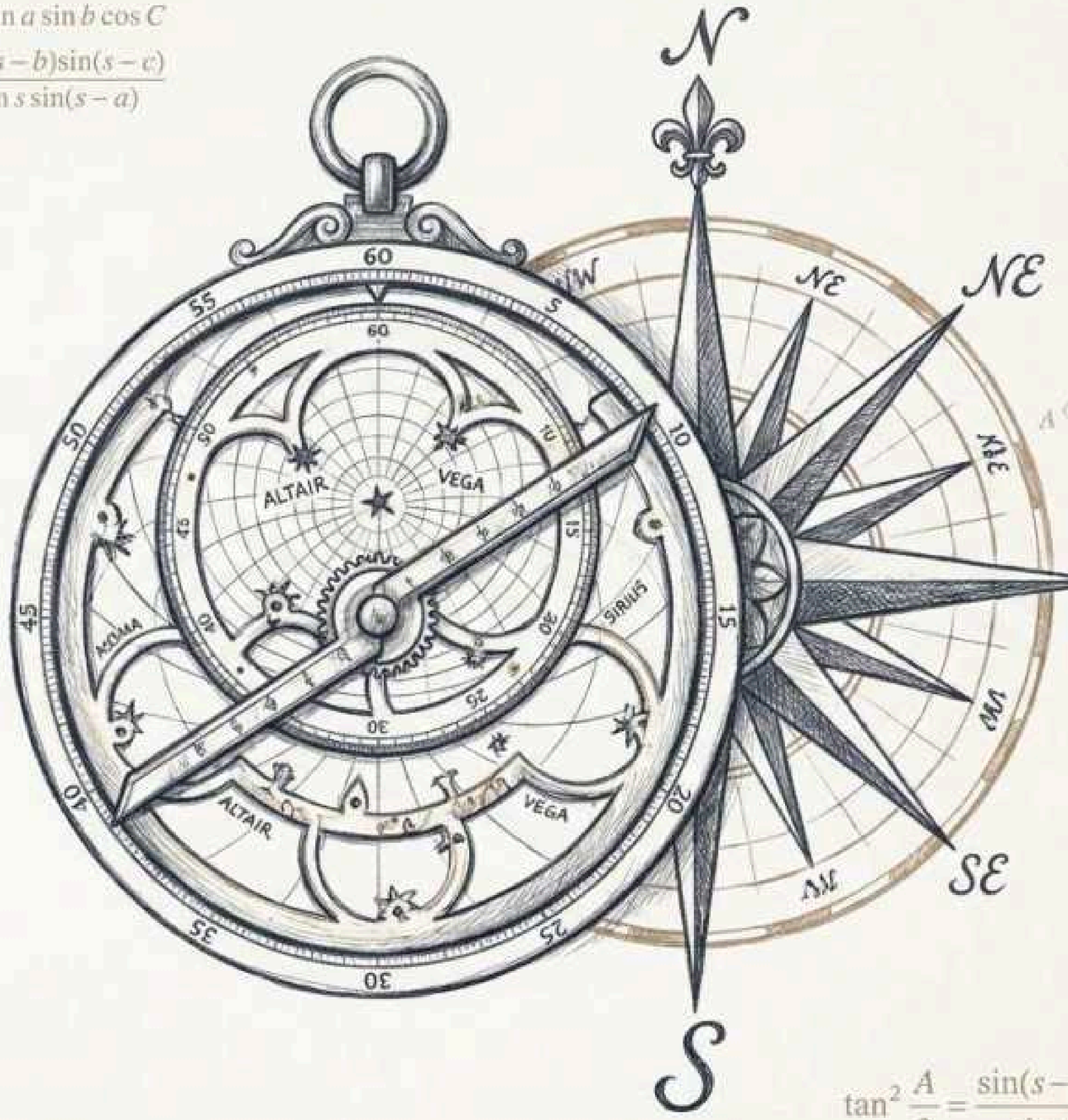
¶ 1.1

HIST 102 B:

Empires and Oceans

Welcome to Lecture 1.

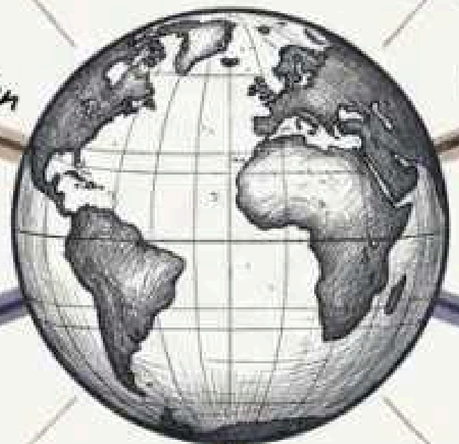


The First Centuries of the Modern Era (1500–1700)

