

CURIOSITY CHRONICLES



Snapshots of Early Modern History

Volume 1

by Rachel Meyers, M.A.

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Globally Minded History for the Elementary Child

by Rachel Meyers, M.A.

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Volume 1

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Introduction to Early Modern History

Ted: I'm Time Talking Ted!

Mona: And I'm Mystery Mulling Mona.

Ted: We're back again for early modern history! When exactly is that?

Mona: We ended our tour of medieval history in 1550, so we'll be picking up there, then we'll be traveling all the way up to 1845.

Ted: YES! I get to zoom my timeline in a lot then! Now that I know when early modern history is, what is early modern history?

Mona: We live in the modern era of history. Modern means things that are currently happening or recent, but when we're talking about historical eras, modern describes the invention of advanced technology and machines, as well as the creation of a global world.

Ted: So does that mean early modern history is the era where that started happening?

Mona: Yeah, this is the era of history that laid the foundation for the modern era.

Ted: What are some of the major changes that happen in early modern history?

Mona: For the first time in history, people can travel all over the world—literally. At the end of the tour of medieval history, we saw Ferdinand Magellan circumnavigate the globe. Pretty soon, Francis Drake will do the same thing. Later Captain Cook will as well. Many others will too. Improved travel starts to make the world feel smaller. Each time someone circled the globe, they gained new knowledge that would shape future trade routes, inventions, wars, and colonization plans.

Ted: Ooo, colonization. We learned about that at the end of medieval history. That's when a new group of people starts living somewhere else and tells the local people how to live. It's not a good thing. Does that happen a lot in early modern history?

Mona: Colonization is basically early modern history in a nutshell. It happened all over the place. Mainly, it was European countries sailing outside of Europe and staking claim to wherever they ended up. At the beginning of early modern history, Spain controls vast portions of North and South America, as well as the Caribbean Islands. Portugal controls Brazil and many islands in the Indian Ocean. Other European countries are packing their bags, ready to get in on the action. By the end of early modern history, the British Empire will control nearly a quarter of all the people and land on the planet.



Ted: Wow, so colonization here we come. What else is going on in this era of history?

Mona: Many countries take on their modern shape.

Arthur: Don't forget art!

Lily: Books!

Arthur: Music!

Lily: Science!!

Arthur: Philosophy!

Lily: We're Arty Arthur and Literary Lily. We're here to remind you that culture is about to kick it into high gear, and we are ready for it!

Mona: Glad to see you guys will be joining us again.

Arthur: We wouldn't miss it! Baroque, the Enlightenment, Romanticism.

Lily: Shakespeare, the invention of opera, rationalism.

Arthur: The scientific AND industrial revolutions!

Lily: I mean, this era of history has got it all! It's got so much in fact, Arthur and I have decided to set up our own area called Arthur and Lily's Culture Corner. We'll be highlighting important artists, musicians, writers, inventors, cultural movements, new art forms, and more.

Mona: We're happy you're here to add even more culture to history!

Ted: Let's not forget about wars and generals. I've got Napoleon to look forward to. As well as Admiral Yi and the Zulu Empire. Not to mention the American and French Revolutions.

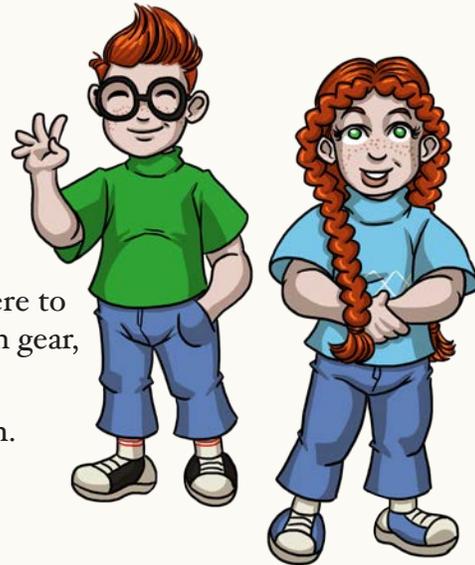
Mona: Well, I've got the rise and fall of quite a few empires to cover, not to mention all the things you guys might forget about.

Ted: Where do we start?

Mona: Remember Henry VIII?

Ted: The dude who kept killing and divorcing his wives?

Mona: All because he wanted a son to inherit the throne. Let's go see how that plan worked out for him.



Section 1: Elizabethan England



Chapter 1: England Picks a Religion

Ted: Let's do a quick recap of where we're at.

Mona: We're starting in England in the mid-1500s. England is currently ruled by the Tudor Dynasty. Henry VIII became king of England in 1509. His first wife, Catherine of Aragon gave birth to a daughter named Mary. Henry adored Mary as a child. Mary was exceptionally intelligent and Henry often bragged about her and showed her off to foreign leaders.

Ted: But Henry didn't like Catherine very much. As great as Mary was, she wasn't a boy. Henry desperately wanted a son. So he tried to divorce Catherine.

Mona: The Pope said no, so Henry founded the Church of England so that he could officially divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. He also disinherited Mary, banned her from seeing her mother, and partially exiled her. Oh, and all of England was suddenly declared Protestant.

Ted: But marrying Anne Boleyn didn't help Henry get a son since Anne's first child was a girl named Elizabeth.

Mona: Elizabeth had a hard life from the start. Her mom, Anne Boleyn, was beheaded when she was a toddler. Her dad resented her for being female. She was disinherited when Henry remarried. Then because of the sketchy way Henry married Anne, there were plenty of people at court who thought Elizabeth wasn't Henry's official child and she didn't deserve to be part of the court.



The wives of Henry VIII.



The heirs and children of Henry VIII. From left to right, Mary I, Elizabeth I, and Edward VI.

Ted: While all that was going on, Henry married and divorced/executed a few more women.

Mona: One of those women, Jane Seymour, gave birth to a son named Edward VI.

Ted: Henry's last wife, Catherine Parr, tried to smooth over all this drama. Since Henry now had that son he so desperately wanted, Catherine Parr convinced him to reinherit his two daughters.

Mona: That means if Edward died without an heir of his own, his older sisters could inherit the throne.

Ted: Thus, Henry dies in 1547 thinking he'd successfully ensured a male would inherit the throne and carry on his family name.

Mona: He was right. The next king was his son, Edward VI.

Ted: Yeah, but Edward didn't live long enough for that to matter too terribly much.

Mona: Edward was just 9 years old when he became king. Then he died 7 years later when he was only 15. But just because he was young doesn't mean Edward didn't do anything as king. Edward carried on his father's work on converting England to Protestantism or as he called it "the True Religion." Henry VIII and Edward VI destroyed thousands of Catholic churches, monasteries, and abbeys around England. Hundreds of Catholics were executed during these changes.

Ted: Since he was only 15 when he died, Edward didn't have a child to inherit the throne, which means England was right back where it was before Henry divorced Catherine of Aragon.

Mona: Except for the whole change in religion thing, which is kind of a big deal. England was split down the middle. There were still ardent Catholics who wanted to return the country to its Catholic days. Not the mention the staunch Protestants who would do whatever it took to keep the country Protestant. The line of succession might not be different, but pretty much everything else was. When Edward died, the future of England hung in the balance.

Ted: Why?

Mona: Because the monarch's religion became the religion of the whole country. Switching back to Catholicism or staying Protestant would change so much about England's future.

Ted: Mary should be next in the line of succession, right?

Mona: Yep! And she's a Catholic. Edward was afraid of Mary restoring Catholicism, so he disinherited her again.

Ted: What about Elizabeth?

Mona: She's a Protestant, but Edward couldn't come up with an excuse to disinherit only Mary, so he disinherited both his sisters.

Ted: Since that's all of Henry's kids, who's going to inherit the throne now?

Mona: Edward tried to name Lady Jane Grey as his heir. She was the great-niece of Henry VIII and a Protestant. She was already married so she could have male children to inherit the throne, plus her husband was an influential nobleman.

