



Exploration and Discovery

History – Junior Cert

Quick Notes

Exploration and Discovery

Travel did not take place before 1400 because, roads were bad, ships were weak and dangerous and could not sail against the wind and navigational instruments were poor. There were a large number of kings and princes willing to sponsor voyages of explorations to find this new route. Missionaries also wished to spread the Catholic religion. Caravels were new ships developed around this time and they were a combination of Mediterranean and Atlantic ships with lateen (or triangular) sails, strong clinker-built hulls. Other navigational instruments used were astrolabes, quadrants (both calculated latitude), compass (pointed to magnetic north), Portolan charts (atlases), swinging the lead (told the depth of the water), chronometer (measured exact distance travelled), sextant (determined position). The discovery of Portugal was made possible by Prince Henry the Navigator, Bartholomew Diaz and Vasco Da Gama. Whilst Spain was discovered by Christopher Columbus and Ferdinand Magellan. The captain was responsible for navigation and the master was responsible for the steering of the ship. Craftsmen such as carpenters were on board, but it was mostly sailors that did the strenuous work. Scurvy was a common disease on these ships – a deficiency of Vitamin C caused by a lack of fresh fruit and vegetables. Scurvy caused gums to rot and teeth to fall out. However typhoid was the most dangerous disease which was caught from drinking dirty water. The Aztec Empire was invaded about by Hernan Cortes in 1519, when his army landed in Mexico and eventually managed to capture and destroy Tenochtitlan (capital). They rebuilt and renamed this as Mexico City and by 1525, all of the Aztec Empire was under Spanish control. Another conquistador was Francisco Pizarro and the Inca Empire. There were many consequences to these invasions – many Europeans emigrated to the colonies, gold, silver, drink, food, drugs flew into Europe, large numbers of natives were killed or died from European diseases, ancient civilisations were destroyed and European languages were spoken in the colonies. Once the Earth was explored, humans looked to space.

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