History 3797: Week 4

Pre-Columbian population and demographic collapse in the Americas
Earliest representation of the people of the new world

Columbus landing on Hispaniola
Native Suicides
Spanish massacre of Indians, by Las Casas
Aztecs dying of smallpox, (Aztec drawing transcribed by Fray Sahaguns, “The Florintine Codex”).
Atahualpa's capture by Pizarro. Drawing by Guamán Poma de Ayala.

Spaniards executing Tupac Amaru, the last Inca of Vilcabamba, in 1572.
Estimated percent decline from first contact to lowest point
“Virgin Soil” hypotheses

- Europe/Asia/Africa had more disease because of larger population and more domestic animals
- Old world populations developed genetic immunity to some diseases through natural selection
- Old world populations develop acquired immunity to some endemic diseases (e.g. measles, mumps) by exposure as children
- New world population had lower genetic diversity, so microbial adaptations to the immune system could spread more quickly