

# Global South / Global North: Africa, Asia & Latin America versus US Midwest:

Retracing  
1500 to the present  
as Environmental History

“The habitual weakness of the American people is to assume that they have made themselves great, whereas their greatness has been in large measure thrust upon them by a bountiful providence which has given them forest, mines, fertile soil, and a variety of climate to enable them to sustain themselves in plenty...”

— Isaac Stephenson, 1915

Main Lecture point: Nature, and our ideas about nature, emerge together in a historical-geographical context

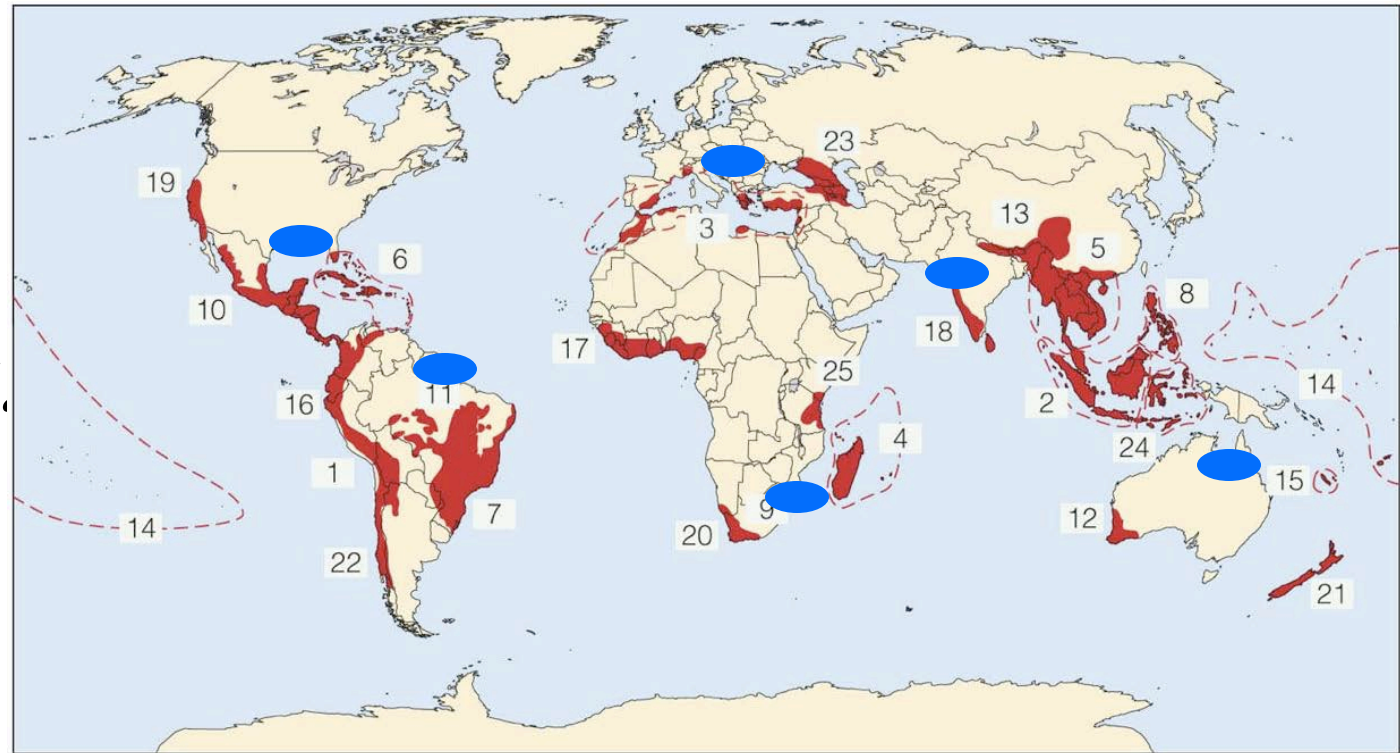
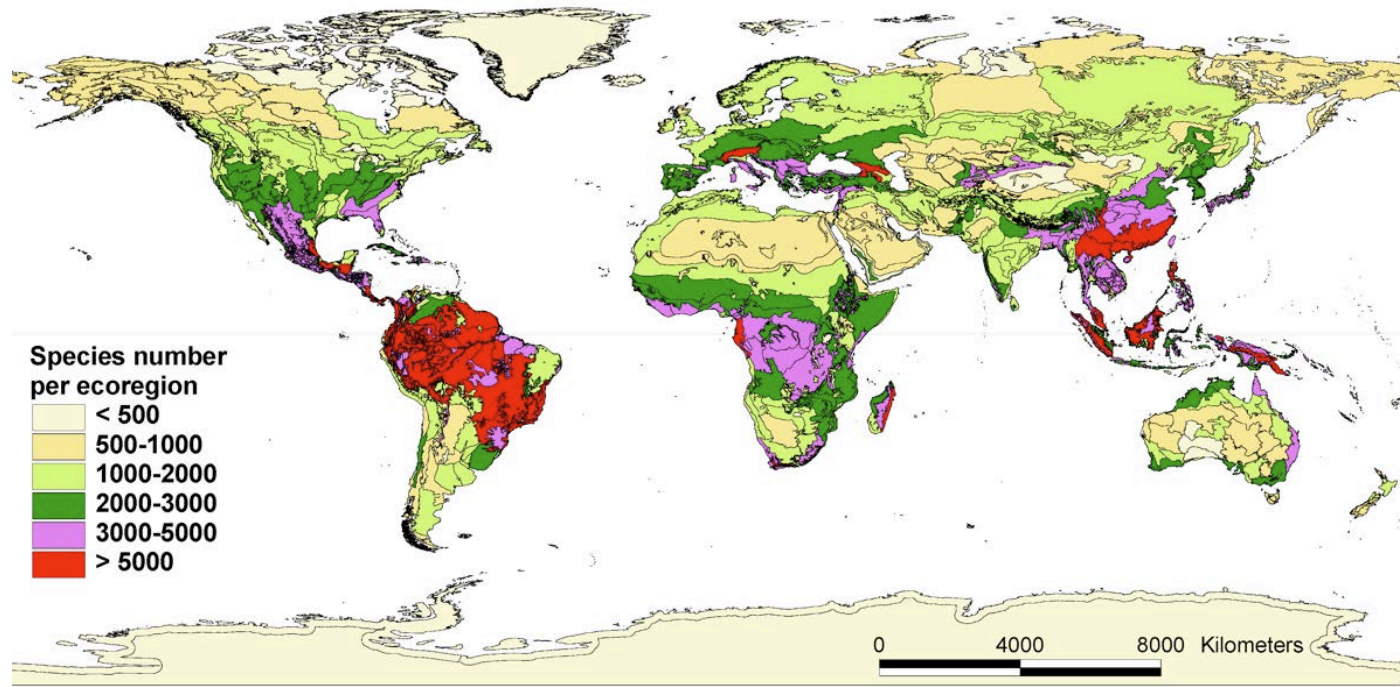
1. The historical geography of *biodiversity* is produced and reduced in part by human action
2. *Ideas of nature* arise in concert with our environmental history
3. Colonial economies and administrations since the 16<sup>th</sup> century (1500s) have profoundly altered the biosphere
4. Contemporary patterns of biodiversity and ideas of nature reflect these past economic and environmental injustices

