Ruling the colonies: Iberian imperialism in global context

Previously... conquest of the Americas

- Different “sides” when considering historical events (ie. conquest & colonization)
- Conquest was a process, not a swift victory
- European reliance on local political discontent, demographic collapse

- 16th century: Early conquest & colonization
- 17th century: consolidation of colonial society, maritime expansion
- 18th century: period of accelerated change & growth

Today

01 Global history & Latin America

02 Global iberian empires

03 Institutions in the colonial Americas

Latin America has historically been sidelined from Global history scholarship

- Roots (Global History comes from British imperial history and economic history)
- Non-european histories were “area studies” not “history”
- Disciplinary silos
- Language barriers



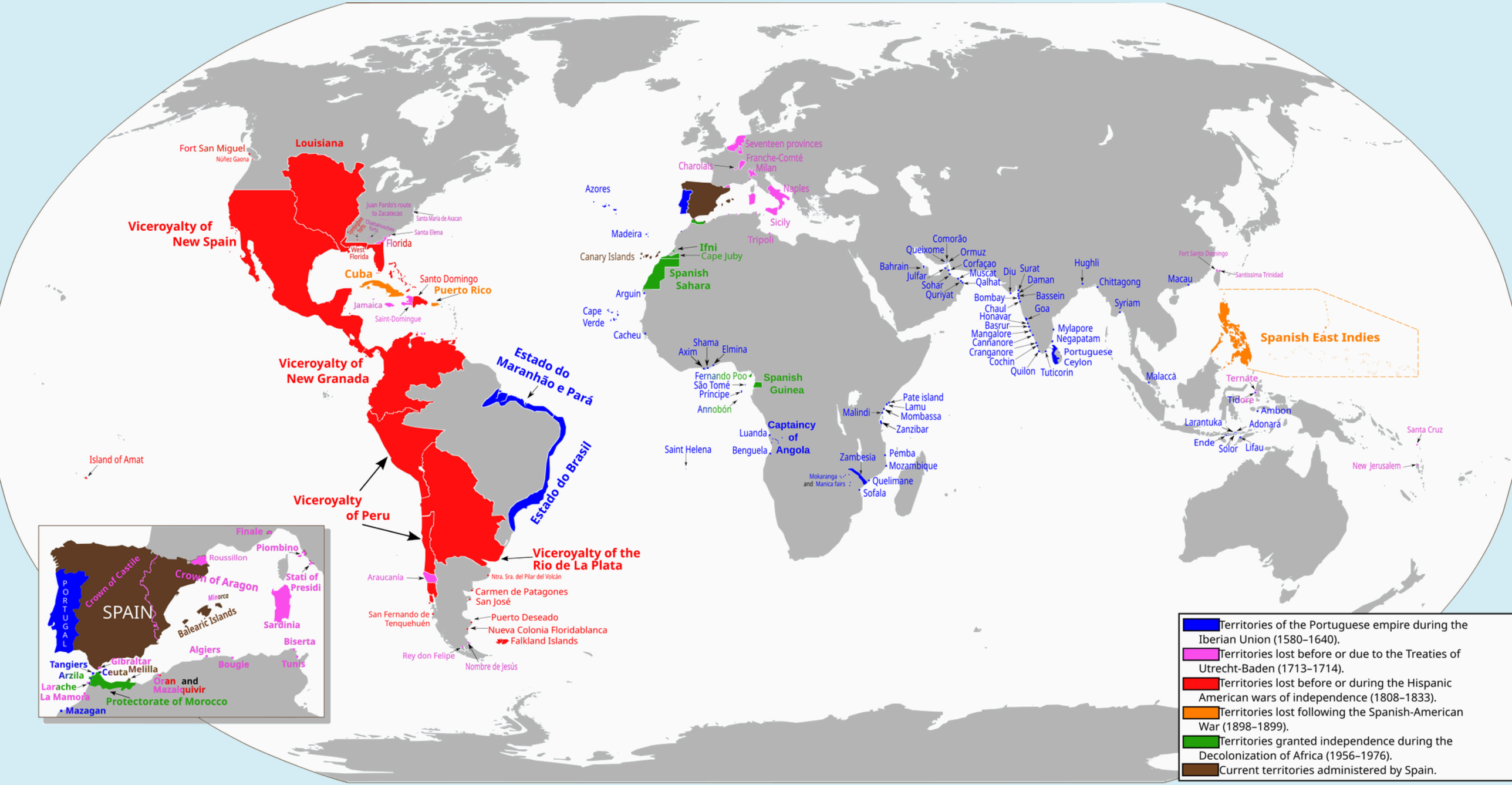


… why look at Iberian empires from a global perspective?

