

Sites of Encounter

Lesson #6: Calicut

What were the effects of the exchanges at Calicut?

Major Topics:

- Spices and trade goods
- Trade patterns in the Indian Ocean
- Cultural Encounters at Calicut
- Spread of cultural & religious influences in South and Southeast Asia



Gangaikondacolapuram Temple, Chola Dynasty, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India. Photograph by Benjamín Preciado, Centro de Estudios de Asia y África de El Colegio de México, Wikipedia Commons, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gangaikonda_Gopuram_5-10a.jpg.

Calicut was a major trade city for the Indian Ocean trade and one of the many sites of encounter in South and Southeast Asia. Traders used the monsoon winds to exchange spices from the Southeast Asian islands with Chinese and Indian products and goods from the west. Chinese, Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim cultural and religious influences spread along with this trade. Those influences spread inland from sites of encounter such as Calicut. In the competitive and profitable spice trade, which was not dominated by a single political power, merchants from many different cultures coexisted, following shared norms that maximized profit and minimized conflict. However, this was a fragile coexistence that was easily upset by violation of those norms.

Students will examine a variety of primary and secondary texts and images to identify key steps in the development of Calicut as a trade city. They will then analyze primary sources on Calicut and the Indian Ocean trade from different perspectives to recognize how different travelers' perspectives were shaped by their motives and experiences. At the same time students will recognize that the common goal of acquiring spices brought together traders from different places, with both positive and negative consequences.

Procedures

Step 1: What's So Hot about Spices?

Spices were highly valued in all the cultures of the medieval world. Spices were used for three purposes – as a flavor for bland food, as a medicine, and as a perfume or fragrance in religious rituals. Rich people consumed expensive spices to show off their wealth. **SE6.1 What's So Hot About Spices?** introduces students to medieval recipes and other uses of spices and shows them a map of the original spice islands. Have students complete the worksheet in groups and follow with a class discussion emphasizing the huge attraction the spice trade had throughout Afro-Eurasia.

Step 2: Monsoon Winds and Travel in the Indian Ocean

SE6.2 Indian Ocean Trade Map orients students to the connections between the flow of the monsoon winds and the organization of Indian Ocean trade. Explain to students that the monsoon winds determined the times and directions of travel. Once a merchant arrived in a port, he had to wait there until the monsoon changed. Since this could take six months or more, sailors and merchants often had second homes in distant places. They intermarried with local people and set up permanent communities. Have students do the map activity using **the SE6.3 Monsoon Winds and Indian Ocean Trade Routes** and the **Afro-Eurasian Trade Circles map** in groups. Answers may be from the group discussion or done individually. Finally, ask students to share, in their groups, a prediction about the effects of cultures coming together in Calicut. Point out that Calicut is in the center, and goods were passing through from both east and west.

Show students the visuals in **SE6.4 Dhows, Junks and Bugis Ships** and have them identify the lateen sails (explained in lesson 5), the bamboo-reinforced junk sails (explained in mini-lesson 2B), and other features of ship design. Introduce the bugis ship (the modern version and the Borobudur relief carving) used by Southeast Asian islanders to transport food and raw materials among the islands.

Step 3: The Organization of Indian Ocean Trade

Tell students they will learn about how traders in Calicut had different motives and, as a result, different experiences and effects on the region. Have students read **SE6.5 Calicut and the Indian Ocean Trade**, a secondary summary on the organization of Indian Ocean trade. Students will independently read and mark the text, underlining words that are unfamiliar and highlighting important points. Then have students discuss the text in groups.

Step 4: The Spread of Culture and Religion

This step has students analyze art and architecture from India and Southeast Asia in order to recognize the effects of cross-cultural transmission in Southeast Asia. The activity in **SE6.6 Comparing Temples and Sculptures in India and Southeast Asia** emphasizes that rulers displayed their power through temples and

that the architectural similarities among the temples are evidence of a shared culture of rulership in the region. Religious sculptures were another medium of religious influence and could be carried by merchants. Similarities in style and bronze-casting techniques demonstrate cross-cultural transmission.

Step 5: Analyzing Perspectives on Calicut and Trade

Students read the primary sources in the series **SE6.8** Primary Sources on Calicut and Trade and complete **SE6.7 Source Analysis Chart, which has them** source the documents, identify the point of view, and record evidence. The sources come from Jewish merchants, Arab geographers, Chinese officials, and Portuguese explorers. The activity has them collect evidence on cultural understanding, gaining riches and leading to war. Depending on class make up and teacher preference, this may be done as a gallery walk with sources on the walls of the classroom, or students sitting in groups with sources grouped into packets by region.

Step 6: Writing Assignment

Using the evidence that they have recorded on the source analysis chart, students will write an essay responding to the lesson focus question: What were the effects of the exchanges at Calicut? **SE6.9 Calicut Writing Assignment** also includes a more specific follow-up question: How did the spice trade bring cultures together, make some people rich, and lead to war? This corresponds to the categories on the source analysis chart.

Modifications / Support for Student Literacy

- Each group will investigate only one area (Chinese or Portuguese, for example) and then report out to the class. The students get the information on areas they did not focus on from other groups as they share out.
- There are multiple sources for each group so number of items to be analyzed in for each trade region may be reduced to allow for a more focused analysis and discussion. This may be done in groups or as a whole class activity with the teacher leading with an example for the first source and gradually releasing responsibility to the groups.
- Depending on the strengths and areas of improvement for any particular class, some of the chart could be filled out in advance, so that students will focus more on evidence and choosing appropriate excerpts.
- The writing piece could be a detailed paragraph or a full essay. (The prompt was written to accommodate both versions).

SE 6.1- What's So Hot about Spices?

Background: A spice is a strong-smelling substance used to flavor food and make medicine, incense and perfume. Spices do not grow in Europe. Strong-smelling substances from Europe, such as parsley, garlic, or oregano, are called herbs. To medieval people, herbs were common and ordinary; spices were exotic treats from Asia. For a rich person, buying spices was one way to show off wealth. Ordinary people could never afford to buy spices.

From where did spices come?

The Native Sites of Popular Spices



* Also native elsewhere

SE 6.1- What's So Hot about Spices?

Spices as flavoring for food

The first recipe comes from a 14th-century English cookbook, "The Forme of Cury." On the left, the recipe is written in the original Middle English and on the right, it is translated into modern English. Parsley, mint, garlic, thyme, sage, and salt either grow or can be found in England.

Citation: "Verde Sawce" and "Garbage," in *Pleyn Delit: Medieval Cookery for Modern Cooks*, edited by Constance B. Hieatt, Brenda Hosington, and Sharon Butler, 2nd ed. (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1996), nos. 50 and 86.



Verde Sawce (Middle English)

Take persel, mynt, garlek, a litul serpell and sawge, a litul canel, gynger, piper, wyne, brede, vyneger & salt; grynde it smal with saffroun, & messe it forth.

Green Sauce (Modern English)

Take parsley, mint, garlic, a little thyme and sage, a little cinnamon, ginger, pepper, wine, bread, vinegar & salt; grind it [with a pestle and mortar] finely with saffron, & serve it.

The second recipe comes from a 15th-century English cookbook manuscript, Harl 279.

Garbagys (Middle English)

Take fayre garbagys of chykonys, as þe hed, þe fete, þe tyverys, an þe gysowrys; washe hem clene, an caste hem in a fayre potte, and caste þerto freysshe brothe of beef or ellys of moton, an let it boyle; an alye it wyth brede, an ley on pepir an saffroun, maces, clowys, an a lytil verjous an salt, an serve forth in the maner as a sewe.

Garbage / Giblets (Modern English)

Take the fair garbage/giblets of chickens, like the head, the feet, the livers, and the gizzards; wash them clean, and throw them in a fair pot, and throw in fresh broth of beef or else of mutton, and let it boil, and combine this with bread, and add pepper and saffron, mace, cloves and little sour fruit juice and salt, and serve it like a stew.

SE 6.1- What's So Hot about Spices?

Spices as Medicines

Two modern historians described ways in which medieval doctors used spices as medicines:

To prevent the bubonic plague: Mix spices, put them inside a cloth, and wrap them up in small ball called a pomander. Then breathe in through the pomander. [Since medieval doctors believed that bad smells spread disease, breathing in "good" smells might prevent disease.]

To prevent scurvy (a lack of vitamin C): Eat ginger.

To deaden toothache: Apply oil of cloves. They also rubbed this on the forehead to cure a headache.

Other spices used in medicines: pepper, camphor, cinnamon, sugar, frankincense, ambergris, and mace.

Spices were also burned as incense in churches and wealthy homes and used to make perfumes.

Citation: Joanna Hall Brierley, *Spices: The Story of Indonesia's Spice Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 17-32.
Paul Freedman, *Out of the East: Spices and the Medieval Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 1-8.

Instructions: After you have read and discussed the sources with your group, answer these questions:

1. Are the Middle English recipes primary or secondary sources? How do you know?
2. Are the medicine descriptions primary or secondary sources? How do you know?
3. Make an interpretation based on the evidence: What was so hot about spices? Why did medieval people value spices so highly?

4. List two pieces of evidence that support your interpretation.

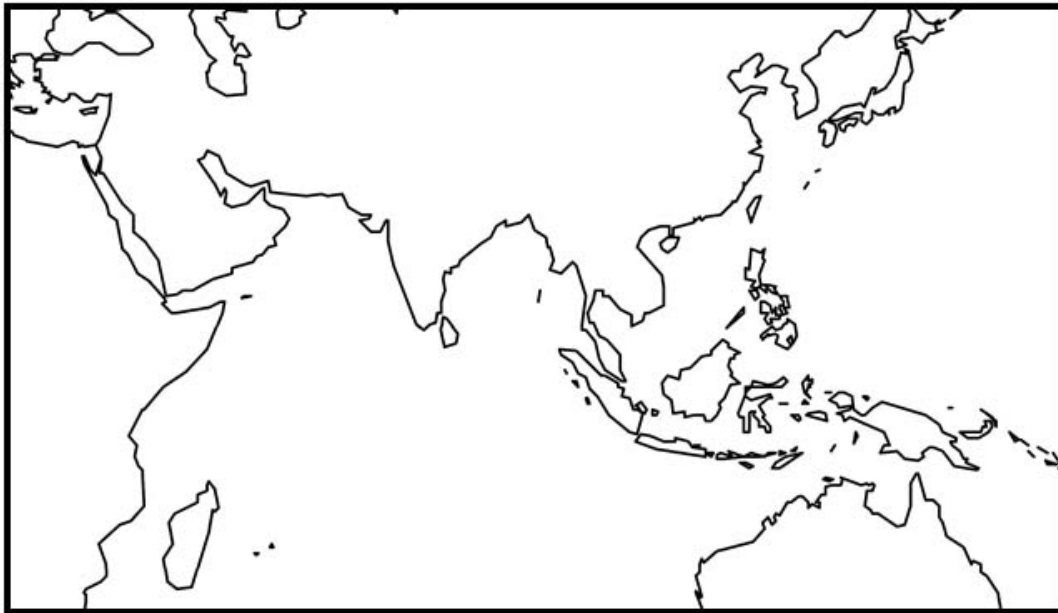
SE6.2- Indian Ocean Trade Map

Directions: Use the SE6.3 Monsoon Winds and Indian Ocean Trade Routes and the World Trade Circles maps to label the following locations. Then discuss and answer the question below.

Cities		Countries & Regions		Waterways	
Cairo	Mecca	Arabia	China	Arabian Sea	Red Sea
Calicut	Quanzhou	India	Persia	Indian Ocean	Mediterranean Sea
Malacca		Southeast Asia		Pacific Ocean	

Trade Routes*	Monsoon Flow	World Trade Circles
Show the trade routes from the cities listed above.	Show the direction of the monsoon winds and when they flowed in each direction.	Lightly superimpose the trade circles (from the World Trade Circles map)

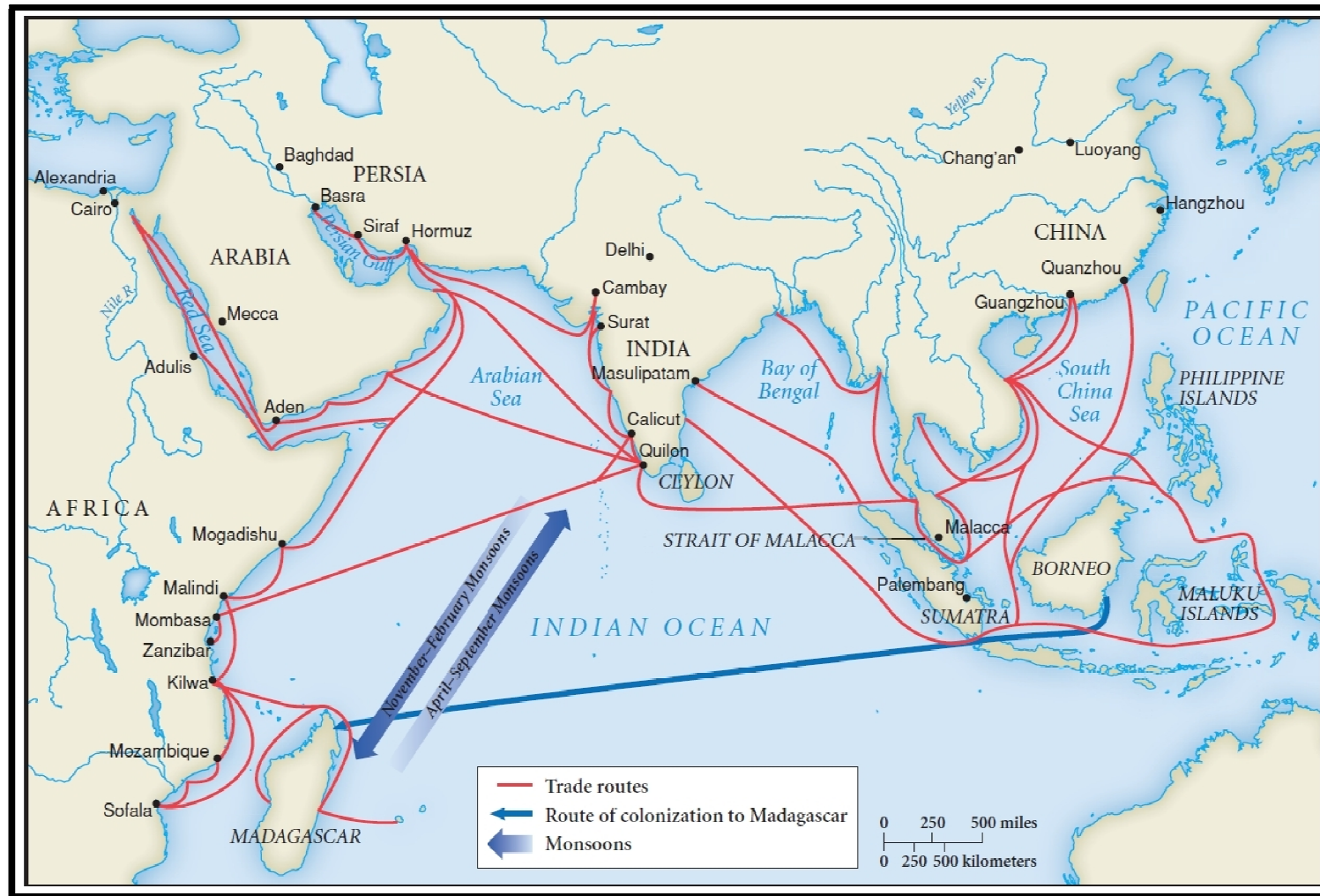
*Use different colors for the trade routes, monsoon flow, and world trade circles. Include these colors in a key.



Making Inferences

Who went to Calicut? What do the monsoon winds tell you about sailors and how they might have had to plan their voyages across the Indian Ocean? (*Use reverse if necessary.*)

SE6.3- Monsoon Wind Flows and Indian Ocean Trade Routes



SE6.3- Monsoon Wind Flows and Indian Ocean Trade Routes



SE6.4 Dhows, Junks, and Bugis Ships (page 1 of 4)

Background: Sailors in the Indian Ocean used different kinds of ships. Arab, Persian and Indian sailors used dhows with lateen sails. Chinese sailors used junks. Southeast Asian islanders used Bugis ships. Shipbuilders and sailors learned about the technology of other cultures and used those technologies if they were suitable for local conditions.



Citation:
"Arab Trading Ship," Al-Hariri's Maqamat, 1237. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Notice that there are two lateen sails facing in opposite directions.

SE6.4 Dhows, Junks, and Bugis Ships (page 2 of 4)



Small modern dhow in the Indian Ocean, with Zanzibar Island in the background, photo by Muhammad Mahdi Karim, 2011, Wikipedia Commons,

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dhow_znz.jpg

Painting of a baggala, a traditional deep-sea dhow from the Maldive Islands. Citation: Painting of a Maldivian baggala, by Xavier Romero-Frias, 2009, Wikipedia Commons, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sd2-baggala.JPG>.

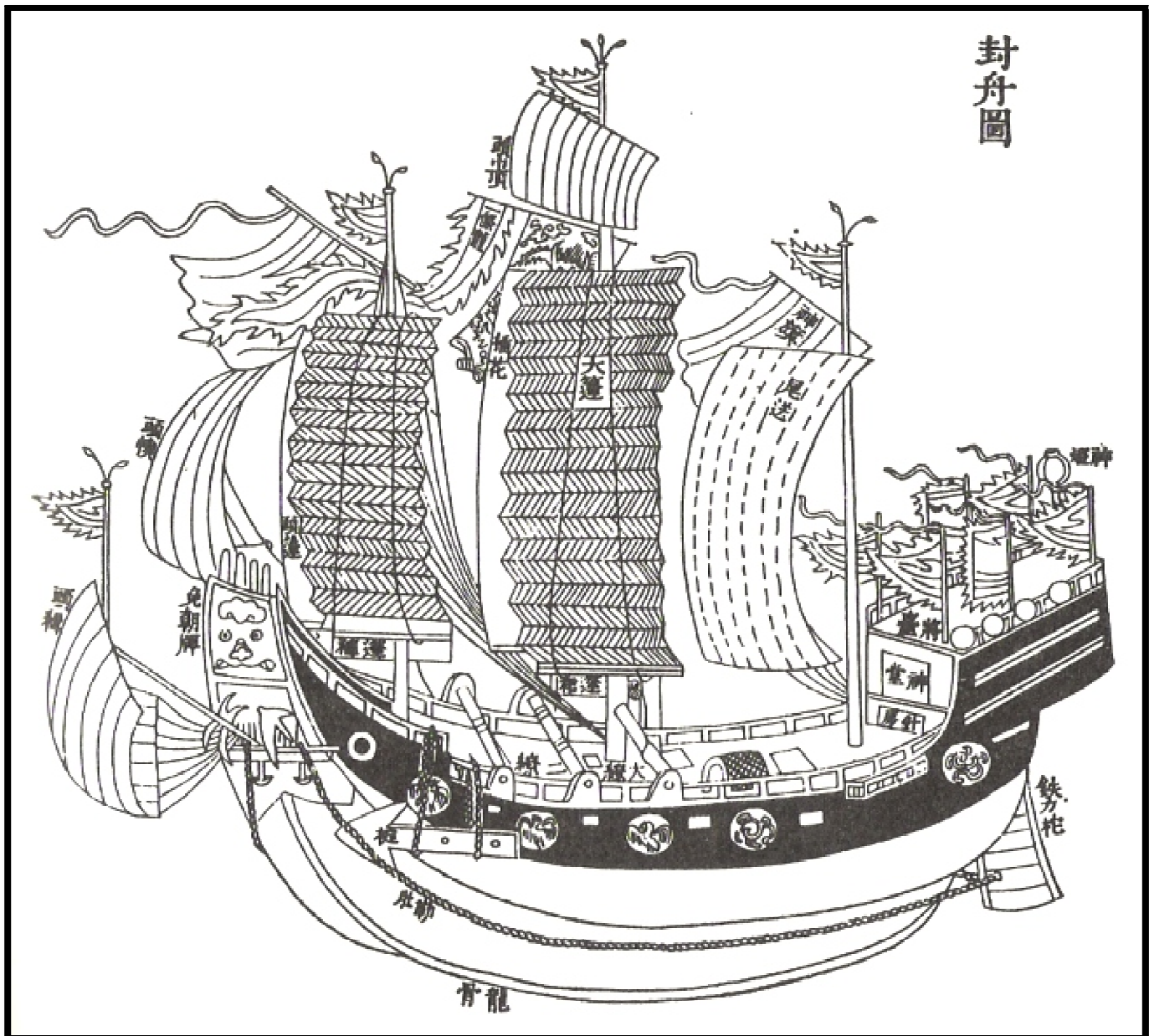


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SE6.4 Dhows, Junks, and Bugis Ships (page 3 of 4)



Citation: Yuan junk (14th century), Fengzhou, photo by User php, from 徐葆光撰『中山傳信錄』（1721年）卷第一「封舟」封舟圖, Wikipedia Commons, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:YuanJunk%2814thcentury%29.jpg>.

SE6.4 Dhows, Junks, and Bugis Ships (page 4 of 4)



A relief showing a sailing ship from Borobudur, a temple in Magelang in central Java (in modern Indonesia). It was built as a shrine to the Buddha in the 9th century by the Sailendra dynasty which controlled central Java and its trade. Photograph courtesy of Professor Michael Vann, California State University, Sacramento

These are Bugis style ships in Jakarta's old port of Tanjung Priok. The Bugis are great sailors and shipbuilders from Sulawesi that the Portuguese, British, and Dutch displaced as traders. Many continued to trade but were then labeled as "pirates" by the Europeans. Many fought back and scared the Europeans, hence the origin of the term "Boogey Man." Their ships are still for their high quality and used throughout the archipelago. These ships show similarity to the 8th century carving in Borobudur in Central Java. Courtesy of Michael Vann, California State University, Sacramento.



SE6.5: Calicut and the Indian Ocean Trade

Since all ships were powered by wind, the monsoon seasons determined where and when people could travel around the Indian Ocean. Since Calicut was in the southern part of India and not far from Southwest and East Asia, it was a natural site for a trade city. Around Calicut on the Malabar Coast of southern India, farmers grew black pepper and weavers made cotton cloth. Our word for a kind of cotton cloth, "calico," comes from the name of the city of Calicut.

Calicut was a small state on the Malabar coast, ruled by a king called the "Zamorin." During the 13th-15th centuries India and Southeast Asia had a few large states, many small states, and some city-states, such as Calicut. This political diversity encouraged trade since small communities could not produce everything they needed. The rulers of Calicut took advantage of their location by making laws that were favorable to merchants. The Calicut government protected merchants from theft, taxed them at low rates, and treated all groups equally. As a result, many foreign merchants settled in the city and established communities.

In Calicut merchants from the Mediterranean and western Asia exchanged their goods from the Mediterranean and western Asia for products from China and Southeast Asia. Most desired were spices (such as black pepper, ginger cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and mace) from the Spice Islands and southern India. These sold for high prices, especially in Europe. As well as being used to flavor foods, many spices were also used as medicine and fragrances. Merchants also bought and sold cotton cloth from India; silk and porcelain from China; metals, armor, weapons and perfume from Egypt and Persia; horses and glassware from the Mediterranean; and slaves from the Mongol lands and East Africa.

Along with goods, ideas also travelled. For a thousand years, travelers carried the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism and Indian culture to the east and southeast. Chinese culture spread south and west. The rulers of Southeast Asian kingdoms, such as Angkor, Champa, and Srivijaya, looked to India and China as powerful cultures that could give them power and prestige. Later, Persian and Arabian culture and the religion of Islam spread east across the islands.

SE6.5: Calicut and the Indian Ocean Trade

Merchants in Calicut

Arabs and Persians from the Muslim world had been go-betweens for Asian and European goods for centuries. They realized the mutual benefit of cultural exchange and respect. The biggest merchants were the "Karimi Merchants," based in Cairo, who had a system of sharing the risks of trade. Chinese merchants were also very established in Calicut, other Indian trade cities, and trade cities in Southeast Asia. Likewise the Chinese had long had trade experience with the Indian subcontinent. As other groups, especially the Europeans, attempted to do business with India directly, they were met with resistance from the established traders.

Competition wasn't the only thing holding traders back. The exact location of the spices was a closely guarded secret. Bad sailing weather and pirate attacks were also possibilities that made trade dangerous. Despite these risks, many different groups saw rewards in their encounters with Calicut.

Not everyone, however, was equally deferential. When the Portuguese set out to find a route around Africa to the famous Spice Islands, they did not know much about the Indian Ocean trade. The Portuguese brought what they thought others would like in trade, but were in for a surprise when they encountered Muslims (whom they described using the term "Moor") in Calicut. Religious differences fueled the rivalry between the two groups. The Muslims tried to turn the Zamorin of Calicut against the Portuguese. Indians quickly found out the European trade goods were of low quality. The Portuguese went home with knowledge of Calicut's location, but only a few spices. (They made a 3000% profit, but had expected more).

What could the Portuguese do? They suddenly realized that they were viewed as not having merchandise worth trading. They would not be invited in to trade for the spices they so desperately wanted. Western Europe had a history of deciding trading rights by force, and violence was an area in which they excelled. The future would bring attacks in and around India, revenge, serious damage to Calicut, and domination by the Portuguese who were most willing to use force.

SE6.5: Calicut and the Indian Ocean Trade

Questions for Consideration

- ✓ What were some of the difficulties faced by merchants who traveled for trade goods?
- ✓ How did competition for trade and religious differences complicate relations between the Portuguese and Muslims in Calicut?
- ✓ Why were the Portuguese discouraged from trading in Calicut?
- ✓ What, if anything, could Calicut have done to prevent attacks that led to its conquest?

SE6.7: Source Analysis Chart

Source #	Point of View	What is the source telling me? (CU-Cultural Understanding, R-Gaining Riches, W-Leading to War)	Excerpts (key quotes from sources)
		CU R W Evidence:	
		CU R W Evidence:	
		CU R W Evidence:	
		CU R W Evidence:	
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SE6.8.1 Ibn Battuta, "Calicut," *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*

We next came into the country of Malabar [the southwest coast of India], which is the country of black pepper. The pepper tree resembles that of the dark grape. They plant it near that of the cocoa-nut, and make frame-work for it, just as they do for the grape tree. It has, however, no tendrils, and the tree itself resembles a bunch of grapes. The leaves are like the ears of a horse. When the autumn arrives, it ripens; they then cut it, and spread it just as they do grapes, and thus it is dried by the sun, and not by boiling as some falsely claim. . . .

From there we traveled to the city of Calicut, which is one of the chief ports in Malabar and one of the largest harbors in the world. It is visited by men from China, Sumatra, Ceylon [Sri Lanka], the Maldives, Yemen, and Fars [Persia], and merchants from all quarters gather there. The sultan of Calicut is an infidel, known as the Samari [Zamorin]. He is an aged man and shaves his beard, as some of the Greeks do. In this town too lives the famous shipowner Mithqal, who possesses vast wealth and many ships for his trade with India, China, Yemen, and Fars. . . .

Some of those that were on board [a shipwrecked vessel] drowned and some escaped. . . . Next morning we found the bodies of Sunbul and Zahir ad-Din, and having prayed over them, buried them. I saw the infidel, the sultan of Calicut [the Zamorin], wearing a large white cloth round his waist and a small turban, bare-footed, with the parasol carried by a slave over his head and a fire lit in front of him on the beach; his police officers were beating the people to prevent them from plundering what the sea cast up [the wreckage from the ship.] At Calicut [the contents of the wrecked ship] are kept by its owners and for that reason Calicut has become a flourishing city and attracts large numbers of merchants.

On the sea of China travelling is done in Chinese ships only, so we shall describe their arrangements. The Chinese vessels are of three kinds: large ships called junks; middle-sized ones called zaws; and small ones called kakams. The large ships have anything from twelve down to three sails, which are made of bamboo rods braided like mats...A ship carries 1,000 men, 600 sailors and 400 soldiers, including archers, men with shields, and arbalists [soldiers armed with heavy crossbows], who throw naphtha [a small gasoline bomb]. These vessels are built only in the towns of Zaytun [Quanzhou] and Canton [Guangzhou].

Citation: Ibn Battuta, C. Defrémery, B.R. Sanguinetti, C.F. Beckingham, and H.A. R. Gibb, trans. and eds., The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325-1354 (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society at University Press, 1958-2000), vol. 3, pp. 812-816.

SE6.8.2 Letter from Mahruz B. Jacob, Jewish merchant, to Abu Zikiri

Background: This source comes from the Cairo Geniza (which you learned about in Lesson 1.) It is a letter from Mahruz B. Jacob, a Jewish ship owner and Indian Ocean merchant from Aden, to his brother-in-law Abu Zikiri, a Jewish merchant from Egypt.

In Your Name, O Merciful. Your hand shall prevail over your foes, and all your enemies shall be cut down. I wish to inform you [Abu Zikiri], my lord, that I was very sad to hear that your ship had been seized by pirates. But afterwards I praised God and thanked Him when I heard that your life was saved. You will be pleased to know that with the profits of some sales here in Mangalore [a port on the west coast of India], I have arranged to get you out in my ship. Please come quickly to Mangalore. If God is willing, we shall embark on our way home as soon as possible.