¶ 1.2







Unprecedented Global Connection

Enormous Human Costs

Enormous Human Costs

Enormous Human Costs



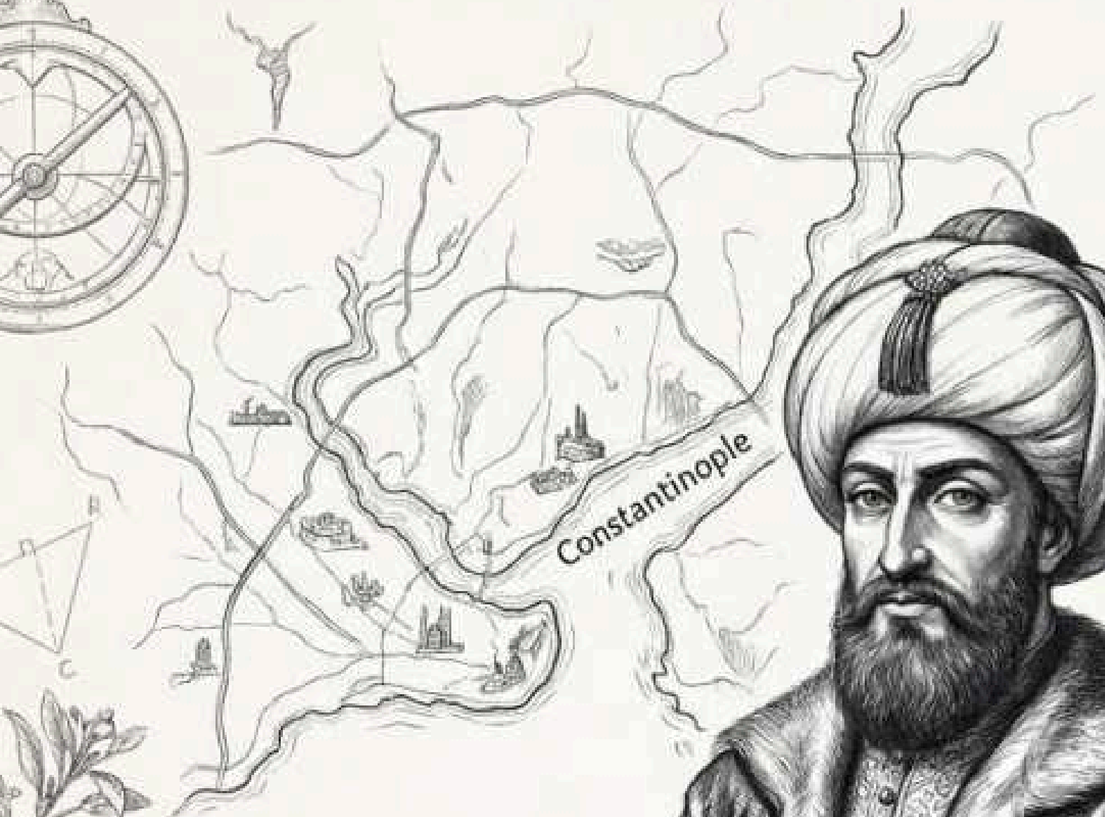




We begin with the empires of the Islamic world.

The Ottoman Empire at its Zenith (1453–1566)

¶ 1.3



Suleiman the Magnificent
(r. 1520–1566)

Territory

Spanned Southeastern Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa.

Military Tech

Gunpowder weapons + trained professional soldiers.

Governance

Ruled many faiths and languages through local religious communities.



The Gunpowder Empires of the Islamic World

Empire	Foundation & Center	Dominant Religion	Key Rulers & Tactics
Ottoman	1453 (Constantinople)	Sunni	Suleiman (Gunpowder, local community autonomy)
Safavid	1501 (Iran)	Shia State	(Noted for state religion)
Mughal	1526 (India) by Babur	Ruling a Hindu majority	Akbar (r. 1556–1605): Tolerance, tax reform, marriage alliances

Dynastic Shifts and Isolation in East Asia



Ming Dynasty

↓

1644: Rebel/Manchurian invasions end the Ming

↓

Qing Dynasty founded by Manchus (lasts until 1912)



Japan

1603: Tokugawa Shogunate takes power

↓

Results in over two centuries of peace

↓

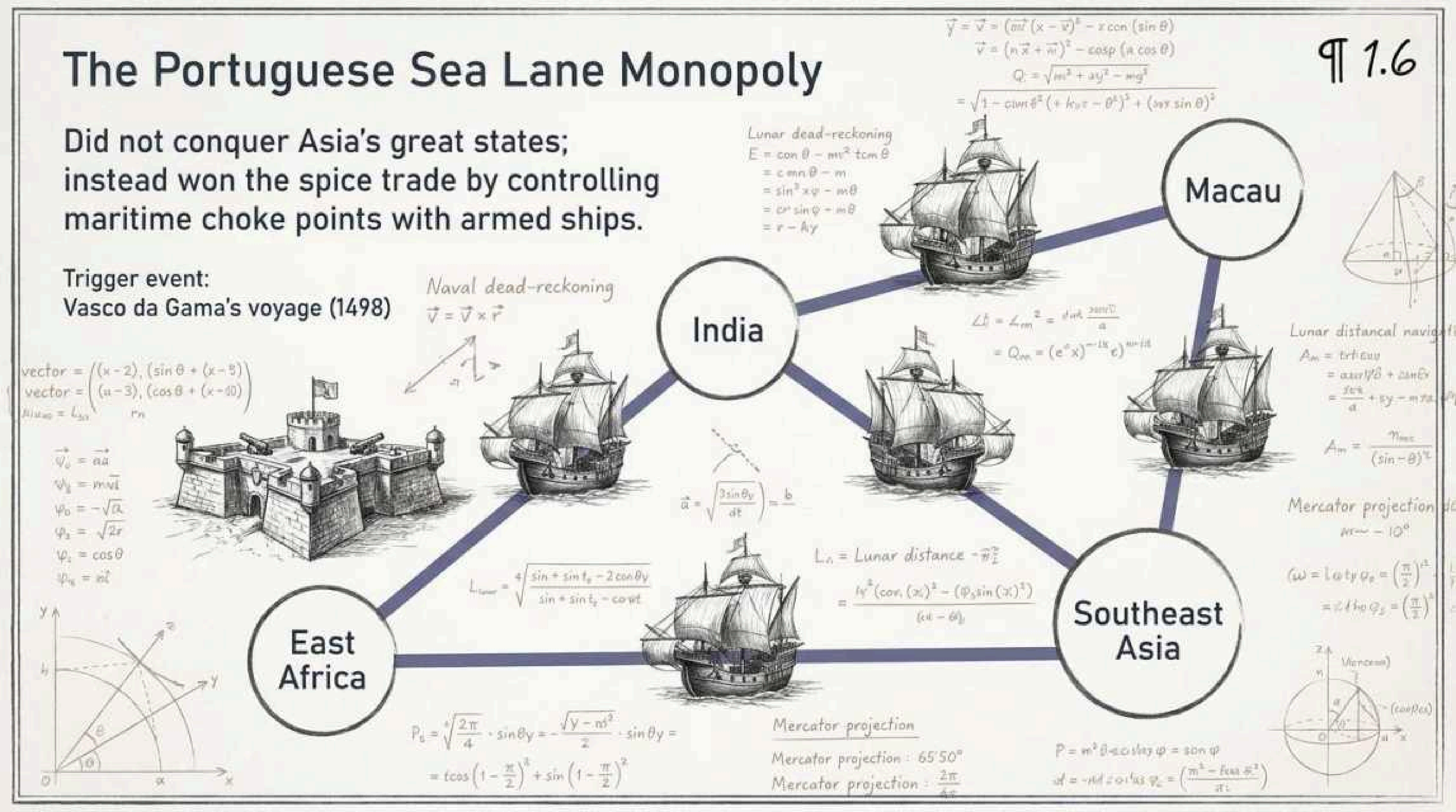
Strategy: Strictly limited contact with outsiders

The Portuguese Sea Lane Monopoly

¶ 1.6

Did not conquer Asia's great states;
instead won the spice trade by controlling
maritime choke points with armed ships.