- Fights eurocentrism
- Acknowledges role of distance in imperial governance
- Better reflects how contemporaries thought about the empire

Count of Aranda (Spanish politician) - proposed in 1783 to split the empire into “kingdoms” with equal rank





Fort San Miguel
Núñez Gaona
Louisiana
Viceroyalty of New Spain
Juan Pardo's route to Zacatecas
Santa María de Axacan
Santa Elena
Florida
West Florida
Cuba
Santo Domingo
Puerto Rico
Jamaica
Saint-Domingue
Viceroyalty of New Granada
Estado do Maranhão e Pará
Estado do Brasil
Island of Amat
Viceroyalty of Peru
Viceroyalty of the Rio de La Plata
Araucanía
Ntra. Sra. del Pilar del Volcán
Carmen de Patagones
San José
San Fernando de Tenquehuén
Puerto Deseado
Nueva Colonia Floridablanca
Falkland Islands
Rey don Felipe
Nombre de Jesús
Azores
Madeira
Canary Islands
Arguin
Cape Verde
Cacheu
Ifni
Cape Juby
Spanish Sahara
Seventeen provinces
Franche-Comté
Charolais
Milan
Naples
Sicily
Tripoli
Shama
Axim
Elmina
Fernando Poo
São Tomé
Príncipe
Annobón
Spanish Guinea
Luanda
Benguela
Captaincy of Angola
Saint Helena
Malindi
Pate island
Lamu
Mombassa
Zanzibar
Zambesia
Pemba
Mozambique
Mokaranga and Manica fairs
Quelimane
Sofala
Comorão
Queixome
Ormuz
Corfaçao
Bahrain
Julfar
Muscat
Qalhat
Sohar
Quriyat
Diu
Surat
Daman
Bombay
Bassein
Chaul
Goa
Honavar
Basrur
Mangalore
Cannanore
Cranganore
Cochin
Quilon
Tuticorin
Mylapore
Negapatam
Portuguese Ceylon
Hughli
Chittagong
Syriam
Macau
Fort Santo Domingo
Santissima Trinidad
Spanish East Indies
Malacca
Ternate
Tidore
Ambon
Larantuka
Adonara
Ende
Solor
Lifau
Santa Cruz
New Jerusalem
Finale
Piombino
Roussillon
Crown of Castile
Crown of Aragon
Stati of Presidi
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
Minorca
Balearic Islands
Sardinia
Biserta
Algiers
Bougie
Tunis
Tangiers
Gibraltar
Arzila
Ceuta
Melilla
Larache
La Mamora
Oran and Mazalquivir
Protectorate of Morocco
Mazagan
Territories of the Portuguese empire during the Iberian Union (1580–1640).
Territories lost before or due to the Treaties of Utrecht-Baden (1713–1714).
Territories lost before or during the Hispanic American wars of independence (1808–1833).
Territories lost following the Spanish-American War (1898–1899).
Territories granted independence during the Decolonization of Africa (1956–1976).
Current territories administered by Spain.