**Where do  
Biodiversity hot  
spots come from?**

**what is a  
biodiversity ‘hot  
spot’?**

**how do types of  
biodiversity and  
processes of  
bio-diversification  
create in hot spots’**

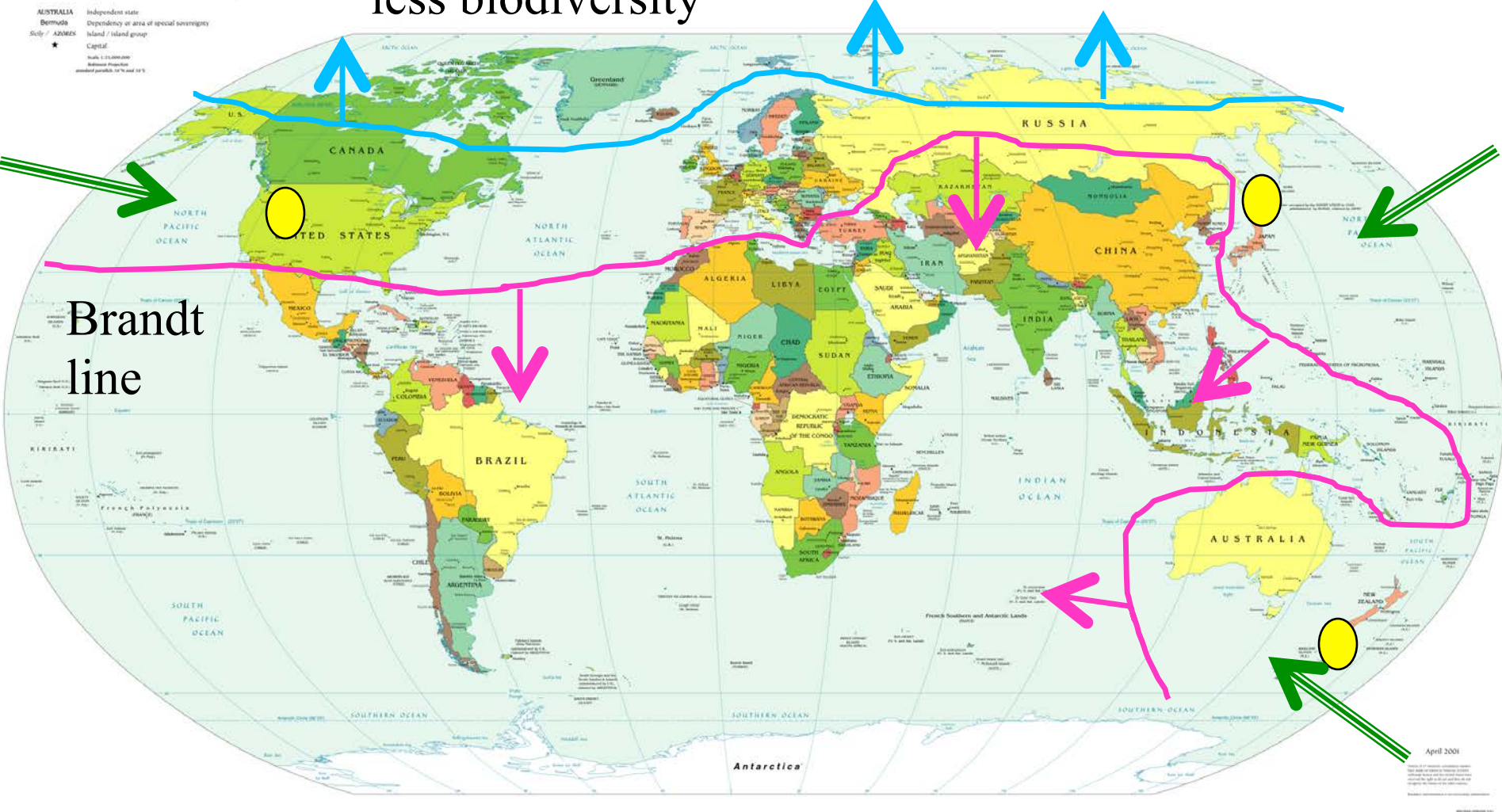
**What about  
‘cold spots’?**





Global **North**: relatively greater wealth;  
less biodiversity

Political Map of the World, April 2001



**Global South / Circumpolar North:**  
relatively less wealth; greater biodiversity

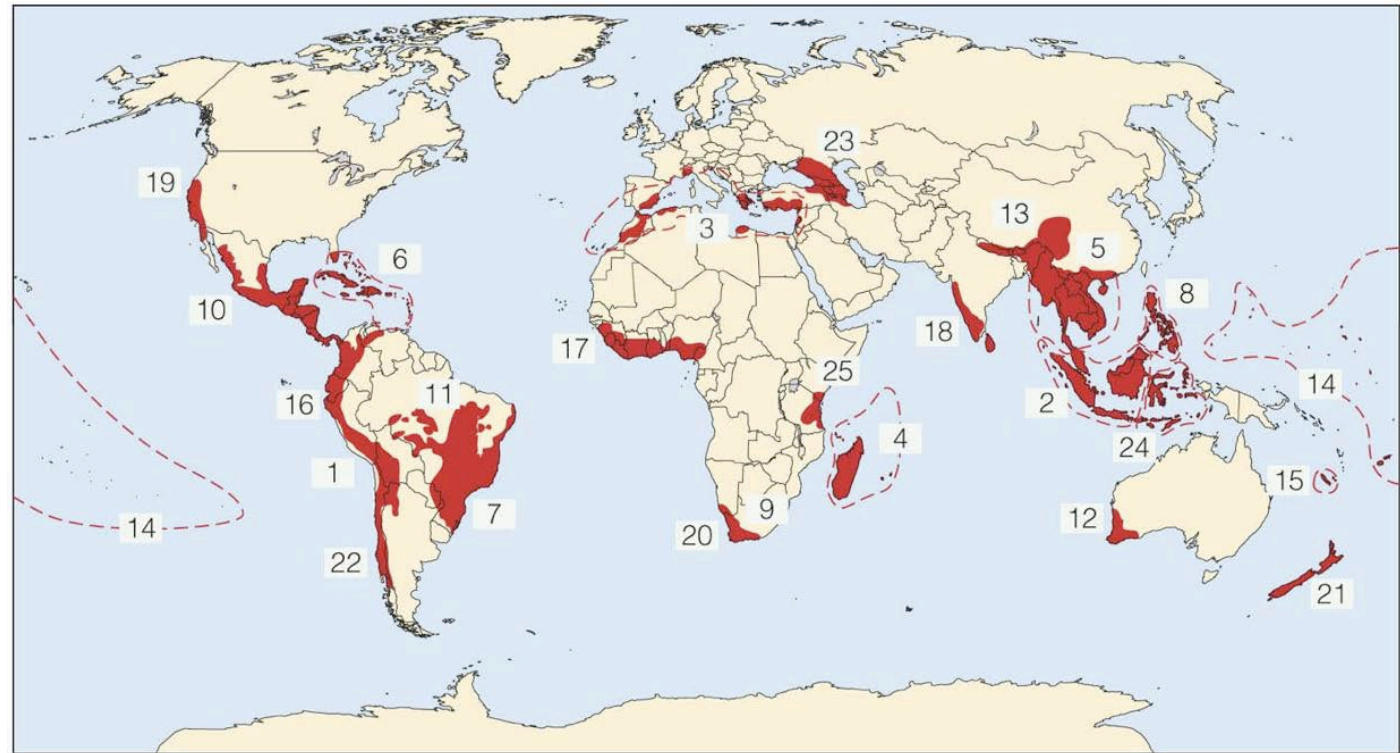
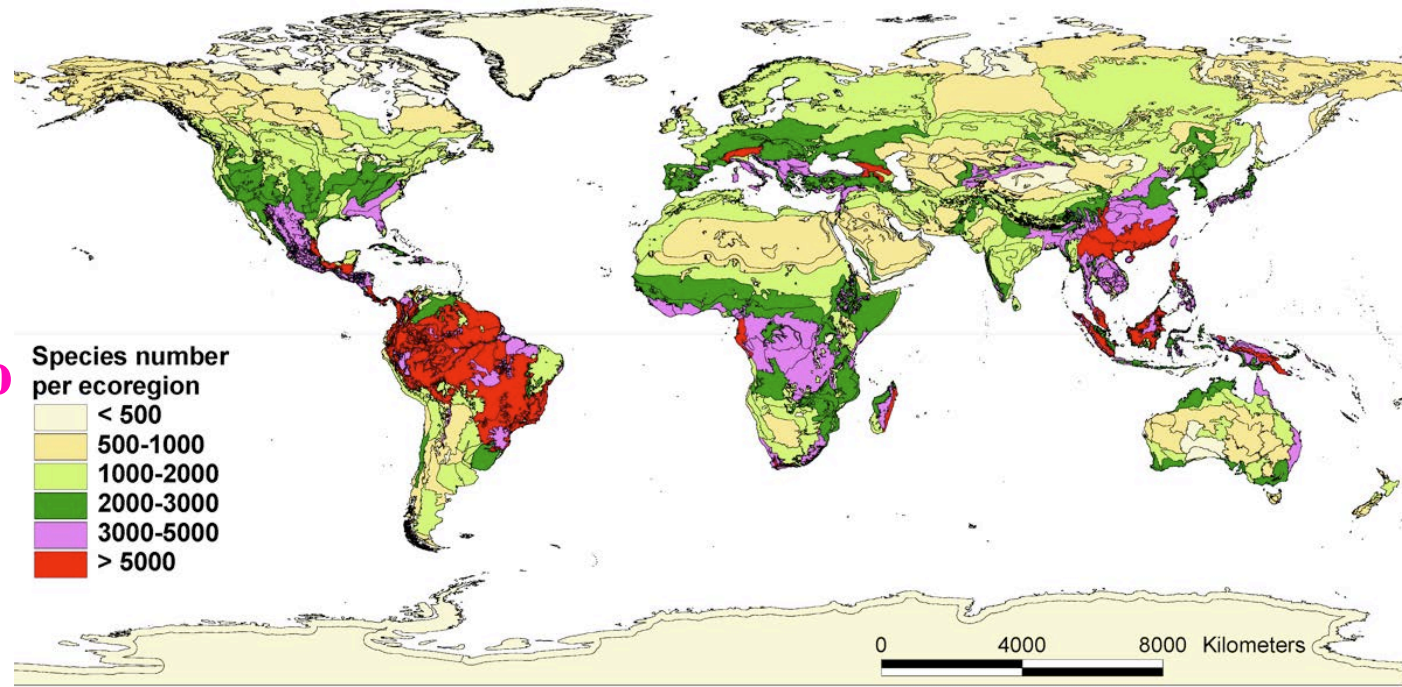
**Where do  
biodiversity hot  
spots come from?**

**What happened to  
existing  
biodiversity?**

**#1**

**Biodiversity is  
affected by:**

**Demographic  
changes in the  
first wave of  
colonialism.**

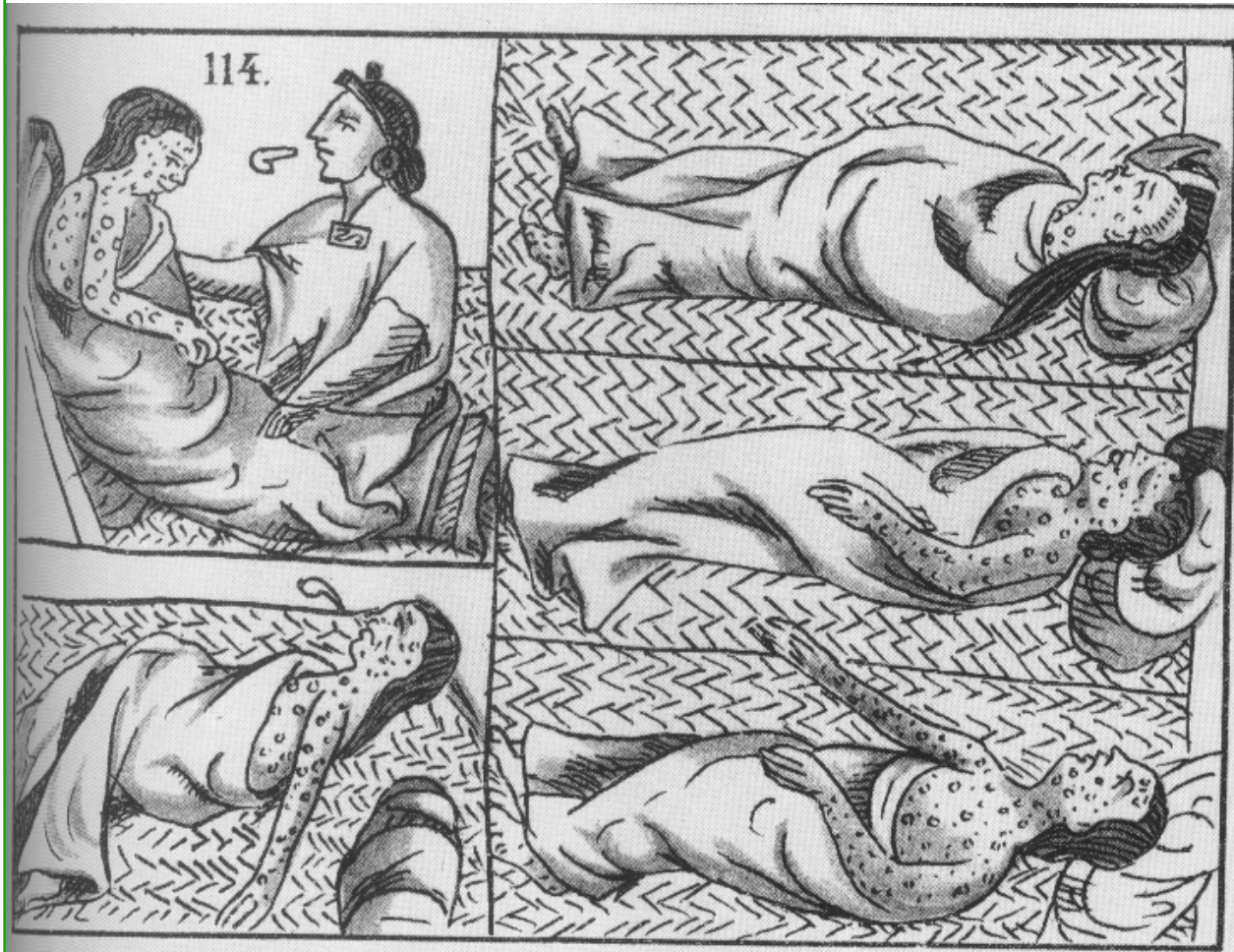




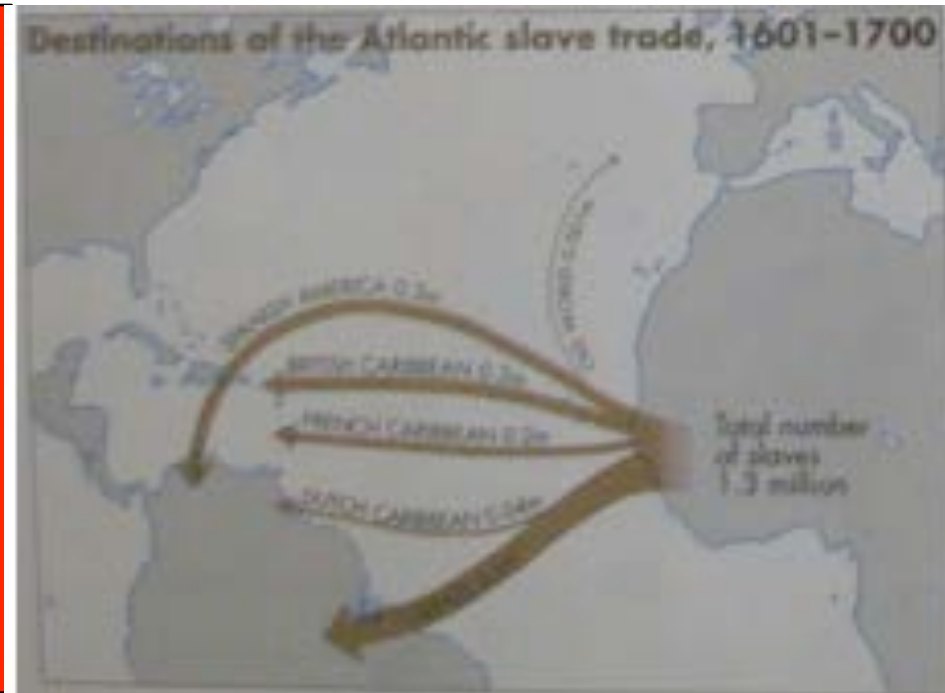
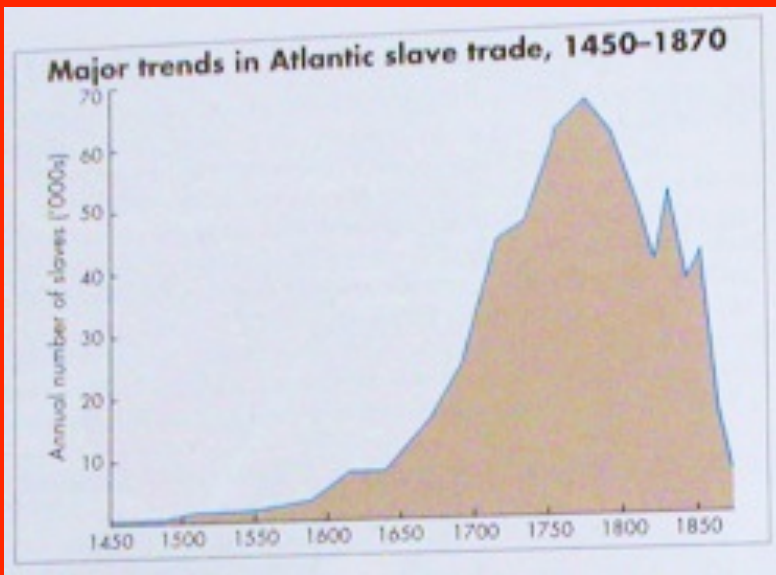
**Death by  
disease and  
forced labor  
during the  
Conquest of  
Mexico:  
  
indigenous  
population  
declined from  
20 to 2 million –  
40% to 98%  
depending on  
area**

