

# THE BEGINNING OF THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

UNIT 7

# A NEW MONARCHY IS BORN

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- At the beginning of the Early Modern Period, there were five kingdoms on the Iberian Peninsula. Members of the same family (the House of Trastámara) ruled in two of those kingdoms: the Crown of Aragón and Crown of Castilla. In 1469, Fernando II of Aragón married Isabel I, the sister of Enrique IV of Castilla, who died in 1474. **Fernando II** inherited the Aragonese throne in 1479. To gain her right to the throne of Castilla, **Isabel I** had to defeat Juana, the king's daughter and heir, in a civil war that ended in 1479. Isabel and Juana were supported by Aragón and Portugal, respectively.
- The marriage of Isabel and Fernando **laid the foundations** for the development of modern Spain, and also for the **Catholic monarchy**. The pope bestowed the title of Catholic King and Queen on the couple in 1496, after they had conquered the Kingdom of Granada and expelled the Jews.

# AUTHORITARIAN MONARCHY

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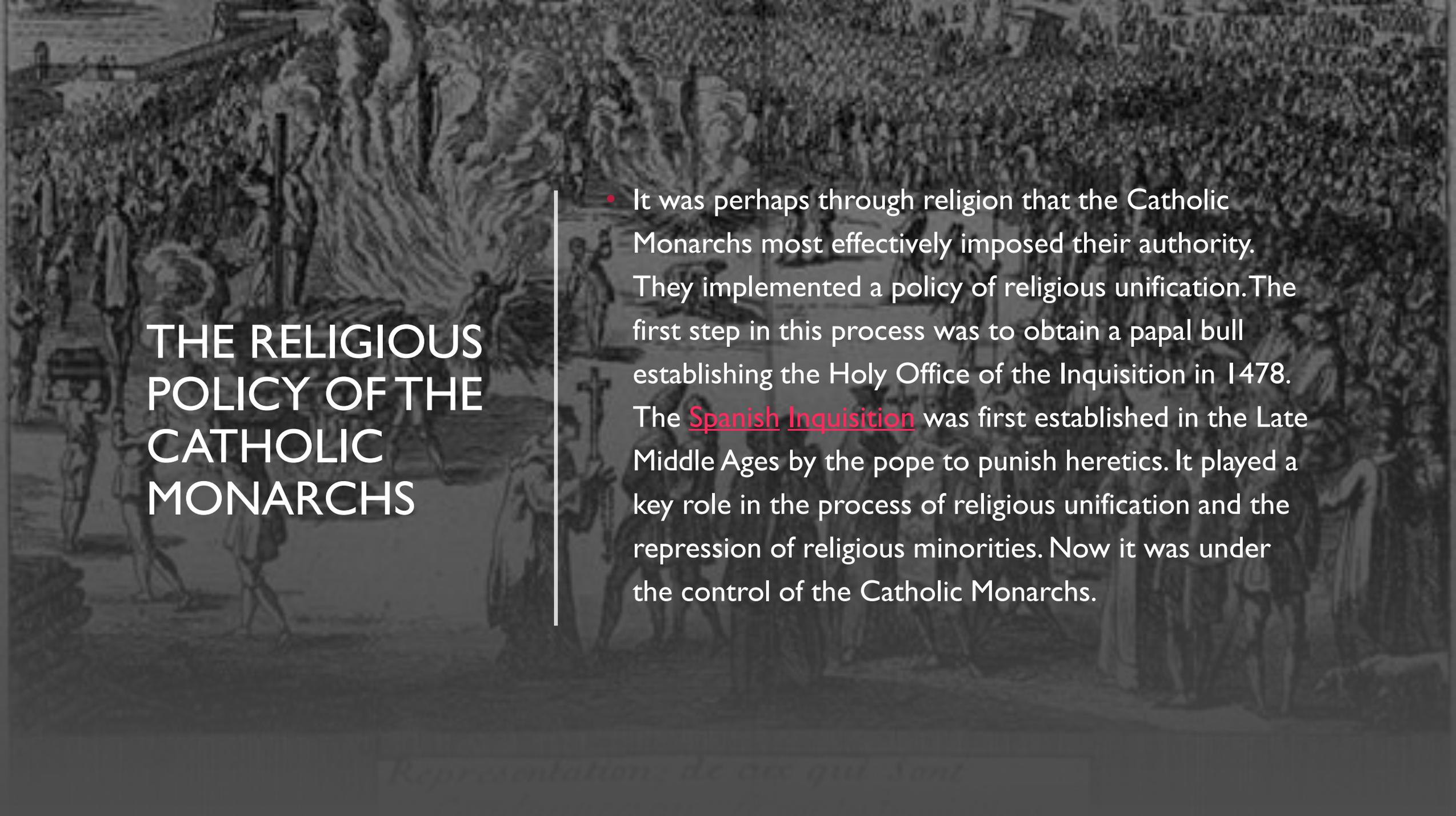
The Catholic Monarchs' main objective was to restore the authority of the monarchy. Their policies brought about transformations in their kingdoms.