Ted: I'm surprised he picked a woman. Had England ever been ruled by a queen before?

Mona: Empress Matilda claimed the English throne in the 1100s, but was never crowned. Other than that, no. England had always been ruled by kings.

Ted: So why do they have so many potential queens now?

Mona: Honestly? They ran out of men. If there had been a good male relative that could have become the next king, they would have chosen him—but fate had dealt England a different hand. Lady Jane Grey was briefly declared Queen of England.

Ted: Briefly?

Mona: Mary was not on board with being disinherited yet again. She gathered as much support as she could to oppose Jane.

Ted: I take it, by 'support' you mean an army?

Mona: Precisely. Mary had been gathering supporters at court for years. Anyone who secretly remained a Catholic supported Mary. Mary marched with her army to London with Lady Elizabeth at her side.

Ted: Wait, Protestant Elizabeth was supporting her Catholic sister?

Mona: Elizabeth was in an awkward position. She'd already narrowly avoided being beheaded for treason by her brother. Supporting her sister was the safest choice she could make. When Mary got to London, she left her army at the gates while she and Elizabeth rode into the city. They were met by cheering crowds as they rode to the palace and ousted Lady Jane Grey, just nine days after she'd been declared queen. Mary was later crowned, becoming England's first official female monarch.



Lady Jane Grey



Ted: Cheering crowds, huh? So Mary was popular with the people?

Mona: Yes. At the beginning of her reign, Mary was very popular and adored by her people. Many English were still Catholic and were excited to see a return to the old ways.

Ted: So she restored Catholicism like everyone thought she would?

Mona: Yes. She reversed everything Henry and Edward had done, trying to take England right back to where it had been 30 years before.

Ted: Can you really erase nearly 30 bloody years that easily?

Mona: No. Plus Mary added plenty of blood to that bloody history, earning herself the nickname “Bloody Mary.” Bloody Mary is a rather unfair nickname though. She did cause lots of bloodshed, but she wasn’t any more violent than her father, brother, or later sister, who aren’t given the nickname “bloody.”

Ted: Why’s Mary singled out with the bad nickname?

Mona: Because she became so incredibly unpopular. Her most unpopular decision of all was to marry Philip II of Spain, a foreigner and a Catholic.

Ted: How does Protestant Elizabeth fit into all this?

Mona: Elizabeth supported Mary, but supporting Catholicism was one step too far. At first, Elizabeth tried to be subtle and just hoped Mary wouldn’t notice she didn’t support Catholicism. When Elizabeth kept coming up with excuses not to attend mass, Mary became suspicious and locked her up in the Tower of London. Traitors were sent to the Tower before being executed.

Ted: Did Elizabeth make it out alive?

Mona: It was Elizabeth’s second very close brush with death, but eventually, Mary released her. Then just five years after becoming queen, Mary died without an heir.

Ted: Now it’s Elizabeth’s turn!

Mona: Elizabeth was crowned Queen of England on January 15, 1559. Her reign is called the Elizabethan Era. She would become one of England’s longest-ruling and most important monarchs.

Ted: Why? What did she do?

Mona: First of all, she reversed the religion of England, yet again.

Ted: So. . . England is Protestant again. . . ? It’s getting hard to keep up.

Mona: Protestant. Again. Elizabeth successfully navigated the many religious groups and came up with compromises that mostly kept the peace. The Church of England became a mixture of Catholic and Protestant beliefs and practices. For example, she allowed worshiping the cross,



Queen Elizabeth I of England in her coronation robes.

which is very important to Catholics but was considered idolatry by many Protestants. She also allowed Catholics to practice their religion in private, which helped keep the peace for those who refused to convert. Her careful compromises between Catholics, extreme Protestants, and middle-ground Protestants created the Church of England that exists today. It was a shaky peace, but it was peace after many decades of religious fighting.

Ted: Okay, ending-ish the war of religion in England is a big accomplishment. What else?

Mona: The whole of Europe was being transformed during Elizabeth's reign. The discovery of the Americas, or as the Europeans called it, the 'New World', was transforming everything. And Elizabeth was not going to get left out.

Ted: Did she send out explorers of her own?

Mona: Explorers and raiders. Spain had become ridiculously wealthy, and Elizabeth was jealous. She hired Francis Drake for a secret mission to raid the Pacific coast of the Spanish Empire. Drake already had a lot of experience raiding Spanish ships and colonies. Now, Elizabeth wanted to up the target and hit the extremely rich and unguarded Pacific coast.

Ted: To get to the Pacific coast you have to go around South America. That's not easy during this period of history.

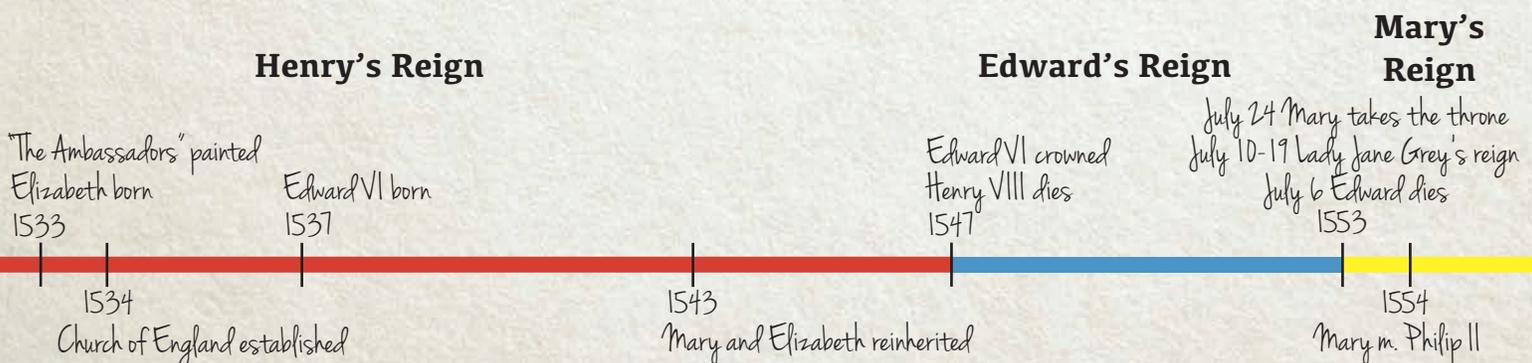
Mona: Which means the Spanish weren't protecting their Pacific coast. They thought no one could get there. Drake set off with three ships. All three made it to the Pacific Ocean, making them the first English ships in the Pacific Ocean, but then the problems began. Severe storms sunk one ship and caused another to turn back. Drake was now left alone with no backup.

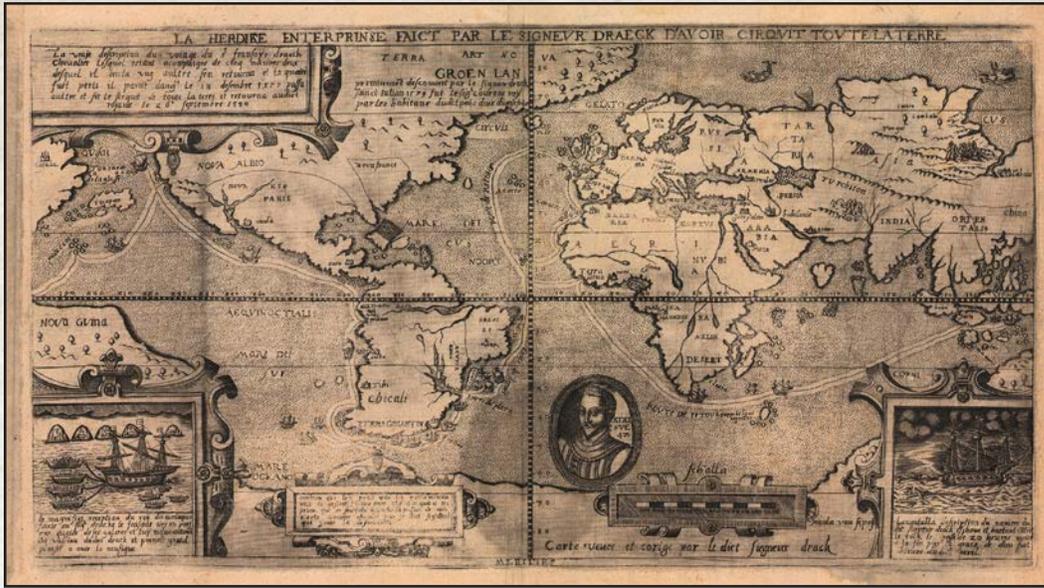
Ted: But with the entire coast unguarded, he had lots of plundering opportunities ahead of him!