## **World History of Biodiversity: 16<sup>th</sup> Century How is biodiversity altered, changed?**

**consequences of Colonialism**



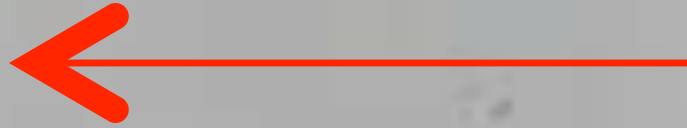
# Biodiversity shaped by Colonial Forced Movements of People





# RESULT OF POPULATION MOVEMENTS

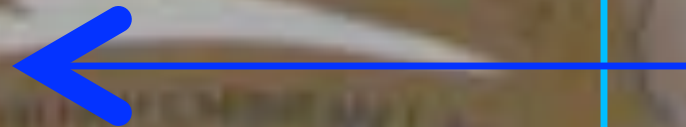
European Settlers: almost impossible to obtain land in Europe



Vast movement of peoples:  
Colonial Greed and Forced Labor



I. Biodiversity *severely reduced*  
In Caribbean and  
to lesser degree in  
other parts of the  
Americas



Slavers force People from Africa



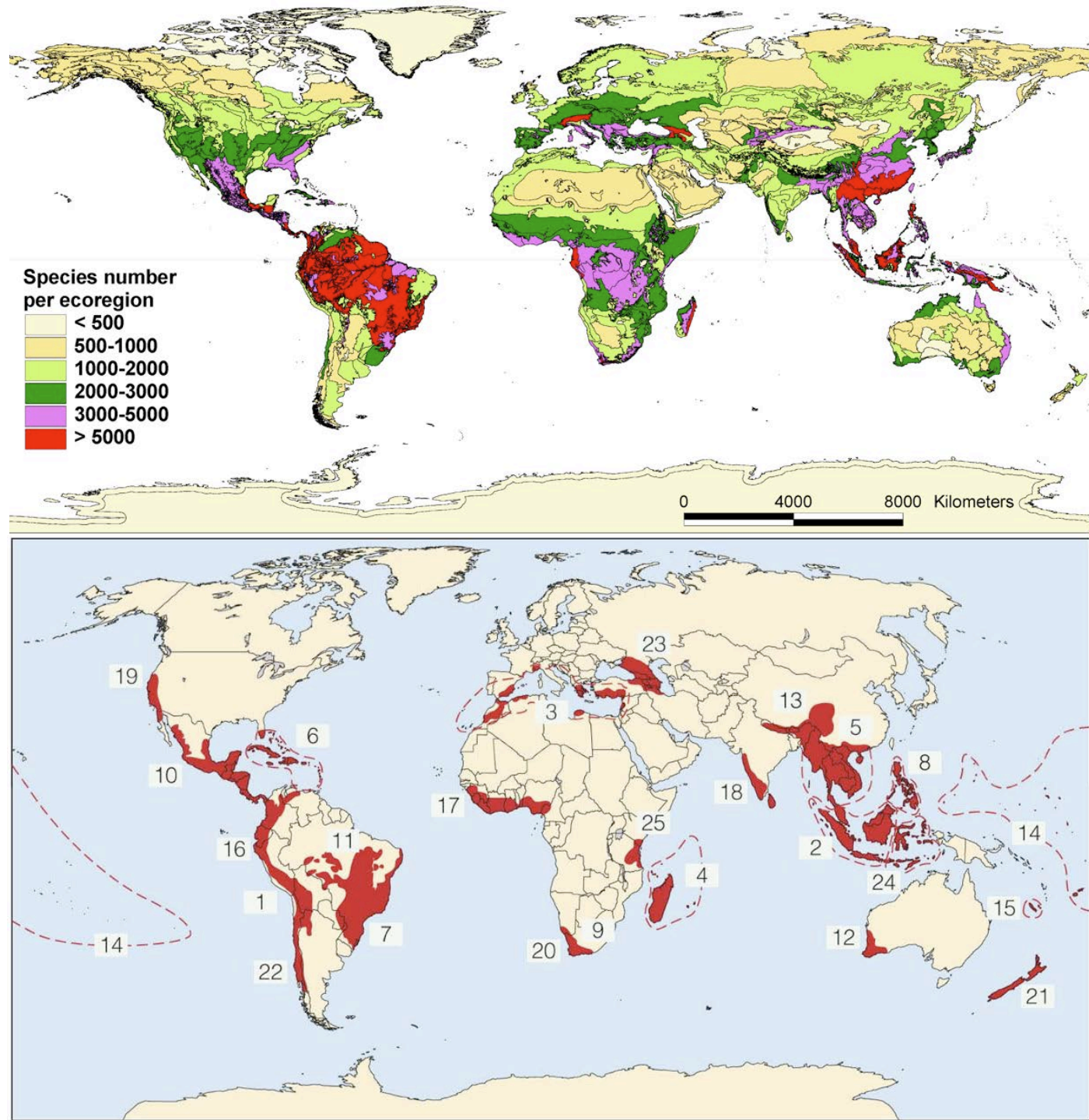
II. Biodiversity *conserved*  
In parts of Africa

Where do  
biodiversity hot  
spots come from?

#2

Biodiversity  
affected by:

new  
technologies of  
food  
production and  
consumption





# Food Crops and Biotic Transfers: Food and Weeds

## Transfer of selected staple crops until AD 1800 and main modes of subsistence AD 1500
















### Main areas of cultivation and husbandry AD 1500

- |   |          |   |               |
|---|----------|---|---------------|
|  | Wheat    |  | Water buffalo |
|  | Millet   |  | Bison         |
|  | Oats     |  | Reindeer      |
|  | Rice     |  | Horses        |
|  | Peas     |  | Cattle        |
|  | Barley   |  | Goats         |
|  | Maize    |  | Sheep         |
|  | Sorghum  |  | Pigs          |
|  | Cassava  |   |               |
|  | Potatoes |   |               |
|  | Beans    |   |               |
|  | Yams     |   |               |

### Main modes of subsistence AD 1500

-  Surplus-producing farming
-  Self-sufficient farming
-  Pastoralism
-  Gathering/hunting
-  Deficit areas

### Crop transfer and regions of origin/major plantations

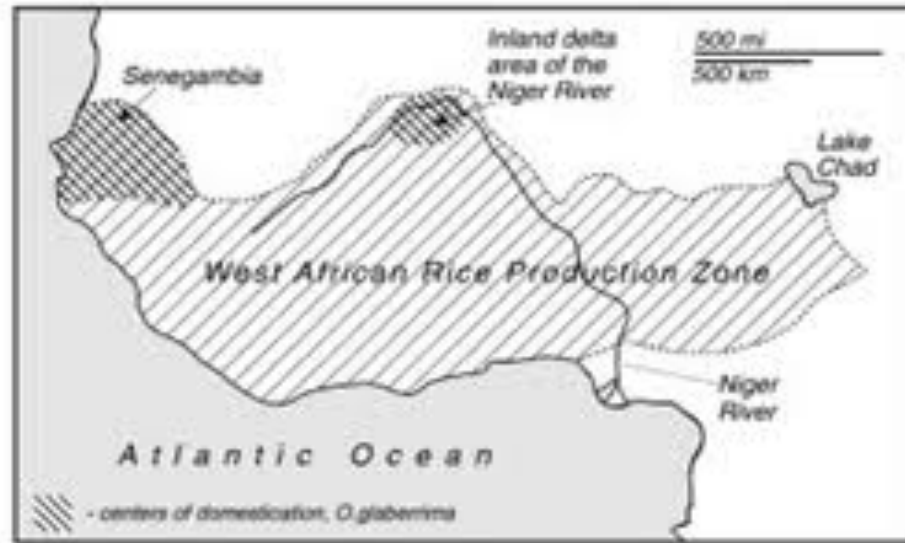
- | Crop   | Origin of crop types  | Transfer route  |
|--|---|---|
| Maize     |  |  |
| Wheat     |  |  |
| Rice      |  |  |
| Cassava   |  |  |
| Potatoes  |  |  |

Bananas, cotton: 500-1500      Sugar and Cocoa: 1500-1880      Coffee and Tea: 1650-1950