The Catholic Monarchs confiscated lands from noblemen who supported Juana during the civil war, but they tried to win the support of the nobility when they needed it.



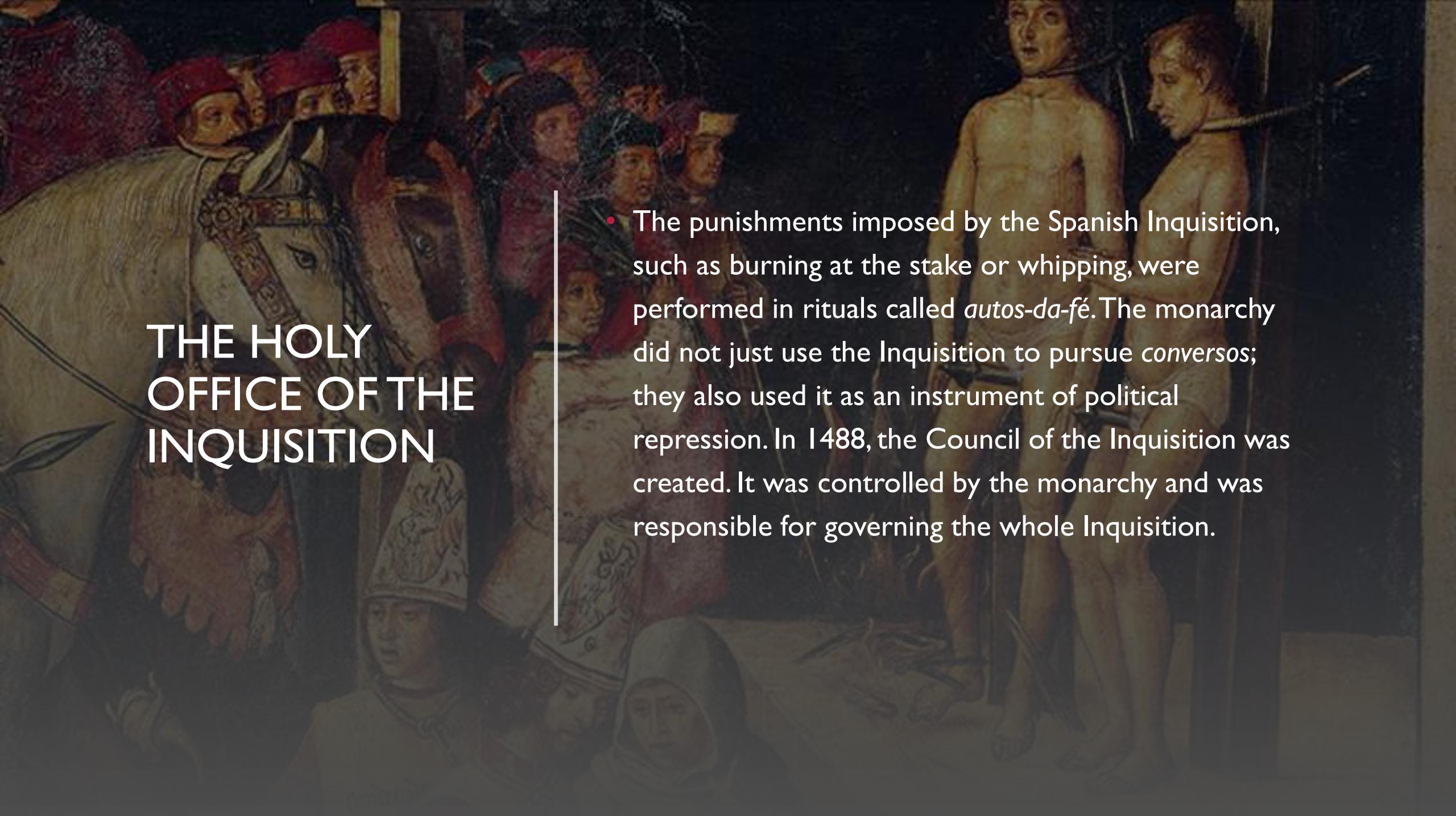
During their reign, the pope gave the Catholic Monarchs the authority to intervene in the appointment of important figures in the Church.



