

Birmingham [AL] PL



Bordone, world map, 1528, detail (not the map viewed by Ayala). Cabot landed in the area of "terra del laboratore" [Labrador] in 1497. See 1685 and 1999 maps, p. 7.

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Ferdinand, King of Spain, woodcut by Carlo Verardi, 1494

Spanish-English Rivalry in the Caribbean, 1498-1670

1498. On the impending Spanish-English conflict in the Caribbean.

Don Pedro de Ayala, Spanish ambassador in England, to Ferdinand and Isabella, King and Queen of Spain, 25 July 1498.

I think your Majesties have already heard that the King of England has equipped a fleet in order to discover certain islands and continents, which he was informed [by] some people from Bristol [England], who manned a few ships for the same purpose last year, had found. I have seen the map which the discoverer has made, who is another Genoese like Columbus [Giovanni Caboto/John Cabot], and who has been in Seville and in Lisbon asking assistance for his discoveries. The people of Bristol have, for the last seven years, sent out every year two, three, or four light ships, in search of the island of Brazil and the seven cities [of Cibola], according to the fancy of this Genoese . . . I have seen on a chart the direction which they took and the distance they sailed, and I think that what they have found, or what they are in search of, is what Your Highnesses already possess. . . . I write this because the King of England has often spoken to me on this subject, and he thinks that Your Highnesses will take great interest in it. . . . I told him that, in my opinion, the land was already in the possession of Your Majesties; but though I gave him my reasons, he did not like them. I believe that your Highnesses are already informed of this matter; and I do not now send the carta, or mapa mundi [map of the world] which that man has made, and which, according to my opinion, is false, since it makes it appear as if the land in question was not the said islands.

1528. The first violation of the Spanish monopoly in the Caribbean.

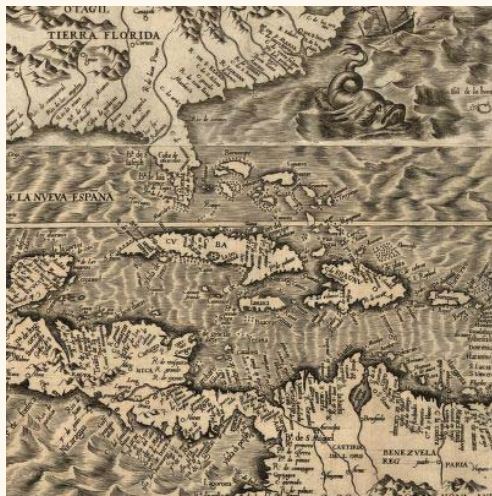
Charles I, King of Spain, to the Judges of the Audiencia of Hispaniola, 27 March 1528.

With respect to what you say of the English ship which anchored in the harbor of the city of Santo Domingo in that island [Hispaniola], I would have been much pleased had you taken and detained it, and had there not been such carelessness in this matter; for, as you will have learned, we are war with the King of England, and even were we

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Hispaniola



Diego Gutiérrez, map of the western hemisphere (*Americae sive quartae orbis*), 1562, details

not it would have been well had you learned what voyage the ship was making and what she carried, and had not let the master and men of said ship go (as go they did), and after they had landed and visited the city and seen how it lies, and its harbor, inasmuch as they were from a foreign kingdom, and this was a thing not heretofore experienced in those parts. Nor can you exonerate yourselves in the matter, for there was great carelessness and negligence.

1568. "Lords of the Sea": English Pirates in the Spanish Caribbean.

Lazaro de Vallejo Aldrate and Hernando Costilla to Philip II, King of Spain, 26 September 1568.