Trigger event:
Vasco da Gama's voyage (1498)



Competing Models of European Encroachment

The Corporate Model



Dutch East India Company (1602).
One of the first joint-stock companies.
Dominated the Indonesian spice trade.

The Settler/Trade Model



English in Jamestown (1607) &
French in Quebec (1608).

Indigenous Agency — Nations like the **Iroquois traded and fought** on their own terms, actively shaping the growing colonies.

The Collapse of the Aztec and Inca Empires

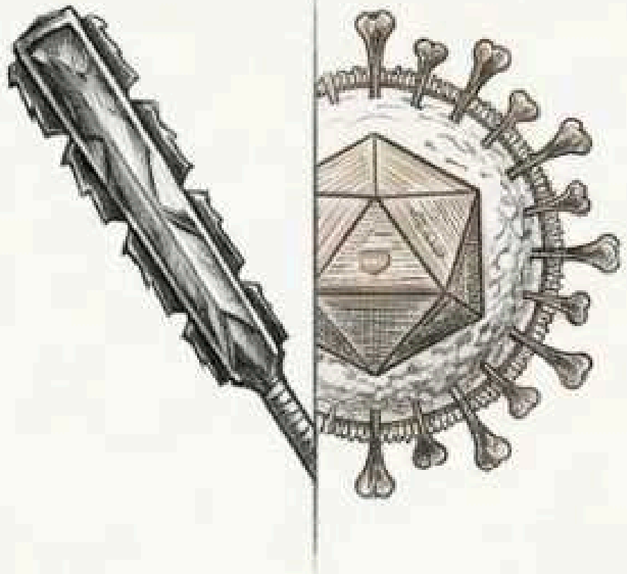
Conquistador Leadership



Hernán Cortés taking Tenochtitlan in 1521; Francisco Pizarro seizing the Inca Empire in the 1530s during a civil war.

+

The Multipliers



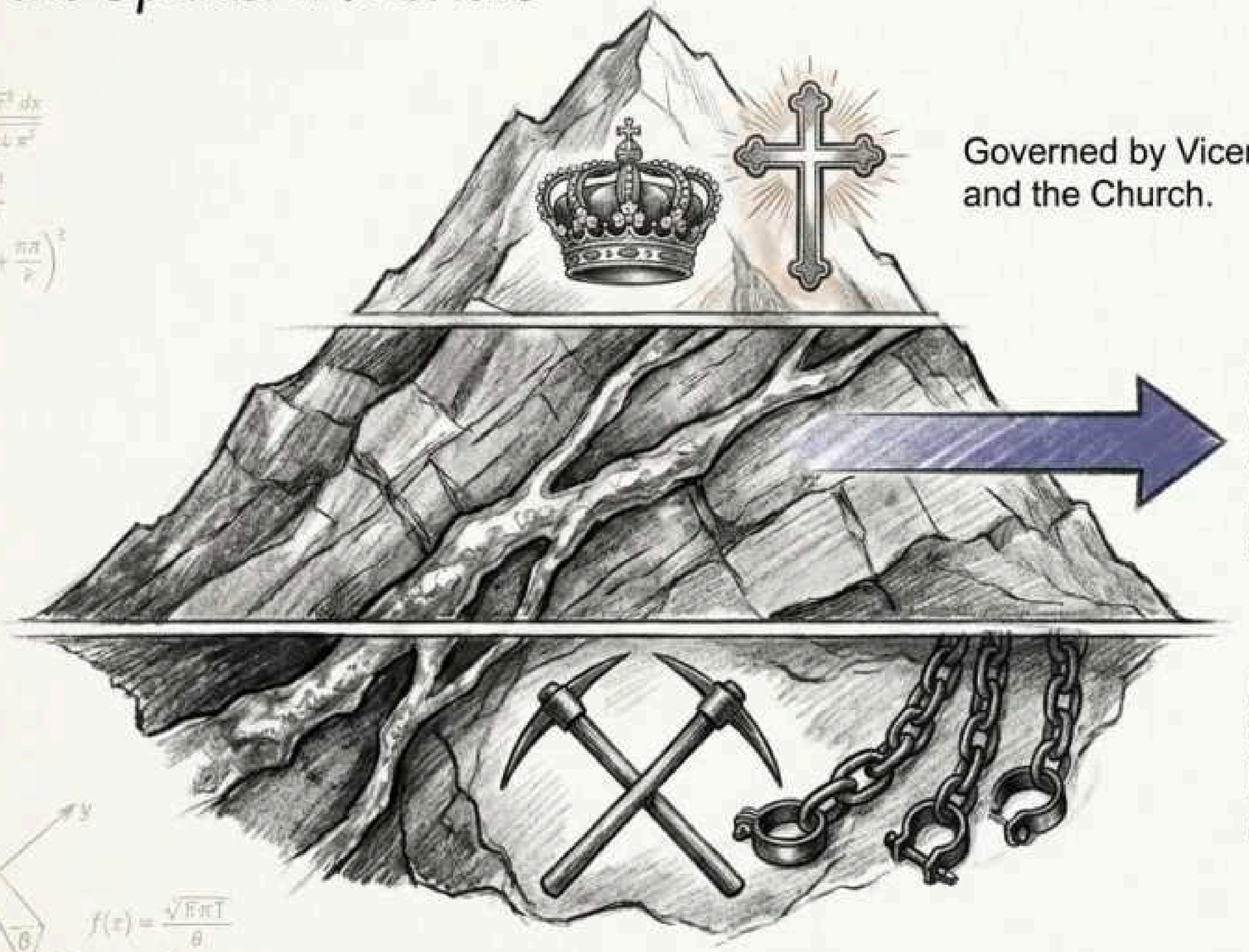
Thousands of Indigenous allies resenting Aztec rule + Epidemic diseases such as smallpox.