## THE RELIGIOUS POLICY OF THE CATHOLIC MONARCHS

- It was perhaps through religion that the Catholic Monarchs most effectively imposed their authority. They implemented a policy of religious unification. The first step in this process was to obtain a papal bull establishing the Holy Office of the Inquisition in 1478. The Spanish Inquisition was first established in the Late Middle Ages by the pope to punish heretics. It played a key role in the process of religious unification and the repression of religious minorities. Now it was under the control of the Catholic Monarchs.

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- In 1492, the Catholic Monarchs expelled all **Jews** that did not convert to Christianity from their kingdoms. The Inquisition was not convinced that the conversos (the Jews who remained) had really converted, so they were under suspicion and socially marginalised.
  - Following the conquest of Granada in 1492, the **mudéjares** in that kingdom were forced to convert to Catholicism. This measure was extended to the rest of Castilla in 1502 through a royal decree, which required all **mudéjares** to renounce their religion or be expelled. The majority converted, but their sincerity was always under suspicion, so they were marginalised. These converts were known as moriscos.



## THE HOLY OFFICE OF THE INQUISITION

- The punishments imposed by the Spanish Inquisition, such as burning at the stake or whipping, were performed in rituals called *autos-da-fé*. The monarchy did not just use the Inquisition to pursue *conversos*; they also used it as an instrument of political repression. In 1488, the Council of the Inquisition was created. It was controlled by the monarchy and was responsible for governing the whole Inquisition.

# ACTIVITIES

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- Define the following terms: *converso*, *marrano*, *mudéjar*, *morisco*.
- Name two punishments imposed by the Holy Office of the Inquisition.
- How did the new monarchy govern its kingdoms?



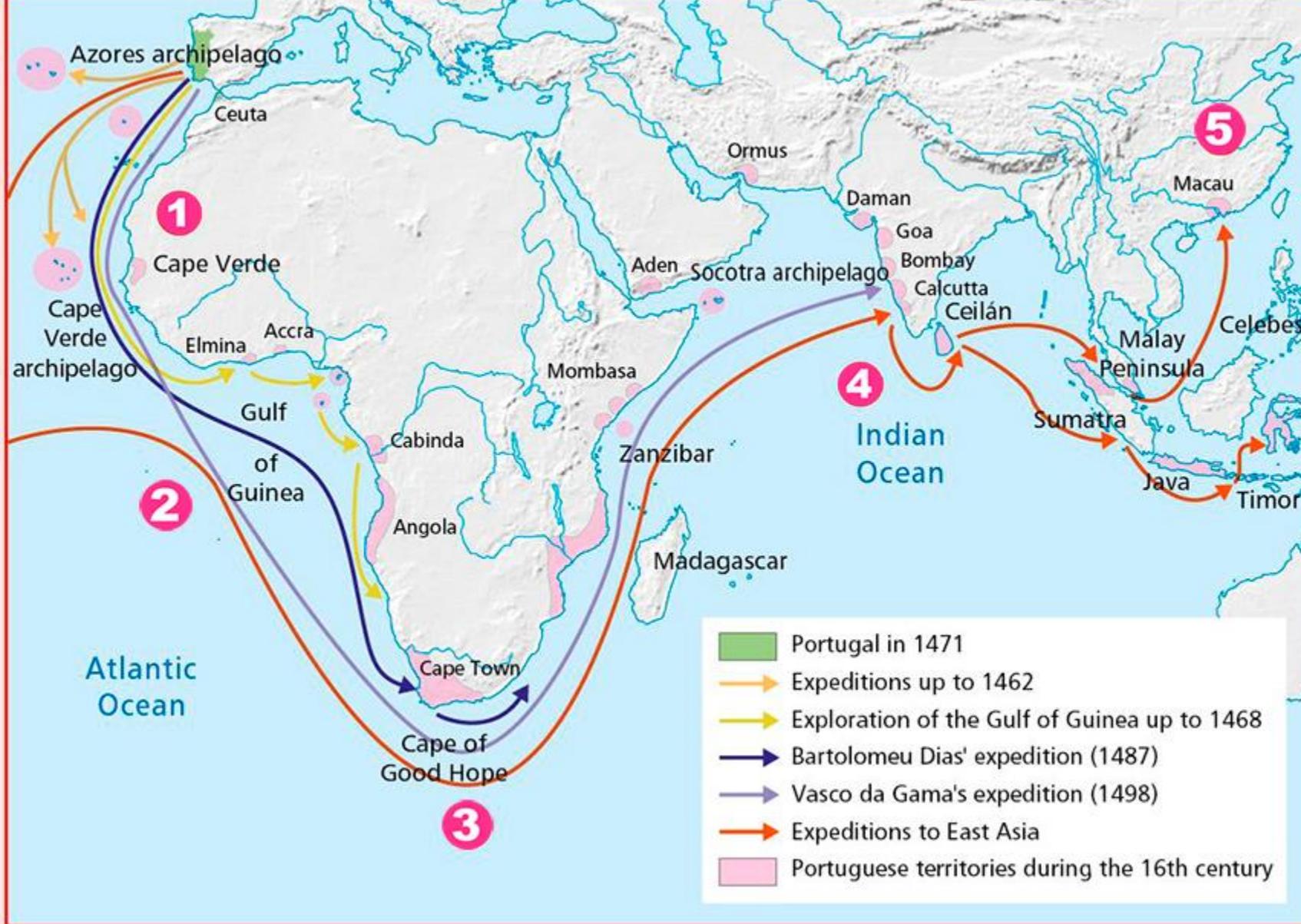
# THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