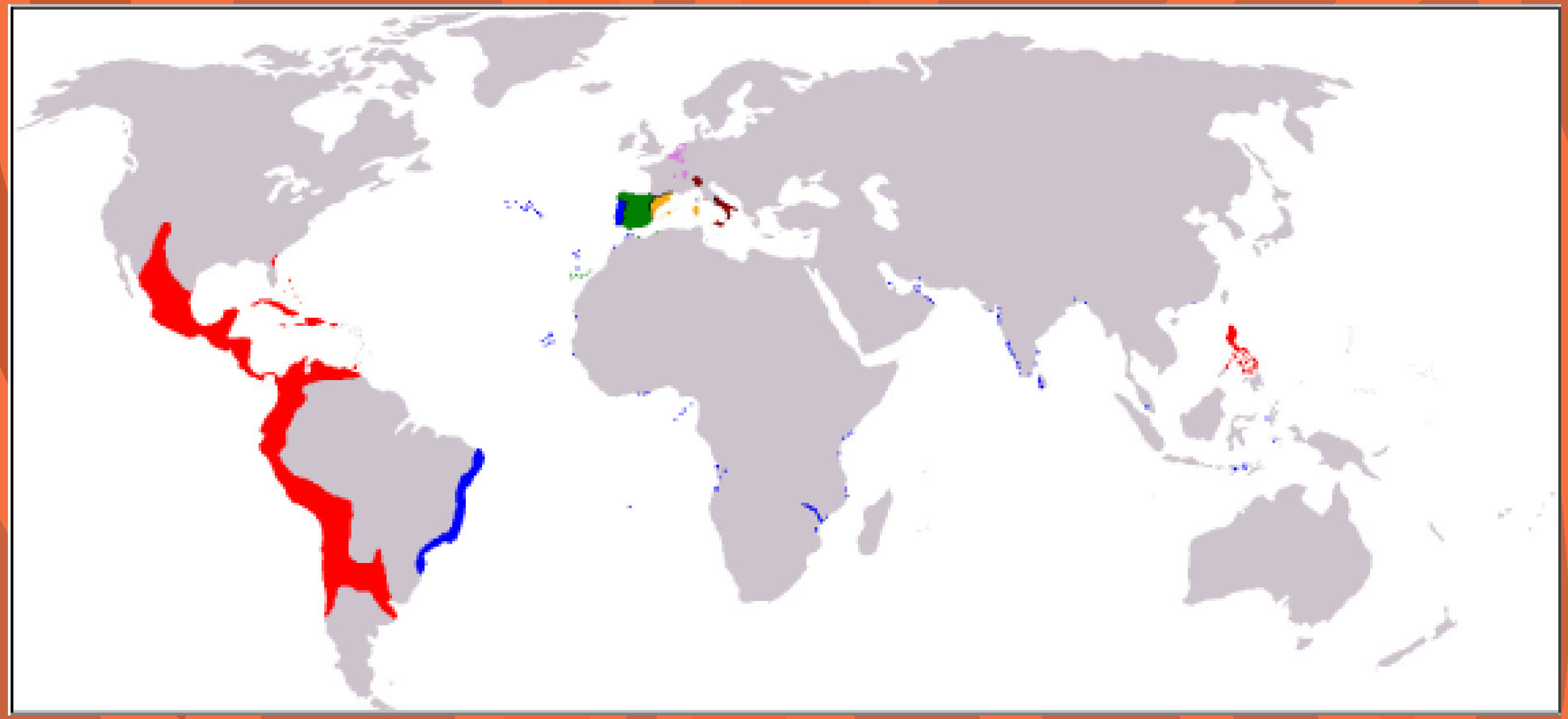
In what ways were Iberian empires global?

- Geographic scope
- Global silver market
- Ecological globalization
- Global governance



