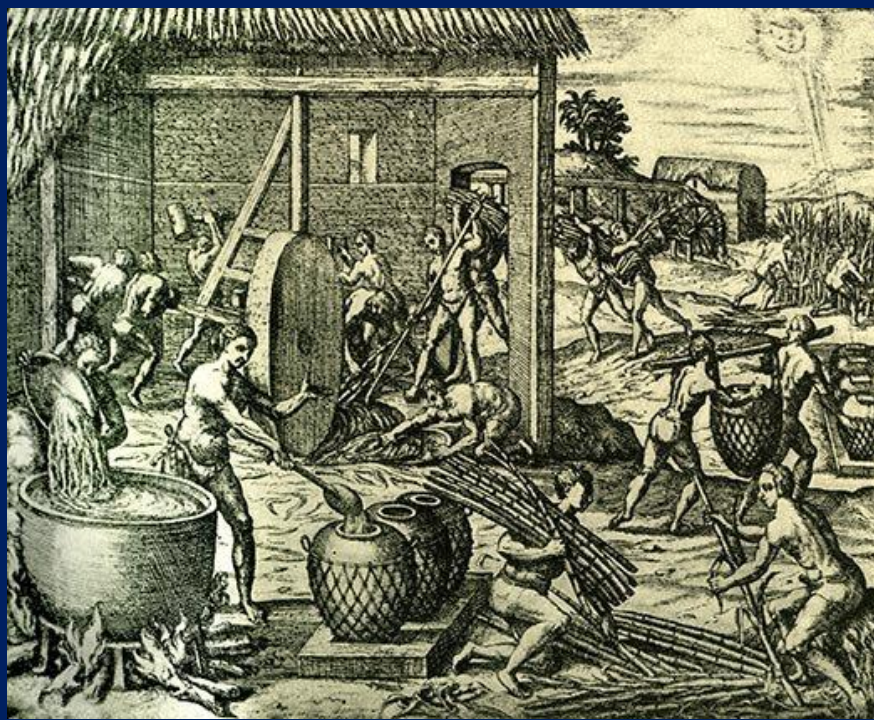
Molinillo

Pocillo



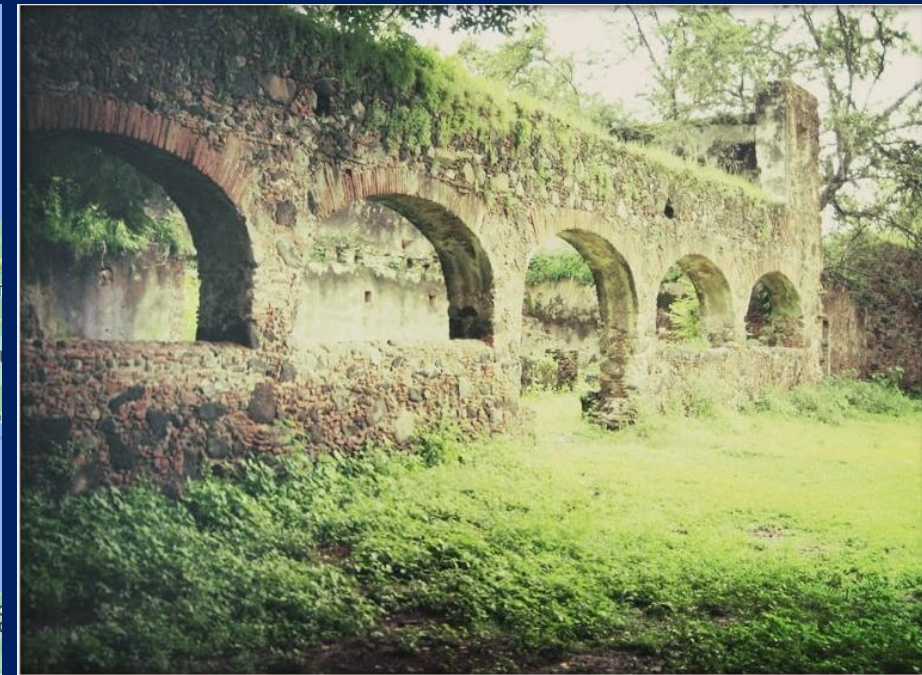
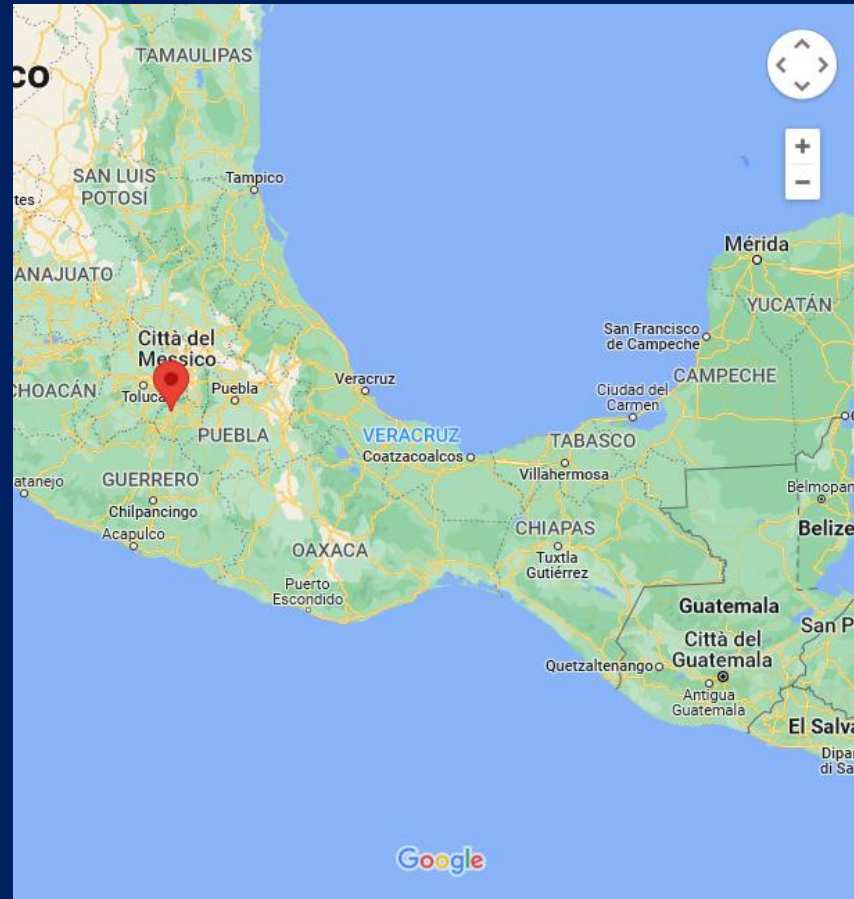
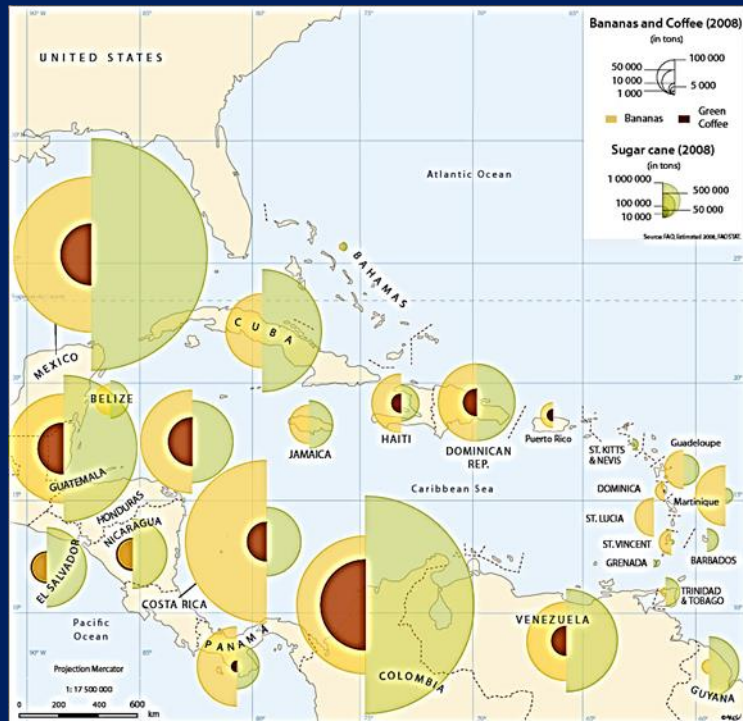
p.138 There were profits to be made, too, from exports based on Old World transplants to the Indies – hides and skins from the livestock now roaming Spain's Caribbean islands and the mainland colonies, and sugar, originally brought by Columbus to Hispaniola on his second voyage. Hides and sugar, indeed, were to become the mainstay of Hispaniola's economy...