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# PORTUGUESE DISCOVERIES

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- At the beginning of the 15th century, Portugal was the greatest power in terms of geographical discoveries. Its aim was to explore the coasts of Africa to find an alternative route to Asia, avoiding the Ottoman Empire, in order to import spices and silk to Europe.
- Portuguese maritime exploration was supported by the country's monarchs, particularly Henry 'the Navigator', who founded a school of navigators and mapmakers in Sagres. Portuguese expansion began with the conquest of Ceuta (1415), an important strategic point on the gold route between Africa and Portugal. Then came the following milestones:



The discovery of the archipelagos of **Madeira** (c. 1419) and the **Azores** (c. 1427), and the exploration of **Cape Verde** (1461–1462).

The exploration of the **Gulf of Guinea**, which gave the Portuguese their first opportunity to sail with the trade winds. These winds blow west from the Equator. Learning how to sail with them was useful later when they travelled to America.

The exploration of the southern coasts of Africa. One expedition, led by Bartolomeu Dias, sailed around the **Cape of Good Hope** (1487), opening the route to southern Asia.

Vasco da Gama completed the route to Asia when he arrived in **Calcutta** (India) in 1498, achieving the European objective of discovering a new route to Asia.

# AMERICA BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF COLUMBUS

- Before 1492, America was inhabited by many different peoples and cultures. In some cases there were large, advanced empires with hierarchical societies.



