

## Paradise or Hell? – The Spanish in South America. Den spanischen Kolonialismus in Südamerika beurteilen (SII)

Nach einer Idee von Maximilian Bunk, München



A clash of cultures. But there were also other forms of contact between the different cultures in South America.

Für die indigenen Völker Südamerikas war die Entdeckung ihres Subkontinents durch Kolumbus eine Katastrophe: Kriege, Miss-handlungen und vor allem Krankheiten dezimierten die Urbevölkerung in nur 150 Jahren von geschätzten 40 auf 4 Millionen.

Wie lebten die Menschen in Südamerika vor der Ankunft der Europäer? Inwiefern hing das Ende der *Reconquista* mit den Entdeckungsfahrten zusammen? Und warum spricht man in Brasilien heute Portugiesisch? Diesen Fragen gehen die Schülerinnen und Schüler in dieser Unterrichtseinheit nach und nehmen dabei auch immer wieder die Perspektive der indigenen Völker ein.

**Klassenstufe:** 12/13

**Dauer:** 6 Stunden und LEK

**Bereich:** Frühe Neuzeit, Entdeckung Amerikas, Kolonialisierung Südamerikas

**Kompetenzen:**

- Gründe für den „Aufbruch nach Westen“ erläutern
- Form und Auswirkungen des spanischen Kolonialismus in Südamerika benennen
- Kolonialisierung Südamerikas als tiefgreifenden Einschnitt in der Geschichte der indigenen Völker begreifen

## Materialübersicht

### Stunde 1: Pre-Columbian America

- M 1 (Fo) Somewhere outside Europe  
M 2 (Tx) South America – many cultures in isolation?  
M 3 (Tx) The Aztecs: An example of an advanced civilisation

### Stunde 2: From the Reconquista to the Conquista

- M 4 (Tx) 1492 – a successful year for the Spanish

### Stunde 3/4: Taking possession of South America

- M 5 (Bi) Hello from South America!  
M 6 (Tx) Two countries divide the world  
M 7 (Tx) Two ways to “run” a colony

### Stunde 5/6: Conflict or cooperation: Cultural contacts

- M 8 (Bi) When two cultures clash  
M 9 (Tx) Forms of cultural contact  
M 10 (Tx) Genocide in South America?

### Lernerfolgskontrolle

Exam: The impact of Spanish colonialism

**Bi:** Bildimpuls – **Fo:** Farbfolie – **Tx:** Text



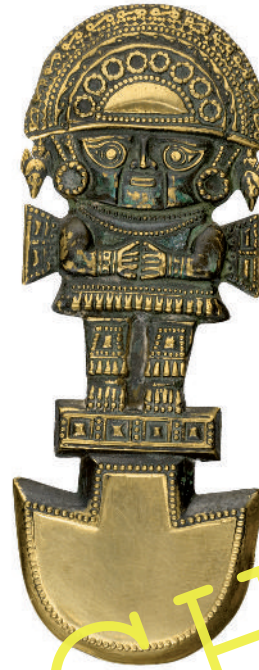
## M 1 Somewhere outside Europe

1.



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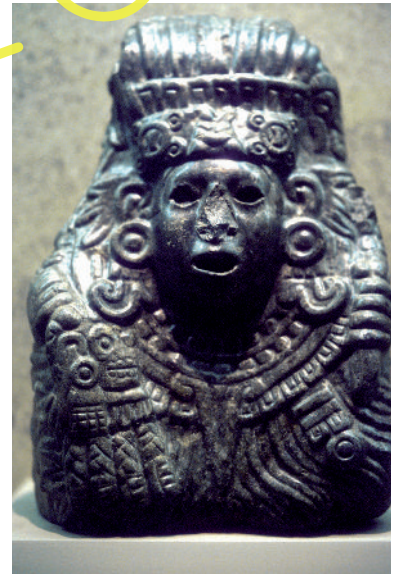
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### Vocabulary for describing the pictures