Iberian Kingdoms in 1400s

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE



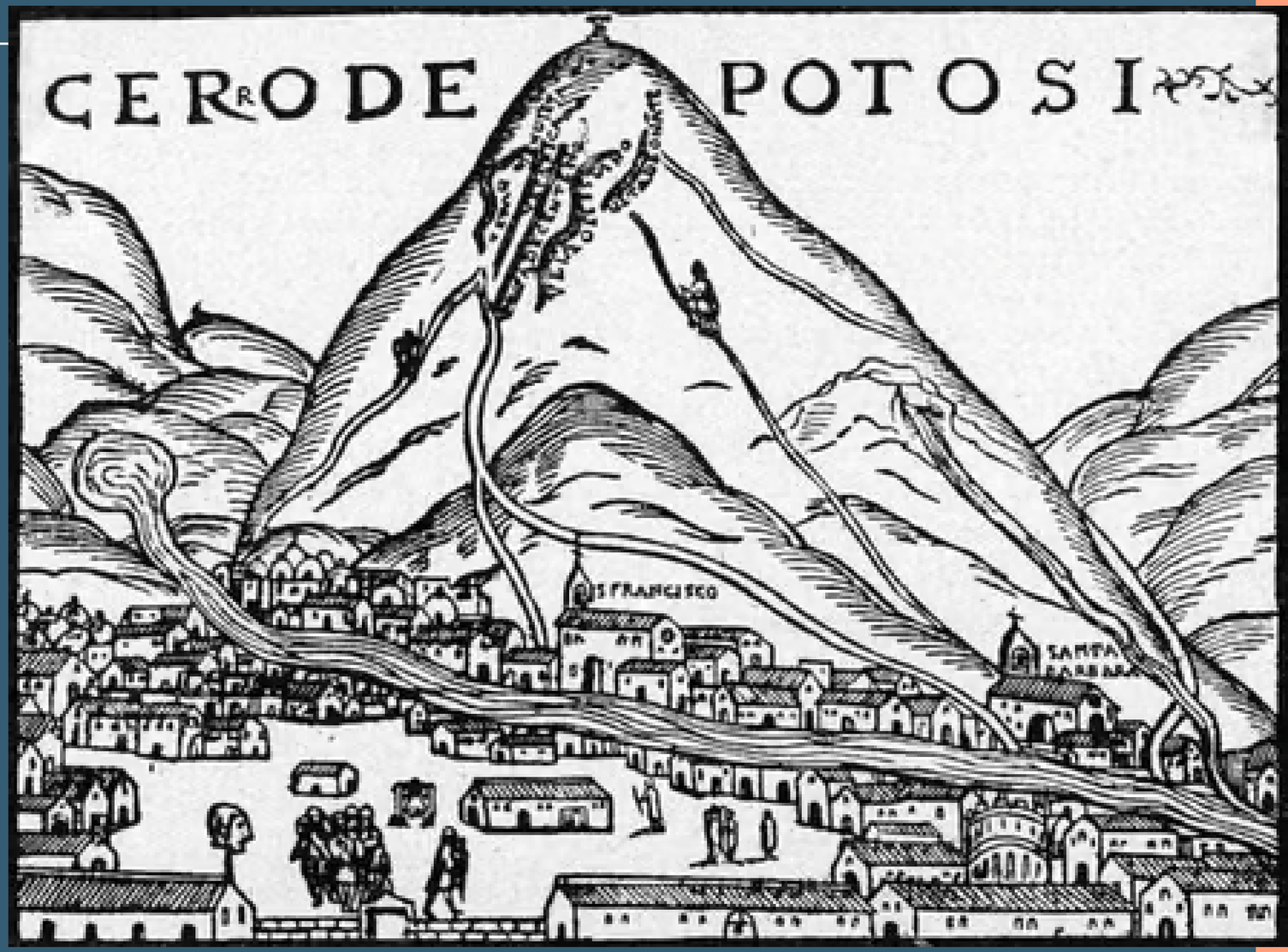
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE



Imperio portugués (1415-1543)