=



Spanish conquest of massive territories in the Americas.

Extraction and Colonial Rule in the Spanish Americas



Governed by Viceroys and the Church.

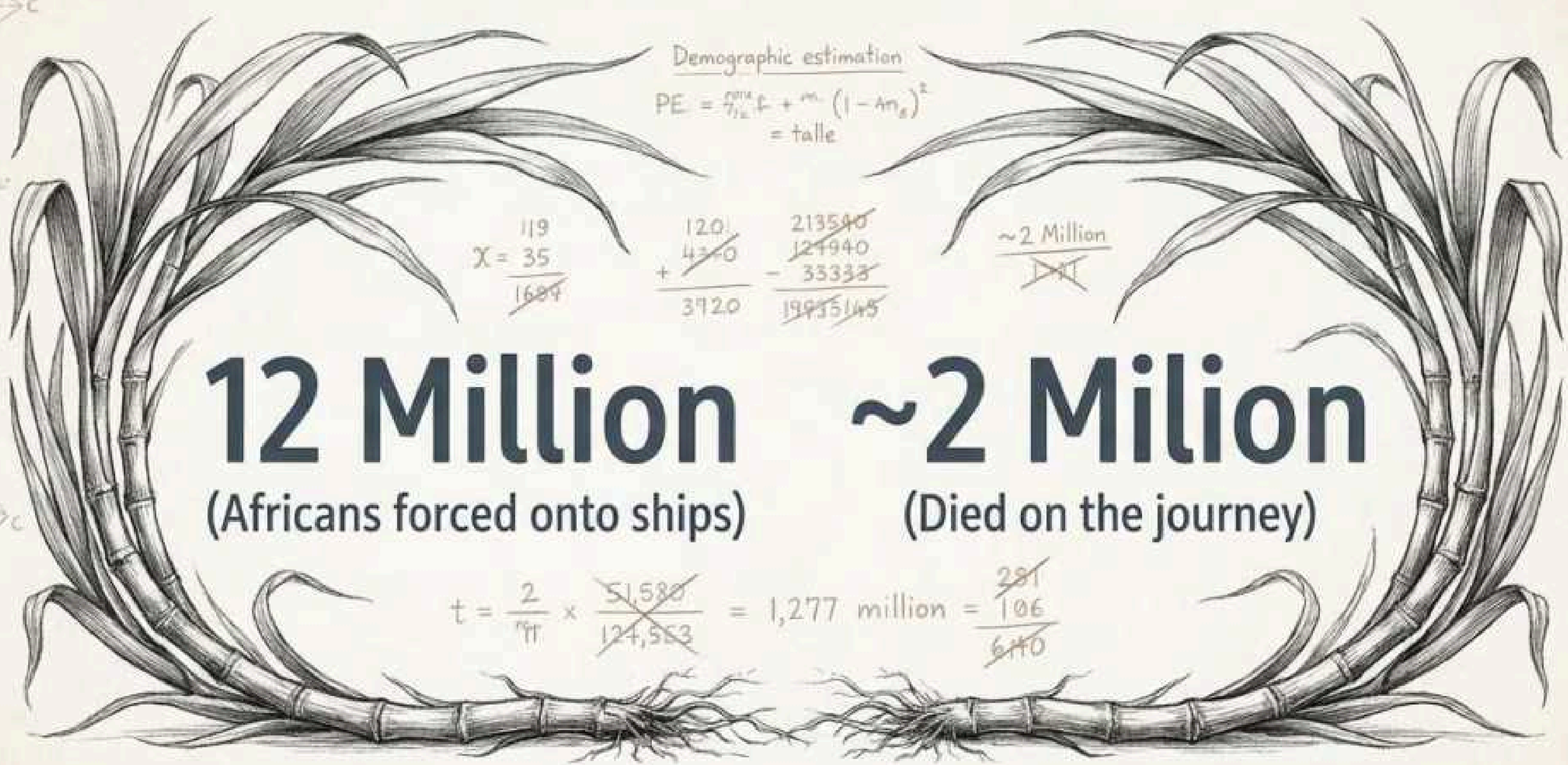
Silver from Potosí (Bolivia) flowed to Spain and across the Pacific to China (high demand).

Extremely high death tolls among forced Indigenous labor in mines and fields.



Protests led by priests like Bartolomé de las Casas.

The Atlantic Slave Trade (16th–19th Centuries)