Mona: Drake made his way up the coast of South America, stealing vast quantities of gold along the way. He even plundered a massive Spanish treasure ship carrying roughly \$60,000,000 in today's money.

Ted: Oooo! I wish I could have seen the Spaniards' faces after that!

Mona: After his successful raids, Drake kept sailing north, hoping to find the Northwest Passage and sail home.





A map by Nicola van Sype showing the voyage of Francis Drake. This map was made in the early 1580s, shortly after Drake's journey. The northern most point of Drake's voyage before crossing the Pacific is still disputed.

America, Drake and other explorers in his day hoped there was a way to sail north around North America. They called this supposed path the Northwest Passage.

Ted: There's not actually a Northwest Passage is there?

Mona: No, there are too many islands and icebergs in the way. Once Drake realized he was not going to succeed in finding the Northwest Passage, he was faced with a problem. If he turned around and tried to get home by going around South America again, the Spanish would be ready for him. That left him with only one path home.

Ted: Sailing all the way around the world?

Mona: Yep! Drake set off across the Pacific Ocean and picked up some extremely valuable spices and fabrics on his way through Indonesia, sailed across the Indian Ocean, around Africa, then back on home to England. Drake was the second captain to circumnavigate the globe, and the first one to survive the journey since Magellan died along the way.

Ted: I bet Elizabeth was excited about that!

Mona: Oh yes! Drake made Elizabeth and everyone else who paid for his voyage extremely rich! Queen Elizabeth knighted Drake for this voyage.

Ted: This is an exciting era of history! What does Elizabeth do next?

Mona: She does a lot of things! She inspires a golden age of literature, she starts colonizing the Americas, she fights off the Spanish! Next time, we'll talk some more about Queen Elizabeth's accomplishments.

Elizabeth's Reign



Elizabeth settles religious disputes
Elizabeth I crowned
1559

1558
Mary dies & Elizabeth takes the throne

Drake's Circumnavigation
1577 — — — — — 1580



Culture Corner

Hans Holbein



Lily: Welcome to Arthur and Lily's Culture Corner.

Arthur: This is our first time popping by to give you a rundown of a significant person or painting or book or invention or anything that makes the world a bit more human.

Lily: Today's spotlight is on a Northern Renaissance artist. A man who brought art and culture to the Tudor Dynasty. He's the official court painter for Henry VIII, which had the potential to be a hazardous job. Today's spotlight is on Hans Holbein.

Arthur: I want to look at one painting in particular because it's just packed with SO much. In one painting, Holbein captured what life at the Tudor court was like.

Lily: I present you with *The Ambassadors*. So bro, why is this painting a big deal? Because frankly, it looks like two dudes standing next to a bunch of stuff.

Arthur: Ah, but that's the genius of Holbein. The mastery is in the details. You are right. We do have two guys, and they are standing next to a bunch of stuff. That alone tells us something. They have a bunch of stuff. They're rich. England is starting to get very rich at this point in history.

Lily: You know, artists don't include things accidentally. There is a bunch of stuff on that table, but why those things? Why not something else?

Arthur: Exactly!! The ambassadors who are paying Holbein to paint this want to come off looking a certain way. Those objects were chosen intentionally! Look at all those scientific instruments and globes they have. These men are educated. This is the Age of Exploration! They are knowledgeable about the world.

Lily: And just look further down. There are instruments. These men are cultured too. They are taking part in all the finer parts of life available at the Tudor court.

Arthur: Just look a little bit closer, and you'll start to notice things are off. Many of the scientific instruments are set up wrong. There's a broken string on the lute. The book is a book on mathematics, and it is open to a page on division. All is not right at the Tudor court. The tools don't work, the music doesn't play, and the court is being divided.

Lily: It's all very subtle.

Arthur: You've got to be subtle at the Tudor court!

Lily: Or off with your head!

Arthur: It's with those subtleties that Holbein shows us precisely what it's like to live under the Tudors. Everything is off, but you aren't allowed to say it. Instead, you just need to carry on and distract yourself with money and material objects.



Lily: I hope I don't offend you, bro. But what in the heck is that thing by their feet?! Is the painting damaged? Did Holbein make a huge mistake? Is it a flying saucer? What is it??

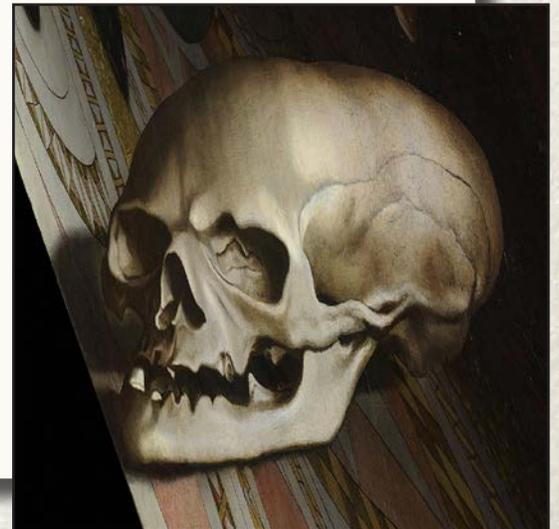
Arthur: That is the thing that tells us there is something really off about this painting. Because at first, you don't know what it is. Holbein was a master of perspective. That is an anamorphosis.

Lily: That means he distorted the perspective of something.

Arthur: When you stand in front of the painting, it looks like a smudge or a disc. But if you kneel down to the right of the painting, suddenly it becomes a skull.

Lily: Death is lurking at the Tudor court.

Arthur: Holbein couldn't say it, but he could paint it. The Tudor court was rich. It was powerful. It was knowledgeable. It was cultured. It was broken. It was haunted by death.



Chapter 2: Elizabeth Extends Her Reach



Ted: It's Elizabeth Day! What else do I need to know about Queen Elizabeth?

Mona: Elizabeth was ambitious. She was England's second female ruler. Her sister's reign hadn't gone very well. Elizabeth had a lot to prove! The New World was the perfect place to prove herself.

Ted: So she starts colonizing America?

Mona: She tried. She sent the explorer Walter Raleigh to establish the Virginia Colony in North America. Raleigh was given pretty much free reign to do whatever he wanted in America, so long as

Elizabeth got her share of the profits. Raleigh was given so much freedom in fact, that he never even went to North America. He organized for other people to go, while he personally went off to South America in search of the golden city of El Dorado.

Ted: Oooo, did he find El Dorado??

Mona: No. El Dorado is a myth. But he did find potatoes and tobacco. Both of which he brought back to England and popularized.

Ted: Potatoes are awesome!

Mona: And smoking became a staple British pastime for hundreds of years. So all in all, potatoes and tobacco probably had a bigger impact than El Dorado would have.

Ted: What about the colony he was supposed to establish?

Mona: The company Raleigh sent to America founded a small colony on the island of Roanoke, just off the coast of modern North Carolina.

Ted: I don't remember Roanoke Colony from US history.