Inca: der Inka, Inka- – Aztec: der Azteke, aztekisch – Mayan: der Maya, Maya- – sacrificial knife: Opfermesser – slab: Steinplatte – step pyramid: Stufenpyramide

Pictures: 1. The ruins of the Incan city Machu Picchu, in Peru (built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century); 2. Sacrificial knife of the Chimú culture (Peru, 11<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> century); 3. Aztec sun stone with the sun god at the centre (around 1500); 4. The Mayan city, Tikal, in northern Guatemala (3<sup>rd</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century); 5. Statue of the god, Quetzalcoatl, who was worshipped by the Aztecs and Mayans (dating not clear)

## M 4 1492 – a successful year for the Spanish

Most people associate the discovery of America with the date 1492. For the Spanish, this date also marks another important event: the end of the long reconquest of their country from the Islamic rulers.

### From the Reconquista to the Conquista

The time around 1500 is – at least for Europe – often described as the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern times. Events like the invention of the printing press, the end of Constantinople and the Reformation shook the old order. In addition to this, there was the “discovery” of America – a huge shift in the way the world was perceived<sup>1</sup>.

Yet, before the Spanish were able to establish a vast colonial empire, they had to achieve both state and religious unity within their country because, in 711, the Moors<sup>2</sup> had conquered large parts of the Iberian peninsula<sup>3</sup>. The campaign to reconquer these areas lasted several centuries and is known as the “Reconquista”<sup>4</sup>. On 2 January 1492, Granada, the last city under the control of Muslims, was regained. The Spanish subsequently forced the Muslims and Jews to either convert to Catholicism or leave the region.

Spain was now united and sought to further expand both economically and territorially. Portugal, its neighbour, was also pursuing these aims. Spain certainly did not want to lag behind<sup>5</sup> its competitor. The long campaign against Islam also fuelled<sup>6</sup> the



The palace and fortress complex Alhambra in Granada, Spain, was built in Moorish style.



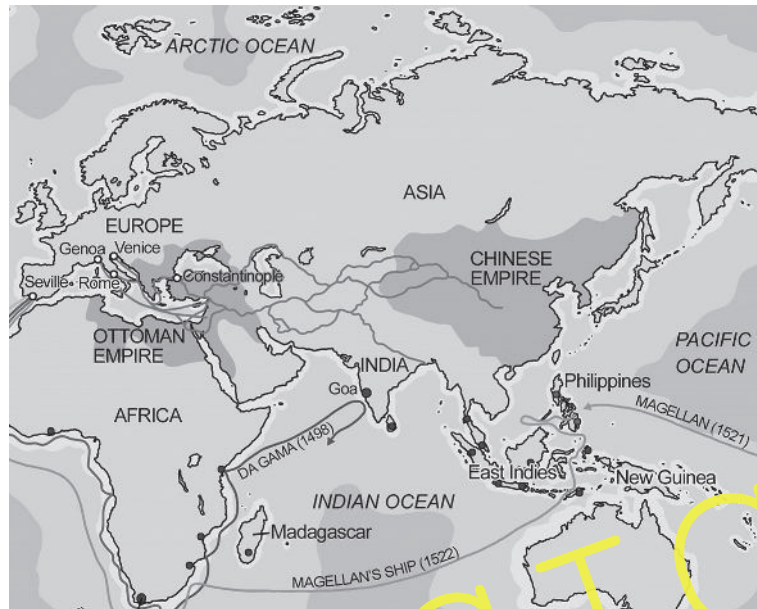
The “Patio of the Lions” in Alhambra is laid out in the style of an Islamic garden.

idea of crusade<sup>7</sup> and the idea to convert “heathen”<sup>8</sup> peoples to Christianity e.g. in India. Furthermore, the soldiers who had fought in the *Reconquista*, now needed to find new sources of income. The groups of numerous conquistadors, who set out for the recently discovered continent, consisted predominantly of veterans of the *Reconquista*. These adventurers were prepared to take high risks to achieve fame and fortune.