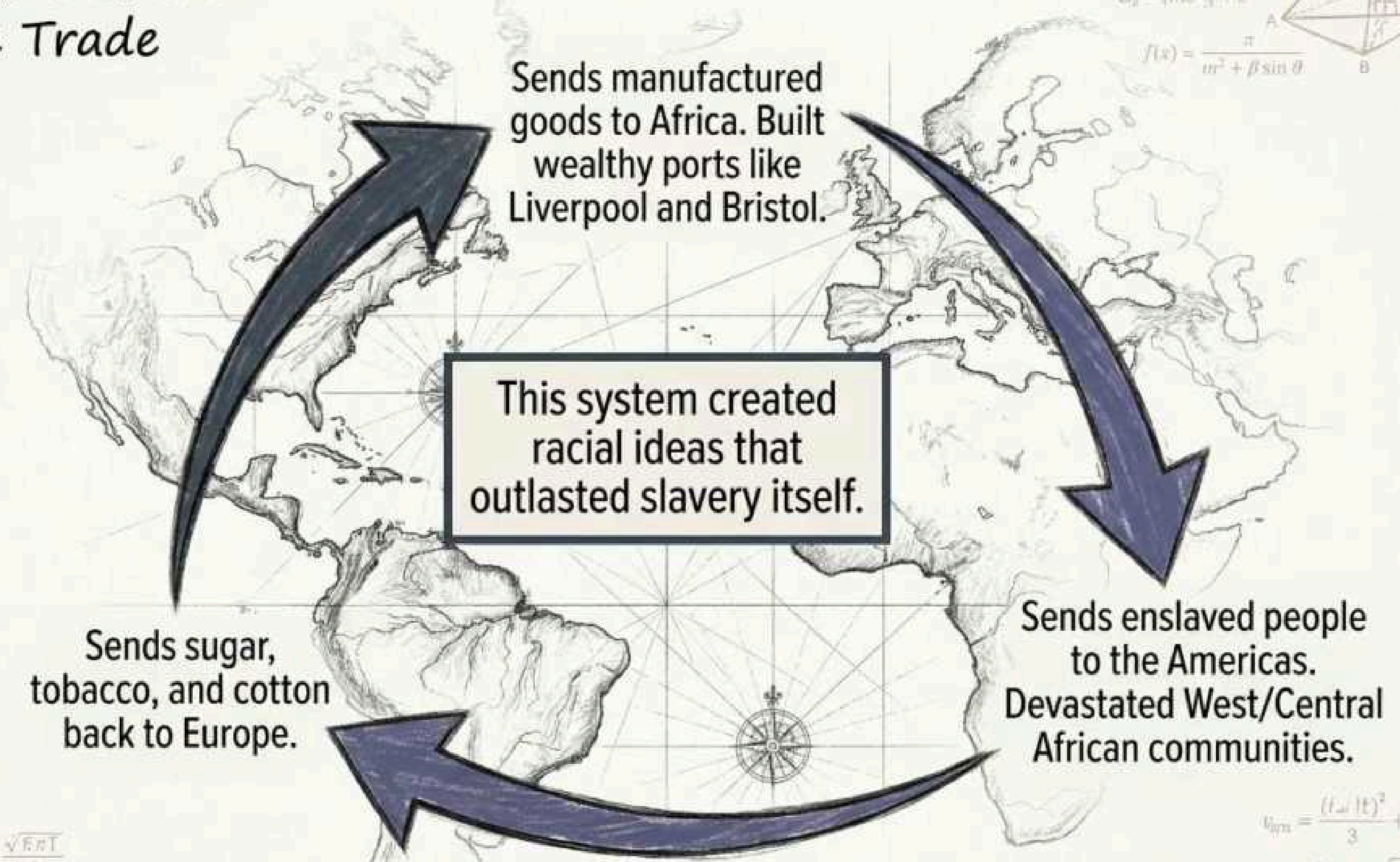


12 Million
(Africans forced onto ships)

~2 Milion
(Died on the journey)

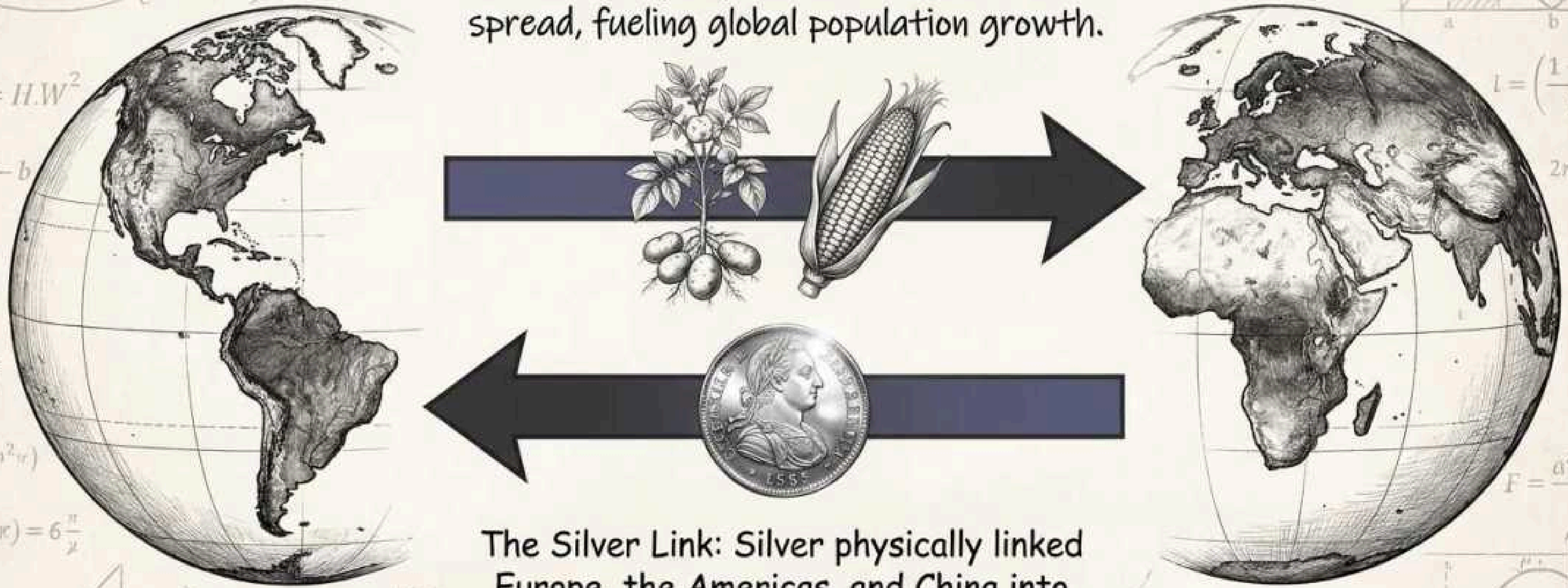
Driven by intense European demand, African rulers/merchants participated in a trade that sent the vast majority to work on brutal sugar plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean.