In the 1520s wealthy *encomenderos* with a stake in Hispaniola's future began to invest in sugar mills... This marked the...beginnings of a plantation economy in the Spanish Antilles which in 1558, at its peak, produced 60,000 arrobas [ca. 70 mila t.] of sugar for export to Seville, before it was outpriced on the Iberian markets by sugar produced more cheaply in other parts of the Americas



Within a few years of the conquest of Mexico sugar production moved to the mainland when Hernán Cortés established sugar mills at Tuxtla and Cuernavaca

Most of this sugar was for export, and the Cortés plantations survived, with fluctuating fortunes, throughout the colonial period



Cuernavaca, aqueduct in hacienda Apanquetzalco

p.139 It was, however, the discovery in the 1540s of the great silver deposits of northern Mexico and the Andes that dramatically altered the prospects of Spain's American possessions, and transformed them into far more than mere appendages to Europe's trading networks

Although the first silver strikes in New Spain were made within a decade of the conquest, the decisive event was the finding in 1546 of silver ores on the northern plateau at Zacatecas, to be followed by discoveries of further deposits in the same region in the following decades



Colorada silver mine

Here are the ten largest silver mines by production across the world in 2020, according to GlobalData's mining database

1. Gumuskoy Mine

The Gumuskoy Mine is a surface mine situated in Kutahya, Turkey. Owned by Yildizlar SSS Holding, the brownfield mine produced an estimated 48,597 thousand ounces of silver in 2020

2. Penasquito Mine

Located in Zacatecas, Mexico, the Penasquito Mine is owned by Newmont. The surface mine produced an estimated 27,801 thousand ounces of silver in 2020. The mine will operate until 2032

Already in the previous year [1545] Spaniards in Peru had come across the extraordinary silver mountain of Potosí in the eastern range of the Andes

As a result of these spectacular discoveries, silver took the place of the dwindling supply of looted gold as the most valuable mineral resource of Spain's empire in America

p.140 Although subsoil rights in Spain and its overseas territories belonged to the crown, the imposition of a state monopoly on the development of mining in the New World was out of the question

The crown needed silver urgently, and if new deposits were to be found and effectively exploited, this could only be achieved through private enterprise

The crown was therefore ready to grant prospecting and mining rights, in the form of what came to be a permanent concession, to those who came forward to request them. Those who received the concession were obligated in return to hand over to treasury officials a proportion – commonly *a diezmo, or tenth* – of all the silver they mined. It was this waiving by the crown of its subsoil rights that made possible the rapid development of the mining economies of New Spain and Peru, although at a high price in terms of deception and fraud.

P. J. Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society in Colonial Mexico. Zacatecas 1546-1700*, Cambridge University Press 1971, p. 182

The diezmo was, in fact, a permanent concession granted to miners, since the basic rate of tax on precious metals was a fifth (or quinto). In theory, the distinction between silver to be taxed at a tenth and that to be taxed at a fifth was clear: only silver produced by a *bona fide* miner in his own hacienda de minas, with ores from his own mines, was to be considered *plata del diezmo*; on any other silver, not produced directly by a miner, a *quinto* was to be levied

What sort of silver could be considered *del quinto*? Primarily, it was *plata del rescate*, or silver that had been bought. Into this class fell metal that had been produced from *pepena* ores bought from Indians. Merchants buying ore and smelting it in a *parade de fuelles*, or buying rough smelted silver from Indian mine-workers, were therefore liable to pay a fifth

Parada defuelles: A small furnace for smelting silver ores, usually operated by men who were not recognised miners

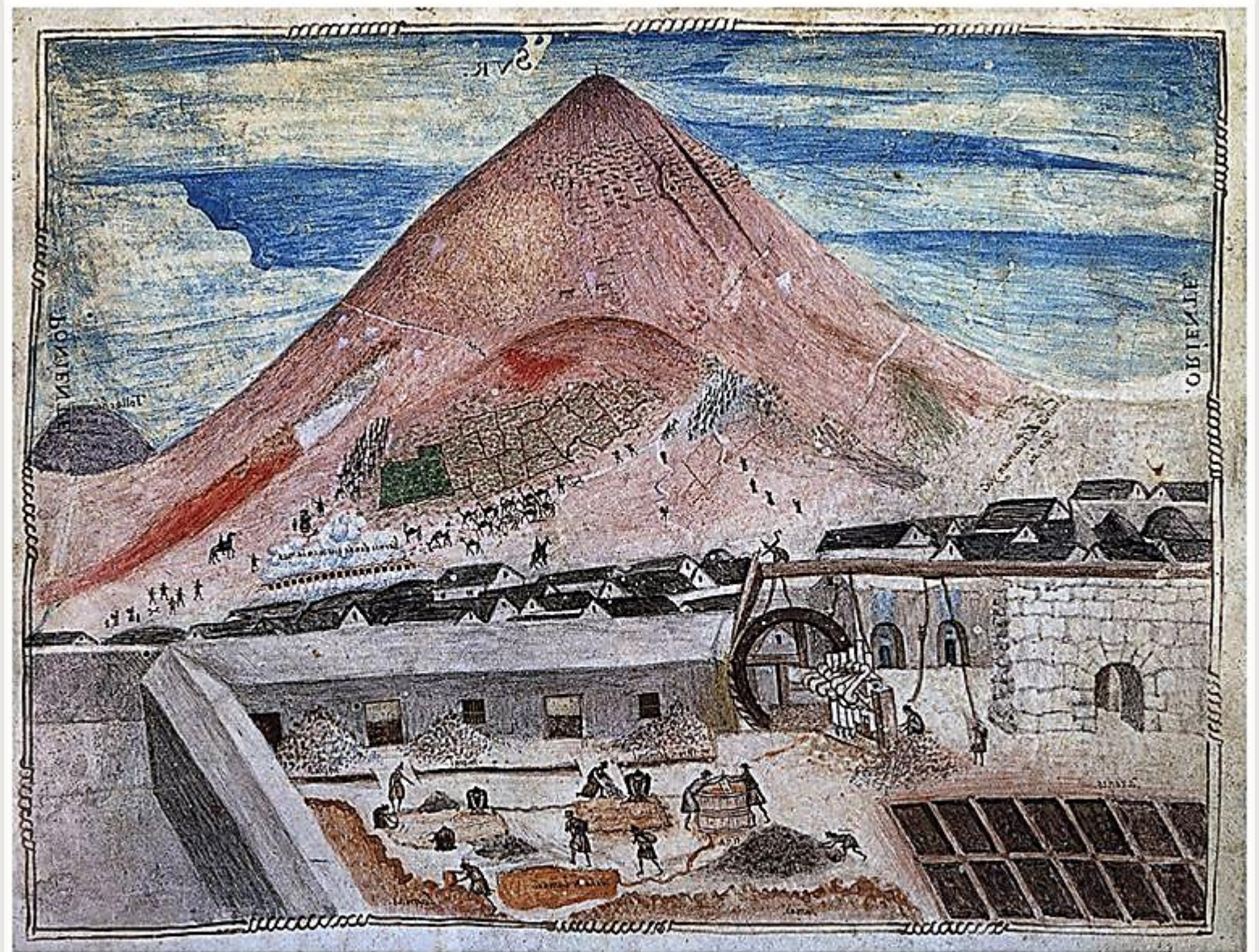
The beginnings of large-scale silver production in the two American viceroyalties had a galvanizing impact on their economies and societies... There was an immediate stimulus to mining technology and production techniques...

The most important technical advance came in New Spain in the 1550s when the process of drawing silver from the ore by the use of an amalgam of mercury was pioneered

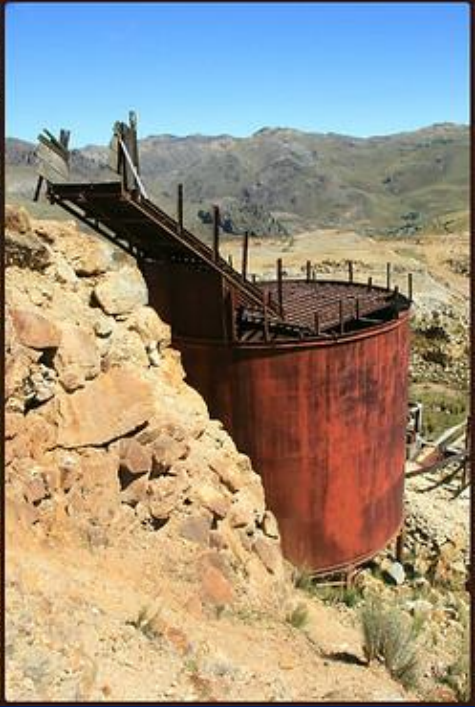
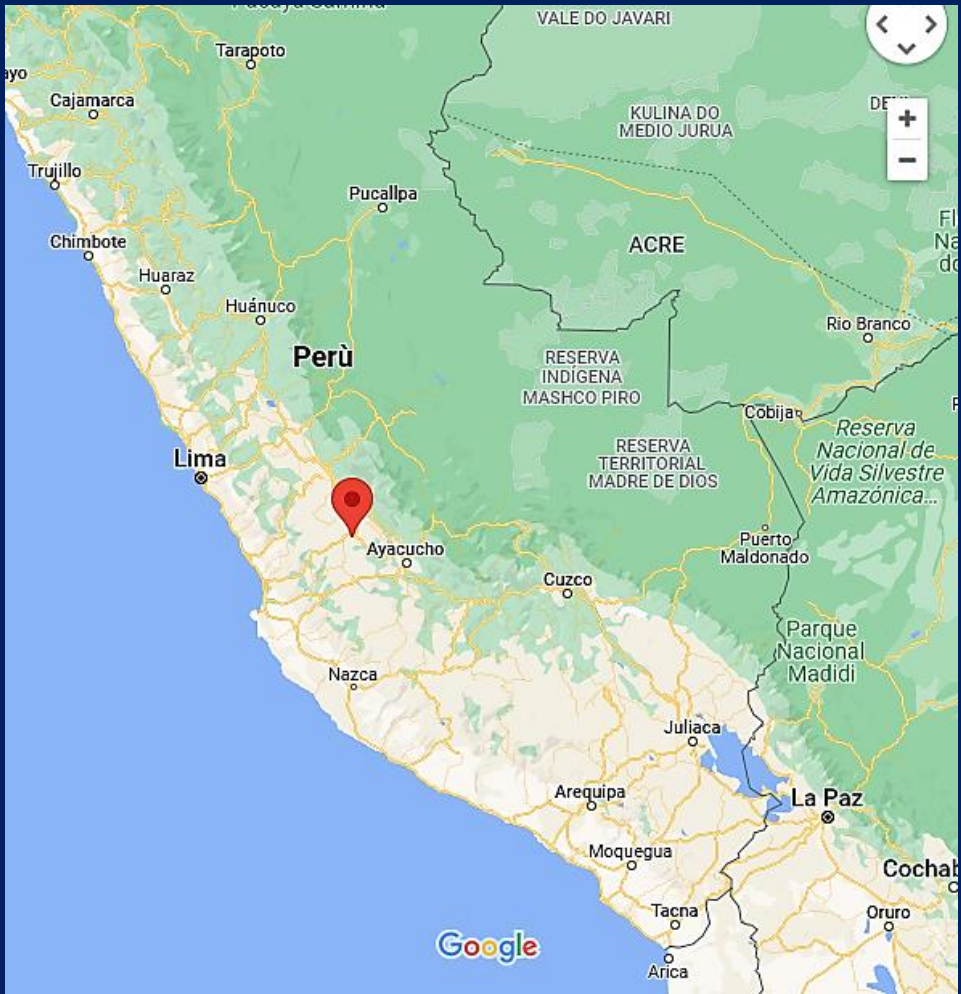
There was a delay of some twenty years before the amalgamation process was transferred to the Andes, probably because Spanish entrepreneurs in Potosí were happy to cut costs and win quick profits by leaving it to Indian miners to follow their old and well-tried techniques