We entreat your Majesty to remedy the grievous condition prevailing today in the Indies. For every two ships that come [here] from Spain, twenty corsairs [pirate ships] appear. For this reason not a town on all this coast is safe, for whenever they please to do so they take and plunder these settlements. They go so far as to boast that they are lords of the sea and of the land, and as a matter of fact daily we see them seize ships both of the Indies trade and also some that come here from Spain itself. They capture towns, and this so commonly that we see it happen every year. Unless Your Majesty deign to favor all this coast by remedying the situation, all these settlements must necessarily be abandoned, from which will result grave detriment to Your Majesty's royal patrimony and an end will be put to inter-Indies traffic, trade with the Canaries will suffer, as will also those ships which come out of Spain between fleets.

1580. "The Only Way." Bernardino de Mendoza, Spanish Ambassador in England, to Philip II, King of Spain.

. . . no foreign ship should be spared in either the Spanish or Portuguese Indies, but . . . every one should be sent to the bottom . . . This will be the only way to prevent the English and French from going to those parts to plunder; for at present there is hardly an Englishman who is not talking of undertaking the voyage, so encouraged are they by [Sir Francis] Drake's return [from his lucrative pirating raids in the Caribbean in 1573].

1580. On the right of nations to establish colonies in the New World.

William Camden, *Annals of Affairs in England and Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth*, publ. 1615.

Bernardino de Mendoza, Ambassador for Spain in England, made an angry and vehement demand for satisfaction from the Queen, complaining that the [West] Indian Ocean was navigated by the English. The reply that

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Signature of Elizabeth (as princess) 1549

Robert Kitay



Cathedral of Santa Maria de Menor, constructed 1514-1544, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

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Queen Elizabeth I, "in the superb dress in which she went to St. Paul's to return thanks for the defeat of the Spanish Armada," engraving ca. 1840

he received was as follows:—That the Spaniards by their unfairness towards the English, whom they had prohibited from commerce, contrary to the right of nations, had brought these troubles upon themselves. . . . Her Majesty does not understand why her subjects and those of other Princes are prohibited from the Indies, which she could not persuade herself are the rightful property of Spain by donation of the Pope of Rome [1493 decree dividing the New World between Spain and Portugal] . . . and that only on the ground that Spaniards have touched here and there, have erected shelters, have given names to a river or promontory; acts which cannot confer property. So that this donation of alien property (which be essence of law is void) and this imaginary proprietorship ought not to hinder other princes from carrying on commerce in these regions, and from establishing Colonies where Spaniards are not residing, without the least violation of the law of nations.

1586. On the English sacking of Santo Domingo on the Spanish island of Hispaniola.

Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral of Santo Domingo to Philip II, King of Spain, 19 February 1586.

God, Our Lord, permitted an English fleet which the people of this city of Santo Domingo sighted on Friday, the 10th of January of this present year, to land men immediately, on the following Saturday. That day they entered into the city and sacked and destroyed it. We understand that it was Heaven's punishment on this people's manifold sins. . . .

The English remained here thirty-six days, during which they treated this city as an enemy of their religion, of their queen, and of themselves. They carried away everything they wanted and could transport; everything else they burned and destroyed. Notably, they burned two thirds of the residencies and edifices of this city and all its churches and monasteries and nunneries, its hospitals and hermitages, excepting the cathedral. . . .

They made a jail of two chapels in this church wherein they confined many residents whom they arrested; and confined therein, these persons used the chapels as prisoners must any place in which they are long detained The church stands, then, sacked, defaced, in ruins. We are helpless.

1588. On the English defeat of the Spanish Armada in the North Sea.

Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 1599.

Thus the magnificent, huge, and mighty fleet of the Spaniards (which themselves termed in all places invincible) such as sailed not upon the Ocean sea many

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Silver utensils from the Spanish galleon *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, wrecked on the Florida coral reefs near the Dry Tortugas in 1622

hundred years before, in the year 1588 vanished into smoke, to the great confusion and discouragement of the authors thereof.

1623. "No other way." Supplanting Spain in the West Indies.

Sir Benjamin Rudyerd, Speech in the English House of Commons, 17 March 1623.