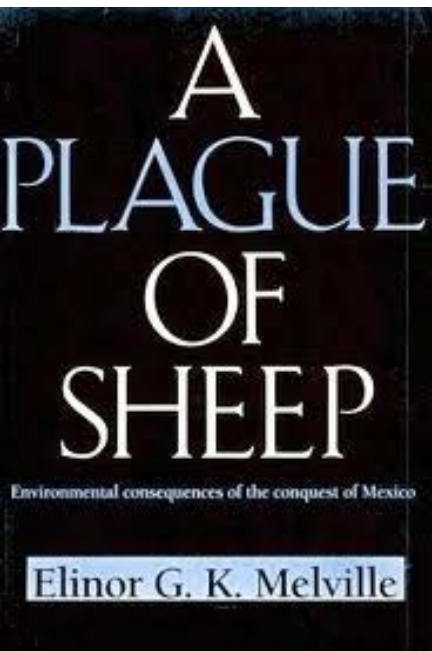


## Crop transfers: new plants and animals brought new technologies

**Example 1:**  
Africans bring rice cultivation and water management technology to Americas



**Example 2:** European Sheep damage Mexico

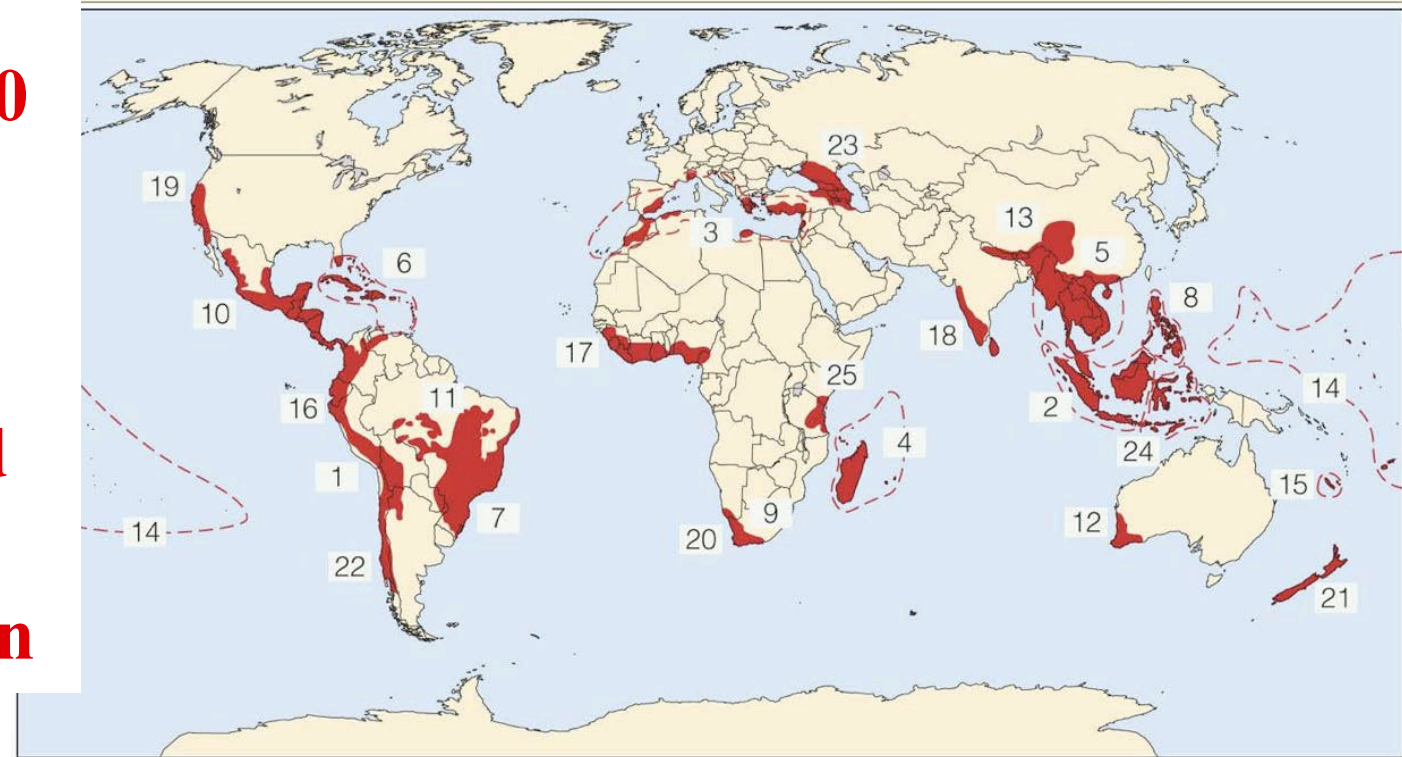
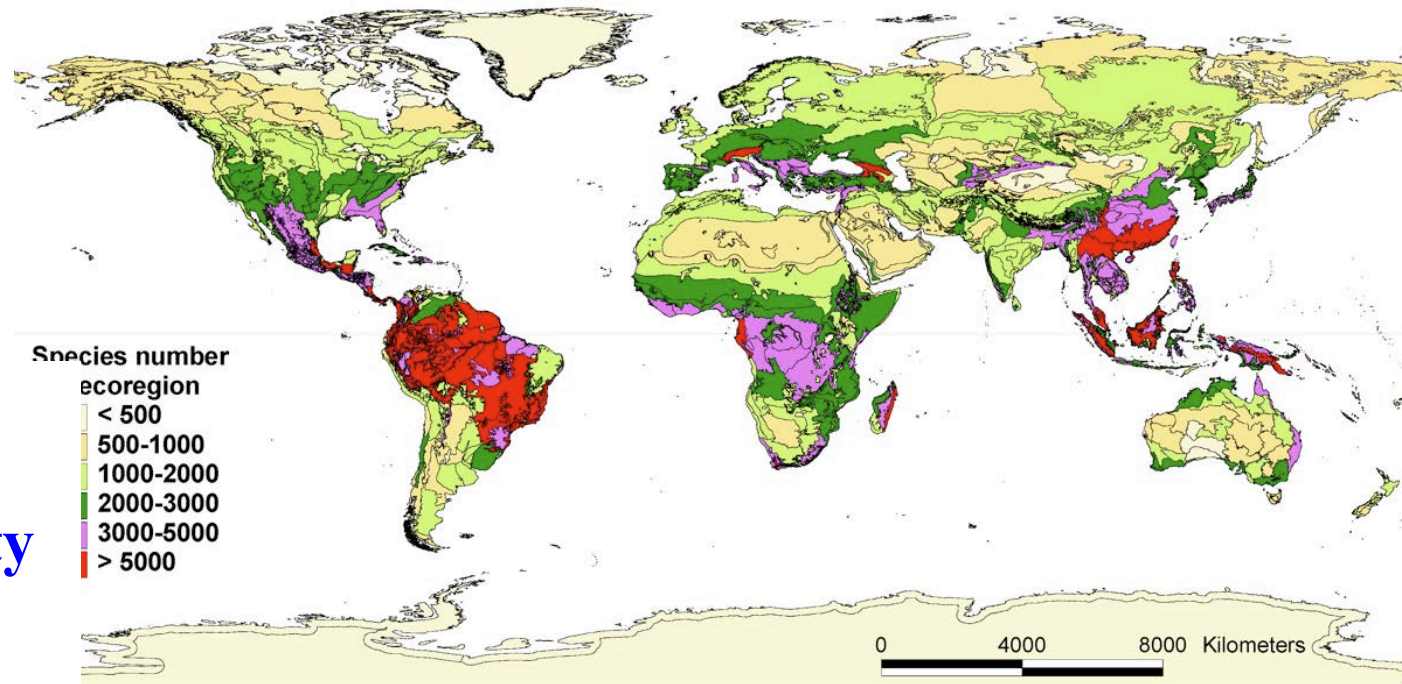


Where do  
biodiversity hot  
spots come from?

**#3**

How is biodiversity  
affected by:

Early 1600-1800  
(mercantile  
(market-  
oriented)  
colonialism and  
expanded  
industrialization



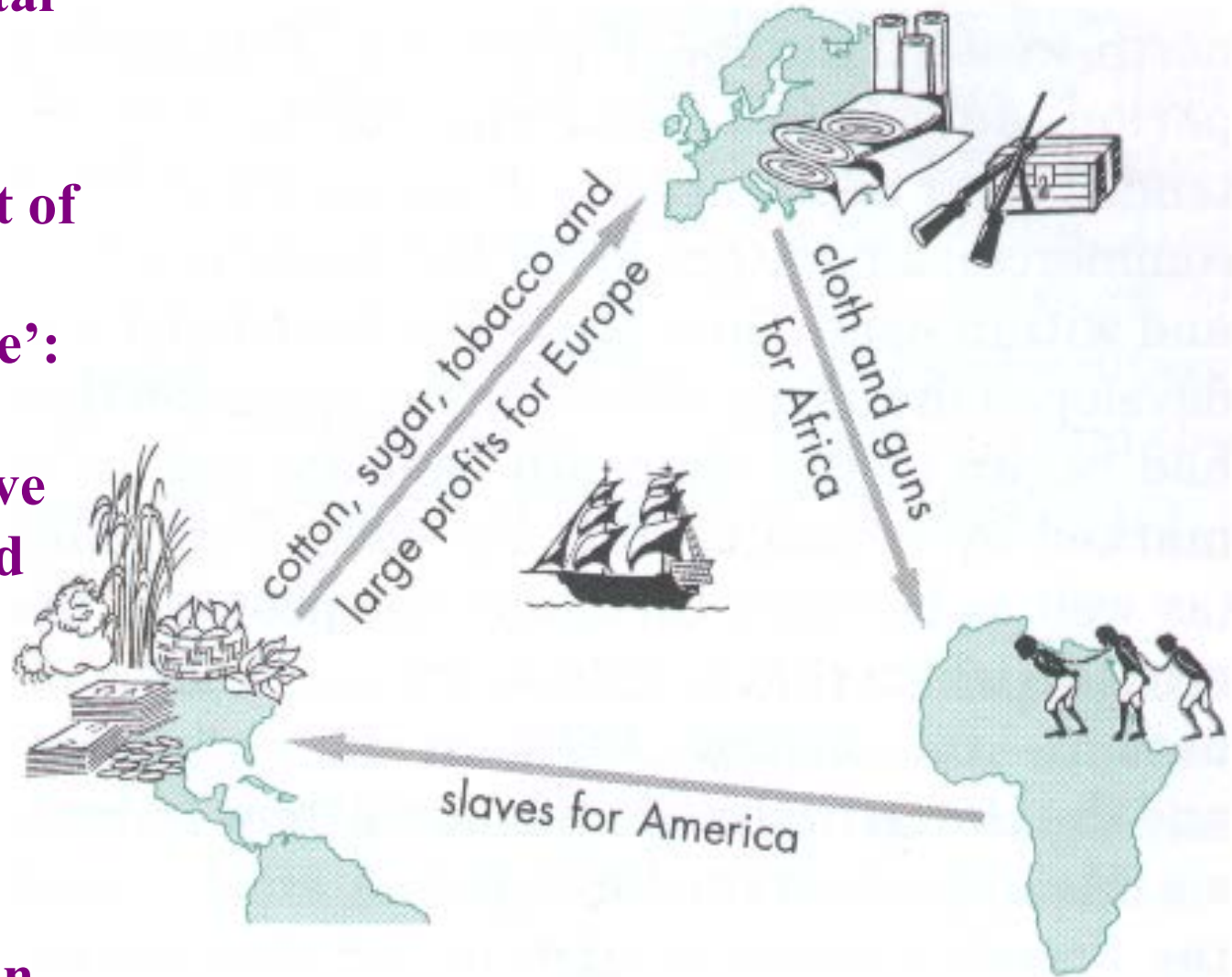


# Global Economies And environmental change

## Classic Statement of the so-called 'Triangular Trade':

Early, violent wave  
of colonialism and  
exploitation  
beginning in the  
17th century  
(1600s)

Coming to force in  
the 18<sup>th</sup> century  
(1700s)



*Figure 11.2 The triangular trade.*



# Transfers of wealth to Europe, 16th-19th centuries

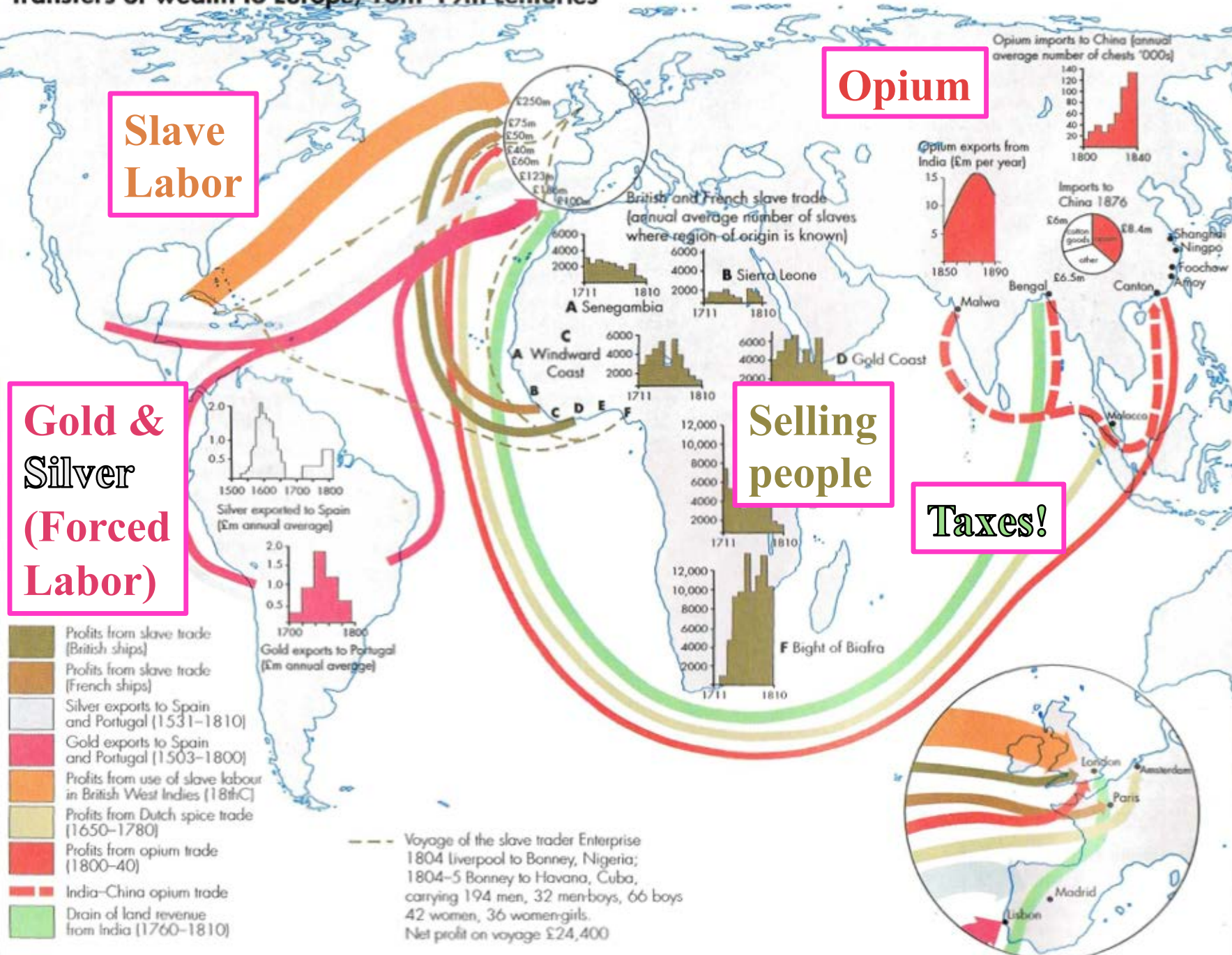
Slave Labor

Opium

Gold & Silver  
(Forced Labor)

Selling people

Taxes!

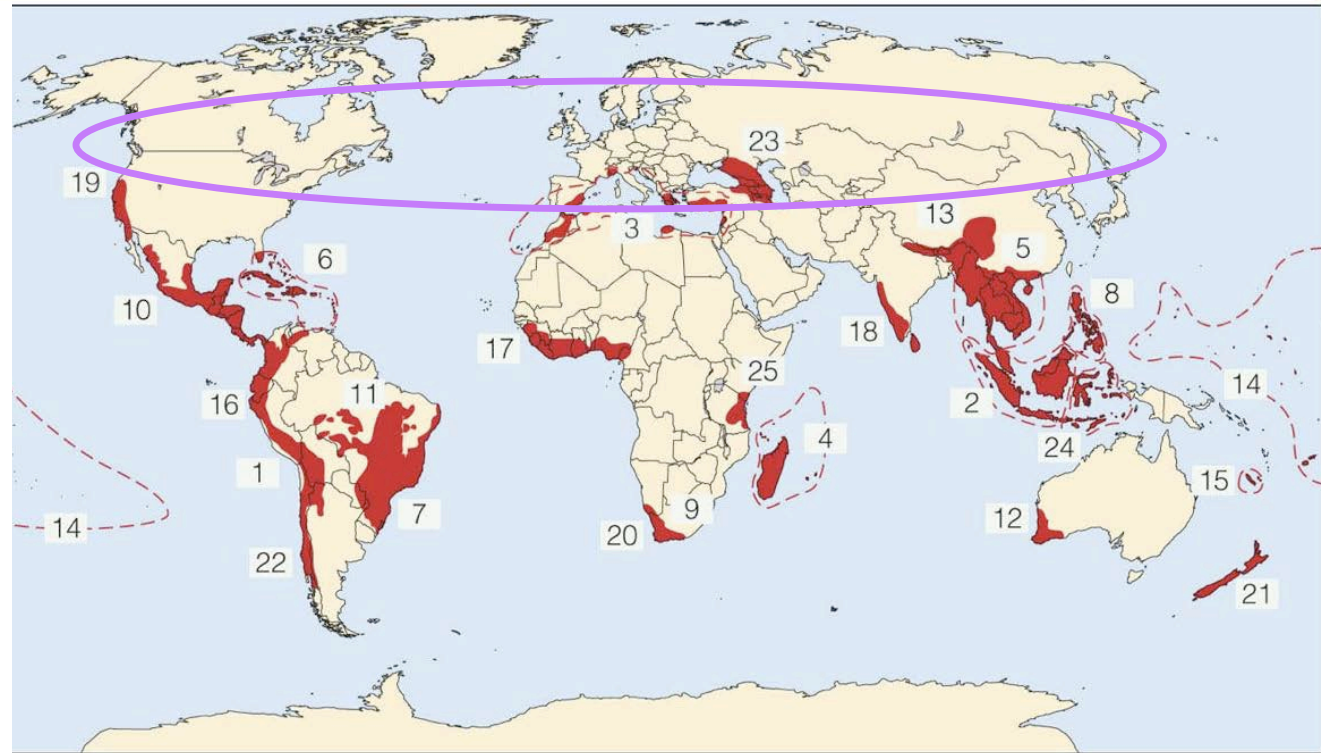
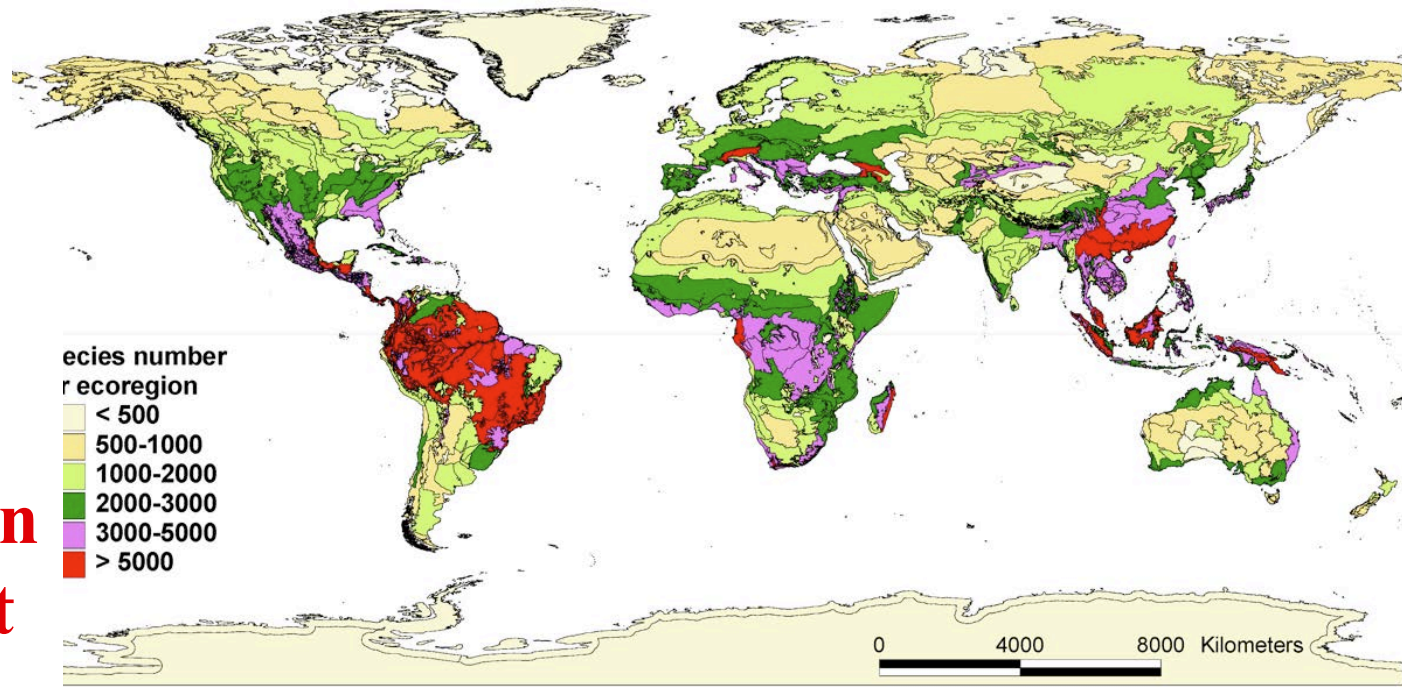


Where do  
biodiversity hot  
spots come from?

#4

Global Northern  
biodiversity lost  
during 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>  
century period

Northern and  
some southern  
biodiversity lost  
due to economic  
expansion



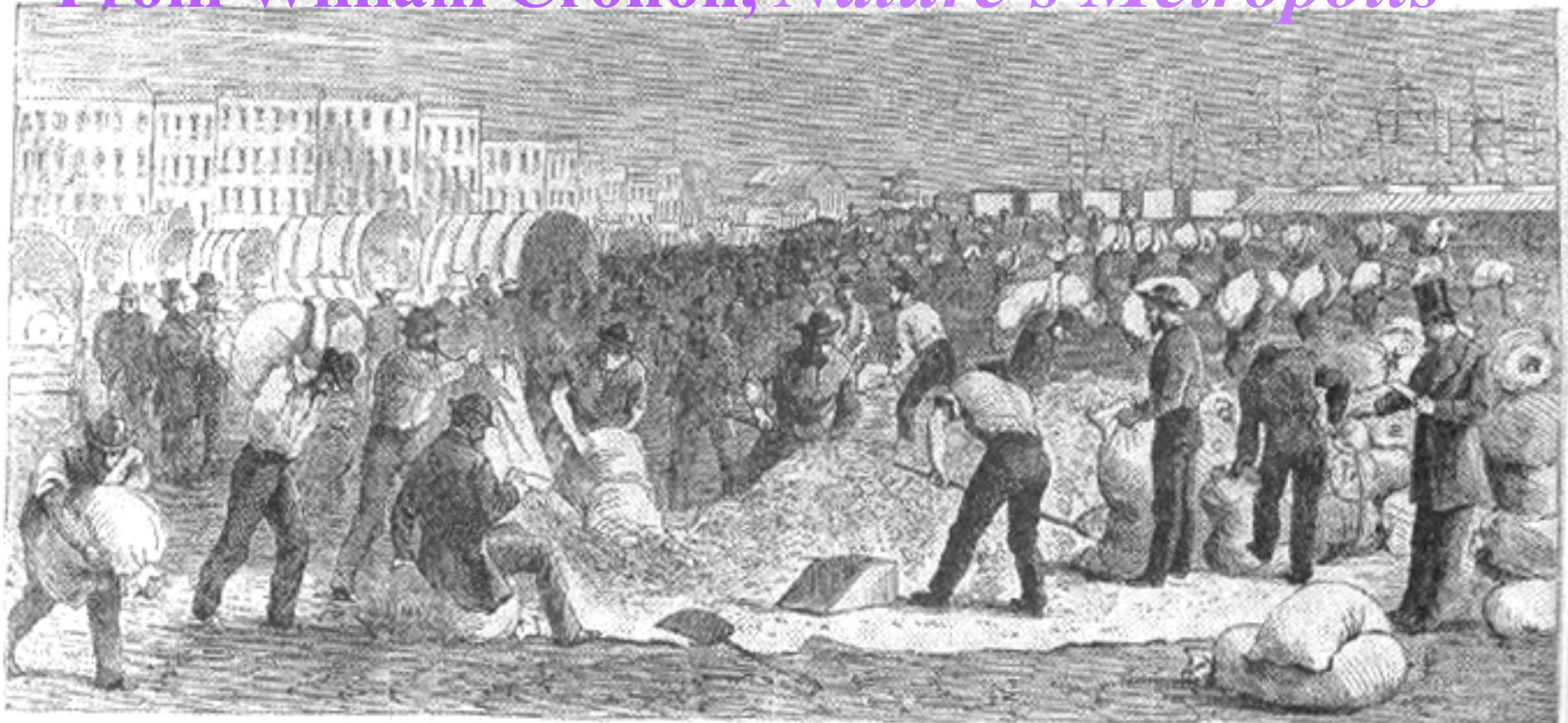


# USA: economic benefit, environmental deficit

Midwestern Grain Traders

Chicago c. 19th Century

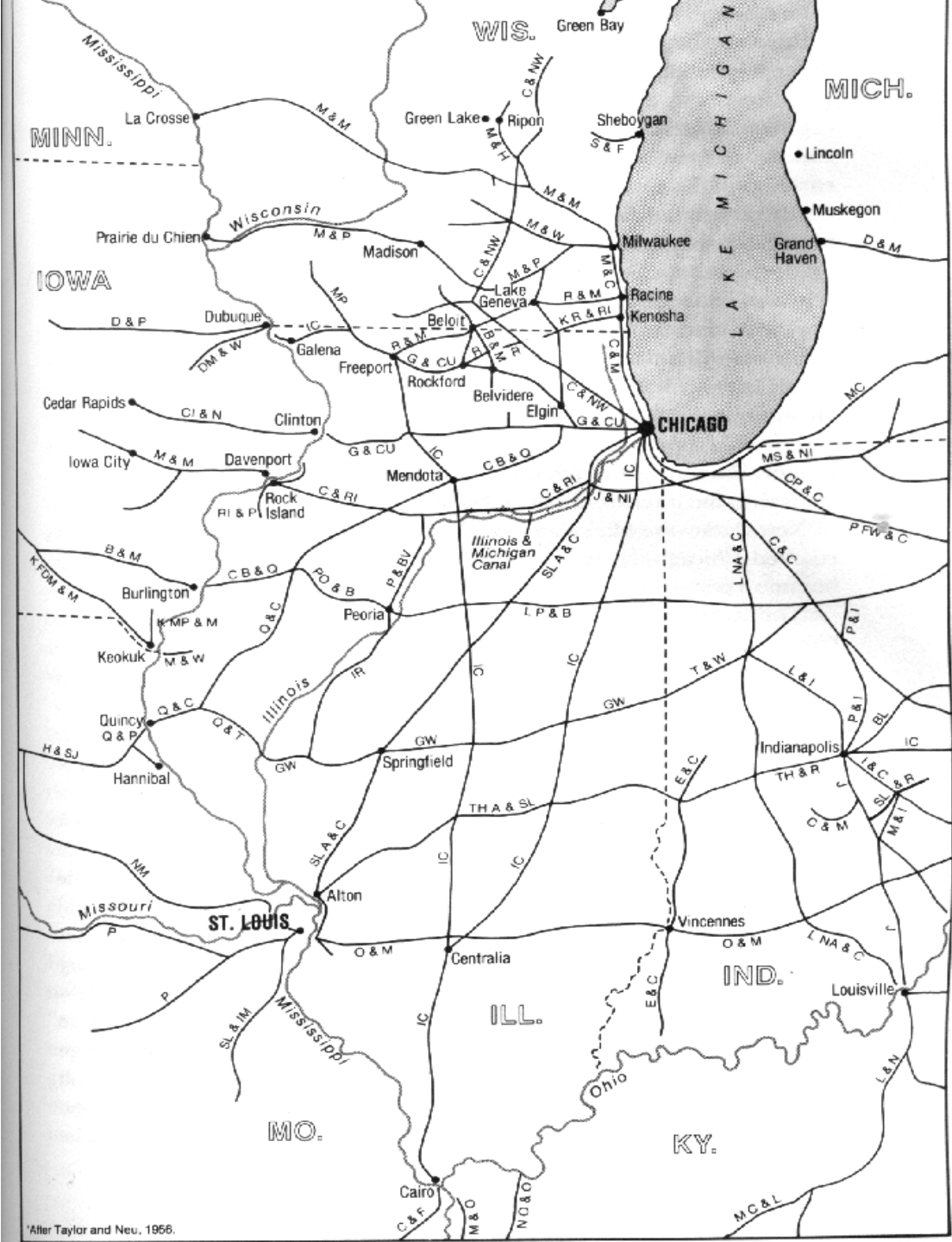
From William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*



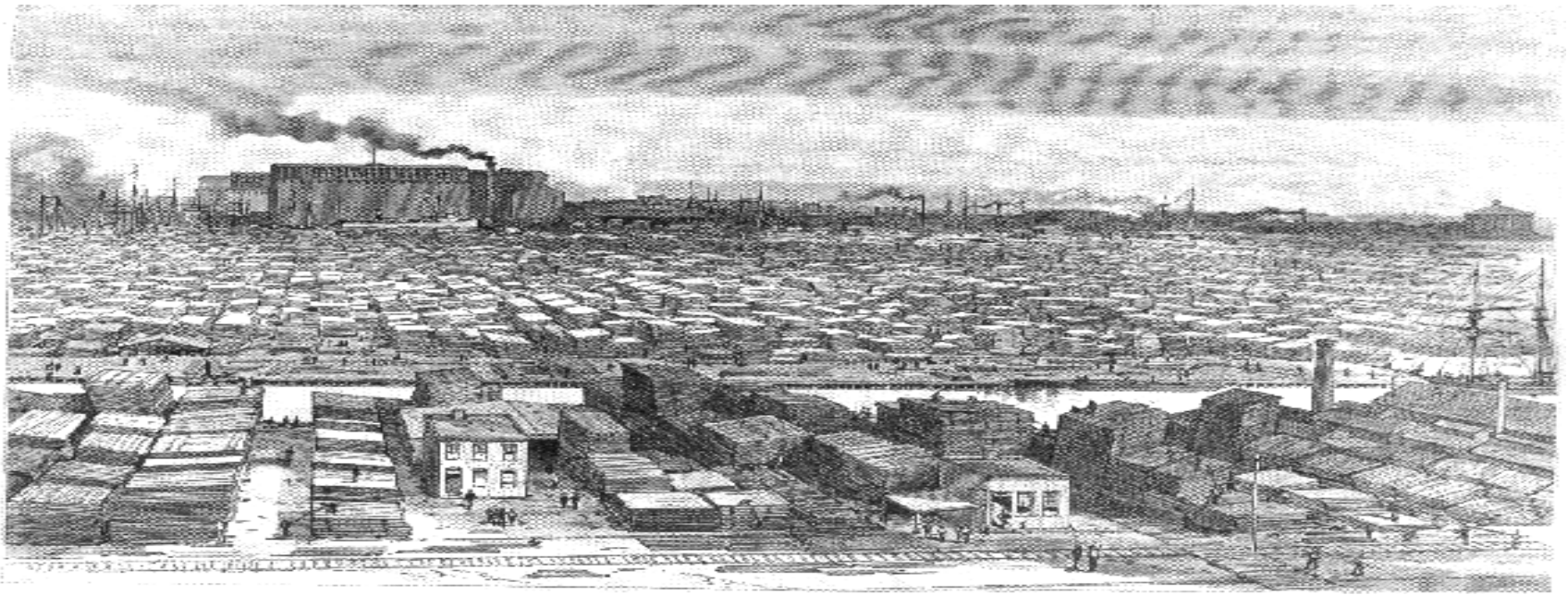


## US Westward Expansion

# Transport expansion Midwestern Railways 1861



<sup>1</sup>After Taylor and Neu, 1956.