When the new refining procedure was eventually introduced, it made possible spectacular increases in silver production – increases facilitated by the fortunate discovery in 1563 at Huancavelica, in the mountains south-east of Lima, of mercury deposits that would provide a partial alternative to the mercury that had to be shipped across the Atlantic from the Spanish mines at Almadén

Frantumazione
del minerale e
successivo
processo di
amalgama (s.m.)



The Incredibly Rich Silver Mines at Potosí
Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America
Chapter 16, *A History of Western Societies*, Ninth Edition
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Huancavelica



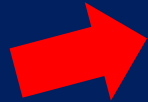


Almadén

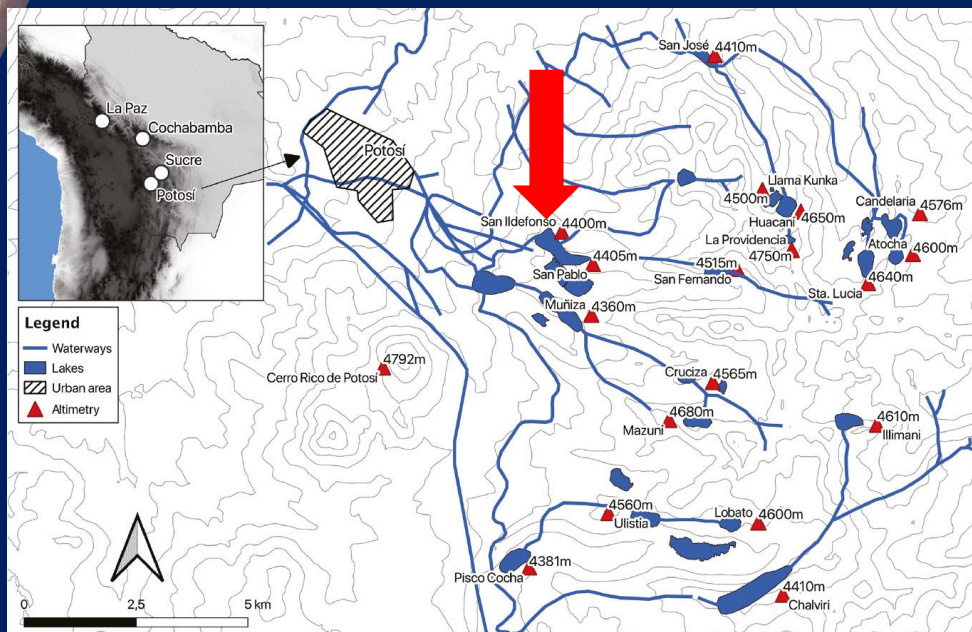
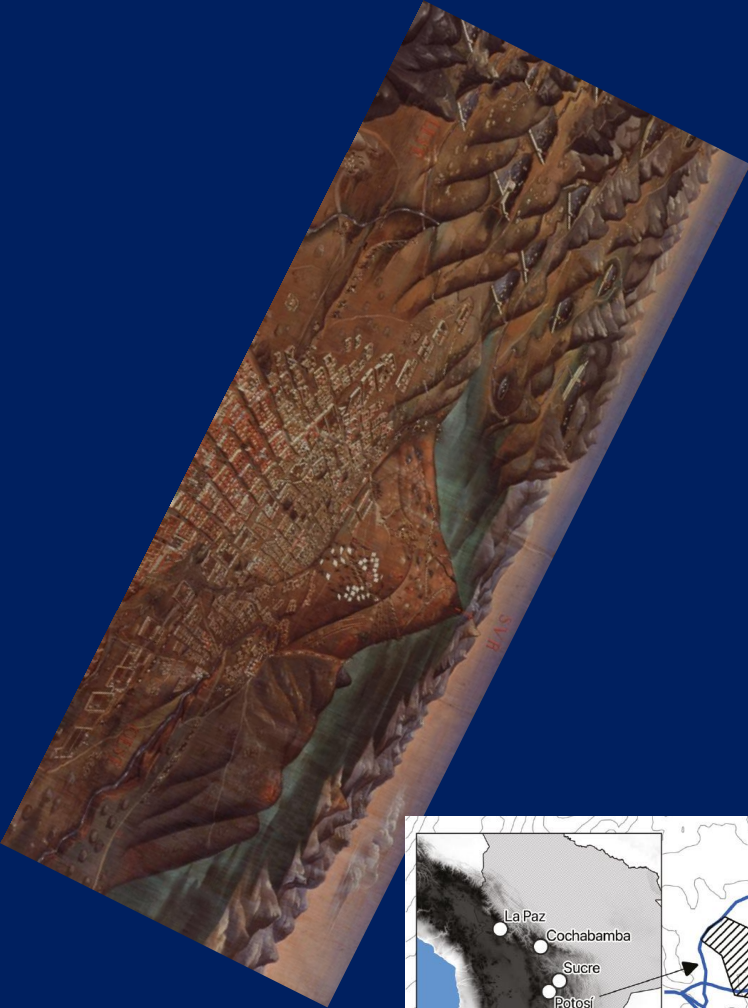
p.141 The rush to find new reserves of silver was the principal dynamic behind the creation of new settlements and towns in northern Mexico, while Potosí, located 13,000 feet [ca. 4,000 m] above sea level in the rarefied air of the Andes, grew into one of the largest cities of the western world, with a combined indigenous and Spanish population exceeding 100,000 by the start of the seventeenth century



12 Gaspar de Berrio, *Description of the Cerro Rico and the Imperial Town of Potosí* (1758). The Cerro Rico, or silver mountain, rises in the background, while the town itself, built to a grid-iron plan, is laid out before it. To the left are the artificial lakes and dams constructed by the Spaniards to power the mills for refining the silver. While work goes on in the mines, a procession comes down the hillside carrying the banners of a religious confraternity. Situated in the high Andes, 13,000 feet above sea level, mid-eighteenth-century Potosí had a population of under 60,000, well down from that in 1600, when a population of over 100,000 made it one of the largest cities of the western world.



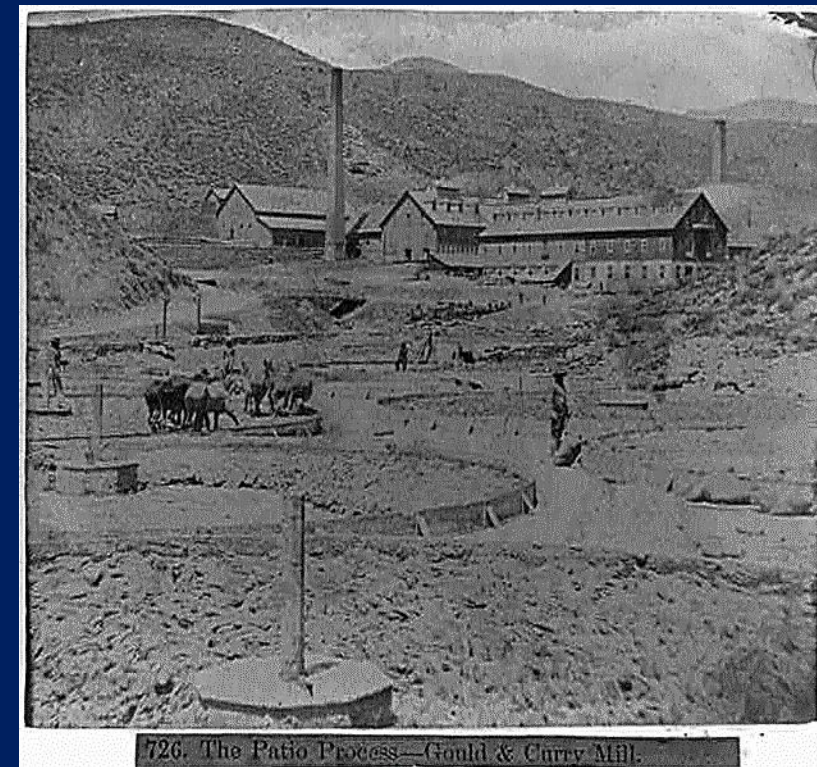








Hacienda Nueva de Fresnillo, stato di Zacatecas



726. The Patio Process—Gould & Curry Mill.

The production and minting of silver introduced at least a partial monetary economy to expanding areas of Spanish America

p.142 Very soon after its introduction, Indians began to use **specie [moneta metallica]** in Mexican markets alongside their cacao beans

