

C. The Rise of the Europe of Nations

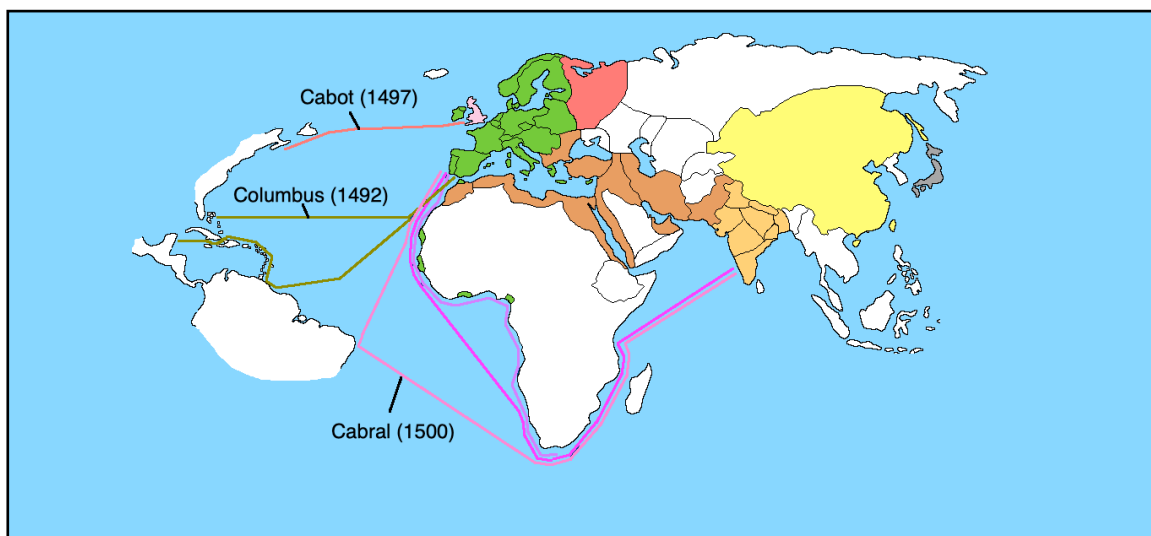
1. One way to think of the timeline is that Europe is the “trunk,” while the Anglosphere, America, and the Iberosphere are “branches,” and Greco-Roman civilization is the “roots” of the *family tree* of Western civilization.
2. Europe became the trunk, when the Greco-Roman world collapsed once and for all in **476 AD**. Greco-Roman civilization had been under attack for about a century by Asian invaders of Europe called the “Huns.” When it finally fell, it was not obvious what would rise to take its place.
3. Just before the fall, in **451 AD**, the Romans had received the help of a Germanic tribe called the “Franks” to defeat the Huns at the *Battle of Chalons*. This may be one of the most decisive battles in history, because if they had lost, there might never have been a Europe.
4. When the last Roman emperor, named Romulus Augustus, was deposed by other Germanic barbarians in **476 AD**, it was the Franks who grew to dominate the shell of former Roman territory. They adopted many Greco-Roman values and traditions, including the religion of Christianity. If the Huns had taken their place, there is a good chance, the entire heritage of the Greco-Roman world would have been destroyed and forgotten.
5. Instead, the Franks built an empire that later broke into the two important countries, France and Germany. Tribes called the Angles and Saxons, and later the Normans, settled in England, making it a separate country.
6. Meanwhile the tribal people of Spain and Portugal were fighting an invasion of Europe by the Muslims which began in **711 AD**. It was known to them as the “Reconquista” (which means “reconquest”) and it lasted nearly 800 years! Only in **1492** did the Reconquista end.
7. By this point in Europe’s history, Iberia had become a distinct set of cultures. France, Germany, and England had as well. Europe had become a cultural block of separate nations (i.e. people with a long history, and a distinct language and traditions that gave them a sense of belonging together).

D. The Age of Discovery

1. The reason why there are so many cultural blocks in the same “family” of cultures is that the different nations of Europe engaged in a unique contest to explore the world during the period known as the *Age of Discovery*.
2. The main goal of the explorers and their royal patrons during this time was to find an efficient trade route to Asia—China mainly, but also Japan and India—because of the notoriety of these cultures ever since the voyage of a young Italian merchant named Marco Polo.
3. Polo’s time in China in the service of the Chinese emperor was the material for a famous book that inspired many explorers, who imagined that sailing to Asia directly, rather than trading with Muslim merchants in the Middle East, would be extremely profitable. (The

goal was to cut out the “middle man,” of which there were indeed many, who formed a chain between China and Europe, and who each took a percentage of the value of goods bought and sold along the way, thus raising the prices to exorbitant levels. Anyone who could break that chain would be able to sell the same goods for much less, and still make huge amounts of money.)