Chicago 19th C. Lumber District

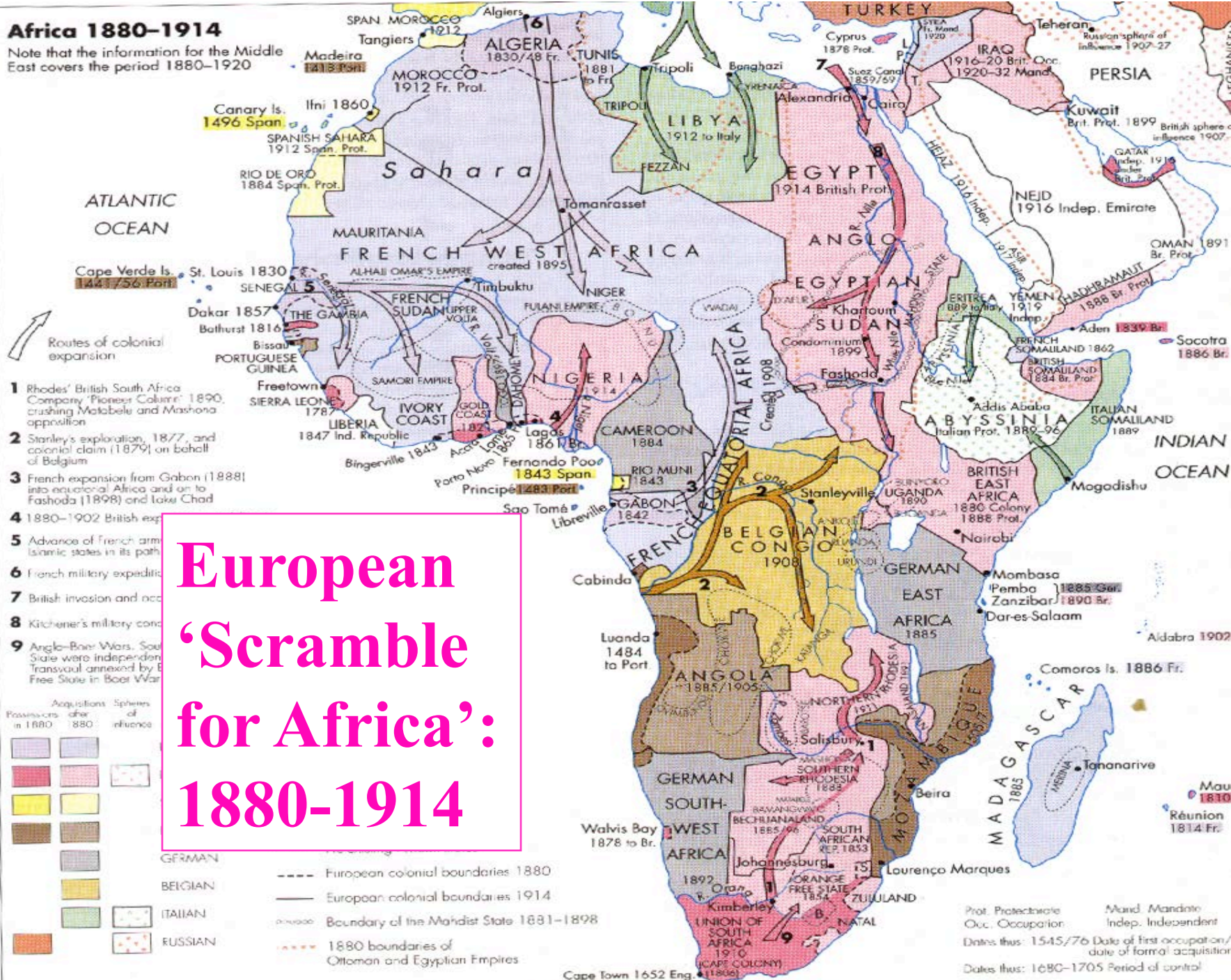
Michigan North Woods





# Africa 1880-1914

Note that the information for the Middle East covers the period 1880-1920

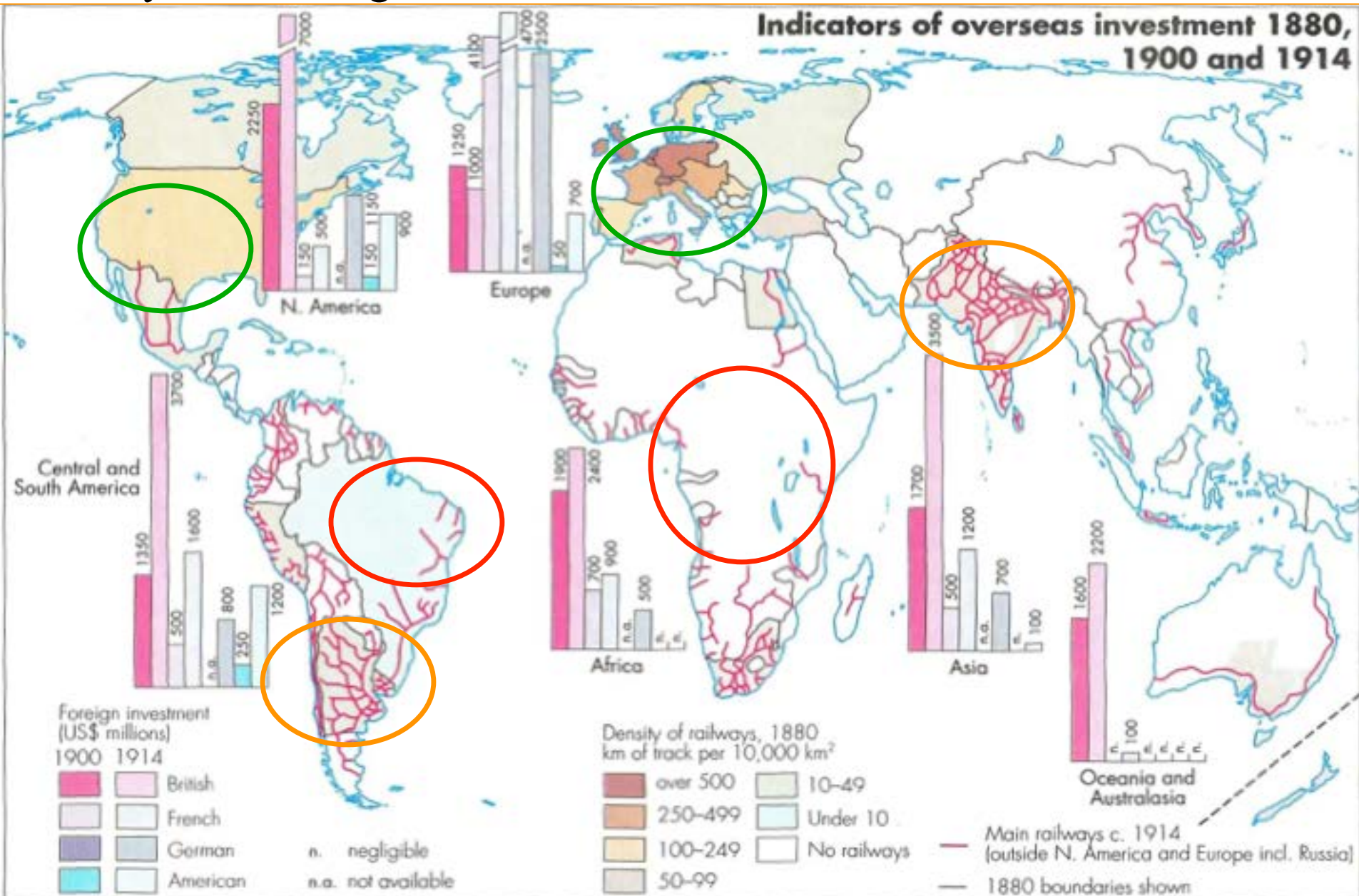


## European 'Scramble for Africa': 1880-1914



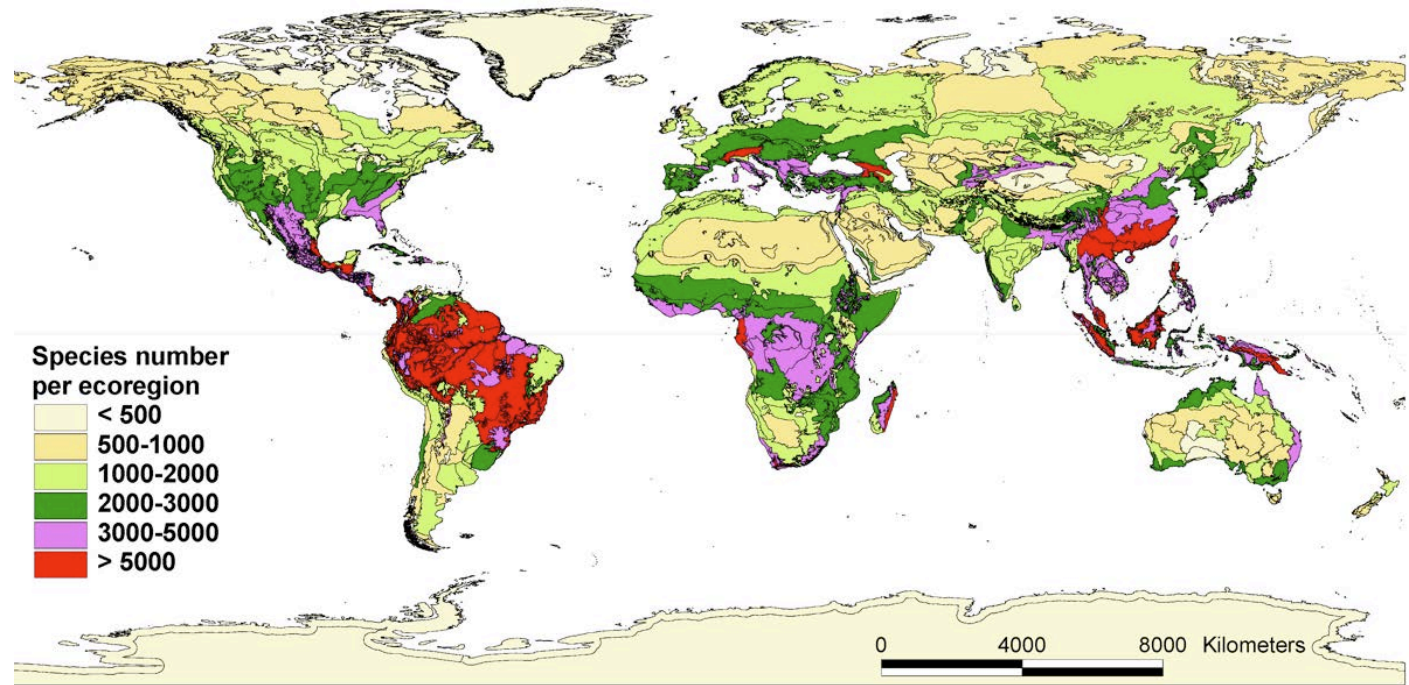
# Comparing North and South: summary

## Railways and Foreign Investment, 1880-1914



# What are Biodiversity Hot Spots Used For?

## #5 Colonial Policies Exploit Biodiversity

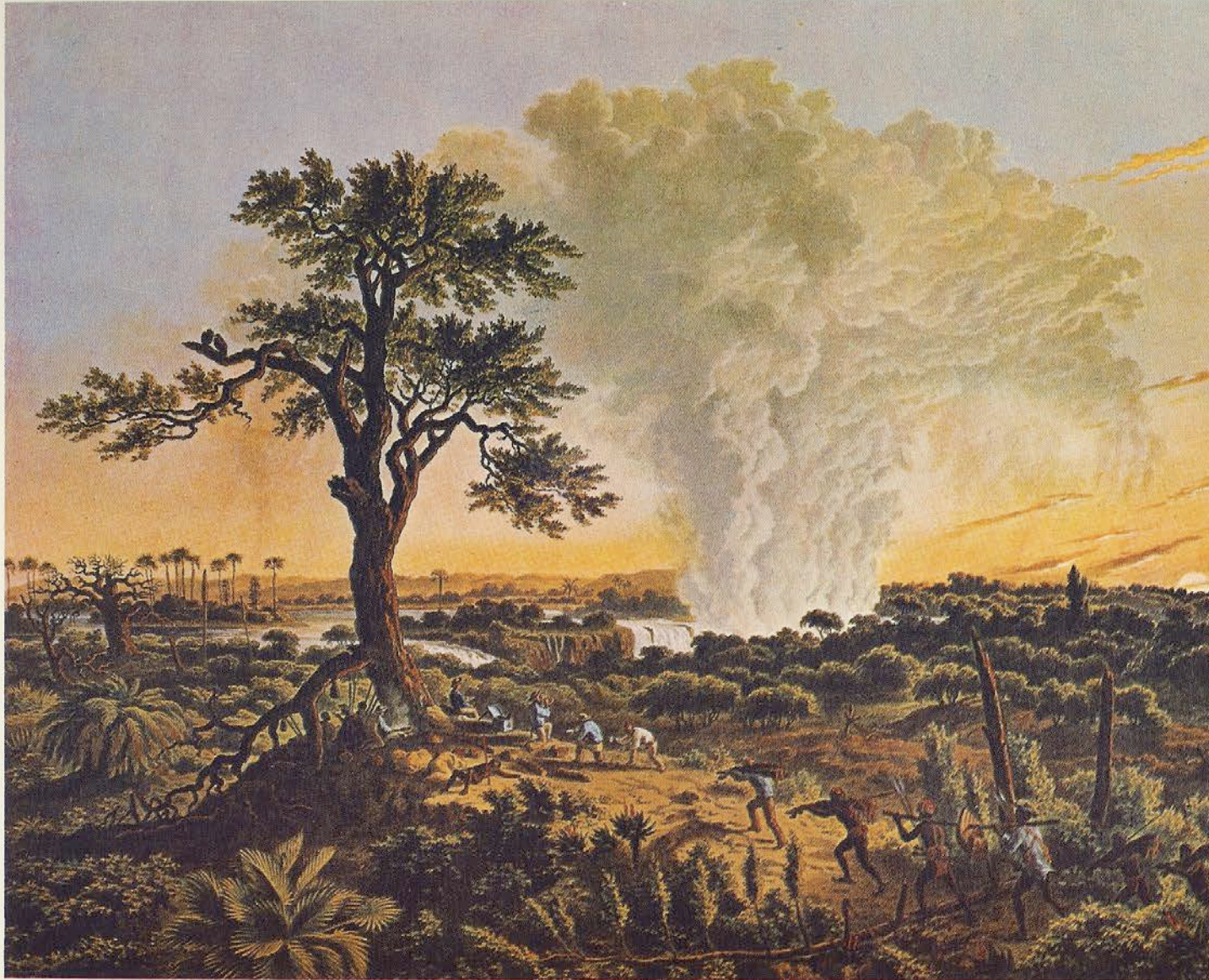


1. *European* ideas of African peoples and nature:  
noble savage, wilderness  
labor force and natural resources for colonial profit
2. European ideas of nature were enacted (legislated)  
into African policy

Recall Neumann



# Africa: Imposing a 'Natural' Landscape through colonial policy



T. Baines del. T. Fisher lith.

London: Published, October 4<sup>th</sup> 1865 by Day & Son, (Limited), Lithographers, Gate Street, Lincolns Inn Fields, W.C.

THE FALLS BY SUNRISE, WITH THE "SPRAY CLOUD" RISING 1,200 FEET.

**Sadly Ironic:  
Landscape  
created  
through  
colonial  
expansion and  
administrative  
policy become  
colonial  
playground  
(Neumann  
reading)**



# **Conclusion:**

- 1. The ‘nature’ of our world was fundamentally reworked from 1450-1900**
- 2. The historical and geographical processes that enriched our nation exacted a cost**
- 3. The conservation or ‘preservation’ movement conflicted with both capital expansion *and* indigenous livelihoods**
- 4. Historical dynamics live on in contemporary geographies and practices**
- 5. We owe much of our wealth to expropriation of natural resources *and* peoples:**

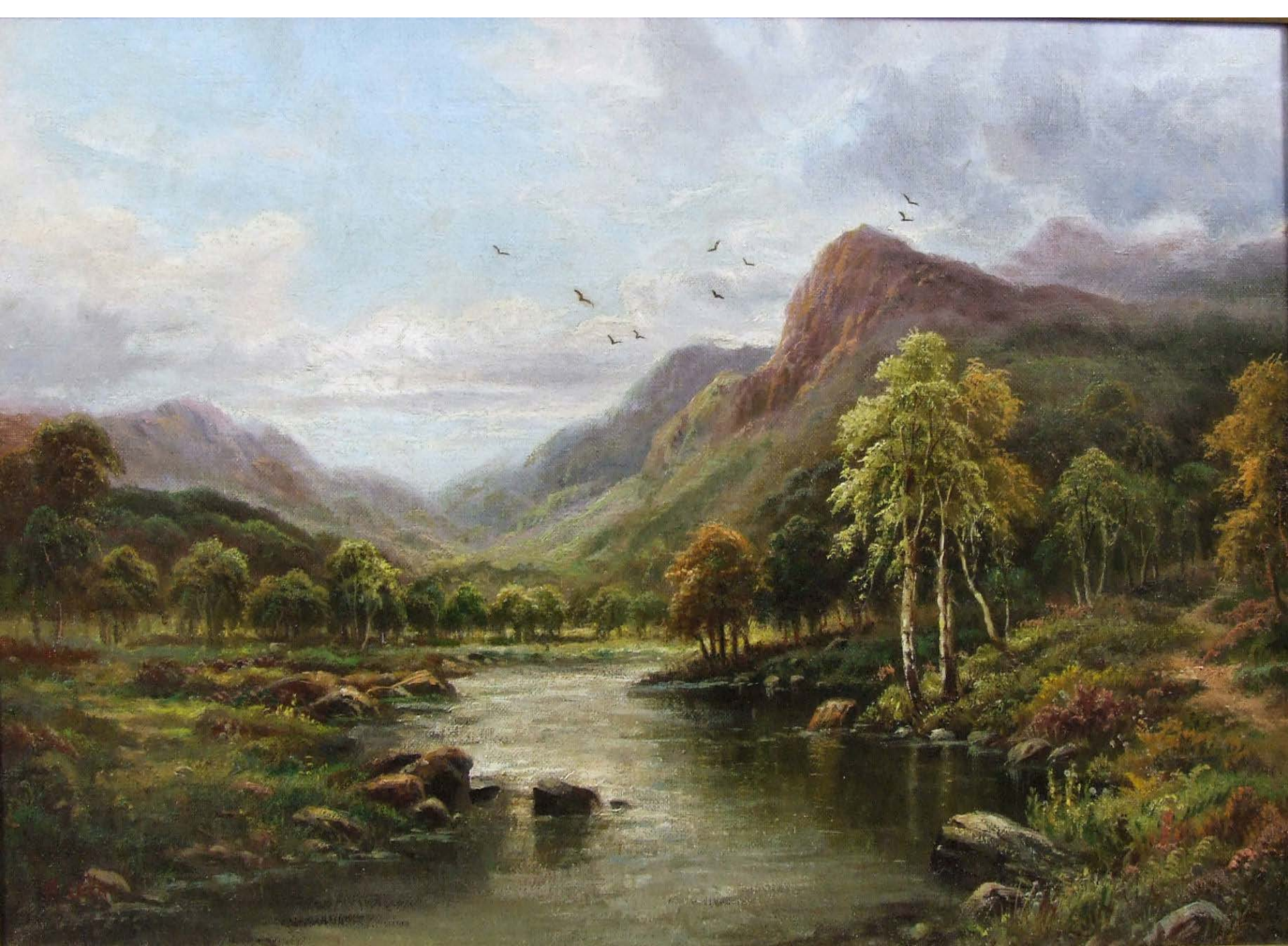
**Question: was it a ‘bountiful harvest’?**

***See next***

“The habitual weakness of the American people is to assume that they have made themselves great, whereas their greatness has been in large measure thrust upon them by a bountiful providence which has given them forest, mines, fertile soil, and a variety of climate to enable them to sustain themselves in plenty...”

— Isaac Stephenson, 1915

¿¿Based upon this lecture, what would you say is missing in Stephenson’s statement??