### In search of the western sea route

In Europe the demand for luxury goods and precious metals<sup>9</sup> was constantly rising. The minting of coins<sup>10</sup> and works of art consumed more gold and silver than Europe possessed. At the same time the Ottomans<sup>11</sup>, whose empire lay along the trade routes between India and Europe, increased the cost of importing goods like silk and spices by imposing duties. For this reason, the emerging European powers started looking for an alternative way to Asia. The aim was to circumvent<sup>12</sup> the Ottoman Empire and have direct access to India.



Trade routes between Europe and Asia

The navigator Christopher Columbus promised to find a sea route to Asia and the fabulous riches of this continent. The Portuguese did not believe Columbus's theory that a voyage to the west would lead to India. Instead, they attempted to find a way along the African coast. Yet the Spanish rulers equipped Columbus for an expedition on which he set off in 1492. The fact that he later reached America instead of India did not prove to be of any disadvantage for his patrons. On the contrary, it formed the basis of Spain's large empire.

Based on a text by Maximilian Bunk

### Annotations

1 **to perceive**: wahrnehmen – 2 **Moor**: der Maure – 3 **Iberian peninsula**: Teil Europas, der südwestlich der Pyrenäen liegt; benannt nach dem Stamm der Iberer, der die Halbinsel in der Antike bewohnte – 4 **Reconquista**: Spanish for "reconquest", which means the recapture of territories from the Islamic rulers – 5 **to lag behind so. (lagged, lagged)**: hinter jmdm. zurückbleiben – 6 **to fuel sth.**: etw. anheizen, verstärken – 7 **crusade**: Kreuzzug – 8 **heathen**: heidnisch – 9 **precious metal**: Edelmetall – 10 **minting of coins**: Münzprägung – 11 **Ottoman**: Osmane – 12 **to circumvent sth.**: etw. umgehen

### Tasks

1. Read through the text about 1492.
2. Explain why the *Reconquista* was an important requirement for the Spanish departing into the west.
3. Give reasons why they sailed west over the Atlantic.
4. Name alternative possibilities to circumvent the Ottomans.

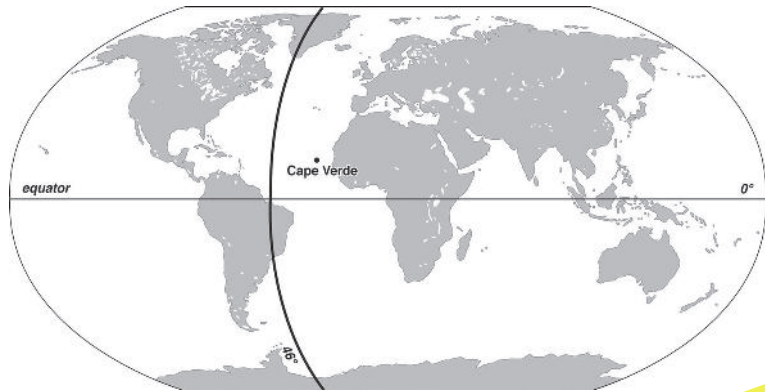
## M 6 Two countries divide the world

*A major motive for the voyages of discovery was the rivalry between the kingdoms of Portugal and Castile and Aragon (Spain) which had emerged from the "Reconquista".*

The kingdoms of Portugal and Spain had many things in common: they were centrally organised, had strong armies which had been tested in combat with the Moors<sup>1</sup> and were interested in trade. In addition, both were Catholic countries.

Initially, the competition between

Spain and Portugal was an important driving force for the voyages of discovery. However, after Columbus had discovered America, the relationship between both kingdoms worsened: Bartolomeu Dias had already sailed around the southern tip<sup>2</sup> of Africa in 1488 in the name of the Portuguese king. The Portuguese wanted to secure the African route to India for themselves. Spain, on the other hand, claimed the territories recently discovered by Columbus. The main challenge now was to prevent this rivalry from turning into an armed conflict, since this ultimately would have damaged both nations and disrupted trade.