The Engine of the Triangle Trade



The First Truly Global Age

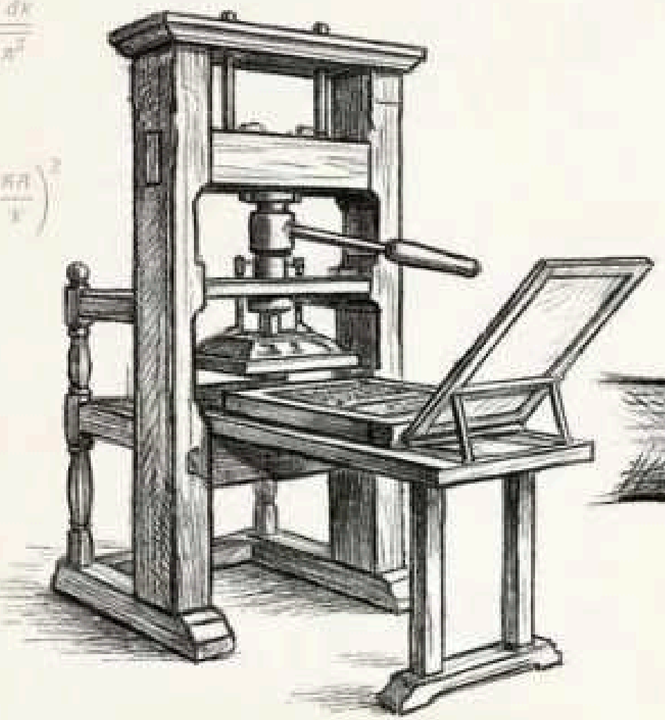
American crops (potatoes, maize, manioc) spread, fueling global population growth.



The Silver Link: Silver physically linked Europe, the Americas, and China into one unified economy.

Benefits and burdens were very unevenly shared.

The Printing Press and the Fracturing of Western Christianity



The Printing Press spreads ideas at unprecedented speed.

Martin Luther (1517) criticizes church practices → Protestant churches arise.

John Calvin's followers establish new Protestant denominations.

The Catholic Church responds with its own internal reforms.



Wars of Religion follow the ideological split.

The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648)

¶1.14

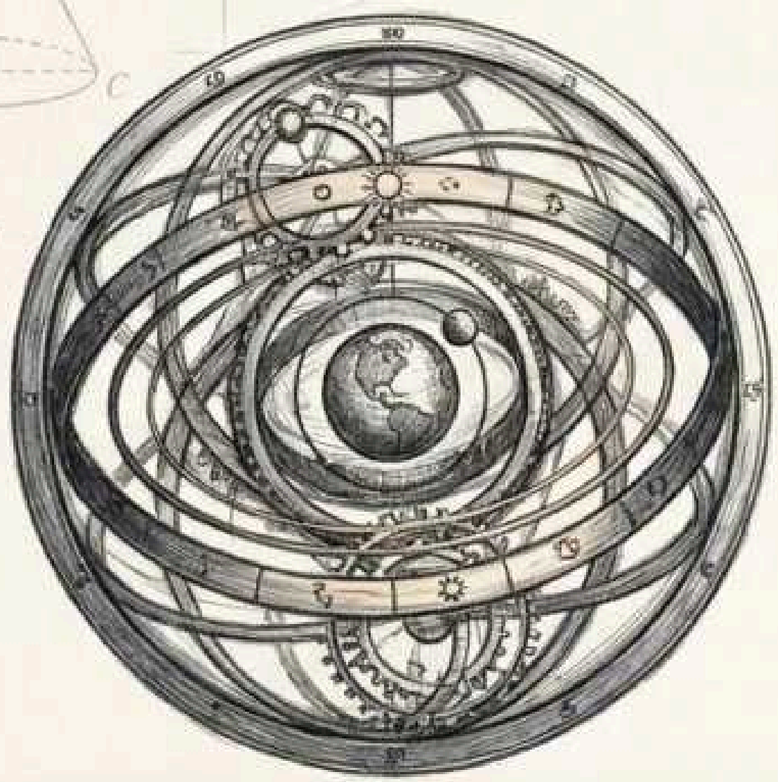


The Cost: Devastated central Europe. Some regions lost a third or more of their population.

The State System:

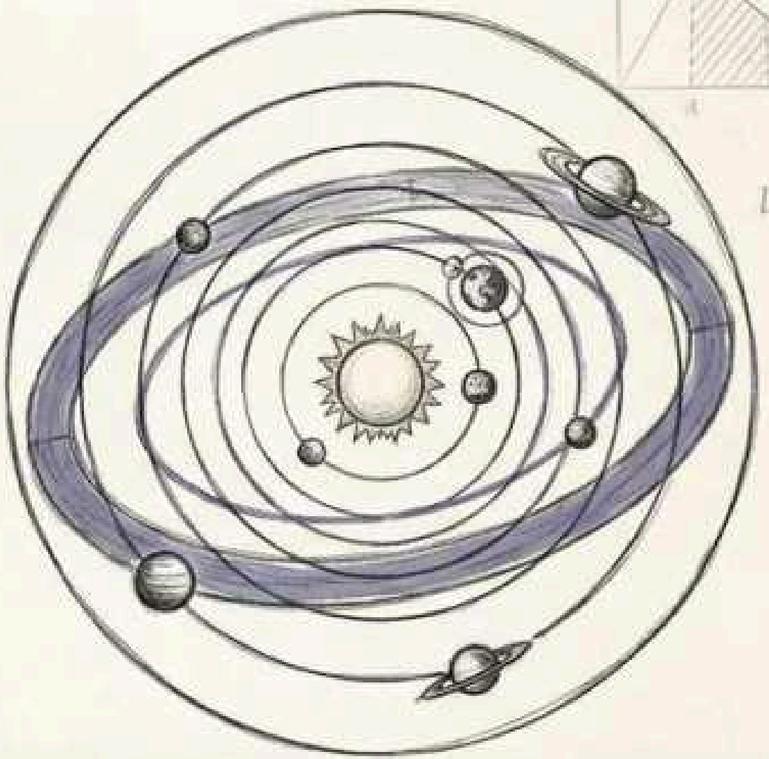
- The resulting peace marked the start of sovereign states (though historians debate the extent of change).
- Governments grew stronger, characterized by larger armies and formalized tax systems.

Unifying the Heavens and the Earth



1543: Nicolaus Copernicus proposes the Earth moves around the sun.

$$F = G\frac{m_1 m_2}{r^2}$$



1633: Galileo uses a telescope to support heliocentrism and is condemned by the Church.