The growing familiarity of the indigenous population with coins and complex financial transactions played an important part in the inexorable process by which the Spaniards would realize their aim of drawing it into a monetary economy ... The chink of coins would herald the coming of 'civilization' to the Andes



The absence of silver mines in the areas of English settlement left the British colonies at an obvious disadvantage in providing settlers with specie as a circulating medium

From the 1620s tobacco became the common currency of the Chesapeake, even if accounts were kept in pounds, shillings and pence

The gold and silver coins that circulated in the [British] colonies were Spanish and Portuguese, with the Spanish silver piece of eight (the dollar) considered the most reliable coin because of its milled edges

These silver pieces filtered in to the American mainland through contraband trade and exchanges with the Spanish Caribbean islands, and there were never enough to meet the demand



As a result, local shortages of gold and silver coins remained [in North America] a persistent problem throughout the colonial period...

p.143 With specie draining away to England to pay for British imports, barter and commodities continued to be used for many local transactions

Since sixteenth-century Europe possessed an insatiable thirst for silver, which it needed both for its own transactions and to balance its chronic trade deficit with Asia, its outflow from the Indies was a foregone conclusion

...Mexican and Peruvian silver propelled the Spanish Indies inexorably towards integration into the developing economies of Europe

p.144 From the mid-sixteenth century, Spanish America became pre-eminently a silver-based empire, furnishing successive Spanish rulers with a significant proportion – 20 to 25 per cent – of their revenues, while providing a stream of bullion which helped to lubricate Europe's economic activities and enabled the colonial societies to acquire from Europe the commodities they were unwilling or unable to produce locally

Spain's empire of the Indies therefore became heavily dependent for its export trade to Europe on a single staple which accounted for 80 to 90 per cent of the value of its annual exports to Seville in the final decades of the sixteenth century and the opening decades of the seventeenth

A similar dependence on a single staple export trade would be characteristic of the economies of other colonial societies in the Americas in the early stages of development, although New Spain and Peru would be unique in their development of an extractive economy until gold was struck in large quantities in eighteenth-century Brazil

Outside the silver-producing regions, it was a question of finding and developing a suitable crop for large-scale export. While **New England** and the Middle Colonies failed to achieve this, the story would be very different in the Caribbean islands and the Chesapeake colonies

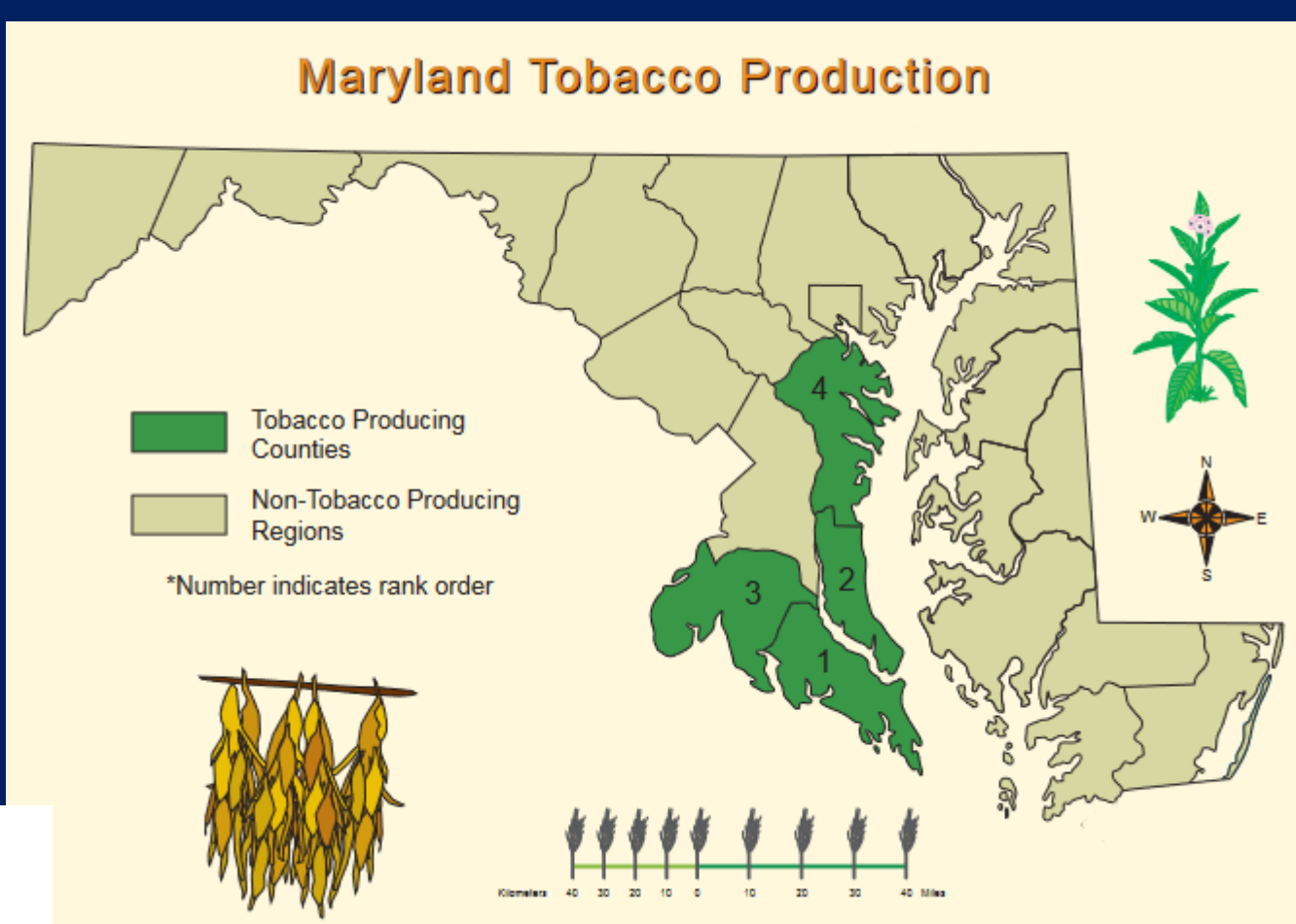
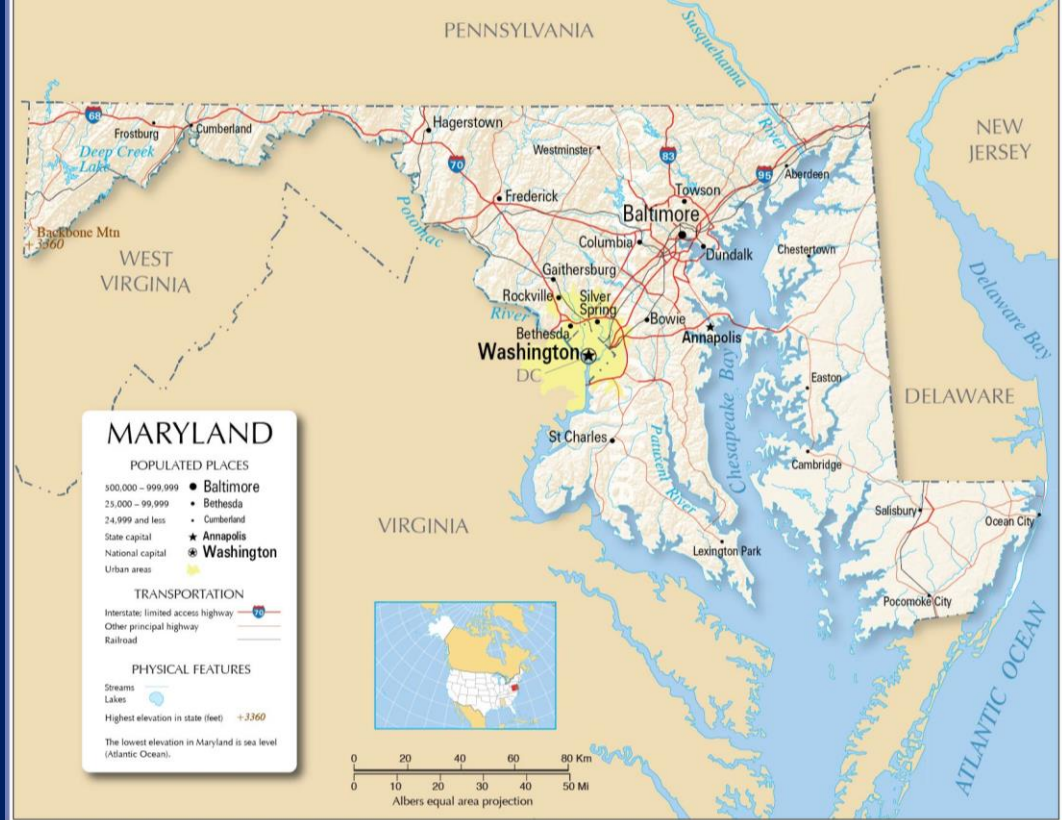
Both regions were to provide fertile soil for one or other of the two crops that were to prove most in demand in overseas markets – sugar and tobacco. To these would be added rice and indigo as the Lower South (the Carolinas and Georgia) was developed in the eighteenth century