Line of demarcation according to the Treaty of Tordesillas

Since only the Pope was accepted by both Catholic countries as a higher authority, he was supposed to settle the conflict<sup>3</sup>. This occurred in 1494 in the Treaty of Tordesillas (named after a small city 150 km north of Madrid where the contract was signed). The treaty set a line of demarcation that ran 370 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands and effectively split the world into a western and an eastern part. The western part went to Spain and the eastern part to Portugal. In those days, though, nobody knew that Brazil jutted out<sup>5</sup> so far to the east: it came therefore under the Portuguese sphere of influence.

The papal "bestowal" was, however, subject to one condition: wherever the Spanish and the Portuguese encountered "heathens"<sup>7</sup> they were obligated to spread<sup>8</sup> Catholicism. The Treaty of Tordesillas initially helped to relax tension and enabled both countries to expand in their respective parts of the world.

Based on a text by Maximilian Bunk

### Annotations

1 **Moor**: der Maure – 2 **southern tip**: Südspitze – 3 **to settle a conflict**: einen Konflikt klären, schlichten – 4 **line of demarcation**: Demarkationslinie, Grenzlinie – 5 **to jut out (jutted, jutted)**: herausragen – 6 **bestowal**: Schenkung – 7 **heathen**: Heide – 8 **to spread (spread, spread)**: verbreiten

### Tasks

1. Read carefully through the text about the Treaty of Tordesillas.
2. Explain which problem the Treaty of Tordesillas temporarily solved and why it was necessary.
3. Name the consequences of the treaty.
4. Give reasons why the Spanish received the western part and the Portuguese the eastern part. Why did Brazil nevertheless become a Portuguese colony?
5. Imagine you were the Portuguese/the Spanish king. How did you feel after you had signed the contract? Write a short diary entry.

## M 7 Two ways to “run” a colony

*In the Treaty of Tordesillas, Spain and Portugal had divided the world amongst themselves. Of course, other nations like England and France did not accept this. Yet they were not strong enough to compete with the Iberian fleets and so had to watch as these countries established colonies and trading posts.*

After Columbus had landed in America in 1492 and Vasco da Gama had discovered the sea route to India six years later, there was a rapid development in both the Spanish and the Portuguese colonial empires.

The Portuguese established themselves along the African and Asian coasts. There they found that maritime trade<sup>1</sup> functioned well and they built forts<sup>2</sup> as well as trading and military outposts<sup>3</sup>. They made use of the existing trade networks by simply securing them for themselves. When they encountered stronger powers like China or Japan, the Portuguese often placed themselves at their service<sup>4</sup>. The outposts were far apart and were primarily intended to control trade. The top priority for the Portuguese was to procure<sup>5</sup> goods and to sell them at a profit. Their network ensured this, which is why the Portuguese were largely content with this system in Asia.

The Spanish, on the other hand, did not find any existing maritime trade or commodities<sup>6</sup>. The Aztecs' and the Incas' treasures were quickly plundered and consumed. Further wealth (e.g. from agriculture, plantations and mines) could only be achieved by hard work and it required control over the country as well as over the people (as slave labourers). Only in this way could raw materials<sup>7</sup> be turned into money. The Portuguese proceeded in a similar way in Brazil.

In addition, immigration from Spain and Portugal to South America began. Land there was available and there was a high demand for manpower<sup>8</sup> to administrate the country and its population.

Based on a text by Maximilian Bunk

### Annotations

1 **maritime trade**: Seehandel – 2 **fort**: Festung – 3 **outpost**: Außenposten – 4 **to place at service**: in Dienst stellen – 5 **to procure**: beschaffen – 6 **commodities**: Waren, Handelsgüter – 7 **raw material**: Rohstoff – 8 **manpower**: Arbeitskräfte

### Tasks

1. Read carefully through the text and take notes on how the colonial systems in South America and in Asia were set up.
2. Work with a partner. Partner A describes how the colonial system in South America was set up, and partner B describes how the colonial system in Asia was set up. Use your own words.
3. Together with your partner, name the differences between the two colonial systems. Try to find a suitable name for each system.
4. Consider what the objective of both the Portuguese and the Spanish was. Explain why the empires in America and Asia differed so greatly.