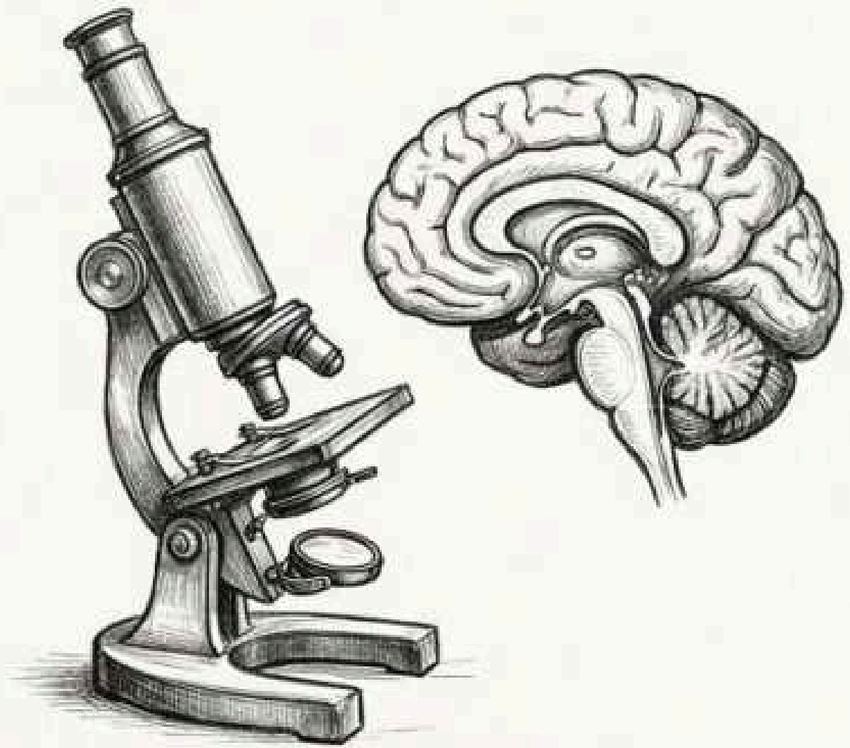
1687: Isaac Newton publishes laws of motion and gravity, proving a single set of physical rules governs the entire universe.

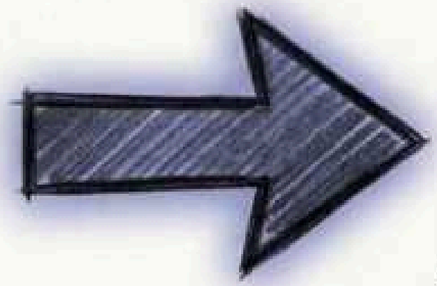
The Scientific Revolution and Empirical Truth

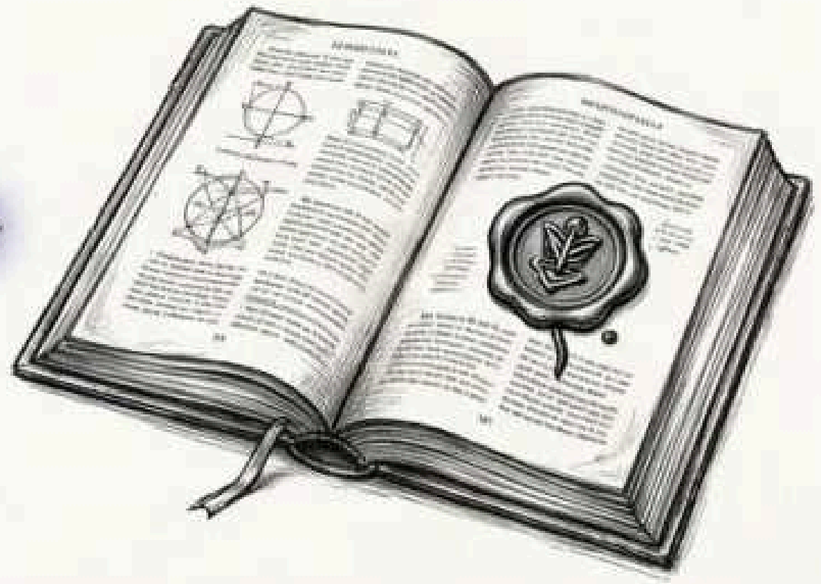
¶ 1.16



Institution: Learned societies share results in print (e.g., Royal Society of London, founded 1660).







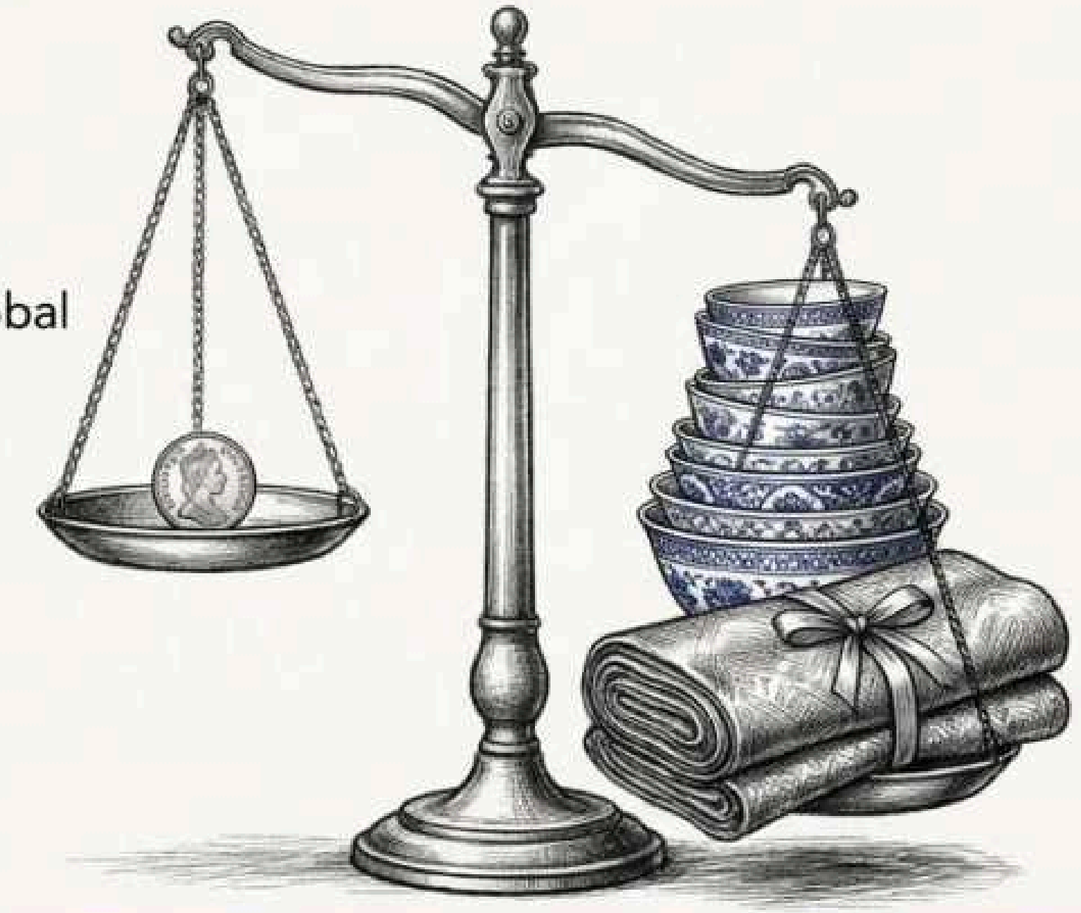
Methodology: Francis Bacon (Careful Experiment) + René Descartes (Reason).

