Source: Nicky Huys, *History of European Exploration*,

At the forefront of these motivations is the pursuit of economic gain. The promise of wealth from new trade routes, resources, and commodities has been a powerful incentive for explorers. The desire for spices, gold, silver, and other valuable goods not only drove individual adventurers but also influenced national policies, leading to state-sponsored expeditions. This economic impetus often catalyzed the establishment of trade networks that spanned continents, fundamentally altering the flow of goods and resources across the globe….

Religious zeal has also played a pivotal role in motivating exploration. Many explorers were driven by a desire to spread their faith, particularly during the Age of Discovery. The mission to convert indigenous populations to Christianity was often seen as a moral obligation. This religious motivation intertwined with political and economic ambitions, as nations sought to expand their influence and assert their dominance through the spread of their beliefs. The establishment of missions and the interactions with local populations were frequently framed within a context of spiritual duty, even as these efforts sometimes led to cultural imposition and conflict….

Political ambition has also been a driving force behind exploration. The competition among European powers during the age of colonial expansion created a race for territory and resources. Nations sought to assert their dominance on the global stage, and exploration became a means of demonstrating power and prestige. The establishment of colonies and acquisition of land were often framed as acts of national interest, with explorers serving as agents of their countries’ imperial ambitions. The geopolitical landscape was thus shaped by the ambitions of nations, which frequently led to conflicts over territorial claims and the subjugation of indigenous populations.