Sir Walter Raleigh painted in 1588.



The location of Roanoke Island, including modern U.S. state borders for reference.

Mona: That's because it didn't last. The colonists arrived in 1585. Then they suddenly disappeared. No one knew what happened to them. Raleigh wanted to find out, so he convinced another group of colonists bound for the New World to stop off at Roanoke and investigate.

Ted: What did the new colonists find?

Mona: They found the settlement built by the first group of colonists, but they didn't find any bodies, or signs of war or disaster, or any other

clue to tell them what happened to everyone. Since these colonists were looking for a place to settle in the Americas and they did find an empty village, they decided, 'Hey why not settle here?'

Ted: Um, because this place has a history of people mysteriously disappearing?

Mona: They didn't seem worried about that. Thanks to a drought, the new colonists struggled to grow enough food to survive. The governor of the colony, John White, decided to sail back to England to get supplies. Everyone else was supposed to hunker down and wait for him to return. Except it took White three years to make it back. By the time he got there, everyone was gone.

Ted: AGAIN?!?

Mona: Just like the first time, there was no clear evidence for what happened. No bodies. No graves. No signs of fighting. The only thing the governor found was the word 'Croatoan' carved into a tree.

Ted: What's Croatoan?

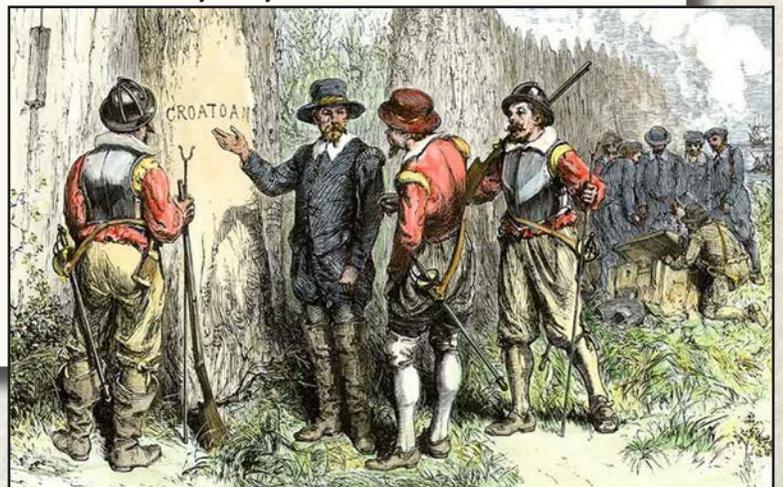
Mona: It's an island south of Roanoke. It's also the name of a local tribe.

Ted: So . . . they moved to Croatoan Island? Or were killed by the Croatoans? Or moved in with the Croatoans because they were about to starve? Or . . . ?

Mona: All those are possibilities people have considered over the years. White wasn't able to go investigate because of a major storm, so it's still a mystery!

Ted: Surely there's some evidence to give us a clue which possibility is right?!

Mona: Nope. It's a mystery! There are little bits of evidence to support each possibility, but even after hundreds of years of searching, we still don't know for sure what happened to the Roanoke Colony.



Painting by John White of when he and his men discovered the missing colony and word 'Croatoan.'

Ted: That's kind of creepy. Why on earth did it take John White THREE years to get back with supplies?? If it hadn't taken him so long, we might have answers!

Mona: He was delayed by a little thing called the Spanish Armada.

Ted: Oh hey now, I like the Spanish Armada!

Mona: Queen Elizabeth sure didn't like the Spanish Armada.

Ted: Here's the rundown on the Spanish Armada. Spain and England did not get along. At all.

Mona: Spain was super Catholic, and England was Protestant. Plus remember Catherine of Aragon that Henry VIII divorced? She was a Spanish Princess. Then Queen Mary married the King of Spain.

Ted: Plus all the raids by Francis Drake and Co. Yeah. . . Spain and England did not like each other.

Mona: Then for reasons we'll get to in a couple of Snapshots, Spain was having issues with Protestant rebels in the Netherlands. Queen Elizabeth decided to support the Protestant rebels.

Ted: And Spain was like, 'Oh no you don't! You are not going to mess with us! We're going to take you down!!' And so they built the Spanish Armada, also known as the Invincible Armada. Pro tip: Don't ever call your ship 'invincible'. It never ends well.

Mona: What exactly is an armada?

Ted: An armada is a fleet of warships. Remember when the Song Dynasty in China developed the world's first standing navy—that is a navy that exists all the time, not just in times of war? Well, European countries were just starting to develop standing navies that included fleets of warships. In the Middle Ages, European warships were usually just merchant ships the king "borrowed" to use in a war. Now we're getting to custom built warships.



Painting of the Spanish Armada fighting the English fleet. The ships with the white flag and red cross are English. The ships with the red flag and yellow cross are Spanish.

Mona: Why does that matter?

Ted: Warships are different than merchant ships. Warships are designed to be fast and agile. Merchant ships are designed to hold lots of stuff. We're also in the age of cannons now, so warships were built with gun ports on the side and large stores of weapons and ammunition. Cannons are a total game changer for naval warfare. Before naval warfare was basically just ships trying to sail close enough to each other so one crew could board the other ship. Then it was just run-of-the-mill fighting. If a captain was feeling creative, he might try to force the other ship to sail into rocks and sink. Now, with cannons, a captain could actively work to sink another ship. In this new age of warfare, the greatest sea-power in the world—Spain—is going head to head with Queen Elizabeth. King Philip II's goal was to capture London. Phillip assembled over 130 ships and over 25,000 men to create the Spanish Armada.

Mona: But Queen Elizabeth had a huge network of spies. She knew what Philip was up to. And she was ready.

Ted: The Armada sailed up to southern England, but was hanging back to wait for a fleet of reinforcements. Elizabeth had a fleet of ships waiting for them, including the trusty Sir Francis Drake. The English were a bit faster at adapting to the new type of naval warfare. Their cannons were ready. The Spaniards were still relying on old tactics and were prepared for a land battle, not a sea battle. In fact, the English knew—thanks to that network of spies—that the Spanish ships were so loaded down with supplies for the land invasion that their cannons couldn't be properly reloaded. All the English had to do was sail just close enough in a fake attack to get the Spanish to waste their first round of ammo. Then the English could safely bombard the Spanish ships for hours.

Mona: With that kind of advantage did the English destroy the whole fleet?

Ted: Surprisingly, no. Just as the English had almost driven most of the Spanish ships into the rocky coast, the wind changed. Most of the Spanish ships escaped—but they escaped by sailing to the eastern side of England.

Mona: So they had to sail right past England again to make it home to Spain?

Ted: Or, they could sail all the way around the British Isles!

Mona: Just like Drake sailed around the whole world to avoid the Spanish.

Ted: As they were rounding Ireland, the Spanish miscalculated where they were, and a significant part of the Armada ran aground and sank. A bedraggled fleet returned home to Spain, a shadow of what had left.

Mona: Phillip gave up on his plans to conquer England after that humiliating defeat.



The Armada portrait of Queen Elizabeth painted shortly after the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The paintings of the armada in the background as well as the globe under Elizabeth's hand represent her increasing power.

Ted: And Francis Drake and his fellow commanders went down in English history as heroes.

Mona: Queen Elizabeth certainly gained a lot of popularity for stopping the Spanish invasion.

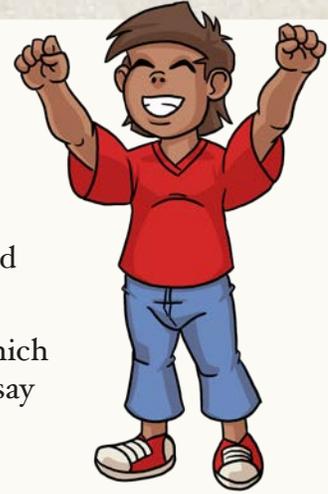
Ted: Elizabethan England is an eventful place! What else happened during Elizabeth's reign?