Impact: Did not remove religion from daily life, but fundamentally changed how educated people judged what was true.

The Locus of Global Wealth in 1700

The Light Side:

Europe was not yet the center of the world; global dominance came later.



The Heavy Side:

The Mughal and Qing empires were among the richest states on Earth. China produced much of the world's highly-demanded porcelain and silk.

It is easy to read the later age of European power back into these centuries. Resist this.

Recap: The Architecture of the Early Modern World



The Silver Thread

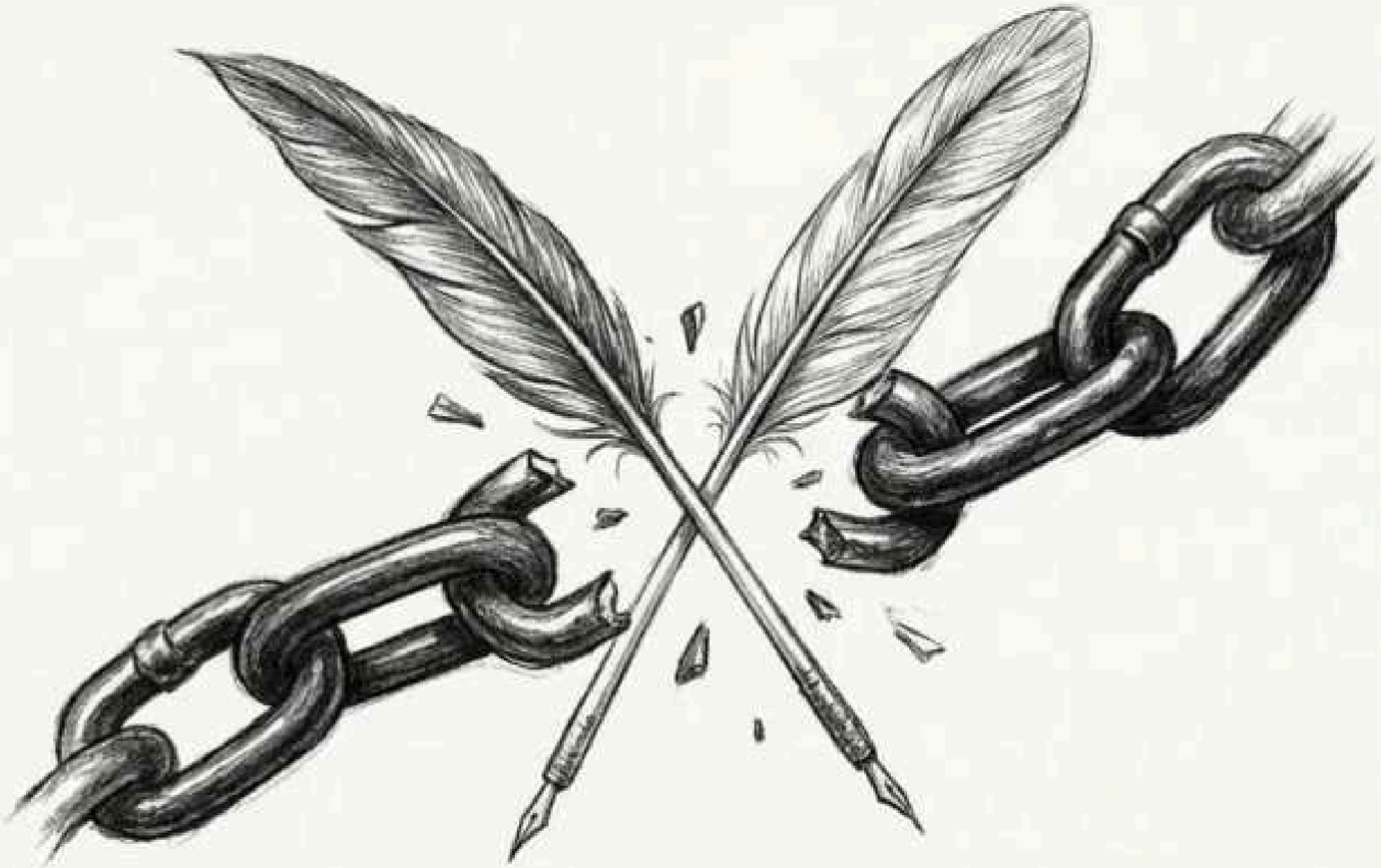


Core Insight: Silver from the Americas paid for goods in China and funded wars in Europe.

If one commodity can tie together three continents, what does that tell us about how far ordinary lives depended on distant events?

"Think about a product you use today."

Looking Ahead: The Age of Revolutions



- The Enlightenment Thinkers
- The American and French Revolutions
- Napoleon Bonaparte
- The slave uprising that created Haiti

How new ideas about rights and nations changed the world.