4. The attempt to reach Asia by sea began with Portugal, under Prince Henry “the Navigator,” and proceeded slowly over decades. Indeed, the Portuguese had not yet succeeded in finding a route when Christopher Columbus proposed a different approach to the monarchs of Spain. Based on the ancient Greek sciences of geography and astronomy, Columbus proposed a westward route from Europe to Asia.
5. After the initial discovery of America by Columbus in **1492**, all the seafaring nations and were inspired to be the first to send explorers to see if they could actually reach Asia. (At the time, the exact nature of Columbus’s discovery was unclear. England, for one, sent an explorer named John Cabot in **1497**. Cabot sailed down the east coast of North America from Newfoundland to some undisclosed point, thus confirming there was a lot of land to be revealed.
6. Columbus himself returned four times to the “New World,” and learned of the land mass of South America, and the layout of central America, before his efforts were cut short by the impatient king and queen of Spain.
7. The evolving geographical understanding of Europeans about the Americas was capped off by the Portuguese explorer Pedro Alvares Cabral in **1500**, when he was blown off course as he rounded Africa, and found the land that is today Brazil (where Portuguese is spoken instead of Spanish as a result).
8. The collected efforts of these explorers can be seen on the following map, along with the Portuguese voyages around Africa that revealed the true extent of the main habitable continents of the world and would result in the spread of Western civilization.



The voyages of Columbus (1492 and later), Cabot (1497), Cabral (1500) and others collectively revealed the scope of the “New World,” which European civilization would soon colonize.

E. Mexico and the Bolivarian Iberosphere

1. Following the discovery of the Americas by Columbus in **1492** (for Spain) and Cabral in **1500** (for Portugal), further exploration continued for decades, with the main goal being to get *around* America and continue on to Asia, until it was clear that there were actually some civilizations in Mexico (the Aztecs and Mayans) and Peru (the Incas).
2. When it was learned that these empires possessed significant amounts of gold and silver, Spanish adventurers known as “conquistadors”—fresh from the final triumph of their long war against the Muslim invaders of Iberia, called the *Reconquista*—set out to conquer them and plunder the resources of these newly discovered peoples, whose religious culture was barbaric and profoundly offensive to the Spanish Catholics.
3. The Aztec empire of Mexico became the target of a conquistador named Hernan Cortes, who from 1519-1521 recruited other native tribes (who hated the Aztecs) and took advantage of his more advanced weaponry and tactics to defeat and enslave them.
4. The same pattern played out in South America, and in most cases, the tribal people of the various regions were too primitive to be able to resist the tide of European colonization.
5. For nearly three hundred years, the colonial Iberosphere was a society patterned after Europe, with military conquerors owning the land, a large caste of poor peasants working for them, and with the added element of slaves imported from Africa.
6. The Catholic priests of Spain and Portugal tried to make conditions more humane for peasants and slaves, but they were never able to actually dictate the social contract.
7. Nor were they able to help make a new social contract when the Iberosphere became independent from Iberia during the Napoleonic period. The military rulers, called “caudillos,” took advantage of the fact that Napoleon had conquered Iberia to declare and win their independence in the **Iberian-American Wars of Independence (1808-33)**.
8. In Mexico, the military commander who led the charge for independence and took over the government was Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. In Venezuela, it was a general called Simon Bolivar. In Brazil, it was Prince Pedro I.
9. The culture that arose was dubbed “Bolivarianismo” by one of the later leaders of Venezuela. It is evidently named after Simon Bolivar. The motto of that culture was perfectly stated by Prince Pedro I in his *Cry of Ipiranga*: “Independence or death!”
10. What the *Cry of Ipiranga* reveals, unfortunately, is that unlike the American Revolution, where the motto was “Give me *liberty*, or give me death!” the **Iberian-American Wars of Independence (1808-33)** did not have a foundation of liberty as the core value.
11. Independence itself has always been the main priority of this cultural group, with some countries like Cuba and Venezuela especially independent, and others like Mexico and Panama accepting closer relations to the United States.
12. Mexico and the Iberosphere have lagged behind America in terms of freedom and prosperity since becoming independent. Mexico itself only experienced a genuine revolution about a hundred years ago. The **Mexican Revolution (1910-20)** finally produced a relatively democratic system, but it has taken nearly a century for that system to provide anything close to the political freedom that Americans have always known.

- 13. Mexico, like the rest of Iberosphere, was so focused on its independence from the rest of the world, that it played only a very minor role in the world wars.
- 14. Unfortunately, in modern times, the focus of *Bolivarianism* has mainly been to avoid become too connected to America—the self appointed world police power. This was especially the case when America helped a new generation of caudillos to create military dictatorships in the Iberosphere to prevent the rise of communism there.
- 15. Ever since the fall of communism, the relationship between America and the Bolivarian Iberosphere has become gradually smoother. The future should generally be one in which these two cultural blocks become more closely linked, if America can avoid being too bossy!
- 16. Here is our full timeline so far:

