V2 Chapter 2 Primary Sources

Christopher Columbus, The Letters of Columbus to Ferdinand and Isabel (1493)

[Introduction] The voyages of Christopher Columbus were funded by Ferdinand and Isabel. Thus it was critical to demonstrate to these monarchs that their investment had been worthwhile. Without their continued support, his effort would have been in vain. As you read the excerpts from Columbus's letters to Ferdinand and Isabel below, ask yourself what light they shed on the monarchs' motives for backing Columbus. **[End introduction]**

Source: Christopher Columbus, *Select Letters of Christopher Columbus, with Other Original Documents, Relating to the Four Voyages to the New World*, trans. and ed. R. H. Major (Hakluyt Society, 1870), 1–18.

SIR, Believing that you will take pleasure in hearing of the great success which our Lord has granted me in my voyage, I write you this letter, whereby you will learn how in thirty-three days' time reached the Indies with the fleet which the most illustrious King and Queen, our Sovereigns, gave to me, where I found very many islands thickly peopled, of all which I took possession without resistance, for their Highnesses by proclamation made and with the royal standard unfurled.

To the first island that I found I gave the name of San Salvador, in remembrance of His High Majesty, who hath marvellously brought all these things to pass; the Indians call it Guanahani. To the second island I gave the name of Santa-Maria de Concepcion; the third called Femandina; the fourth, Isabella; the fifth, Juana; and so to each one gave a new name. . . .

Española is wonder. Its mountains and plains, and meadows, and fields, are so beautiful and rich for planting and sowing, and rearing cattle of all kinds, and for building towns and villages. The harbours on the coast, and the number and size and wholesomeness of the rivers, most of them bearing gold, surpass anything that would be believed by one who had not seen them. There is great difference between the trees, fruits, and plants of this island and those of Juana. In this island there are many spices and extensive mines of gold and other metals.

The inhabitants of this and of all the other islands have found or gained intelligence of, both men and women, go as naked as they were born, with the exception that some of the women cover one part only with single leaf of grass or with piece of cotton, made for that purpose. They have neither iron, nor steel, nor arms, nor are they competent to use them, not that they are not well-formed and of handsome stature, but because they are timid to surprising degree. Their only arms are reeds cut in the seeding time, to which they fasten small sharpened sticks, and even these they dare not use for on several occasions it has happened that I have sent ashore two or three men to some village to hold parley, and the people have come out in countless numbers, but, as soon as they saw our men approach, would flee with such precipitation that father would not even stop to protect his son and this not because any harm had been done to any of them, for, from the first, wherever I went and got speech with them, gave them of all that had, such as cloth and many other things, without receiving anything in return, but they are, as have described, incurably timid. It is true that when they are reassured and have thrown off this fear, they are guileless, and so liberal of all they have that no one would believe it who had not seen it. They never refuse anything that they possess when it is asked of them on the contrary, they offer it themselves, and they exhibit so much loving kindness that they would even give their hearts; and, whether it be something of value or of little worth that is offered to them, they are satisfied.

I forbade that worthless things, such as pieces of broken porringers and broken glass, and ends of straps, should be given to them although, when they succeeded in obtaining them, they thought they possessed the finest jewel in the world. It was ascertained that a sailor received for a leather strap a piece of gold weighing two castellanos and half, and others received for other objects of far less value, much more. For new blancas, they would give all that they had, whether it was two or three castellanos in gold or one or two arrobas of spun cotton. They took even bits of the broken hoops of the wine barrels, and gave, like fools, all that they possessed in exchange, insomuch that I thought it was wrong, and forbade it. I gave away thousand good and pretty articles which had I brought with me in order to win their affection and that they might be led to become Christians, and be well inclined to love and serve their Highnesses and the whole Spanish nation, and that they might aid us by giving us things of which we stand in need, but which they possess in abundance.

They are not acquainted with any kind of worship, and are not idolaters; but believe that all power and, indeed, all good things are in heaven and they are firmly convinced that I, with my vessels and crews, came from heaven, and with this belief received me at every place at which I touched, after they had overcome their apprehension. And this does not spring from ignorance, for they are very intelligent, and navigate all these seas, and relate everything to us, so that it is astonishing what good account they are able to give of everything; but they have never seen men with clothes on, nor vessels like ours.

On my reaching the Indies, I took by force, in the first island that I discovered, some of these natives, that they might learn our language and give me information in regard to what existed in these parts and it so happened that they soon understood us and we them, either by words or signs, and they have been very serviceable to us. They are still with me, and, from repeated

conversations that have had with them, find that they still believe that I come from heaven. And they were the first to say this wherever I went, and the others ran from house to house and to the neighbouring villages, crying with loud voice “Come, come, and see the people from heaven!” And thus they all, men as well as women, after their minds were at rest about us, came, both large and small, and brought us something to eat and drink, which they gave us with extraordinary kindness. . . . .

In all these islands I did not notice much difference in the appearance of the inhabitants, nor in their manners nor language, except that they all understand each other, which is very singular, and leads me to hope that their Highnesses will take means for their conversion to our holy faith, towards which they are very well disposed. I have already said how had gone one hundred and seven leagues in following the sea-coast of Juana in straight line from west to east and from that survey can state that the island is larger than England and Scotland together, because, beyond these one hundred and seven leagues, there lie to the west two provinces which have not yet visited, one of which is called Avan, where the people are born with a tail. These two provinces cannot be less in length than from fifty to sixty leagues, from what can be learned from the Indians that have with me, and who are acquainted with all these islands.

The other, Española, has a greater circumference than all Spain, from Catalonia by the sea-coast to Fuenterabia in Biscay, since on one of its four sides made one hundred and eighty-eight great leagues in straight line from west to east. This is something to covet, and when found not to be lost sight of. Although I have taken possession of all these islands in the name of their Highnesses, and they are all more abundant in wealth than I am able to express and although hold them all for their Highnesses, so that they can dispose of them quite as absolutely as they can of the kingdoms of Castile, yet there was one large town in Española of which especially l

took possession, situated in a locality well adapted for the working of the gold mines, and for all kinds of commerce, either with the main land on this side, or with that beyond which is the land of the great Khan, with which there will be vast commerce and great profit. To that city gave the name of Villa de Navidad, and fortified it with a fortress, which by this time will be quite completed, and have left in it sufficient number of men with arms, artillery, and provisions for more than year, a barge, and sailing master skilful in the arts necessary for building others. I have also established the greatest friendship with the king of that country, so much so that he took pride in calling me his brother. . . .

. . . Finally, and speaking only of what has taken place in this voyage, which has been so hasty, their High nesses may see that shall give them all the gold they require, if they will give me but very little assistance spices also, and cotton, as much as their Highnesses shall command to be shipped and mastic, hitherto found only in Greece, in the island of Chios, and which the Signoria sells at its own price, as much as their Highnesses shall command to be shipped; lign aloes, as much as their Highnesses shall command to be shipped; slaves, as many of these idolators as their Highnesses shall command to be shipped. I think also have found rhubarb and cinnamon, and shall find a thousand other valuable things by means of the men that I have left behind me, for I tarried at no point so long as the wind allowed me to proceed, except in the town of Navidad, where I took the necessary precautions for the security and settlement of the men left there. Much more would I have done if my vessels had been in as good condition as by rights they ought to have been. . . .

. . . This, thus briefly, in accordance with the events. Done on board the caravel, off the Canary Islands, on the fifteenth of February, fourteen hundred and ninety-three.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What characteristics of the islands did Columbus mention first? Why?

2. How did Columbus characterize the peoples he encountered? What role did he imagine them playing in the advancement of Spanish interests in the near future?

3. Based on these letters, what seems to have been Ferdinand and Isabel's primary motive in backing Columbus?

[[RP: Note the special characters highlighted in the fifth paragraph of the source below. The author said he wasn't sure what they mean but that they should appear as is because it's how the words appear in the source.]]