In Spanish American cacao would become an increasingly strong export staple over the course of the seventeenth century, to the particular benefit of the planters of Caracas in what had until then been a relatively marginalized Venezuela

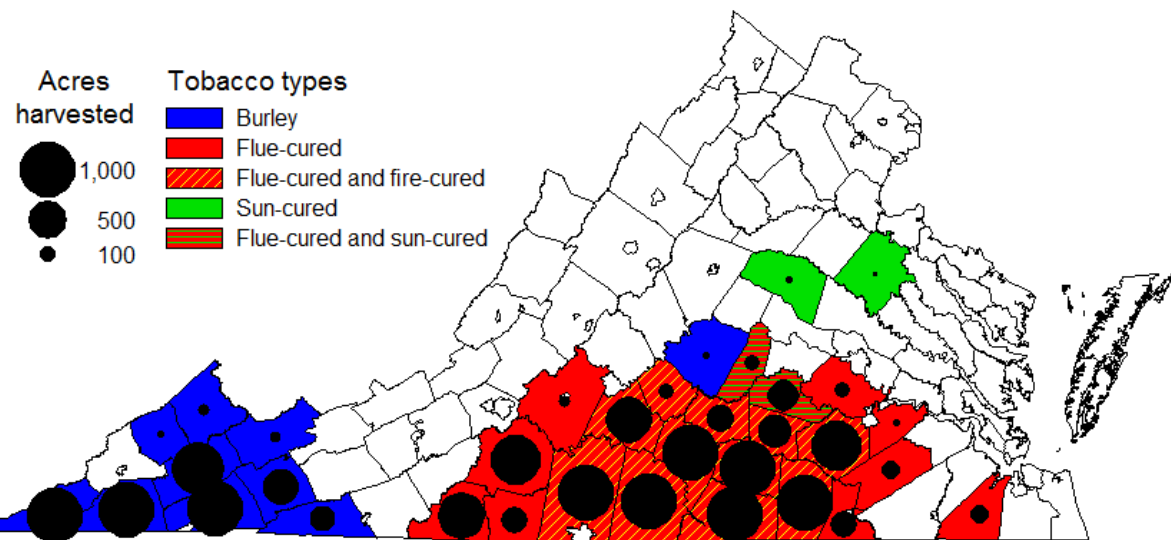
The realization that the soil was suitable for the cultivation of tobacco and that the home country would pay a good price for the 'weede' [erba] proved to be the salvation of the Jamestown colony

p.145 Extensive [tobacco] cultivation got under way in Virginia in the 1620s, and would spread in the 1630s and 1640s to the newly founded colony of Maryland

As tobacco exports grew, so also did the population – from 2,500 in Virginia in 1630 to a total of 23,000 for the two colonies in 1650, and up to 100,000 by the end of the century. Tobacco cultivation came to dominate the life of the Chesapeake region, shaping its dispersed settlement patterns along the waterways, and the character of its labour supply



VIRGINIA TOBACCO, 2004



Labour supply

p. 146 The labour systems developed in Spanish and British America for the production of their staple commodities were heavily conditioned by the degree to which they were populated by Indians capable of being put to productive work by the colonists

The Spaniards were exceptionally fortunate in that their silver producing regions lay either within, or relatively close to, densely populated regions of indigenous settlement. This made it possible, by one device or another, to recruit a native labour force for working in the mines

The first areas of English settlement lacked any such advantage. In the absence of a densely settled and usable local population, the settlers and their sponsors were forced to come up with other solutions to the problem of providing a continuing labour supply for growing and processing their staple crop

[forza lavoro indigena nell'America spagnola]

The challenge confronting the Spanish colonists and colonial authorities was how to mobilize the potentially vast indigenous labour force without infringing too blatantly the letter of the law

Ferdinand and Isabella had laid down the fundamental principle that the indigenous inhabitants in the new overseas territories of the Crown of Castile were vassals of the crown, and, as such, were not to be enslaved

p.147 There were, however, exceptions, and the conquerors and early settlers were quick to exploit them. In 1503 Isabella permitted the enslavement of man-eating Caribs, 'because of the crimes they have committed against my subjects' – a provision that effectively gave carte blanche to the Hispaniola settlers to engage in slave-raids on the neighbouring islands

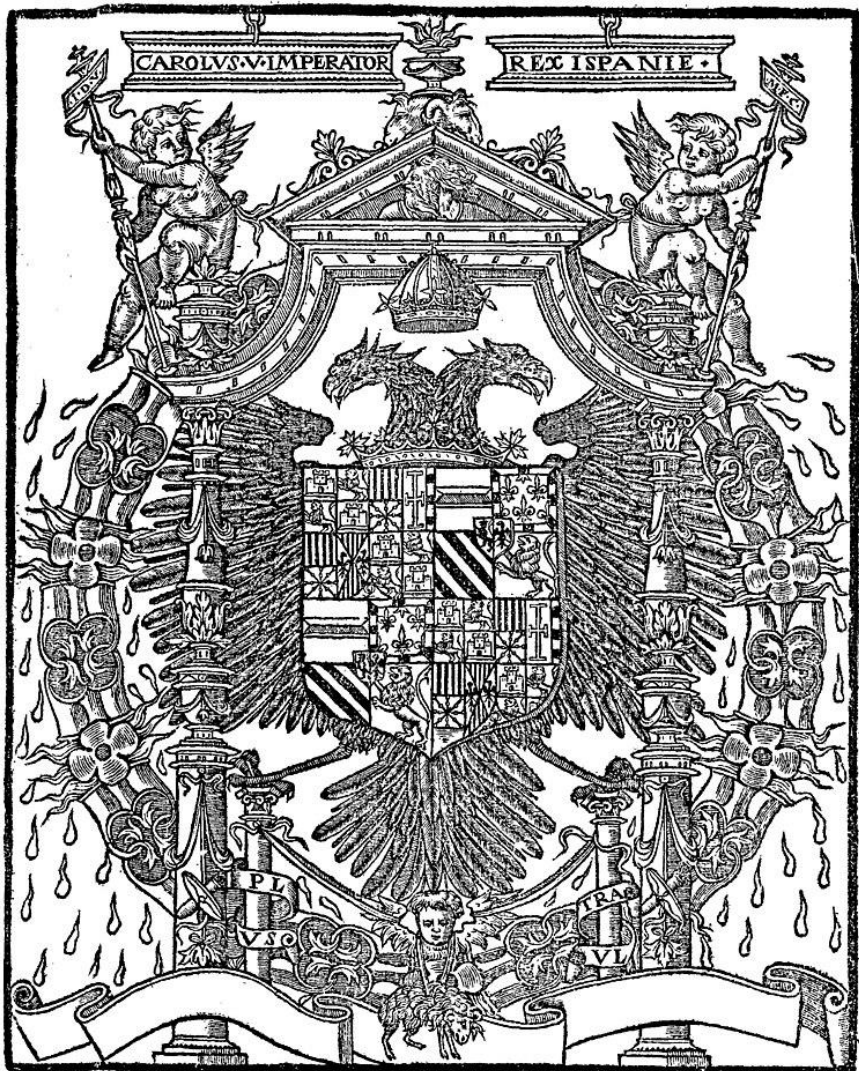
They could also resort to the rules of 'just war', as developed in medieval Christendom, by which infidels who persisted in resisting Christian forces and fell into their hands could legitimately be enslaved

The Caribbean islands, and the heavily populated central American mainland region between Mexico and Panama, became a vast catchment area in which Spanish raiders seized Indians for enslavement, using specious arguments of 'just war' as their pretext...

Under Charles V, the crown sought to limit the abuses by further legislation

This culminated in a decree of 1542, subsequently incorporated into the New Laws later that same year, ordering that nobody in future should enslave Indians, 'even if they are taken in just war'

p.148 Indians were neither to be purchased nor otherwise acquired, but were to be treated, as the New Laws put it, 'like our vassals of the crown of Castile, since that is what they are'



Leyes nuevas

Leyes y ordenanças nueuaméte hechas por su Magestad/ pa la gouernacion de las Indias y buen tratamiento y conseruacion de los Indios: que se ban de guardar en el conseyo y audiéncias reales q̄ en ellas residen: y por todos los otros gouernadores/ iuezes y personas particulares dellas.

Con priuilegio imperial.