# European Ideas of Pristine Nature lead to the Imposition of Wilderness: European ideals of nature

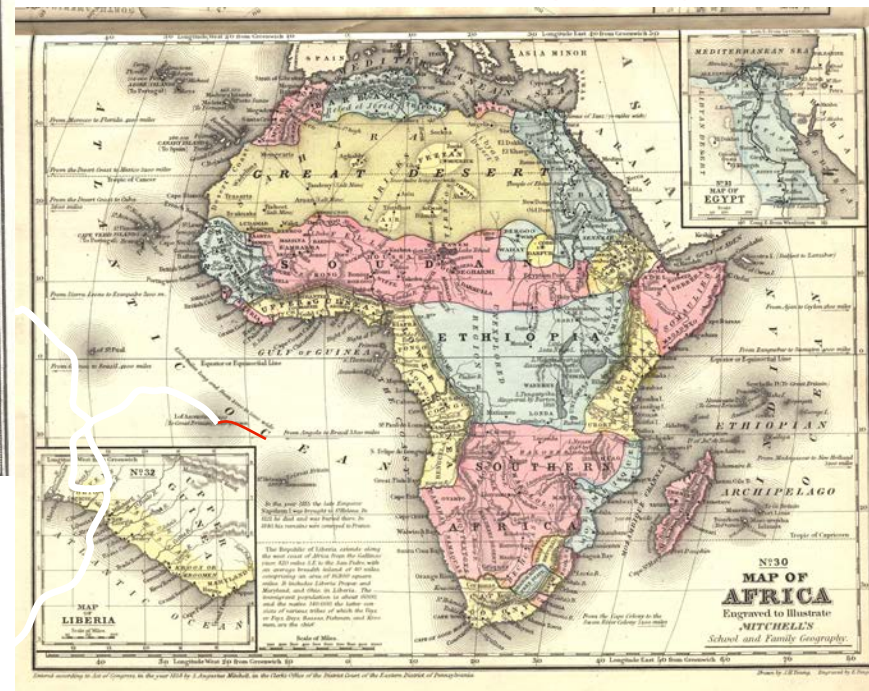
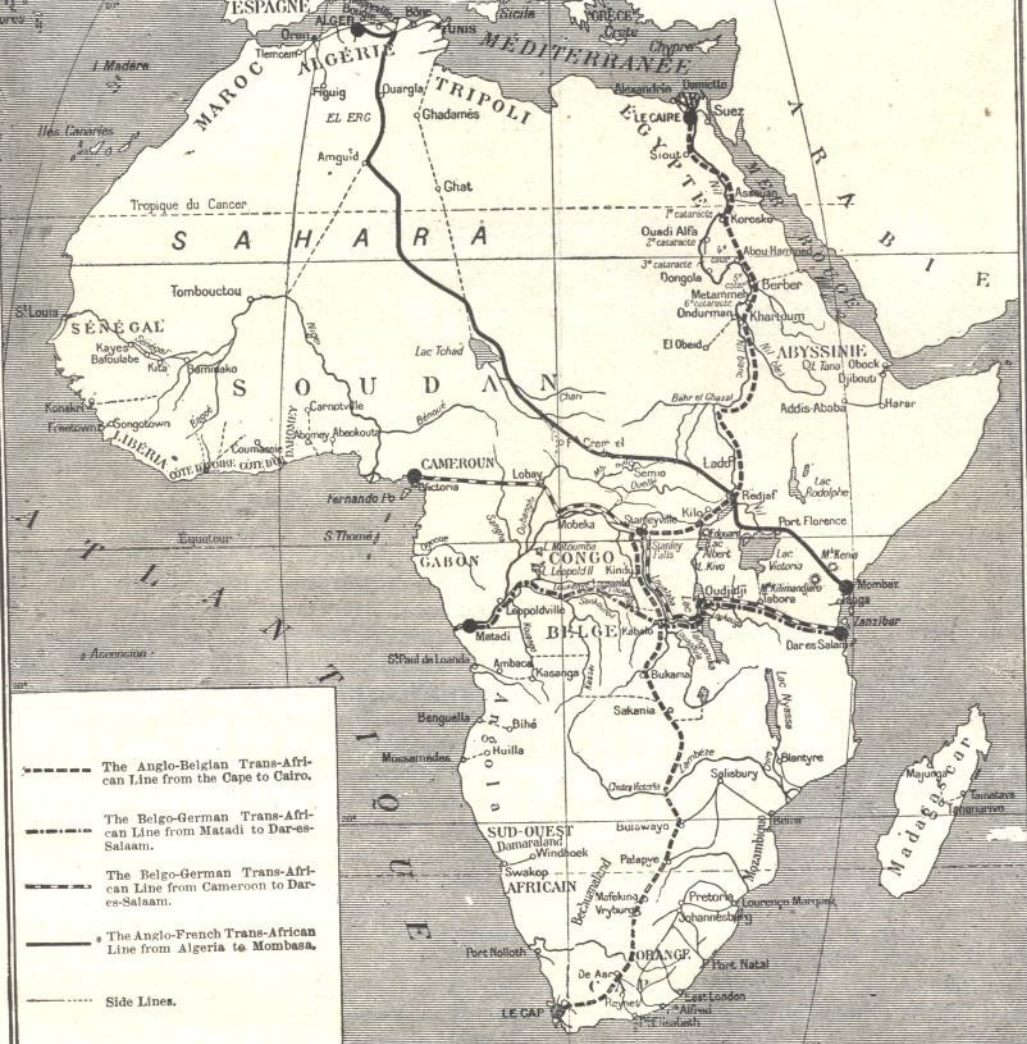






# African Railways 1915

1890



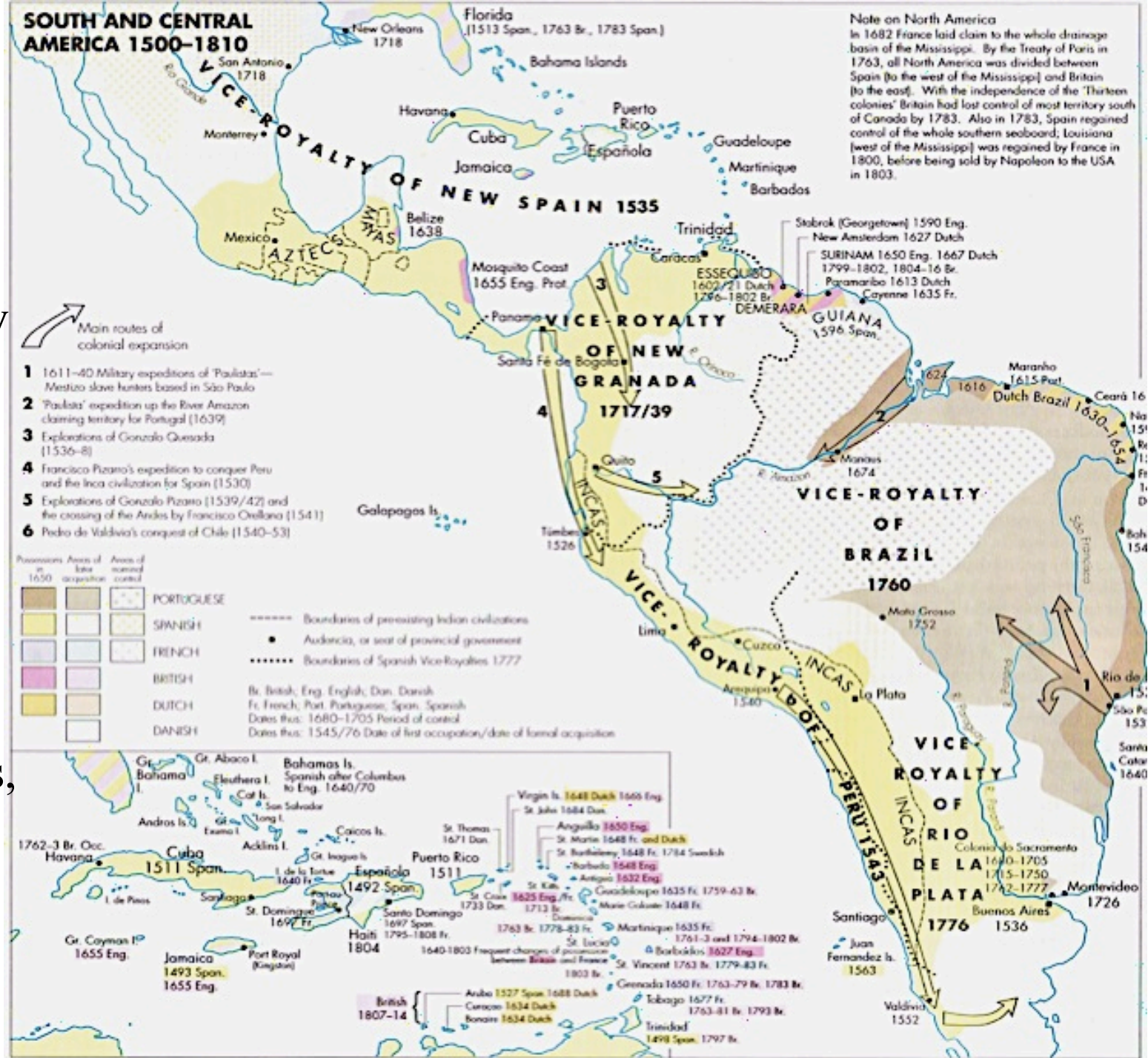
Note relative **LACK** of transport development in Africa, AND the same is true of Asia with the exception of India



END

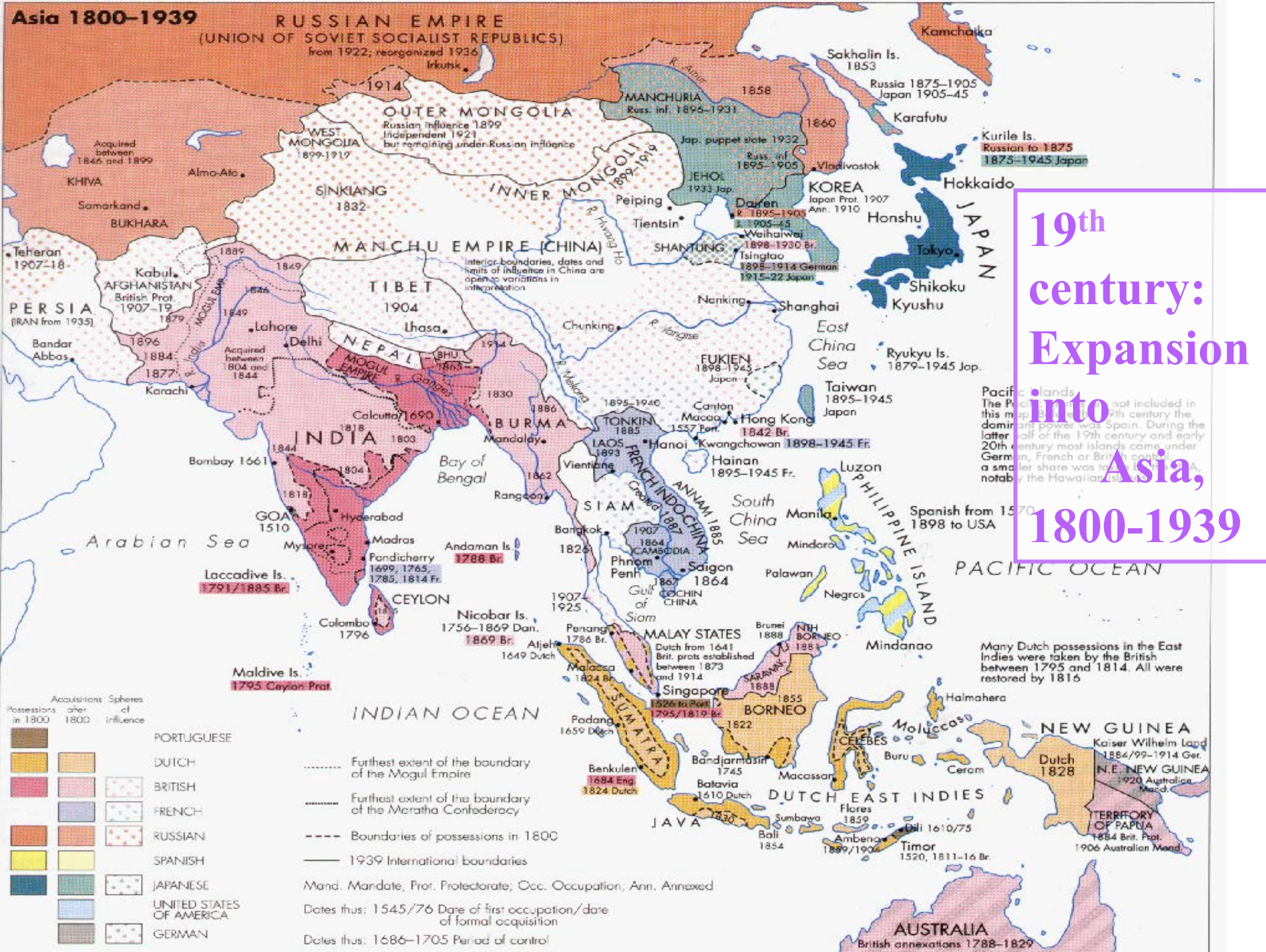
Notes?

Began 1492,  
Mercantile  
phase  
1600s-1880s,  
After  
'century of  
depression'





RUSSIAN EMPIRE  
(UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS)  
from 1922; reorganized 1936







USA **internal** colonialism: **REVIEW**  
From previous lecture: Native Americans Expelled  
from Yellowstone, Glacier, Yosemite: 1870s  
Teddy Roosevelt in Yellowstone





# 1930s, Parks formed by 'preservationists': especially in E. and S. African settler colonies

## 1. Creating the Serengeti: enclosure and eviction



1931 Hingston Report  
(Tanzania)

'Create the finest park in Africa'

## 2. What about people? Loss of hunting, gathering rights of the Maasai

- a. Disputes over human land use:  
Maasai farming vs. white hunting
- b. Use regulation to recreate a white colonial vision of 'natural'  
Africa and 'primitive' Man (gendered use intended)
- c. Who decides?

2012 Spanish King Juan Carlos kills an elephant in Botswana: **Spanish King lives on Spanish People's Tax Dollars, uses tax \$ to kill elephants!**

Dispute over Serengeti continues today:  
Hunting 'land grab' would force Maasai out of part of the Serengeti to make way for **Saudi Royal hunting park**