Source: Goitein, S.D. and Mordechai Akiva Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza* ("India Book"). Boston: Brill, 2008, pp. 473-5.

Questions for Consideration

- ✓ What does Mahruz B. Jacob hope happens to people he considers enemies?
- ✓ What type of challenges did long-distance merchants face?
- ✓ Despite challenges, was the trade mission successful? How do you know?
- ✓ Is there evidence of bias in this source? If so, what is it?

SE6.8.3 Letter from Joseph b. Abraham to Abraham Ben Yiji

Background: This letter comes from the Cairo Geniza. It was written by Joseph b. Abraham, a Jewish merchant from Aden, sent to Abraham b. Yiji, another Jewish merchant from al-Mahdiyya, in North Africa. Abraham traveled widely through the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean, visiting India, Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, and other places. After a trip of seventeen years in India and three more in Yemen, Abraham returned to Egypt.

In your name, O Merciful. I read and understood your letter and was pleased to learn that you were well and your affairs successful, for which I praised the Lord very much. You wrote that you kindly sold the silk and sent goods for its proceeds in the ships of Rashmit. I learned that Rashmit's two ships were total losses [sunk at sea]. May the Holy one be blessed [and may] He compensate me and you!

All the copper that you sent with Abu Ali arrived, and the table-bowl also arrived. It was exactly as I wished. May God give you a good reward and undertake your compensation.

You mentioned that you approached the kardal gently, in order to get something for us back from him. Perhaps you should threaten him that here in Aden we excommunicate anyone that owes us something and does not fulfill his commitments. Maybe he will be afraid of excommunication. If he does not pay, we shall issue an official letter of excommunication and send it to him.

The smaller ship with part of the shipment arrived and I took delivery from it of 1 ½ bahar of pepper, as had been stated in your note. The larger ship, however, arrived near Berbera [modern day Somali Republic] when its captain ran into trouble with it until it was thrust against Balb al-Mandab, where it crashed. The pepper was a total loss.

Source: Goitein, S.D. and Mordechai Akiva Friedman, India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza ('India Book'). Boston: Brill, 2008, p. 551.

Questions for Consideration

- ✓ *What evidence is there that geography can be a challenge to merchants?*
- ✓ *Why is trust an issue?*
- ✓ *What are some challenges in trading with people in other countries?*
- ✓ *Why might religion play an important role in trade?*

SE6.8.4 Letter from Abraham b. Yiji to his brother in North Africa

Background: This letter comes from the Cairo Geniza. It was written by Abraham b. Yiji to his brothers and sisters at home in al-Mahdiyya, a city in North Africa.

This is to announce to you, my brother, that I have set out from India and arrived in Aden safely with my belongings, life, and children. Now I wish to let you know that I have enough to live on for all of us.

Source: Goitein, S.D. and Mordechai Akiva Friedman, India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza ("India Book"). Boston: Brill, 2008, p. 683.

Questions for Consideration

- ✓ *What were the benefits of successful travel and trade?*
- ✓ *Safety and success were not guaranteed. Would you be willing to take the risk to trade and be a long-distance merchant? Why or why not?*
- ✓ *Does this source seem more peaceful or hostile? Why?*

SE6.8.5 Abdu Razzak, Description of Calicut, 1442

Calicut is a perfectly secure harbor which like Hormuz [a Persian Gulf port] brings together merchants from every city and from every country. In it there are many precious articles. . . . It contains a large number of Muslims who are constant residents and have built two mosques. Security and justice are also firmly established in this city, [so] that the most wealthy merchants bring in big cargoes, which they unload and unhesitatingly send into the markets without thinking in the meantime of any security, or checking the account, or keeping watch over the goods. When the sale is made, they [the Calicut officials] levy a duty [charge a tax] on the goods of one-fortieth; if they [the goods] are not sold, they [the officials] make no charge whatsoever. At Calicut, every ship, whatever place it may come from or wherever it may be bound, when it puts into this port is treated like other vessels and has no trouble of any kind to put up with.

M. G. S. Narayanan, Calicut: The City of Truth Revisited. Calicut: University of Calicut, 2006, p. 130. Modernized by Shennan Hutton.

Questions for Consideration

- ✓ *Why would merchants choose Calicut over other places to stop and trade?*
- ✓ *Describe the qualities necessary for a good port.*
- ✓ *Does this source lead the reader to think that when cultures interact they will be peaceful or warlike? What is the evidence for your opinion?*

SE6.8.6 Ma-huan, "Description of Calicut and Pepper Production," 1409

Background: *Ma-huan was a translator for the Chinese Admiral Zheng He. He traveled with the famous Chinese fleet on three voyages and wrote an account of his travels.*

This is the great country of the Western Ocean. It is three days' sail from Cochin. The country lies beside the sea. The king of the country is *Nan-k'un*, who is a firm believer in the Buddhist religion, and he venerates [worships] the elephant and the ox. The population of the country includes five classes: the Muslim people, the *Nan-k'un* people, the *Che-ti* people, the *Ko-ling* people, and the *Mu-kua* people. Formerly there was a king who made a sworn compact [an agreement] with the Muslim people, saying "You do not eat the ox; I do not eat the pig; we will reciprocally respect the taboo," and this compact has been honored to the present day. The king has two great chiefs who administer the affairs of the country; both are Muslims. The majority of the people in the country all profess [follow] the Muslim religion.

Much pepper is grown on the hills. The inhabitants of the mountainous countryside have established gardens, and it is extensively cultivated. When the period of the tenth moon arrives, the pepper ripens. It is collected, dried in the sun, and sold. Of course, big pepper-collectors come and collect it, and take it up to the official storehouse to be stored; if there is a buyer, an official gives permission for the sale. The duty is calculated according to the amount of the purchase price and is paid in to the authorities. Each one ph-ho of pepper is sold for two hundred gold coins.