# I. AZTECS

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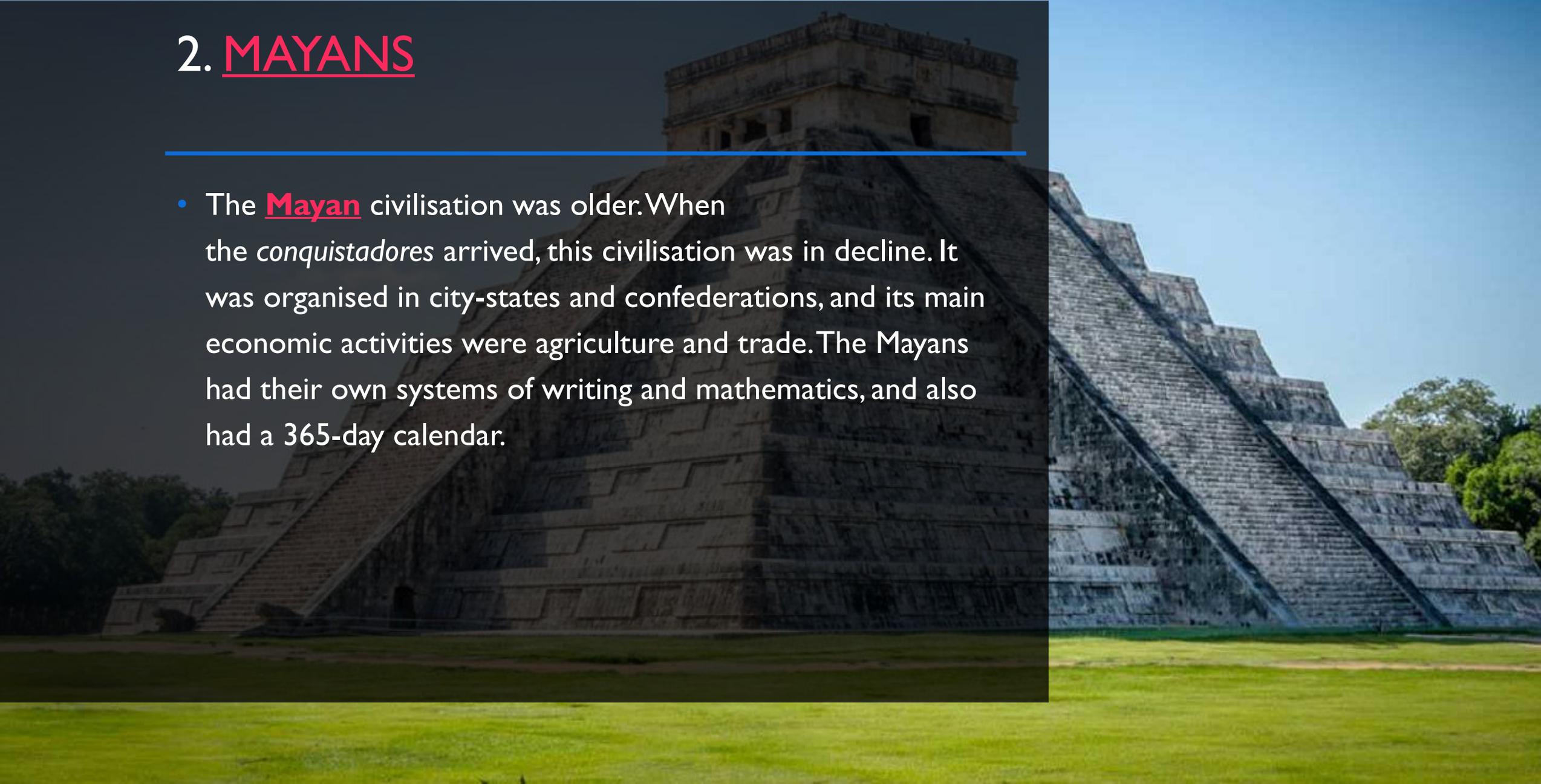
- The Aztecs created an empire in Central America. Its capital was Tenochtitlán, today's Mexico City. The Aztecs conquered other peoples, imposing taxes and strict military control over them. The Aztec emperor lived in Tenochtitlán and led an advanced society with an economy based on well-developed agriculture and prosperous trade.



## 2. MAYANS

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- The Mayan civilisation was older. When the *conquistadores* arrived, this civilisation was in decline. It was organised in city-states and confederations, and its main economic activities were agriculture and trade. The Mayans had their own systems of writing and mathematics, and also had a 365-day calendar.



An aerial photograph of the Inca ruins of Machu Picchu, showing stone buildings, terraces, and a large mountain peak in the background under a blue sky with clouds.

### 3. INCA

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- The **Inca** culture formed an empire in the Andes and controlled the peoples of the area. It was organised in provinces. Each province was ruled by a governor under the orders of the emperor or *Sapa Inca*. The Incas grew crops and farmed livestock. Although they could not write, they had a complex political and social structure and an extensive network of roads.

## 4. OTHER TRIBES

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- There were other peoples, organised in **tribes**, who lived in small territories. Most were hunter-gatherers, and their culture and social hierarchy were less developed than those of the large empires. However, at the time when the Europeans arrived, none of the existing American cultures were using the wheel or working metal.

# ACTIVITIES

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- What important discovery did Portuguese explorers make in the Gulf of Guinea?
- Name one economic activity that was common to the Aztecs, Incas and Mayans.