An Account of Vasco da Gama's First Voyage to India

[Introduction] Vasco da Gama's 1497–1498 voyage to India took him around the southern tip of Africa to the Indian port city of Calicut. In these excerpts of a description of the voyage, in which da Gama is referred to by the title "Captain-Major," we first hear about his crew's encounter with the Khoi Khoi people in South Africa and then about their arrival in Calicut. Da Gama had a much clearer idea of where he was than Columbus did, but there was still plenty of confusion generated by these encounters.**[End introduction]**

Source: https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1497degama.asp

1497

The Bay of St. Helena [on the west coast of the present country of South Africa]. On Tuesday (November 7) we returned to the land, which we found to be low, with a broad bay opening into

it. The captain-major [i.e., da Gama speaking in the third person] sent Pero d'Alenquer in a boat to take soundings and to search for good anchoring ground. The bay was found to be very clean, and to afford shelter against all winds except those from the N.W. It extended east and west, and we named it Santa Helena.

On Wednesday (November 8) we cast anchor in this bay, and we remained there eight days, cleaning the ships, mending the sails, and taking in wood. The river Samtiagua (S. Thiago) enters the bay four leagues to the S.E. of the anchorage. It comes from the interior (sertao), is about a stone's throw across at the mouth, and from two to three fathoms in depth at all states of the tide.

The inhabitants of this country are tawny-colored. Their food is confined to the flesh of seals, whales and gazelles, and the roots of herbs. They are dressed in skins, and wear sheaths over their virile members. They are armed with poles of olive wood to which a horn, browned in the fire, is attached. Their numerous dogs resemble those of Portugal, and bark like them. The birds of the country, likewise, are the same as in Portugal, and include cormorants, gulls, turtle doves, crested larks, and many others. The climate is healthy and temperate, and produces good herbage. On the day after we had cast anchor, that is to say on Thursday (November 9), we landed with the captain-major, and made captive one of the natives, who was small of stature like Sancho Mexia. This man had been gathering honey in the sandy waste, for in this country the bees deposit their honey at the foot of the mounds around the bushes. He was taken on board the captain-major's ship, and being placed at table he ate of all we ate. On the following day the captain-major had him well dressed and sent ashore.

On the following day (November 10) fourteen or fifteen natives came to where our ship lay. The captain-major landed and showed them a variety of merchandise, with the view of finding out whether such things were to be found in their country. This merchandise included cinnamon,

cloves, seed-pearls, gold, and many other things, but it was evident that they had no knowledge whatever of such articles, and they were consequently given round bells and tin rings. This happened on Friday, and the like took place on Saturday.

On Sunday (November 12) about forty or fifty natives made their appearance, and having dined, we landed, and in exchange for the ‡eitils with which we came provided, we obtained shells, which they wore as ornaments in their ears, and which looked as if they had been plated, and foxtails attached to a handle, with which they fanned their faces. The captain-major also acquired for one ‡eitil one of the sheaths which they wore over their members, and this seemed to show that they valued copper very highly; indeed, they wore small beads of that metal in their ears.

On that day Fernao Velloso, who was with the captain-major, expressed a great desire to be permitted to accompany the natives to their houses, so that he might find out how they lived and what they ate. The captain-major yielded to his importunities, and allowed him to accompany them, and when we returned to the captain-major's vessel to sup, he went away with the negroes. Soon after they had left us they caught a seal, and when they came to the foot of a hill in a barren place they roasted it, and gave some of it to Fernao Velloso, as also some of the roots which they eat. After this meal they expressed a desire that he should not accompany them any further, but return to the vessels. When Fernao Velloso came abreast of the vessels he began to shout, the negroes keeping in the bush.

We were still at supper; but when his shouts were heard the captain-major rose at once, and so did we others, and we entered a sailing boat. The negroes then began running along the beach, and they came as quickly up with Fernao Velloso as we did, and when we endeavored to get him into the boat they threw their assegais, and wounded the captain-major and three or four others. All this happened because we looked upon these people as men of little spirit, quite incapable of

violence, and had therefore landed without first arming ourselves. We then returned to the ships. . . .

1498

Calicut. [Arrival.] That night (May 20) we anchored two leagues from the city of Calicut, and we did so because our pilot mistook Capna, a town at that place, for Calicut. Still further there is another town called Pandarani. We anchored about a league and a half from the shore. After we were at anchor, four boats (almadias) approached us from the land, who asked of what nation we were. We told them, and they then pointed out Calicut to us.

On the following day (May 22) these same boats came again alongside, when the captain-major sent one of the convicts to Calicut, and those with whom he went took him to two Moors from Tunis, who could speak Castilian and Genoese. The first greeting that he received was in these words: “May the Devil take thee! What brought you hither?” They asked what he sought so far away from home, and he told them that we came in search of Christians and of spices. They said: “Why does not the King of Castile, the King of France, or the Signoria of Venice send thither?” He said that the King of Portugal would not consent to their doing so, and they said he did the right thing. After this conversation they took him to their lodgings and gave him wheaten bread and honey. When he had eaten he returned to the ships, accompanied by one of the Moors, who was no sooner on board, than he said these words: “A lucky venture, a lucky venture! Plenty of rubies, plenty of emeralds! You owe great thanks to God, for having brought you to a country holding such riches!” We were greatly astonished to hear his talk, for we never expected to hear our language spoken so far away from Portugal.

The city of Calicut is inhabited by Christians. [The first voyagers to India mistook the Hindus for Christians.] They are of tawny complexion. Some of them have big beards and long hair, whilst others clip their hair short or shave the head, merely allowing a tuft to remain on the crown as a sign that they are Christians. They also wear moustaches. They pierce the ears and wear much gold in them. They go naked down to the waist, covering their lower extremities with very fine cotton stuffs. But it is only the most respectable who do this, for the others manage as best they are able. The women of this country, as a rule, are ugly and of small stature. They wear many jewels of gold round the neck, numerous bracelets on their arms, and rings set with precious stones on their toes. All these people are well-disposed and apparently of mild temper. At first sight they seem covetous and ignorant. . . .

The road was crowded with a countless multitude anxious to see us. Even the women came out of their houses with children in their arms and followed us. When we arrived (at Calicut) they took us to a large church, and this is what we saw: The body of the church is as large as a monastery, all built of hewn stone and covered with tiles. At the main entrance rises a pillar of bronze as high as a mast, on the top of which was perched a bird, apparently a cock. In addition to this, there was another pillar as high as a man, and very stout. In the center of the body of the church rose a chapel, all built of hewn stone, with a bronze door sufficiently wide for a man to pass, and stone steps leading up to it. Within this sanctuary stood a small image which they said represented Our Lady. Along the walls, by the main entrance, hung seven small bells. In this church the captain-major said his prayers, and we with him.

We did not go within the chapel, for it is the custom that only certain servants of the church, called quafees, should enter. These quafees wore some threads passing over the left shoulder and under the right arm, in the same manner as our deacons wear the stole. They threw holy water

over us, and gave us some white earth, which the Christians of this country are in the habit of putting on their foreheads, breasts, around the neck, and on the forearms. They threw holy water upon the captain-major and gave him some of the earth, which he gave in charge of someone, giving them to understand that he would put it on later. Many other saints were painted on the walls of the church, wearing crowns. They were painted variously, with teeth protruding an inch from the mouth, and four or five arms. Below this church there was a large masonry tank, similar to many others which we had seen along the road.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How did da Gama and his men misjudge the Khoikhoi (the inhabitants of the southern tip of Africa at the time)?

2.What was the "church" that da Gama visited in Calicut?

3. Who were the men with a thread over their shoulders that he took for Christian priests?

Amerigo Vespucci's First Voyage:

[Introduction] Amerigo Vespucci (1454–1512) was an Italian who, like Columbus, made several voyages across the Atlantic in the service of Spain. The following is an excerpt from a letter published in 1504 that purportedly describes his first voyage in 1497 (five years after Columbus's first voyage in 1492). Scholars are reasonably confident that two of the four voyages attributed to Vespucci really happened. The first voyage, the one described in this document, is one of the questionable voyages. Nonetheless, the document describes indigenous Americans and

their cultures in ways that seem plausible. So even if this letter and the voyage it describes are fabrications, it still reflects an impressive knowledge of the Americas. Sadly, however much Vespucci knew about the Americas, he knew not the paragraph, and his letter is basically a single block of text.**[End introduction]**

Source: https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1497vespucci-america.asp

. . . and so we sailed on till at the end of 37 days we reached a land which we deemed to be a continent: which is distant westwardly from the isles of Canary about a thousand leagues beyond the inhabited region [note 4: This phrase is merely equivalent to a repetition of from the Canaries, these islands having been already designated the extreme western limit of inhabited land.] within the torrid zone: for we found the North Pole at an elevation of 16 degrees above its horizon, [note 5: That is, 16 degrees north latitude.] and (it was) westward, according to the shewing of our instruments, 75 degrees from the isles of Canary: whereat we anchored with our ships a league and a half from land; and we put out our boats freighted with men and arms: we made towards the land, and before we reached it, had sight of a great number of people who were going along the shore: by which we were much rejoiced: and we observed that they were a naked race: they shewed themselves to stand in fear of us: I believe (it was) because they saw us clothed and of other appearance (than their own): they all withdrew to a hill, and for whatsoever signals we made to them of peace and of friendliness, they would not come to parley with us: so that, as the night was now coming on, and as the ships were anchored in a dangerous place, being on a rough and shelterless coast, we decided to remove from there the next day, and to go in search of some harbour or bay, where we might place our ships in safety: and we sailed with the maestrale wind, [note 6: North-west.] thus running along the coast with the land ever in sight,

continually in our course observing people along the shore: till after having navigated for two days, we found a place sufficiently secure for the ships, and anchored half a league from land, on which we saw a very great number of people: and this same day we put to land with the boats, and sprang on shore full 40 men in good trim: and still the land's people appeared shy of converse with us, and we were unable to encourage them so much as to make them come to speak with us: and this day we laboured so greatly in giving them of our wares, such as rattles and mirrors, beads, spalline, and other trifles, that some of them took confidence and came to discourse with us: and after having made good friends with them, the night coming on, we took our leave of them and returned to the ships: and the next day when the dawn appeared we saw that there were infinite numbers of people upon the beach, and they had their women and children with them: we went, ashore, and found that they were all laden with their worldly goods [note 7: Mantenimenti. The word “all” (tucte) is feminine, and probably refers only to the women.] which are suchlike as, in its (proper) place, shall be related: and before we reached the land, many of them jumped into the sea and came swimming to receive us at a bowshot’s length (from the shore), for they are very great swimmers, with as much confidence as if they had for a long time been acquainted with us: and we were pleased with this their confidence. For so much as we learned of their manner of life and customs, it was that they go entirely naked, as well the men as the women. . . . They are of medium stature, very well proportioned: their flesh is of a colour the verges into red like a lion’s mane: and I believe that if they went clothed, they would be as white as we: they have not any hair upon the body, except the hair of the head which is long and black, and especially in the women, whom it renders handsome: in aspect they are not very good-looking, because they have broad faces, so that they would seem Tartar-like: they let no hair grow on their eyebrows, nor on their eyelids, nor elsewhere, except the hair of the head:

for they hold hairiness to be a filthy thing: they are very light footed in walking and in running, as well the men as the women: so that a woman recks nothing of running a league or two, as many times we saw them do: and herein they have a very great advantage over us Christians: they swim (with an expertness) beyond all belief, and the women better than the men: for we have many times found and seen them swimming two leagues out at sea without anything to rest upon. Their arms are bows and arrows very well made, save that (the arrows) are not (tipped) with iron nor any other kind of hard metal: and instead of iron they put animals' or fishes' teeth, or a spike of tough wood, with the point hardened by fire: they are sure marksmen, for they hit whatever they aim at: and in some places the women use these bows: they have other weapons, such as fire-hardened spears, and also clubs with knobs, beautifully carved. Warfare is used amongst them, which they carry on against people not of their own language, very cruelly, without granting life to any one, except (to reserve him) for greater suffering. When they go to war, they take their women with them, not that these may fight, but because they carry behind them their worldly goods, for a woman carries on her back for thirty or forty leagues a load which no man could bear: as we have many times seen them do. They are not accustomed to have any Captain, nor do they go in any ordered array, for every one is lord of himself: and the cause of their wars is not for lust of dominion, nor of extending their frontiers, no for inordinate covetousness, but for some ancient enmity which in by-gone times arose amongst them: and when asked why they made war, they knew not any other reason to give than that they did so to avenge the death of their ancestors, or of their parents: these people have neither King, nor Lord, nor do they yield obedience to any one, for they live in their own liberty: and how they be stirred up to go to war is (this) that when the enemies have slain or captured any of them, his oldest kinsman rises up and goes about the highways haranguing them to go with him and avenge the

death of such his kinsman: and so are they stirred up by fellow-feeling: they have no judicial system, nor do they punish the ill-doer: nor does the father, nor the mother chastise the children and marvelously (seldom) or never did we see any dispute among them: in their conversation they appear simple, and they are very cunning and acute in that which concerns them: they speak little and in a low tone: they use the same articulations as we, since they form their utterances either with the palate, or with the teeth, or on the lips: [note 8: He means that they have no sounds in their language unknown to European organs of speech, all being either palatals or dentals of labials.] except that they give different names to things. Many are the varieties of tongues: for in every 100 leagues we found a change of language, so that they are not understandable each to the other. The manner of their living is very barbarous, for they do not eat at certain hours, and as often-times as they will: and it is not much of a boon to them [note 9: I have translated “et non si da loro molto” as “it is not much of a boon to them,” but may be “it matters not much to them.”] that the will may come more at midnight than by day, for they eat at all hours: and they eat upon the ground without a table-cloth or any other cover, for they have their meats either in earthen basins which they make themselves, or in the halves of pumpkins: they sleep in certain very large nettings made of cotton, suspended in the air: and although this their (fashion of) sleeping may seem uncomfortable, I say that it is sweet to sleep in those (nettings): and we slept better in them than in the counterpanes. They are a people smooth and clean of body, because of so continually washing themselves as they do. . . .

Questions for Discussion:

1. The American continents are named after Amerigo Vespucci, not Columbus. Does this letter hint at why?
2. Are there similarities between Vespucci's description of American Indians and Columbus's description of the people he encountered in the Caribbean? If so, how might we account for that?

Magellan Enters the Pacific

[Introduction] Ferdinand Magellan (c. 1480–1521) led the first European voyage around the southern tip of South America into the Pacific. The voyage was remarkable for many reasons. Most importantly it was the first circumnavigation of the globe. It was also significant for Magellan's discovery of the Straits of Magellan and his ability to find a way through them and into the Pacific. He also made landfall on the island of Guam, which he called the Island of Thieves. This marked the first encounter between the eastern wing of Austronesian expansion and the westward wing of the European expansion. Austronesian speakers (whose origins are probably in Taiwan or Funan on the Chinese mainland) had occupied almost every habitable island in the Pacific by 1500. Guam was the first of these to have a visitor arrive from the West. Note: A league is about 3.5 miles. "Maluco" refers to Melaka, the trading city in modern Malaysia that Magellan was trying to reach.**[End introduction]**

Source: https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1519magellan.asp

They sailed from this river of Santa Cruz on the 18th of October: they continued navigating along the coast until the 21st day of the same month, October, when they discovered a cape, to

which they gave the name of Cape of the Virgins, because they sighted it on the day of the eleven thousand virgins; it is in fifty-two degrees, a little more or less, and from this cape a matter of two or three leagues distance, we found ourselves at the mouth of a strait. We sailed along the said coast within that strait which they had reached the mouth of: they entered in it a little and anchored. Fernando de Magelhaes sent to discover what there was further in, and they found three channels, that is to say, two more in a southerly direction, and one traversing the country in the direction of Maluco [i.e., the Straits of Magellan], but at that time this was not yet known, only the three mouths were seen. The boats went thither, and brought back word, and they set sail and anchored at these mouths of the channels, and Fernando de Magelhaes sent two ships to learn what there was within, and these ships went: one returned to the Captain-major, and the other, of which Alvaro de Mesquita was captain, entered into one of the bays which was to the south, and did not return any more. Fernan [*sic*] de Magelhaes seeing that it did not come back, set sail, and the next day he did not choose to make for the bays, and went to the south, and took another which runs north-west and southeast, and a quarter west and east. He left letters in the place from which he sailed, so that if the other ship returned, it might make the course which he left prescribed.

After this they entered into the channel, which at some places has a width of three leagues, and two, and one, and in some places half a league, and he went through it as long as it was daylight, and anchored when it was night: and he sent the boats, and the ships went after the boats, and they brought news that there was an outlet, for they already saw the great sea on the other side; on which account Fernando de Magalhaes ordered much artillery to be fired for rejoicing; and before they went forth from this strait they found two islands, the first one larger, and the other nearer towards the outlet is the smaller one: and they went out between these islands and the

coast on the southern side, as it was deeper than on the other side. This strait is a hundred leagues in length to the outlet; that outlet and the entrance are in fifty-two degrees latitude. They made a stay in this strait from the 21st October to the 26th of November, which makes thirty-six days of the said year of 1520, and as soon as they went out from the strait to sea, they made their course, for the most part, to west-north-west, when they found that their needles varied to the north-west almost two-fourths, and after they had navigated thus for many days, they found an island in a little more or less than eighteen degrees, or nineteen degrees: and also there was another, which was in from thirteen to fourteen degrees, and this in south altitude; they are uninhabited. They ran on until they reached the line, when Fernan [*sic*] de Magalhaes said that now they were in the neighborhood of Maluco, as he had information that there were no provisions at Maluco, he said that he would go in a northerly direction as far as ten or twelve degrees, and they reached to as far as thirteen degrees north, and in this latitude they navigated to the west, and a quarter south-west, a matter of a hundred leagues, where on the 6th of March, 1521, they fetched two islands inhabited by many people, and they anchored at one of them, which is in twelve degrees north; and the inhabitants are people of little truth, and they did not take precautions against them until they saw that they were taking away the skiff of the flagship, and they cut the rope with which it was made fast, and took it ashore without their being able to prevent it. They gave this island the name of Thieves' Island (dos ladroes).

Fernando de Magalhaes seeing that the skiff was lost, set sail, as it was already night, tacking about until the next day; as soon as it was morning they anchored at the place where they had seen the skiff carried off to, and he ordered two boats to be got ready with a matter of fifty or sixty men, and he went ashore in person, and burned the whole village, and they killed seven or eight persons, between men and women, and recovered the skiff, and returned to the ships; and

while they were there they saw forty or fifty paraos come, which came from the same land, and brought much refreshments.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Shortly before arriving at the Straits of Magellan (here referred to as the Cape of the Virgins), Magellan had had to put down an attempted mutiny and had executed several of his officers. Is there anything about his behavior in this passage that hints at why he may had had trouble with his men?

2. How did the encounter with the people of Guam go? Why did Magellan see the Chamorro people of Guam as thieves?