Global silver

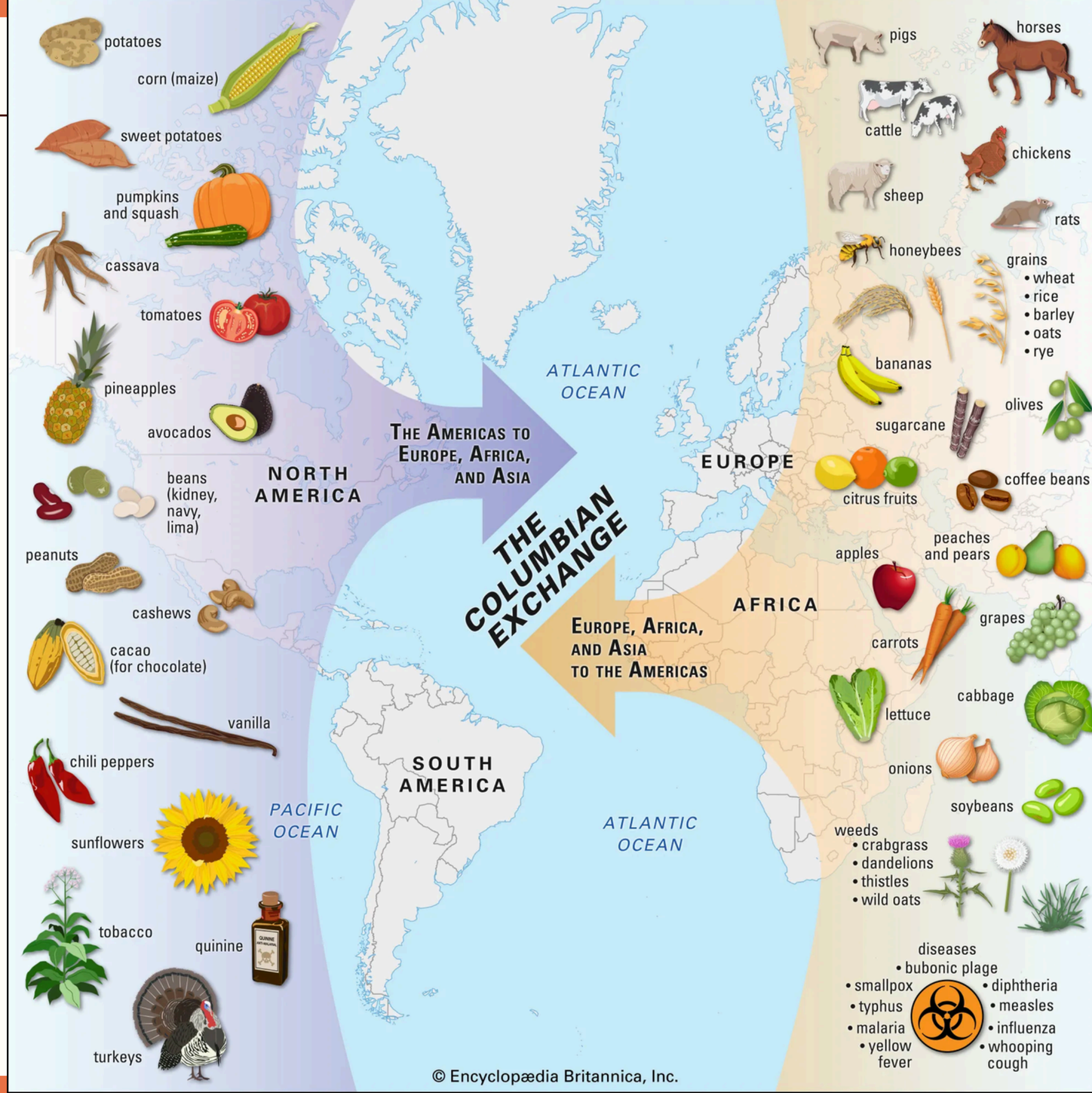
- Silver flows into Europe (funded capital accumulation)
- Connecting miners, traders, bankers, courts all over the world
- Credit & insurance system
- Maritime developments (to move, steal and keep silver)



Engraving of Potosí (Bolivia), the largest silver mine in the world)

Ecological globalization

- Plants, animals, pathogens moving
- Profound environmental change (plantation, deforestation, demographic collapse)



Long-distance governance

- How to control a global empire?
- Bureaucracy, innovation, flexibility
- Scholars have called these “polycentric monarchies”



Iberian empires as imperial models for others

- Coercion & negotiation coexisted
- Slavery & exploitation
- Intra-imperial connexions mattered
- Horizontal relationships to maintain imperial polity



Indigenous labour & religious institutions

- Encomienda
- Pueblos de indios/pueblos de misión
- Controlling indigenous labour

