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# The Global Influence of Christopher Columbus' Discovery on the World History

## Christopher Columbus: The Shaper of Global History

Many people may ask, "What is Global History?" Two concepts that shape Global History and its importance are religion and trade. Through the ideas religion and trade, Global History can be characterized by one familiar figure: Christopher Columbus. The result of Columbus's "Four Voyages" puts across the significance of religion and trade to Global History. The combination of Columbus's finds when he first reaches land, his encounters with the foreign people, and the role played by the Catholic Monarchs and Pope express the meaning of Global History.

When Columbus first set out from Spain to eventually set foot on new land he had two ideas engraved into his mind: Opening trade with China and converting people to Christianity along the way. Although we now know he did not end up in China, these same ideas were carried out on the first land he stepped foot on of 'Hispaniola.' When Columbus first steps foot on the land of 'Hispaniola,' he describes its divine beauty. He mentions the island's mountains, tall trees, and large harbours and rivers. Columbus's observance that "there are many great rivers with broad channels and the majority contain gold," demonstrates one concept of Global History. The automatic instinct to detect a foreign land's riches for the purpose of trade supports a large portion of Global History. He reveals all the articles of trade that he finds of value and of unlimited source: gold, spices, cotton, aloes, slaves, rhubarb, and cinnamon. In large, Columbus

was dedicated to bringing back any commodity of value to the Catholic Monarchs of Spain. Although trade play a significant role in Columbus's voyages and Global History, the encounter of indigenous people take part in an equal or even greater role.

When Columbus set foot on the land of 'Hispaniola,' he witnessed a society like never seen before. He states, "the inhabitants,...., go naked,...., men and women alike." At first Columbus was unable to communicate or even get near the indigenous people, due to their timid nature. After eventually easing in by pushing for trade with the indigenous people, Columbus worked on the conversion of many to Christianity. Columbus states, "I gave them a thousand pretty things that I had brought, in order to gain their love and incline them to become Christian." A realization that these indigenous people had no religion made Columbus's drive to convert much stronger, but does recall that these men are very intelligent and not stupid by any means. Unlike the native inhabitants of "Hispaniola,' Columbus's depiction of the people on the second island he set foot on seemed to be opposite. The island of 'Quaris,' described by Columbus, perpetuates nothing less than a negative connotation. He berates these indigenous people by stating, "they behave most savagely" and are "extremely fierce and who eat human flesh." Even the most savage and barbaric native people, Columbus pushed conversion. He believed that the push for religious conversion would benefit the Kingdom of Spain, and increase its number of supporters. Columbus reiterates this concept in stating, "by the conversion of so many peoples to our holy faith and for the temporal benefits which follow, for not only Spain, but all Christendom will receive encouragement and profit." Columbus's immense dedication to converting native people articulates his devotion to the Catholic Monarchs of the Spanish Kingdom, and

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furthermore supports the overall concept of Global History.

If it were not for the acceptance and support of the Pope and Catholic Monarchs, Isabel and Ferdinand, Global History would be dramatically altered. With the satisfaction of the Catholic Monarchs upon Columbus's return, Pope Alexander VI approved a second Voyage. The Pope "decided that the Admiral should return with a large fleet to settle the island of Hispaniola." With the satisfaction of the goods and religious conversions Columbus demonstrated, lead to the expansion of the Spanish Empire. As for the second Voyage, Columbus was "appointed captain-general of the second fleet and given power to appoint any persons he might choose to the government of the Indies." The result of Columbus's Voyages and the acts he performed, unveil the meaning of Global History.

Global History thrives on the concepts of trade and religion. Without those concepts, Global history would amount to little. Since Columbus acts out these concepts so vigorously in his Voyages, he represents the main aspects of Global History. Due to Columbus's actions, he is able to be portrayed as synonymous with Global History.

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