«Leyes y ordenanzas nuevamente hechas por su magestad para la gobernación de las Indias y buen tratamiento y conservación de los indios»

...[this] brought some improvement, but the decline of Indian enslavement in central America after the middle years of the century was largely caused by the extinction of much of the potential slave population

Elsewhere, enslavement continued wherever royal authority was weak or officials were willing to turn a blind eye. This was particularly true of the lawless border areas on the fringes of empire, like Chile and New Mexico



In the principal regions of Spain's American empire, however, the prohibition of Indian slavery made it necessary to devise alternative methods of recruiting indigenous labour

Initially this was achieved through the encomienda system, which was supplemented, and in some regions gradually replaced as a source of labour, by the *repartimiento*, or short-term allocation of Indians by royal officials to non-encomenderos for different forms of compulsory service

[Legally, the work period was not to exceed two weeks (five in the mines), three or four times annually, and wages were to be paid]

In the middle years of the sixteenth century, when vast new reserves of labour were needed for working the newly discovered silver deposits, the sharp fall in the size of the indigenous population was already beginning to undermine the foundations of the encomienda system

In the eyes of the colonial authorities silver production came to take precedence over all other requirements, including those of the encomenderos

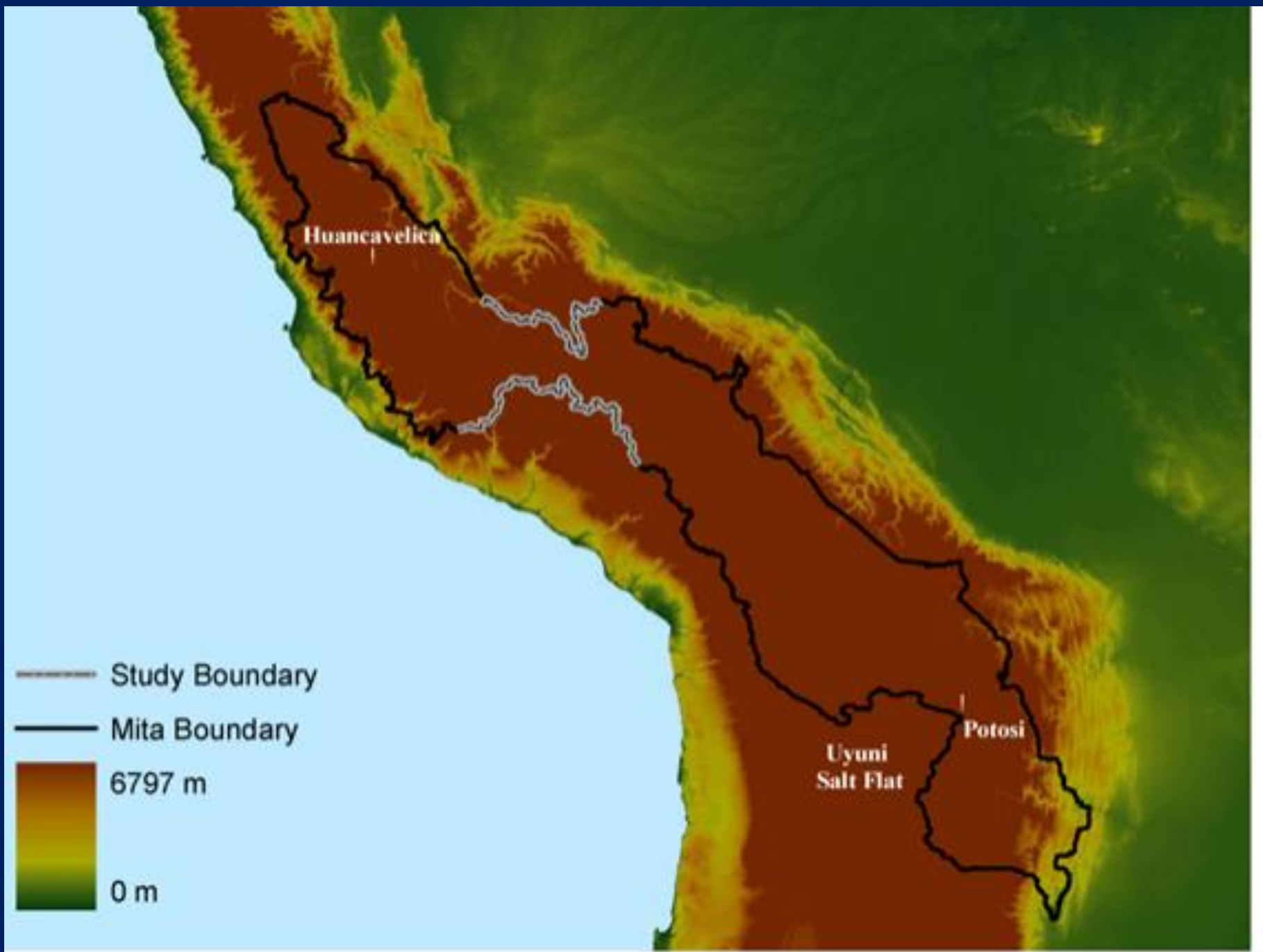
p.149 In Peru, Don Francisco de Toledo, who arrived as viceroy in 1569, oversaw the elaboration of a forced labour system based on a combination of Inca precedent and recently developed Spanish practice



Francisco Álvarez de Toledo (1515-82)

Using as their model the mita employed by the Incas for public works, the Spaniards arranged for the provision of a continuous labour supply for the Potosí mines by means of a **rota system**, under which one-seventh of the adult male Indians from a wide catchment area in the Andean highlands were drafted for a year's labour in Potosí

The *mitayos*, although miserably remunerated, were accorded basic rates of pay. Towards the end of the sixteenth century their labour was increasingly supplemented by that of voluntary workers, known as *mingas*, who were drawn to Potosí by the prospect of the wages that were offered



Their [voluntary workers] presence brought the system closer to that employed in New Spain, where the mines were located too far away from the large sedentary population of central Mexico to make a forced labour system feasible. Instead, Zacatecas and the other mines made use of migrant Indians who were lured to the north by the offer of salaried labour

Gradually but inexorably, in both New Spain and Peru, the indigenous population, considered to be congenitally idle by the Spaniards – themselves generally regarded as something of an authority on the subject – was being sucked into a European-style wage economy

[schiavitù]

The prime solution to the labour problem in Spanish America, therefore, was found in a combination of forced and 'voluntary' indigenous labour. As the indigenous population shrank, however, it was increasingly incapable of meeting the numerous demands imposed upon it

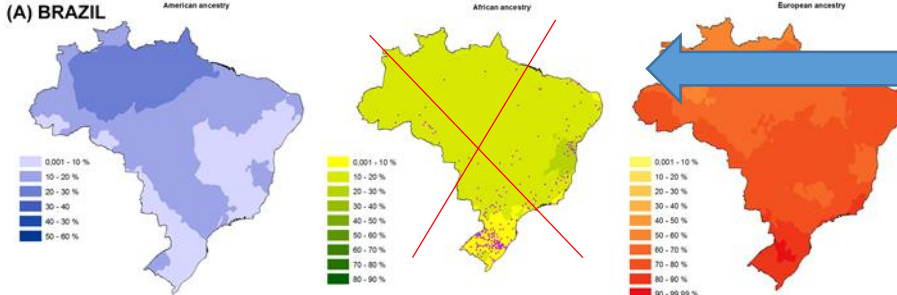
Since it was unthinkable that settlers and their descendants should engage in menial labour, the only remaining option – unless the Spanish crown was prepared, as it was not, to open its American territories to immigrants from other European states – was to import a coerced labour force from overseas. The richest and most accessible source of supply was black Africa

p.150 In the six years following the introduction in 1595 of a new monopoly contract between the Spanish crown and a Portuguese merchant, Pedro Gomes Reinel, who ran the Angola slave trade, there was a sudden massive upsurge in the number of Africans shipped to Spanish America

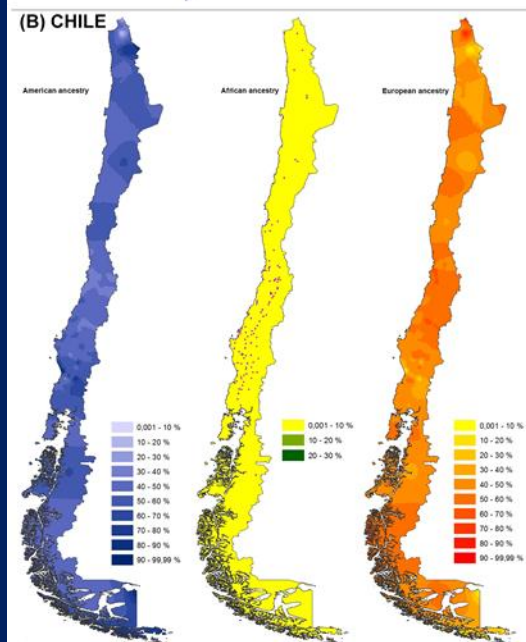
p.153 But expense remained a problem. It was more costly to employ imported African labour than indigenous Indian labour in the mines. In the silver workings of Potosí, for which an indigenous work-force, habituated to working at such an altitude, could be mobilized from the surrounding regions, the relative labour costs proved an overwhelming deterrent to royal officials anxious to relieve the exploitation of Indians by abandoning the *mita*

African labour, therefore...varied in scale and character from region to region. The greatest concentrations of Africans were to be found in the tropical and sub-tropical zones – the Antilles, the coastal regions of the two viceroyalties, and in New Granada and Venezuela