Now, let us a little consider the enemy we are to encounter, the King of Spain. They are not his great territories which make him so powerful, and so troublesome to all Christendom. For it is very well known that Spain itself is but weak in men and barren of natural commodities [resources]. As for his other territories, they lie divided and asunder, which is a weakness in itself; besides, they are held by force and maintained at an extraordinary charge. Insomuch, as although he be a great king, yet he is like that great giant who was said to have one hundred hands but he had fifty bellies to feed, so that ratably [in proportion], he had no more hands than another man.

No sir, they are his mines in the West Indies, which minister fuel to feed his vast ambitious desire of universal monarchy: it is the money he hath from thence which makes him able to levy, and pay soldiers in all places; and to keep an army continually on foot, ready to invade and endanger his neighbors.

So that we have no other way, but to endeavor to cut him up at root, and seek to impeach or to supplant him in the West Indies.

1648. "I offer a New World."

Advice of Thomas Gage, an English priest in Central America, to the Lord General of the New Model Army of England, in the dedication to his narrative, *The English-American his Travail by Sea and Land: Or, A New Survey of the West India's*, 1648.

I offer a New World, to be the subject of your future pains, valor, and piety, beseeching your acceptance of this plain but faithful relation [narrative] of mine, wherein Your Excellency, and by you the English Nation, shall see what wealth and honor they have lost by one of their narrow-hearted princes, who, living in peace and abounding in riches, did notwithstanding reject the offer of being first discoverer of America, and left it unto Ferdinand of Aragon. . . And yet, if time were closely followed at the heels, we are not so far behind but we may yet take him by the fore-top. To which purpose our plantations [colonies] of the Barbados, St. Christophers, Nevis, and the rest of the Caribbean Islands, have not only advanced our journey the better part of the way, but so inured our people to the clime of the Indies as they are the more enabled thereby to

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Philip Lea, *North America divided into its III principall parts*, 1685, detail of Lesser Antilles including Puerto Rico (upper left), St. Christopher, Nevis, and Barbados (center right)

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English sugar plantations in the Lesser Antilles
above: St. Kitts (perhaps), late 1700s
below: Nicholas Abbey plantation, Barbados,
constructed 1650s



New York Public Library



Spanish ports in Cuba and Puerto Rico, insets
in Henry Overton, *A new & correct map of the
trading part of the West Indies*, 1741



undertake any enterprise upon the firm land with greater facility.

Neither is the difficulty of the attempt so great as many may imagine; for I dare be bold to affirm it knowingly that with the same pains and charge which they have been at in planting one of those petty islands they might have conquered so many great cities and large territories on the main continent as might very well merit the title of a kingdom. Our neighbors, the Hollanders, may be our example in this case; who whilst we have been driving a private trade from port to port, of which we are likely now to be deprived, have conquered so much land in the East and West Indies that it may be said of them, as of the Spaniards, *That the sun never sets upon their dominions*. And to meet with that objection by the way, *That the Spaniard being entitled to those countries, it were both unlawful and against all conscience to dispossess him thereof*, I answer that (the Pope's donation excepted) I know no title he hath but force, which by the same title and by a greater force may be repelled. . . .

No question but the just right or title to those countries appertains to the natives themselves, who, if they shall willingly and freely invite the English to their protection, what title soever [the Spanish] have in [those countries] no doubt but they may legally transfer it or communicate it to others. And to say that the inhuman butchery which the Indians did formerly commit in sacrificing of so many reasonable creatures to their wicked idols was a sufficient warrant for the Spaniards to divest them of their country, the same argument may by much better reason be enforced against the Spaniards themselves, who have sacrificed so many millions of Indians to the idol of their barbarous cruelty, that many populous islands and large territories upon the main continent are thereby at this day utterly uninhabited . . .

. . . since that God hath given the earth to the sons of men to inhabit, and that there are many vast countries in those parts not yet inhabited, either by Spaniards or Indian, why should my countrymen the English be debarred from making use of that which God from all beginning no question did ordain for the benefit of mankind?

1654. England's "Western Design." Oliver Cromwell, Protector of England, Instructions to General Robert Venables . . . upon his Expedition to the West Indies, December 1654.