Source: Ma-Huan Ying-yal Sheng-lan, The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores (1433), trans. and ed. by J. V. G. Mills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 137-46.

Questions for Consideration

- ✓ Think back to previous lessons involving Zheng He and Chinese exploration. Were the motives peaceful, warlike or indifferent? What evidence is given here to support your opinion?
- ✓ What does this source reveal about how trade is conducted?

SE6.8.7 Ma-huan's Description of Calicut and its People

Background: *Ma-huan was a translator for the Chinese Admiral Zheng He. He traveled with the famous Chinese fleet on three voyages and wrote an account of his travels.*

The wealthy people mostly cultivate coconut trees. The coconut has ten different uses. The young tree has syrup, [that is] very sweet and good to drink. It can be made into wine by fermentation. For vegetables they have mustard plants, green ginger, turnips, caraway seeds, onions, garlic, egg plants, cucumbers, and melons. They have both red and white rice, but barley and wheat are both absent. Their wheat and flour all comes from other places as merchandise for sale here.

When a ship arrives from China, the king's overseer goes on board and makes an invoice of the goods, and a day is settled for valuing the cargo. On the day appointed, the silk goods are first inspected and valued. Afterwards, the broker states "The price of your goods is now fixed, and cannot in any way be altered." The price of pearls, precious stones, and the Chinese goods exchanged for them is fixed by the broker. They have no abacus on which to make their calculations, but in its place they use their toes and fingers, and, what is very wonderful, they are never wrong in their reckonings.

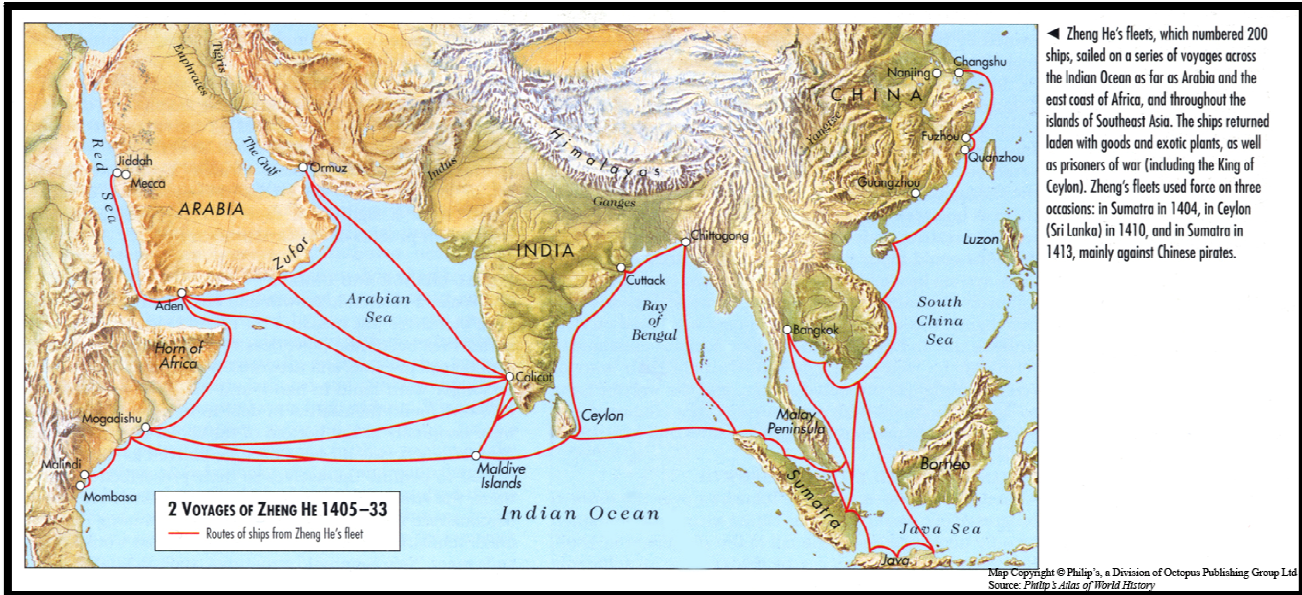
Source: Ma-Huan Ying-yal Sheng-lan, The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores (1433), trans. and ed. by J. V. G. Mills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 137-46.

Questions for Consideration

- ✓ *What is Ma-huan's attitude toward the people in Calicut? Describe the evidence which supports your answer.*
- ✓ *What does this source tell the reader about the organization of Calicut as a trading center? Give evidence to support your answer.*

SE6.8.8 Zheng He's Voyages

Note: This is not a primary source. It is a modern illustration depicting historians' interpretations.



Questions for Consideration

- ✓ How far from China did Zheng He travel?
- ✓ Why were there so many stops in and around Calicut?
- ✓ Based on this map, why would Calicut be an ideal location for a center of trade?

SE6.8.9 Zheng He's Ships

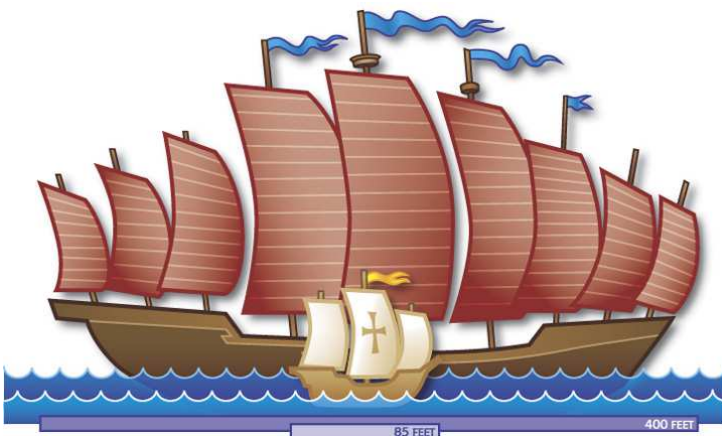
Background: This photograph does not show one of Zheng He's ships, because none of them has survived to today. Taken on Sept. 24, 2006, this photo shows a modern copy of one of the medium-sized ships in Zheng He's fleet. The copy is 63.25 meters and 13.8 meters wide, with a tonnage of 1,300 tons. From 1405 to 1433 of the Ming Dynasty, Zheng He made seven voyages to places in Asia and Africa, and traveled more than 100,000 km.



