

MKU – Biskra	Level:	2 <sup>nd</sup> year <i>Licence</i>
Faculty of Letters and Languages	Course:	Civilization of the Language
English Language Division	Instructor:	Dr. Salim Kerboua
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## LECTURE 5: EXPLORATIONS AND SETTLEMENTS

Perhaps no other event in European history had a greater impact on U.S history than Christopher Columbus's 1492 voyage of discovery. Searching for a short, westerly route to the spices and wealth of Asia, Columbus had sailed across the Atlantic only to reach new lands that would become known as North, Central, and South America. The Genoan sea captain and mapmaker died in 1506 poor and nearly forgotten, but his dream of reaching China and the Spice Islands had opened up whole continents—regardless of whether the indigenous populations would welcome further European exploration and settlement.

Columbus had sailed under the sponsorship of the Spanish monarchy. During the decades that followed, **Spain became the first European power to establish an extensive system of colonies.** Through representatives of the Spanish king— including **priests, merchants, landowners, and soldiers or conquistadores**—Spain staked its claims to the lands, wealth, and even the native peoples of the Americas. As Spain colonized, **it focused most of its efforts on lands that were south of the modern-day United States. Spain was the first to take advantage of its opportunities in the New World,** but other European leaders were soon eyeing Spain's successes with jealousy. They mounted sea voyages of their own, targeting lands north of most of **Spain's early outposts.**

### JOHN CABOT

**England was one of the first rivals to Spain in the New World. Just five years after Columbus reached the Caribbean,** the English Crown sponsored another Genoan, **John Cabot,** to sail on its behalf. It is known that Cabot was a merchant in Venice during the 1460s and that by 1490 he had moved to England, where he became a respected merchant and sea captain. While living in England, Cabot developed a theory similar to that of Columbus—that the Orient could be easiest reached by sailing west across the Atlantic. Cabot's vision differed from Columbus's, however. He thought Japan lay directly west of England, placing it north of the Caribbean. Cabot became convinced that Columbus had landed too far south of the Spice Islands when he reached America in 1492. He set out to find a sponsor, much as Columbus had done a decade earlier, to provide support for his theory. **Cabot received such backing from England's King Henry VII. In the spring of 1496 Henry gave Cabot permission to sail west to Asia with royal funding for his ships and supplies.**

Cabot's first voyage proved a difficult one. Lackluster winds and a supply shortage **caused him to return to England** before reaching his goal. The following year he set sail

again onboard *the Matthew* with a crew of 18, plus his son, Sebastian. After more than seven weeks at sea, the ship made landfall on **June 24, 1497, at a place Cabot called “new found land”** (probably **Canada’s Labrador, Newfoundland,** or Cape Breton Island). Five centuries had passed since Viking long ships had arrived along those same shores. After several weeks of exploring, Cabot returned to England, where an enthusiastic King Henry gave him the title of Great Admiral and authorized another voyage for the following year.

For his 1498 voyage, Cabot’s single ship became five and his crew numbered 300 men. But, once again, troubles plagued him. A storm hit the English flotilla and damaged one of the ships, forcing its early return to England while Cabot and his other four ships continued on to America. In the event, the returning vessel became the voyage’s sole survivor, for Cabot and his other ships never came back and the mystery of their disappearance remains today. Nevertheless, **Henry VII still based his claim to the lands of North America on Cabot’s voyages of discovery.** That claim was furthered by Cabot’s son, Sebastian, who commanded voyages to the New World in 1508 and 1526. During his time in America, Sebastian reached Hudson Bay, giving England an additional claim to the North American interior. Other voyages from England involved merchants, both English and Portuguese, whom Henry VII sent to Newfoundland to establish trade with the American Indians. The king refused to invest any significant money in the New World, a position later held by his son, Henry VIII, and his grandchildren, Edward VI and Mary I.

#### **OTHER EXPLORERS**

Since the time when Christopher Columbus, trying to find a new route to Asia, had stumbled upon America in 1492, many attempts had been made by the kings of Spain, France, and England to explore and conquer new lands on the new continent. French sailor and explorer **Jacques Cartier**, commissioned by King Francis I in **1535**, discovered the site of nowadays Montreal and named the St Lawrence River. After him, **Samuel de Champlain**, in **1603**, laid the foundation of New France.

Between **1539** and **1542**, **Hernando De Soto** carried the Spanish flag to Florida across what are now the southern states, up to Texas, while **Francisco Vasquez de Coronado**, in search of legendary treasures, toil his way from Mexico into the heart of the country lying west of the Mississippi. Before the end of the sixteen century, the Spaniards planted the first European settlements in North America: St Augustine in Florida and Santa Fé in New Mexico.

By that time, the English had tried their luck and failed. In **1587**, Sir **Walter Raleigh**, under a patent of Queen Elizabeth, sent an expedition to the island of **Roanoke**, off the coast of North Carolina. His unfortunate colonists had been swallowed up in the woods, leaving behind no clue as to their fate. Yet his efforts had aroused among his countrymen an interest which was soon to ensure success.



## De Soto's expedition route (1539-1543)

- : Expedition route
- ⋯ : Current state boundaries
- ★ : Approximate location of archaeological site



GRAPHICS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, WITH TRANSLATION AND ADDITIONS BY CAROLINE LINDSEY/MISCELLANY

## FRANCISCO VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO

**Francisco Vázquez de Coronado**, (1510, Salamanca, Spain—September 22, 1554, Mexico) was a **Spanish explorer of the North American Southwest** whose expeditions resulted in the discovery of many physical landmarks, including the Grand Canyon, but who failed to find the treasure-laden cities he sought.

Coronado went to New Spain (Mexico) with in 1535 and earned early distinction in killing the Natives. He was appointed governor of Nueva Galicia in 1538. In February 1540 a military force under the leadership of Coronado left Compostela and proceeded up the west coast of Mexico to Culiacán. A smaller unit rode north from there and encountered the Pueblos of Zuni in July 1540 but found no great wealth or treasure. Another side exploration made García López de Cárdenas the first white man to view the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River (in modern Arizona). The groups united to spend the winter on the Rio Grande at Kuana (near modern Santa Fe). Several Indian groups attempted to attack them there but were beaten back with severe reprisals.

In the spring of 1541, the force moved into Palo Duro Canyon in Texas. There Coronado left most of his men and proceeded north with 30 horsemen to another supposedly fabulously wealthy country, Quivira (Kansas), only to find a seminomadic Indian village and disillusionment again. In 1542 Coronado returned to Mexico, reported his disappointing findings to Mendoza, and resumed his governorship of Nueva Galicia.