The design in general is to gain an interest in that part of the West Indies in the possession of the Spaniard . . .

. . . you are hereby authorized and required to use your best endeavors, wherein Gen. Penn, Commander in Chief of the Fleet, is by Us required to join with and assist you

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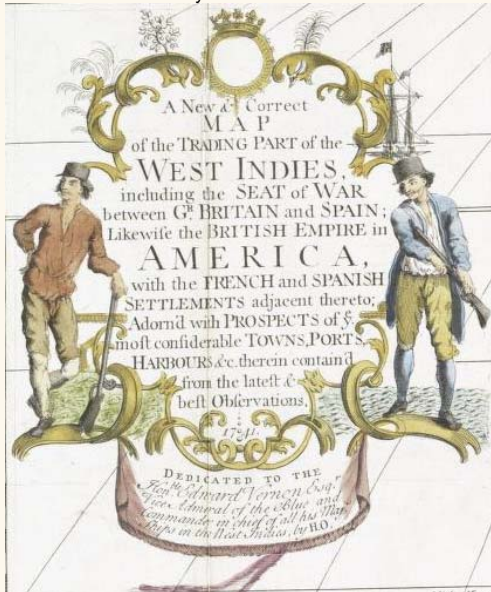
Santo Domingo, Hispaniola (present-day Haiti and Dominican Republic), engraving by Arnoldus Montanus in John Ogilby, *America: being the latest, and most accurate description of the New World*, 1671 (detail)

with the Fleet and sea forces as often as there shall be occasion to land your men upon the territories, dominions, and places belonging unto, in the possession of, or claimed by the Spaniards in America, and to surprise their forts, take or beat down their castles and places of strength, and to pursue, kill, and destroy by all means whatsoever all those who shall oppose or resist you therein, and also to seize upon all ships and vessels which you find in any of their harbors, and also upon all such goods as you shall find upon the land. . . .

In case it shall please God to give you success, such places as you shall take and shall judge fit to be kept, you shall keep for the use of Us and this Commonwealth, and shall also cause such goods and prizes as shall be taken to be delivered into the hands of the said Commissioners, that so they may be brought to a just and true account for the public advantage.

Venables was defeated by the Spanish at Hispaniola and proceeded west to capture weakly defended Jamaica.

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Henry Overton, *A new & correct map of the trading part of the West Indies*, 1741, cartouche

1670. "Universal Peace, true and sincere Amity in America." Treaty of Madrid (Godolphin Treaty) between Spain and England, 18 July 1670.

GODOLPHIN TREATY, celebrated between the Crowns of Spain and Great Britain, to reestablish Friendship and good Relations in America. Madrid, July 18, 1670. . . .

Moreover, it is agreed, that the Most Serene King of Great Britain, his Heirs and Successors, shall have, hold, keep, and enjoy for ever, with plenary right of Sovereignty, Dominion, Possession, and Propriety, all those Lands, Regions, Islands, Colonies, and places whatsoever, being situated in the West Indies, or in any part of America, which the said King of Great Britain and his Subjects do at present hold and possess, so as that in regard thereof or upon any color or pretense whatsoever, nothing more may or ought to be urged, nor any question or controversy be ever moved, etc.

Both countries agreed to limit trading to their own possessions. Spain acknowledged English possessions in the western hemisphere and England agreed to suppress piracy in the Caribbean.



Philip Lea, *North America divided into its III principall parts*, 1685, detail

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CARIBBEAN (WEST INDIES) = Bahamas, Greater Antilles, Lesser Antilles (major claims as of 1660)

Spanish

English

French

Dutch

as of 1660

Cuba

Hispaniola

Jamaica

Puerto Rico

Barbados, Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Lucia,

Virgin Islands, Saint Christopher (St. Kitts),

Grenada, Martinique, Guadeloupe,

St. Martin, Curaçao, Aruba, Saba



West Indies

Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, Univ. of Texas–Austin