Source: People's Daily Online -- Ship imitates ancient vessel navigated...

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200609/25/print20060925>.

Background: This modern drawing compares the size of Zheng He's largest ships (400 ft.) and Columbus' ship the Santa Maria (85 ft).



Citation:

http://www.ashgrove.k12.mo.us/houp/Classes/European%20History/Unit%202/The%20Atlantic%20World/zheng_he_ship.html.

Questions for Consideration

✓ The European and Chinese ships were both sea-worthy. Why might someone have preferred to do business with the Chinese over the

Europeans?

- ✓ Can these ships help to draw a conclusion about the development and sophistication of each country? Why or why not?

SE6.8.10 Zheng He, Inscription about Contacts with the Barbarians, 1431

Background: This is an excerpt from an inscription [writing chiseled into stone] in the Temple of the Heavenly Princess at Liujiagang in Eastern Lü, China, Recording the History of Contacts with the Barbarians (non-Chinese).

...[Zheng] He and the others have been commissioned as envoys to the various barbarians on seven occasions from the beginning of [the reign of the] Yongle [emperor] until now. Each time we have commanded several tens of thousands of government troops and over a hundred seagoing ships. . . . [We have] traversed [traveled] over a hundred thousand li of vast ocean [and have] beheld great ocean waves, rising as high as the sky and swelling and swelling endlessly. . . . When we arrived at the foreign countries, barbarian kings who resisted transformation [by Chinese civilization] and who were not respectful we captured alive, and bandit soldiers who looted and plundered recklessly we exterminated[killed]. Because of this the sea routes became pure and peaceful, and the foreign peoples could rely upon them and pursue their occupations in safety. All of this was due to the aid of the goddess. . . .

Source: Zheng He's Liujiagang Inscription of 1431, cited and translated in Edward L. Dreyer, Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming, 1405–1433. *Library of World Biography Series*. New York/Boston: Pearson Longman, 2006, pp. 191-2.

Questions for Consideration

- ✓ *What does this source reveal about the attitude of the Chinese?*
- ✓ *Describe the parts of this source which show bias.*
- ✓ *What does this source reveal about the Chinese purpose for exploration?*
- ✓ *This source is an inscription on a monument, rather than the letters that we most often look at. Does this change your interpretation? Why or why not?*

SE6.8.11: Vasco da Gama leading the Portuguese around the Cape of Good Hope and making first contact with Calicut

Background: Vasco da Gama set sail on July 8, 1497, rounded the Cape of Good Hope four months later, and reached Calicut on May 20, 1498. He was not prepared for what he found or the riches that were expected of him and so, was unable to trade most of his goods. The few spices he managed to buy still sold for a 3000% profit (No, that's not a typo.) and Portugal saw this as an opportunity which was too good to pass up. The Portuguese would return with more soldiers. In this passage, the author called the Muslim traders "Moors", which was a Portuguese and Spanish name for Iberian Muslims.

1498. Calicut. The first greeting that he [Vasco da Gama] received was in these words: "May the Devil take thee! What brought you hither?" They [Muslim traders in Calicut] asked what he sought so far away from home, and [Da Gama] 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 [send ships here]?" He [Da Gama] said that the King of Portugal would not consent to their doing so, and they [the traders] said [the Portuguese king] did the right thing. After this conversation they took him [Da Gama] to their lodgings and gave him wheaten bread and honey.

When he [Da Gama] 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, while 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 their ears and wear much gold in them. They go naked down to the waist, covering their lower extremities with very fine cotton cloth. But it is only the most respectable who do this, for the others manage as best they are able.

On Tuesday, May 29, the captain-major [Da Gama] got ready the following things to be sent to the king [the Zamorin of Calicut], that is, twelve pieces of lambel, four scarlet hoods, six hats, four strings of coral, a case containing six basins for washing hands, a case of sugar, two casks of oil, and two of honey. And as it is the custom not to send anything to the king without the knowledge of the Moor, his factor, and of the bale [Calicut government officials], the captain-major informed them [the factor and the bale] of his intention. They came, and when they saw the present they laughed at it, saying that it was not a thing to offer to a king, that the poorest merchant from Mecca, or any other part of India, gave more, and that if he wanted to make a present it should be in gold, as the king would not accept such things. When the captain-major heard this he grew sad...

Citation: Vasco da Gama, "Round Africa to India, 1498-1499," Internet Modern History Sourcebook, ed. Paul Halsall, 1998, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1497degama.asp>.

SE6.9 Calicut Writing Assignment

I am ready for this assignment if I have...

- Reviewed SE6.1 and SE6.3 and completed the Indian Ocean Trade Map (SE6.2)
- Completed a careful reading and discussion of the background document (SE6.5)
- Read and discussed the primary and secondary source documents (SE6.8)
- Charted my answers to the primary and secondary source documents on the Source Analysis Chart (SE6.7)

Getting ready to write:

1. Look carefully at the directions and the writing prompt. Disassemble the question by breaking it down into parts. What is it actually asking you to do?
2. Review your map and reread the background document. What parts of the writing prompt are addressed here? Make notes if necessary.
3. Look at your Source Analysis Chart. If it is completely filled out, you have many elements of a rough draft ready to go. Did you notice that circling UC, R or W leads you to the categories in the prompt?

Directions: Use your map and source analysis page to respond to the following prompt. Remember, you will start with a claim which responds to the prompt and follow it up with evidence from your notes. The more specific your evidence, the better your writing will be.

Prompt: What were the effects of the exchanges at Calicut? How did the spice trade bring cultures together, make some people rich, and lead to war?