Mona: So much more! Elizabeth encouraged art and literature, which absolutely flourished during her reign. Lily will have quite a bit to say about William Shakespeare, who lived during this time.

Ted: That's impressive.

Mona: Elizabethan England also had quite a lot of political conflicts. There were plenty of plots, rebellions, traitors, and beheadings during Elizabeth's time. In particular, there were lots of plots surrounding Elizabeth's cousin Mary, Queen of Scots.

Ted: Her cousin Mary, not her sister Mary?



Mary, Queen of Scots

Mona: There were lots of Marys! Mary was the Queen of Scotland. She was a Catholic, so there were several plots to oust Queen Elizabeth and replace her with Mary. Elizabeth succeeded in defeating all those plots, but her reign was certainly eventful!

Ted: Who inherits the throne after Elizabeth? Does Elizabeth ever marry and have children?

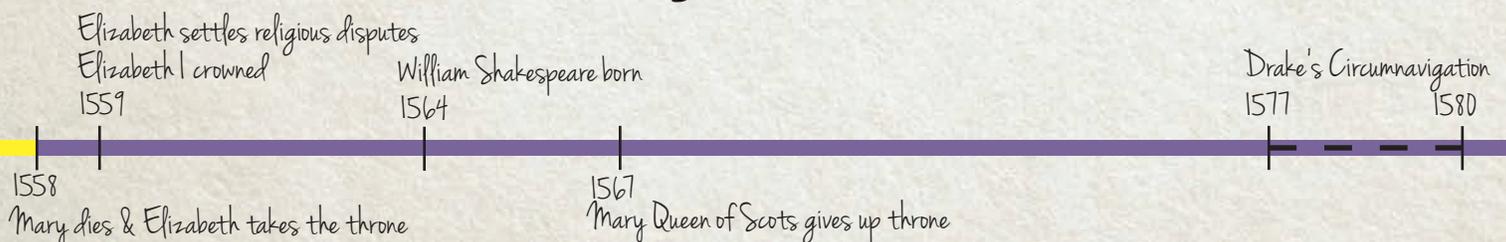
Mona: Elizabeth's entire reign was plagued by the question of who she was going to marry and when was she going to have children. After all, every strong monarch needs to have a child to inherit the throne. Despite that, Elizabeth firmly resisted the many, many attempts to marry her off.

Ted: Why?

Mona: Lots of reasons. Religion was one of them. Many of the nobles of England wanted to use her marriage to forge an alliance with another European country, which means they wanted her to marry a foreign king or prince. The problem was, most of those kings and princes were Catholic. Elizabeth had no interest in marrying a Catholic and possibly plunging her country back into the religious wars she'd scarcely managed to pull it out of.

Ted: Valid point.

Elizabeth's Reign



Mona: The other main issue was a question of control. Elizabeth had played her cards very carefully to gain power. It was no accident she was only the second queen in English history, or that her sister was the first, or that her father had gone to such great lengths to get a son to inherit the throne. A woman holding power was a new and scary idea for most people in England. She knew if she married, and especially if she had a son, it would be all too easy for her to lose power in favor of her husband or son. In fact, Mary Queen of Scots was forced to give up her crown in Scotland in favor of her one-year-old son.

Ted: Oooo, that's harsh.

Mona: Elizabeth insisted that she was married to England. She said being the monarch was such a large commitment she couldn't possibly be both the monarch and a wife.

Ted: So what happened when she died?

Mona: The throne went to her closest male relative: King James VI of Scotland, the son of Mary Queen of Scots. James was crowned King James I of England and started the Stewart Dynasty. James was a Catholic, but despite what the Protestants feared, James didn't change the religion of England. England faced different problems under the Stuarts than it did under the Tudors. We'll come back in a little while to see what those problems were. Now it's time to see what Spain was doing in the New World.

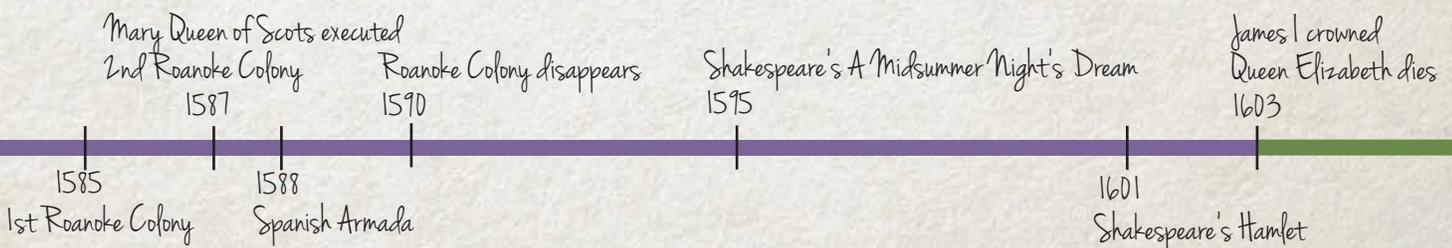


King James I of England (also known as King James VI of Scotland) painted by John de Critz around 1605, shortly after James took the English throne.

Want to know more?

Try researching the following topics:

- The Tower of London
- Queen Elizabeth's early life and imprisonment
- The Church of England
- Life of Mary, Queen of Scots
- History of Scotland
- Witch-hunts in England and Scotland
- *Daemonologie* by King James





Culture Corner

William Shakespeare



Lily: Welcome back to Arthur and Lily's Culture Corner.

Arthur: I'll give you a drumroll to introduce—

Lily: William Shakespeare!!! The Bard of Avon!

Arthur: He's the crowning jewel of the Northern Renaissance!

Lily: William Shakespeare was an English playwright who lived during Queen Elizabeth's day. Theater was all the rage during Elizabeth's time. The Queen enjoyed watching plays at her palace. Nobles would patronize theater companies. Commoners would attend the theater on their days off. Theater was high art. It was low art. It was everything!

Arthur: Tell me sis, why is Shakespeare such a big deal?

Lily: His writing is phenomenal! His plots are timeless! His plays are just as good today as the day he wrote them!

Arthur: And why is that, pray tell?

Lily: Because he wrote people as they really are—like really are. People see themselves in Shakespeare's plays. They see villains. They see heroes. They see ordinary people. Shakespeare's characters are so real they've enchanted people for centuries.

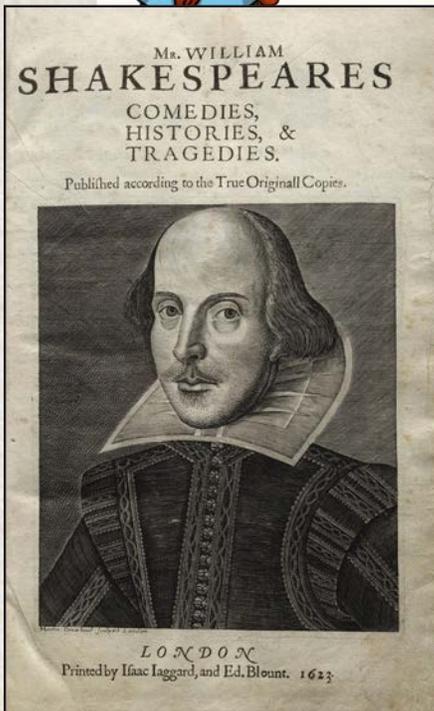
Arthur: That can't possibly be all.

Lily: Oh no! Shakespeare brings a super important change to the way stories are told. His stories were about problems that were, well, modern. He was the first modern writer. His characters ask the same sorts of questions we're still asking today. What is the purpose of life? What is love? What is justice? What is evil?

Arthur: And that, my friends, is the power of the Northern Renaissance. It started something that's still changing our world today!

Lily: That's not the only way he shaped our world today. Shakespeare invented hundreds of words you use every single day. Words like bedroom, dawn, eyeball, moonbeam, lonely, impede, lackluster, bandit, torture, zany, scuffle, worthless, and so many more!

Arthur: We all owe a great debt to the Bard!



The exterior of the reconstructed Globe Theater in London, England.



The interior of the reconstructed Globe Theater in London, England. You can see the stage in the center, surrounded by the yard, as well as the three levels of seating.

Lily: Can I give you a quick rundown of what Elizabethan theater was like?

Arthur: By all means!

Lily: There were several public theaters located in London. The theater Shakespeare's plays were performed at for most of his career was the Globe. The Globe was round. It had three levels of seating around the edges of the theater.

The higher your seat, the more expensive

the ticket. Nobility, and sometimes even royalty, would watch from those seats. Down below in the center of the theater was a large open area called the yard. Commoners could buy a ticket to stand in the yard for only a penny.

Arthur: Rich and poor come together to watch Elizabethan theater!

Lily: Each theater had its own company of actors. These actors performed all the parts in each play. There were no auditions. Different actors would specialize in a type of role. One actor would always play the clown roles, while another would always be the young lover, while another would always be the lead in tragic plays. There were no women in Elizabethan theater. It was seen as indecent for a woman to perform on stage. Instead, all parts were played by men. Boys and teenagers played the female roles until their voices got too deep.

Arthur: Things were always changing in Elizabethan England, the same play didn't hang around too long.

Lily: Audiences always demanded something new! Shakespeare would only have a few weeks or months to turn out a new play. Once he even wrote a whole play in a weekend! Then the actors would get a few days to memorize their lines. They'd get three or four rehearsals, then they'd perform. A new play would only be performed a handful of times before the company moved onto something else. Old plays would be revived if they were popular enough. It wouldn't be strange for a theater company to perform six different plays in a single week.

Arthur: The pace of Renaissance art is exhilarating!

Lily: I could go on and on forever, but the real way to get to know Shakespeare is to go read or watch something he wrote!

An anonymous painting from the 1800s of various Shakespearean characters.



Section 2: The Riches of Spain



Chapter 3: The Gold and Silver of the Spanish Main

Ted: At the end of our tour of medieval history we saw Spain take over massive amounts of land in the Americas including conquering the Aztec and Inca Empires. How big has its empire gotten?

Mona: Huge! The Spanish territory in the Americas was so big, Spain had to split it into two different territories: The Viceroyalty of Peru and the Viceroyalty of New Spain.

Ted: What's a viceroyalty?

Mona: It's like a state or a mini-country ruled by another country. The Viceroyalty of Peru included all of the former Inca Empire as well as most of South America. Its capital was Lima. The Viceroyalty of New Spain included modern-day Mexico, all of Central America and the Caribbean, as well as Florida and the central and western States in the modern United States, parts of southern Canada, and the Philippines. Its capital was Mexico City.

Ted: Both of those are ridiculously huge areas! But, did you say the Philippines? I thought that it was in Asia. How did the Philippines get into this?

Mona: We'll get to that in a minute. In the meantime, Spain had a really clear goal when they started colonizing the Americas. They wanted gold! Oh, so much gold! The conquest of the Inca and Aztec's sure helped with that goal. At first, Spain was glutting itself on the gold of the New World, but then they had to confront the fact that they didn't actually have any major gold mines in the Americas. All that gold was just stuff they'd stolen from the Native peoples.



Plus the
Philippines!

*See note on page 27 about the
borders shown on this map.*

Gold and silver coins from the reign of Philip II.



Ted: So they needed a mine?

Mona: Yes. But the problem was, where was all the gold? Spain spent quite a lot of time searching for the ideal gold mine. While they do eventually find gold, they really hit the jackpot with silver. Spain started both gold and silver mines in northern Mexico. At first, Spain made quite a lot of money off these mines. These mines required so much labor the Spanish started using a system called *encomienda*, as well as bringing slaves over from Africa.

Ted: Yuck, slavery. I'm guessing *encomienda* is similar to slavery?

Mona: Yes. *Encomienda* was a system where the Spanish demanded tribute and labor from the people they conquered.

Ted: So the Spanish conquered them, stole their stuff, and then said 'now you have to give us more stuff and work for us for free'?

Mona: It was as terrible as it sounds.

Ted: Colonization sucks. . .

Mona: The mines in Mexico were productive, and the Spanish made a lot of money off them, but they were soon overshadowed when a literal mountain of silver was discovered.

Ted: How? Where?

Mona: Diego Huallpa was a Quechua man working for the Spanish in modern-day Bolivia. He climbed a mountain looking for an Inca shrine. On his way down the mountain, he was knocked down by a gust of wind and fell into *paydirt*. He immediately recognized the valuable metals mixed into the dirt. Soon word spread and several different mines were opened on the mountain Cerro Rico de Potosi. With this discovery, Spain went from making quite a lot of money to making utterly unreasonable amounts of money.

Ted: Cerro Rico is an actual mountain of silver? Cool!

Mona: It has rocks and other minerals too, but yeah, it had TONS of silver.

Ted: Was there terrible forced labor at Cerro Rico too?

Mona: Yes. The Inca had a system called *mit'a* where people served the government for a certain number of days per year.

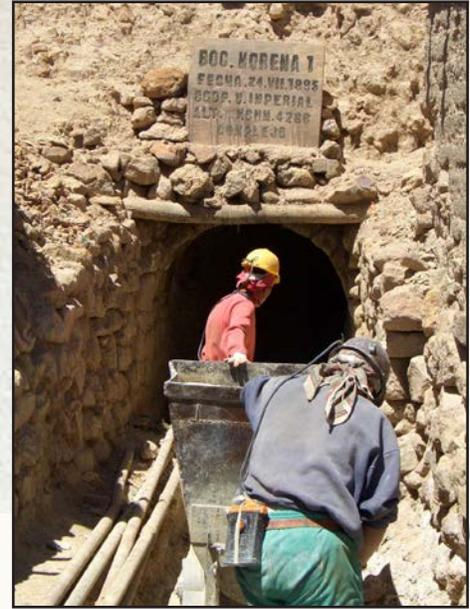
Ted: And in exchange for that Pachacuti promised them food, protection, education, and other benefits.

Mona: Yeah, and it was through the *mit'a* system that the Inca were able to build so many incredible things like their road system and Machu Picchu. The Spaniards decided to make the *mit'a* system part of their *encomienda* system. They just made it. . . worse.



Above, a view of Cerro Rico de Potosí in Bolivia.

Right, modern miners working at Cerro Rico. Cerro Rico is one of the richest ore discoveries in history. It is still being mined today and has been mined almost continuously since its discovery by Diego Huallpa.



Ted: Because I'm guessing they didn't provide the people with the food, protection, and education like the Inca government did.

Mona: It was slavery. A really brutal form of slavery since working in the mines was so incredibly dangerous. Not all the workers at Cerro Rico were forced laborers though. Many were paid. But the most difficult and dangerous jobs were given to the mit'a workers.

Ted: That's pretty horrendous!

Mona: The encomienda system was so brutal that some Spaniards objected to the cruel treatment of the Natives. The friar Bartolomé de Las Casas petitioned the Spanish King on behalf of the Native people and was able to get some reforms, called the New Laws, passed which freed thousands of Natives. Other Spaniards fought hard to keep the system in place, and the cruelty and forced labor were far from over.

Ted: At least someone tried to fix that mess. . . What exactly was Spain doing with all this silver?

Mona: That's how the Philippines come into this.

Ted: How?

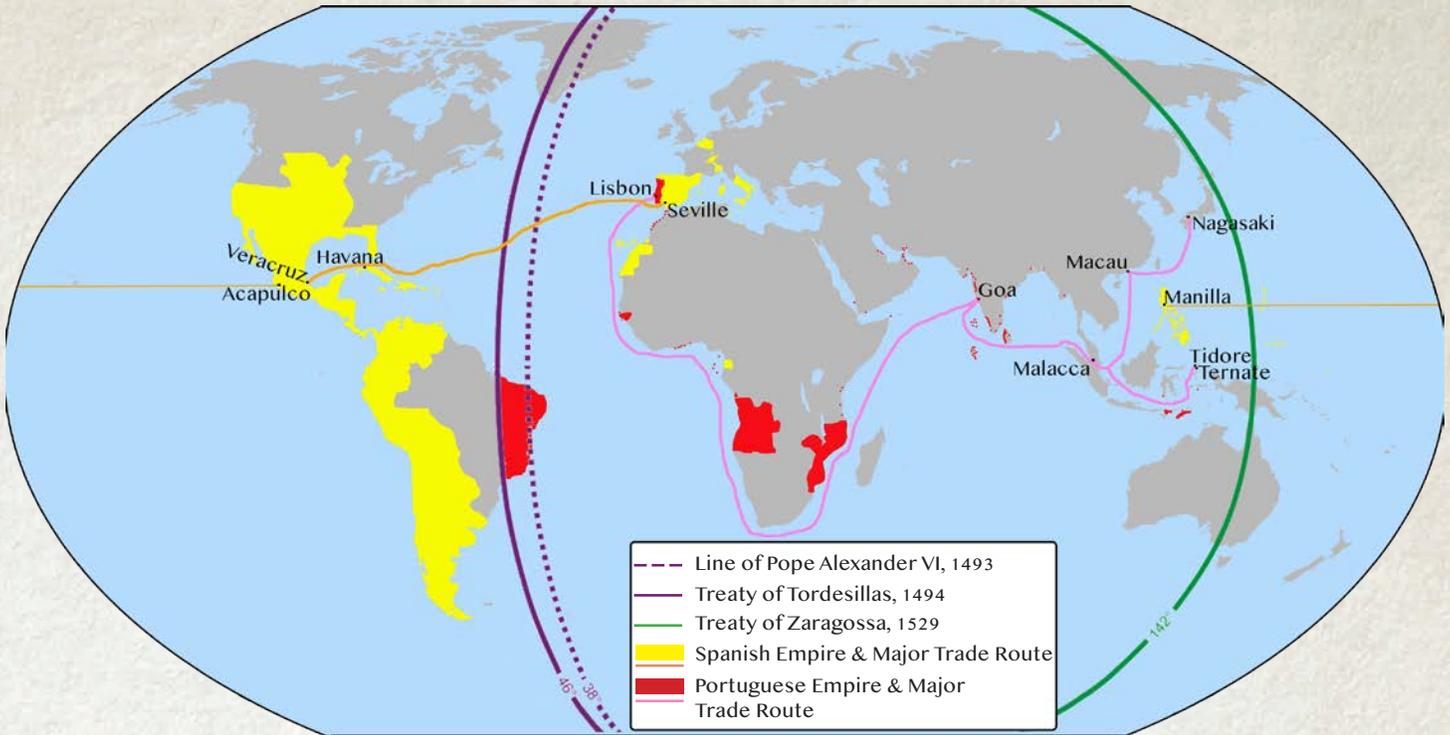
Mona: In 1493, the Pope decided to settle the disputes between the budding Spanish and Portuguese Empires with the Treaty of Tordesillas. In the treaty, the Pope drew a line down the world and said Spain gets this half. Portugal gets that half.

Ted: Like a mom trying to get two siblings who share a room to stop fighting. . .

Mona: Exactly like that. Portugal got Africa and Asia. Spain got the Americas.

Ted: Can I point out those lands weren't the Pope's to give away?

Mona: You can point that out, but the Pope did it anyway. Back to the Philippines. The reason Spain even found the Americas was because they were trying to sail to Asia. Spain wanted in on Asian trade routes. In 1543, a Spanish explorer landed on an island in the Pacific Ocean and decided to name it and the surrounding islands the Philippines after King Philip II of Spain. The Philippines were technically in Portuguese territory, but they were far enough away from major spice sources that Spain figured Portugal wouldn't fight for them.



Map of the Spanish and Portuguese Empires in the 1600s. The purple line is the division created by the Treaty of Tordesillas. That treaty did not include a dividing line in the Pacific Ocean/ The Treaty of Zaragoza was signed to end further Spanish and Portuguese conflicts over Asian trade routes. The core Portuguese trade route is shown in pink, while the Spanish trade route is shown in orange. Major port cities are labeled.

Please note, borders changed frequently and there is a difference between claimed land and controlled land. This map shows claimed land. While the Spanish and Portuguese claimed all this land, that does not mean they controlled it all in any meaningful way. In particular, Spanish control in the Americas outside of the former Inca and Aztec Empires was limited. The far north and south ends of the empire were claimed in name only, and Spain had almost no presence there. In addition, many other areas were heavily disputed between the Spanish and Native peoples. Likewise, Portugal's claims in Africa were also heavily disputed.

Ted: Ah, so Spain colonized the Philippines because it was as close as they could get to Asia!

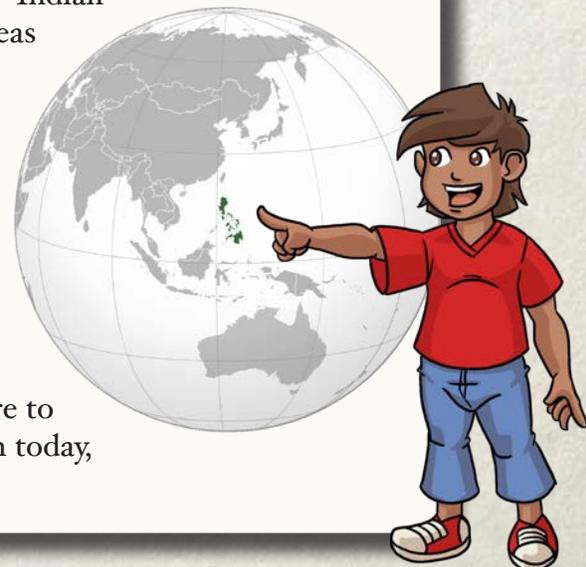
Mona: Exactly! In 1565, Spanish colonizers showed up and started taking control of the islands. They founded Manila in 1571 as the capital of the Philippines.

Ted: Can we stop and talk about the Philippines then? The Philippines are this group of islands on the eastern side of Asia.

Mona: The Philippines are just outside what's known as the "Indian cultural bubble." The Indian cultural bubble describes the areas around India that were heavily influenced by Indian culture, religion, philosophy, and art. So the Philippines had some similarities with other Southeast Asian cultures, but not a lot.

Ted: A lot of the Philippines was settled by Austronesian-speaking people thousands of years ago, right?

Mona: Yeah, we talked about that in ancient history. The Spaniards showed up and added a whole lot of Spanish culture to the mix, which is why millions of Filipinos still speak Spanish today, and the majority of Filipinos are Catholics.



Ted: Because language and religion are two things the Spanish were really good at spreading.

Mona: Spain discovered a sea route that went straight from Mexico to the Philippines. That meant it was easy to sail all that silver from the Americas to the Philippines where it could be spent buying Asian trade goods. Silver was the preferred type of money in Asia since it was one of the very few things Chinese merchants were interested in trading for.

Ted: Oh! I'm seeing how these pieces fit together. They mine silver in the Americas, send it over to the Pacific coast, sail it to the Philippines, buy Chinese stuff (like porcelain, silk, and spices), and then?

Mona: Sail it back to Mexico! Ships called Manila Galleons sailed this trade route from Acapulco to Manila for 250 years.

Ted: That's a long time for one trade route to last.

Mona: The long term trade route between Mexico and the Philippines meant that a lot of ideas and culture were shared over the years, creating a close connection and many similarities between the two regions.