## M 8 When two cultures clash

*Both engravings originate from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They show the clash between the Spanish conquerors and indigenous peoples of South America.*

Conquistadors mistreat indigenous people (around 1520).

The contemporary copperplate engraving illustrates a report by Bartolomé de Las Casas who was a bishop for many years in the Spanish colonies.



© picture-alliance/akg-images

The conquest of Peru by the Spanish under Francisco Pizarro, 1529. Copperplate engraving by Theodor de Bry (1528–1598) from the year 1596.



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### Vocabulary for describing the pictures

loincloth: Lendenschurz – armament: Rüstung – sack: Sack – loan: Last – to push so. on: jmdn. antreiben – stake: Pfahl – to hang so./sth. up: jmdn./etw. aufhängen

### Tasks

1. Describe both engravings.
2. Summarise how the Spanish and the indigenous people were portrayed.
3. Choose one of the pictures and formulate the thoughts of one of the natives and one of the conquerors.
4. Put forward a hypothesis about the “encounter” between the Spanish and the indigenous people which you can verify during the lesson.



## M 9 Forms of cultural contact

*The historian Urs Bitterli has conducted research which shows that there are various forms of cultural contact between Europeans and the peoples of other continents.*

Bitterli differentiates between four categories of cultural encounters<sup>1</sup> between European and non-European societies: 1. Contact; 2. Clash<sup>2</sup>; 3. Relationship; 4. Interdependence<sup>3</sup>; interdependence sometimes arises from the further development of "relationship".



Brutal treatment: Illustration from a report by the bishop Bartolomé de Las Casas

"Contact" and "relationship" were formative<sup>4</sup> for the trading empire of the Portuguese in Asia and for a religious mission. Bitterli regards "clash" as typical of the Spanish conquest of Central and South America.

The characteristics of Bitterli's categories are the following: A contact of cultures is an encounter of Europeans with an overseas culture for a limited period of time, for the first time, or is marked by a long interruption. These encounters were mostly friendly, with the Europeans behaving at the beginning of this cultural contact in a non-aggressive manner.

There were cultural clashes wherever the Europeans appeared. The process depended on the geographical location as well as on the balance

of power between the two clashing cultures. On islands, the natives were often completely wiped out<sup>5</sup>. On the mainland<sup>6</sup>, where there was a way of escape, they were driven away<sup>7</sup>. Where the natives were militarily well-equipped, they managed to avoid a cultural clash or limit it geographically.

A cultural relationship arose when lasting contact existed between peoples who were on equal terms<sup>8</sup> with respect to political power. A requirement for a cultural relationship was supply and demand<sup>9</sup>. On the European side, the intermediaries<sup>10</sup> were traders and missionaries.

Mixed colonial societies can be counted in the category "interdependence". These emerged in various regions in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries where both groups exchanged elements of their culture during their long-term relationship.

Based on a text by Maximilian Bunk

### Annotations

1 **encounter**: Zusammentreffen – 2 **clash**: Zusammenprall – 3 **interdependence**: Verflechtung – 4 **formative**: prägend – 5 **to wipe out sth.**: etw. ausrotten – 6 **mainland**: Festland – 7 **to drive away**: verdrängen – 8 **to be on equal terms**: gleichgestellt sein – 9 **supply and demand**: Angebot und Nachfrage – 10 **intermediary**: Vermittler

### Tasks

1. Read through the text about cultural contact.
2. Explain how, according to Bitterli, the cultural contacts differ between Asia and South America.
3. Name the four forms of cultural contact which Bitterli categorises.
4. Consider which category fits the Spanish contact with the Aztecs and Incas. Do you think that there were other forms of contact in South America?
5. Give current examples of cultural contacts.