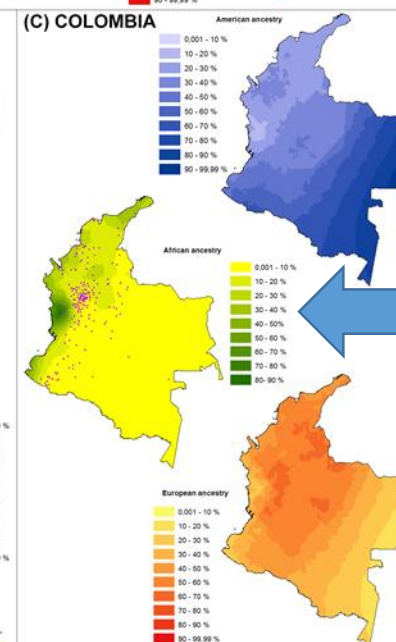
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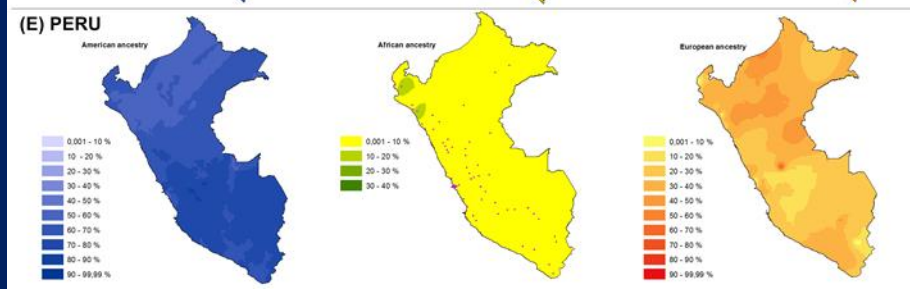
(C) COLOMBIA



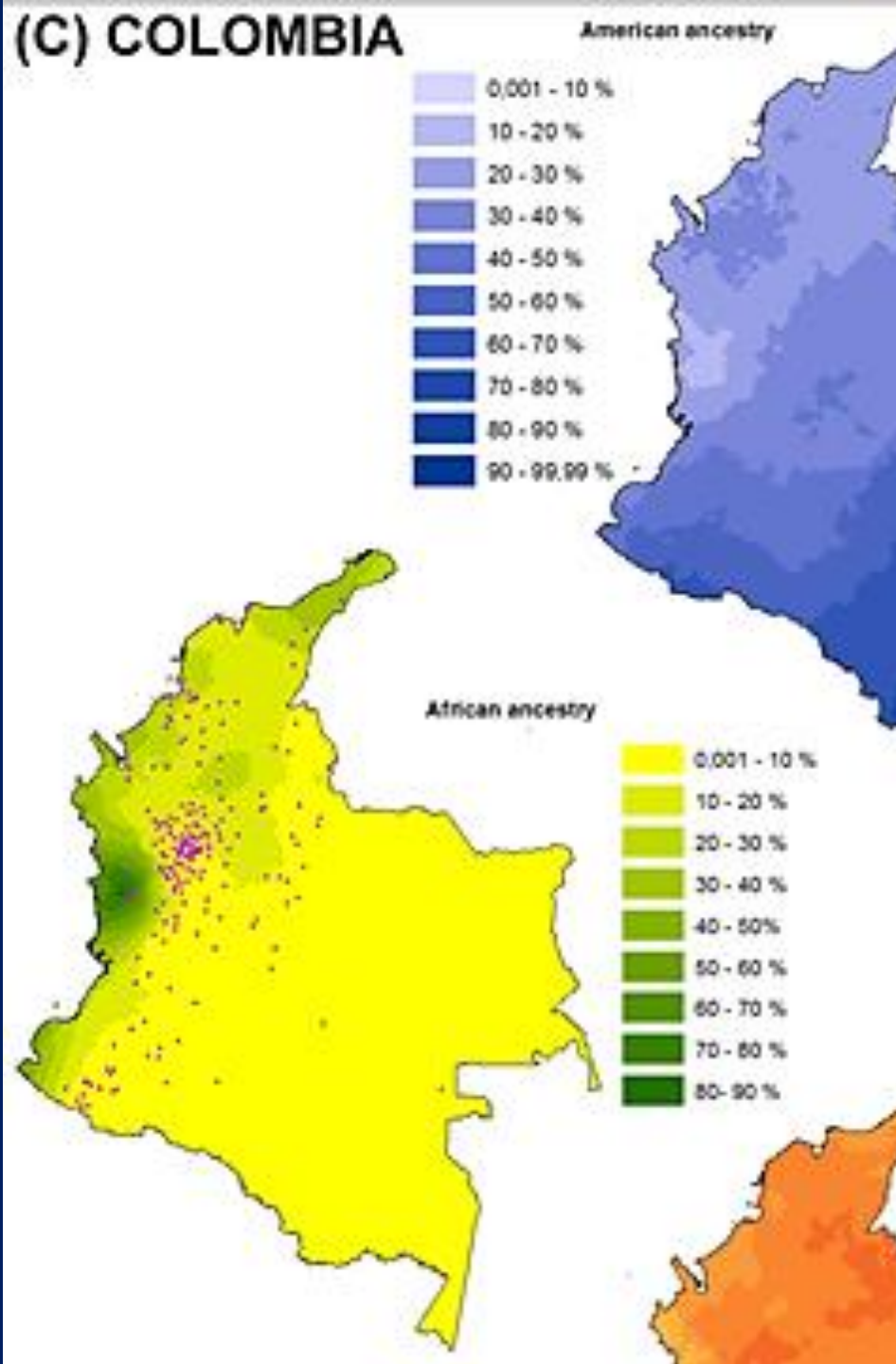
(D) MEXICO



(E) PERU



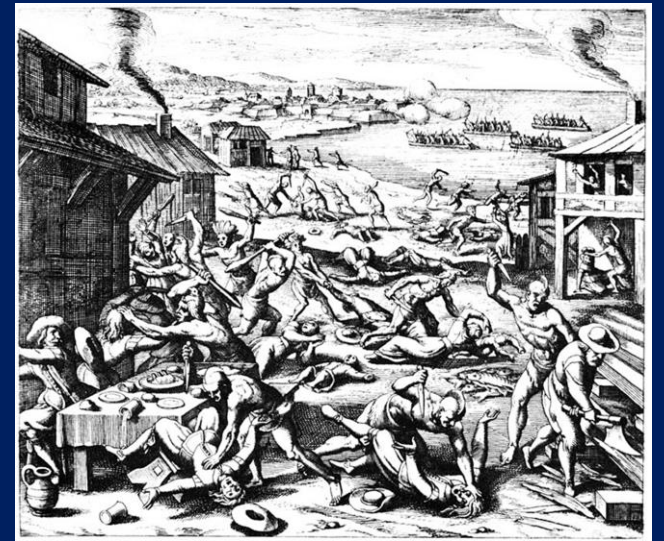
(C) COLOMBIA



Vendedoras de frutas en Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

p.154 In British America inadequate numbers, unsuitability for the kind of systematic labour expected by Europeans, and deep distrust – who in Virginia would be willing to take Indians into domestic service after the terrible events of 1622? – all played their part in preventing the early English settlers from systematically building up an indigenous work-force on the Spanish model

The Maryland settlers found that male Indians, unwilling to accept the routine of daily labour in the fields, simply disappeared into the interior when the summer months approached



During the course of the seventeenth century ... individual [British] colonies made occasional moves in the direction of Indian enslavement. They resorted, too ... to the pretext of 'just war' to turn Indians into slaves, and displayed no scruples about purchasing Indians taken captive by some rival tribe

South Carolina, indeed, between the time of its foundation in 1670 and the end of the Yamasee War in 1713, made the Indian slave trade a major business...As many as 30,000 to 50,000 may have been enslaved over the course of the colony's first fifty years

p.155 ...there were deterrents, both practical and legal, to Indian enslavement as a long-term solution to the shortage of labour in British America