Ted: Why did the trade ships sail back to Mexico though? I would have thought Spain would want to send all those Asian trade goods back to Spain, not Mexico.

Mona: But they couldn't sail across the Indian Ocean to get back to Spain. Stopping off in Mexico before crossing the Atlantic was easier than sailing around South America.

Ted: Ah, right. The Indian Ocean "belonged" to Portugal. What's Portugal been up to?

Mona: Portugal has been busy building up their own trans-continental empire.

Ted: The Spanish and Portuguese Empires were distinctly different. Spain was going for the more traditional land empire approach. The same sort of thing Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan did. They conquered massive amounts of land, toppled previous empires, and were left with millions of people and vast natural resources to rule. Portugal built a trading post empire. It was more of a lazy soldier's approach to empire building. They didn't conquer much land. They didn't topple empires. Yet they still had a large empire.

Mona: You're right, Portugal didn't really control that much land, at least not compared to Spain. Portugal stuck to the coasts. They'd build forts along the coast to take over trade, or they'd conquer powerful cities on the coast, like Kilwa Kisiwani.

Ted: Portugal wanted to control trade. ALL of the trade. From Europe, around Africa, and across the Indian Ocean, Portugal set up a nearly continuous empire. Their ships never had to stop and resupply at an unfriendly port. Taking the coasts gave Portugal a powerful empire. In addition, the Portuguese also took control of strategic ports so they could STOP trading going in certain directions. They stopped the trade that had been thriving in the Persian Gulf for millennia so they could force merchants to go along the Portuguese route around Africa.



1493 — Treaty of Tordesillas
1521 — Viceroyalty of New Spain founded

1529
Treaty of Zaragoza

Viceroyalty of Peru founded 1542
Cerro Rico discovered 1545

The New Laws passed 1543
Philippines named

Mona: How did Portugal get control of so many cities? I get that they conquered quite a few of them, but what about places like China? Surely Portugal wasn't strong enough to take on China.

Ted: Nope! And they had the good sense not to. Portugal used non-military tactics to get certain ports. In the case of China, they started talking to the Ming government and eventually convinced the Ming to rent a Chinese city to them.

Mona: They rented a whole city?

Ted: Pretty crazy, right? This wasn't short term either. Portugal rented this city for several centuries.

Mona: What city was it?

Ted: Macau.

Mona: Macau is one of the most densely populated cities in the world today!

Ted: And from 1557 to 1999 it belonged to Portugal. Ports like this were key to Portugal building its empire.

Mona: Another tactic the Portuguese tried was religion.

Ted: How did that help build an empire?

Mona: The Portuguese hoped that if people converted to Christianity, then they would be friendly with the Portuguese.

Ted: Friendly as in let them use their ports and give them good deals on trade goods?

Mona: Exactly. The Portuguese had some success with their missionary attempts, but generally, it caused problems. Several different violent conflicts broke out around the Indian Ocean as locals objected to Portuguese missionaries.

Ted: The Spanish also spread religion everywhere they went.

Mona: It's a common theme in the Age of Colonization.

Ted: Spain and Portugal seem to have this colonization thing on lockdown. Are they the only countries colonizing everywhere?

Mona: Nope! England, France, and the Netherlands, in particular, were not too happy about being left behind in either trade routes or colonization. Wars and conflicts in Europe would rage for quite a while as these countries tried to outdo each other at home. Meanwhile, in the rest of the world, these countries would try to start their own colonies, create their own trade routes, or plunder Spanish and Portuguese ships all in an attempt to come out on top.

Ted: So how does all this power and silver affect Spain and Portugal back in Europe?

Mona: Let's go find out!

Macau rented by Portugal
1557

Q. Elizabeth I crowned

Spain colonizes Philippines
1565

Manila Galleon route begins

Manila founded
1571



Culture Corner

Miguel de Cervantes ☾



Arthur: Welcome back to Arthur and Lily's Culture Corner.

Lily: Today I'm highlighting another game-changer in the history of writing: Miguel de Cervantes!

Arthur: Cervantes is a writer who lived in Spain during the 1500 and 1600s.

Lily: He spent five years serving in the army, where he had his hand shot off, and another five years as a slave to pirates. The rest of his life he spent as a poor and struggling author. His books were not popular, and he couldn't make enough money. He eventually ended up in prison because of his money problems. While he was sitting in prison, he started writing something that changed the world.

Arthur: Don Quixote! Tell me sis, what is Don Quixote about?

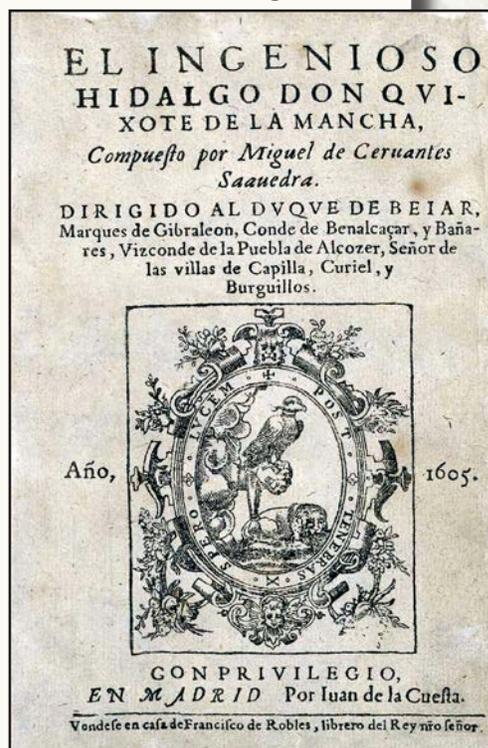
Lily: Don Quixote is the adventures of an insane knight.

Arthur: Sounds promising!

Lily: In Cervantes day, medieval romances were all the rage. These books were about chivalrous knights going on grand adventures where they rescued damsels in distress and performed great feats of heroism. Cervantes enjoyed these books but was also bored with how predictable they were. Don Quixote is a satire, or mockery, of these medieval romances.

Arthur: Ho, ho! How does it mock those stories?

Lily: Don Quixote is a poor nobleman who has read so many of these medieval romances that they've rotted his brain and turned him mad. He suddenly believes he is a chivalric knight. He pulls out his great-grandfather's rusty armor, mounts his skinny pony, and sets off to complete great feats of heroism. Don Quixote falls madly in love with the noble lady Dulcinea (who is actually just an innkeeper's daughter) and insists he will do great things to prove his love to her. Along the way, he is joined by Sancho Panza as his squire. Sancho is a bit dim, very pragmatic, and a loyal friend to Don Quixote. Sancho is the world's first sidekick. Don Quixote and Sancho have many misadventures, such as fighting giants, which turn out to be windmills.



Arthur: All that sounds spectacular, who wouldn't want to read about an insane knight? But do tell, why is Don Quixote so important?

Lily: It's considered the first modern novel. Unlike all those medieval romances it's not really about what Don Quixote does. It's about what Don Quixote thinks and feels. It's about what Sancho thinks and feels. It asks big questions like 'what is reality?'

Arthur: What is reality? That is a good question. Are we real? How do we know?

Lily: Most importantly, Don Quixote is about the individual. Don Quixote and Sancho and Dulcinea and every other person they meet is important. They are important because they are people. They have unique thoughts. Unique dreams. Unique feelings. Every person matters because they are different. Even if a person is totally insane, they still matter. Miguel de Cervantes is one of the first writers to explore and celebrate individuality.

Arthur: I quite agree. I, as an individual, matter. I quite like being me, and I love that I'm different from other people.

Lily: Individuality is at the center of our world today. And that's all thanks to people like Miguel de Cervantes.



*Illustrations by Gustave Doré of scenes from Don Quixote.
Left shows the famous windmill fight. Right shows Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.*