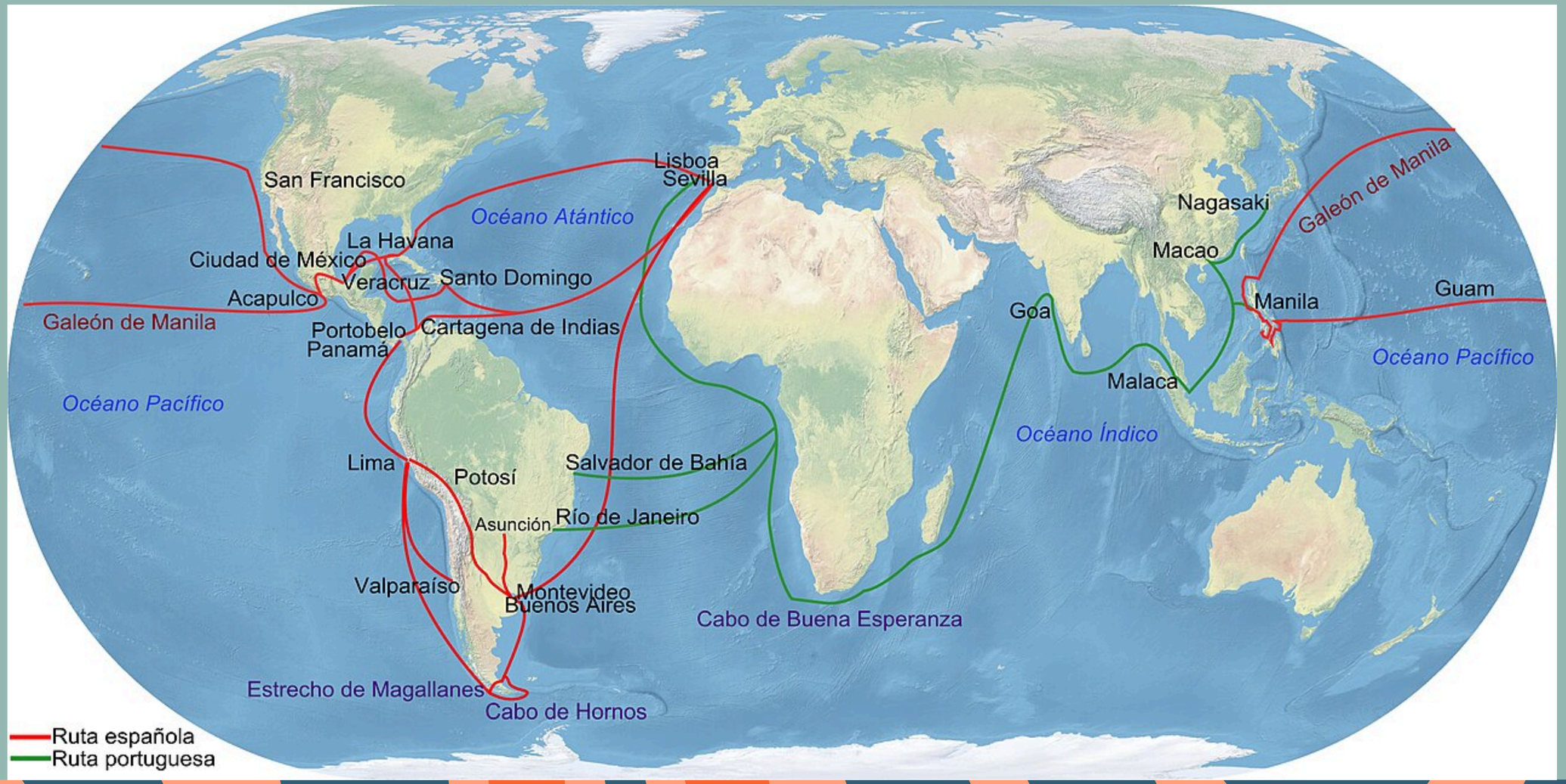


Encomiendas in Tucuman, Argentina

03

Economic absolutism & central control

- Commercial exclusivism & monopoly
- Carrera de Indias
- Casa de Contratación
- Fleet system (2 fleets per year)



03

- Growing importance of regional trade & transimperial smuggling
- Responds to local populations (Creole, indigenous, enslaved)



Codex Mendoza

Political & administrative structures

	SPANISH EMPIRE	PORTUGUESE EMPIRE
CENTRAL	King Consejo de Indias	King
AMERICAS - regional	Reales Audiencias (justice) Viceroyalties, Governorships, General Caiptainships Provinces	Feitorias & Donatary-caiptaincies (early colonization) Governo geral (State of Brazil)
AMERICAS - local	Alcaldes (aldermen), corregidores, Ayuntamiento	Senados da camara (local justice) Ayuntamiento

Political & administrative structures

	SPANISH EMPIRE	PORTUGUESE EMPIRE
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	Most of the mainland	Brazil
Export economy	Mining (silver, gold) Agriculture	Plantation economy
Land tenure systems	Distinct “Spaniard” vs “Amerindian” legal framework (at least ideal) Haciendas Missionaries: pueblos de indios, pueblos de mision	No differentiated framework Engenhos (plantations) & aldeias (Amerindian towns)

Institutional change & flexibility

- **Compromise**: increased control by Crowns AND increasingly strong local interests
- Crowns ultimately can't check **rising power of creole elites** (Spain tries harder than Portugal)
- Tendency towards **localisation of political/ economic life;** but Crown overall legitimacy maintained
- Development of increasingly separate **American societies** – culture, identity

Thank you!

See you next class!