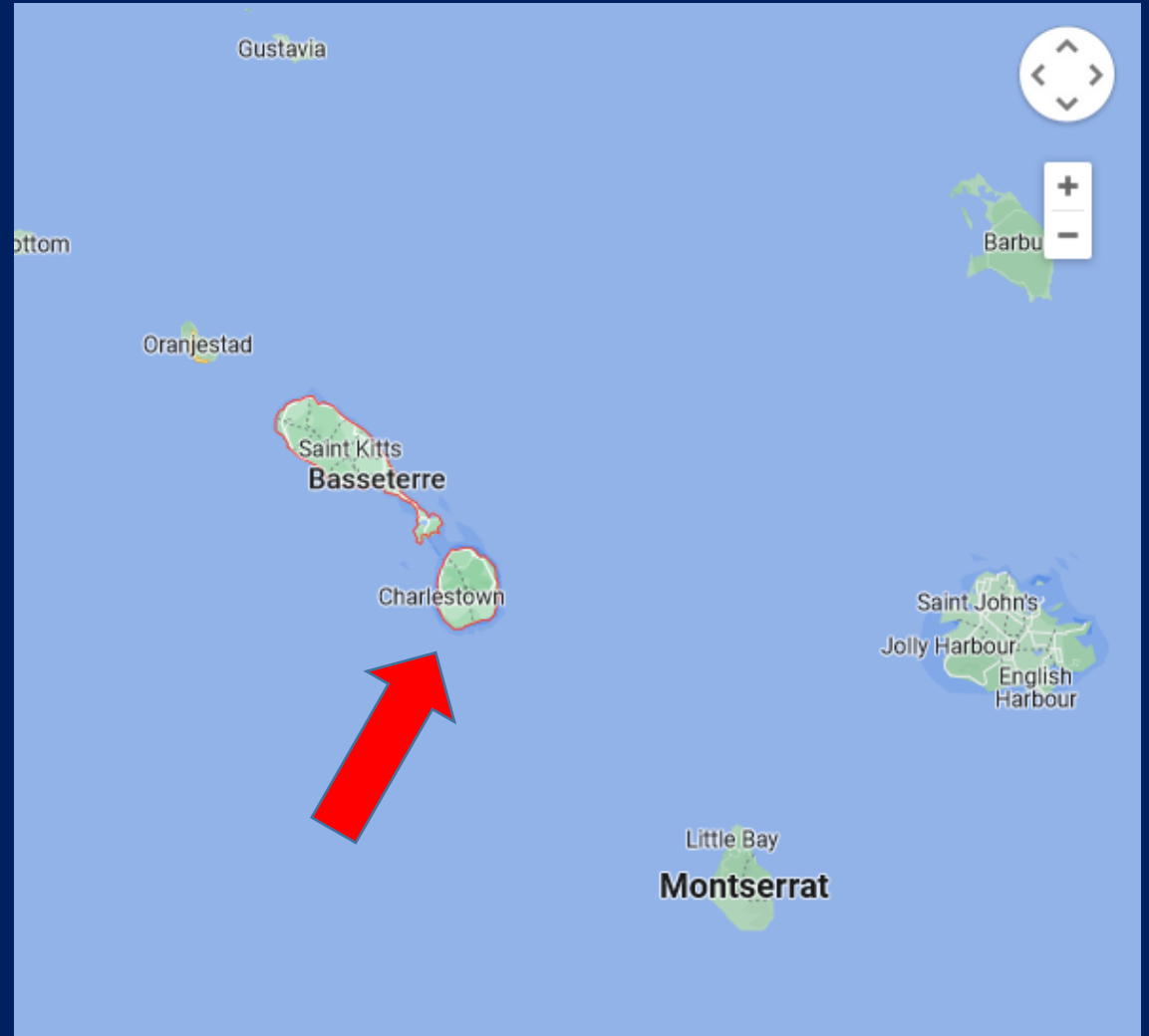
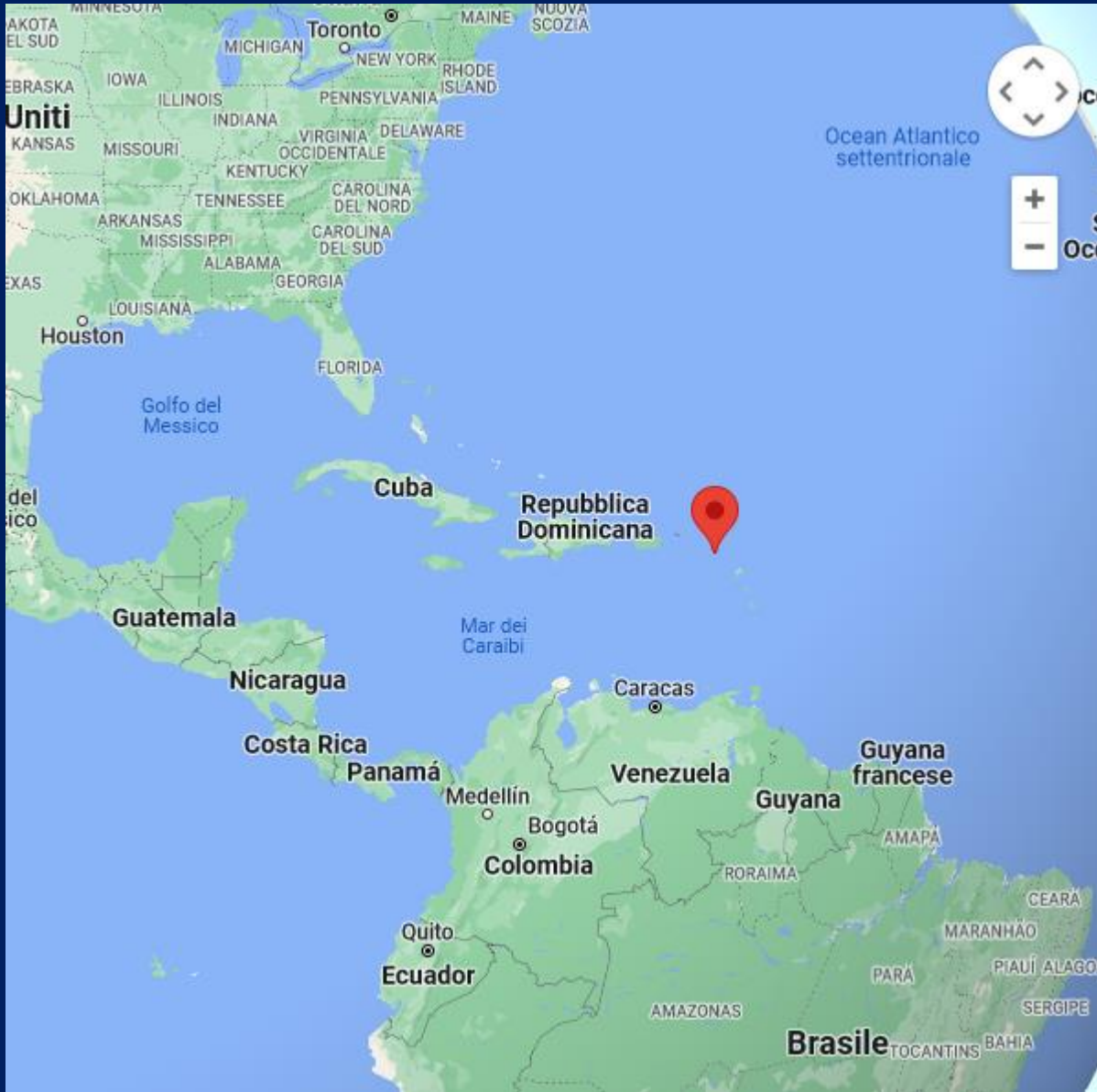
Outside the West Indies, it was too easy for slaves to abscond when Indian country was so near at hand

The word 'slave' had no meaning in English law when the first settlers moved across the Atlantic...

It was to indentured white servants from the British Isles that the colonies first turned in their search for additional sources of labour, and it was as indentured servants that the majority of white emigrants crossed the Atlantic in the seventeenth century

p.156 ...as many of them were to find on arrival, the conditions under which they were forced to work their four- or five-year stints made them, in their own eyes, little better than slaves

In one revealing incident, when a Spanish expedition attacked English settlers on Nevis in 1629, servants in the militia threw away their arms crying 'Liberty, joyfull Liberty', preferring collaboration with the Spaniards to subjection to tyrannical English masters



A shortage of white indentured servants, combined with difficulties in managing men and women whose only thought was to finish their period of service and strike out on their own, encouraged English settlers, both in the Caribbean and on the southern mainland, to turn to the most obvious remaining source of labour – imported Africans

Bermuda, granted to the Virginia Company in 1612 and run by the Bermuda Company from 1615, imported its first blacks in 1616

In its first half-century, however, Bermuda's economy was not heavily dependent on black slave labour. The story was very different in the short-lived colony of Providence Island. ...relatively accessible sources of supply made it considerably cheaper to import blacks than white indentured servants to cultivate the tobacco crop.

... By 1641, when its eleven-year existence was abruptly terminated, the Providence Island colony had become an authentically slave society – the first such society in British America



...Virginia began importing African slaves soon after Bermuda
p.157 It was only at the end of the seventeenth century, however, that the Chesapeake colonies began to turn massively to African slaves to meet their labour requirements...

Before then they had relied heavily on indentured labour, and white servants worked side by side with blacks ... in the tobacco fields

The situation began to change in the 1680s, at a moment when a decline in the supply of indentured servants from the British Isles coincided with a fall in the cost of importing slaves. By 1710, 20 per cent of Virginia's population were slaves

As sugar became the staple crop, the drawbacks of dependence on indentured labour became increasingly clear to the planters. Not only did white servants often prove unruly and rebellious when they found themselves condemned to effective servitude on the sugar plantations, but they were naturally reluctant to continue as wage-earners when their period of indenture expired

Some of the Barbados planters had seen African slave gangs at work in Brazil, and began to realize that African labour, even if initially more expensive, offered longterm advantages, since slaves would provide life-long service and could be more cheaply clothed and fed. Best of all, their condition as **bondsmen** made them absolute servants of their masters, as no white man could be

By 1660 there were as many blacks as whites on the island – perhaps 20,000 of each race – and by the end of the century Barbados, along with its companion slave societies of Jamaica and the Leewards, had absorbed 250,000 slaves from Africa





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjHlgrGsLWQ>

Simple Plan, *Summer Paradise*, girato a Barbados



Simple Plan - Summer Paradise ft. Sean Paul (Official Video)



[Jamaica]

CUBA.- Piantaggione di tabacco.

PEPTONE DI CARNE DELLA COMP^{IA} LIEBIG.

Veggasi a tergo.

An advertisement for Liebig's Meat Peptone. The main illustration depicts a tobacco plantation in Cuba, with workers in a field, a windmill, and a building. A tin of Liebig's Meat Peptone is shown in the bottom left corner. The text at the top reads "CUBA.- Piantaggione di tabacco." and the text at the bottom reads "PEPTONE DI CARNE DELLA COMP^{IA} LIEBIG." and "Veggasi a tergo."

p.158 ... set apart from the beginning by the colour of their skin, blacks stood little chance in societies which had as yet no developed code of law relating to slavery, and which, with little or no Indian labour available, were otherwise overwhelmingly white

As Virginia's House of Burgesses realized in the wake of Bacon's rebellion in 1676, it was in the interests of masters to prevent the development of an alliance between aggrieved indentured servants and slaves by drawing a sharper dividing line between them in terms of legal status, a process already under way before the rebellion began



p.158 Gradually the legal shackles were tightened round the Africans, and British America moved inexorably towards the establishment of **chattel slavery**

This chattel slavery would make possible the development of plantation economies on the British American mainland