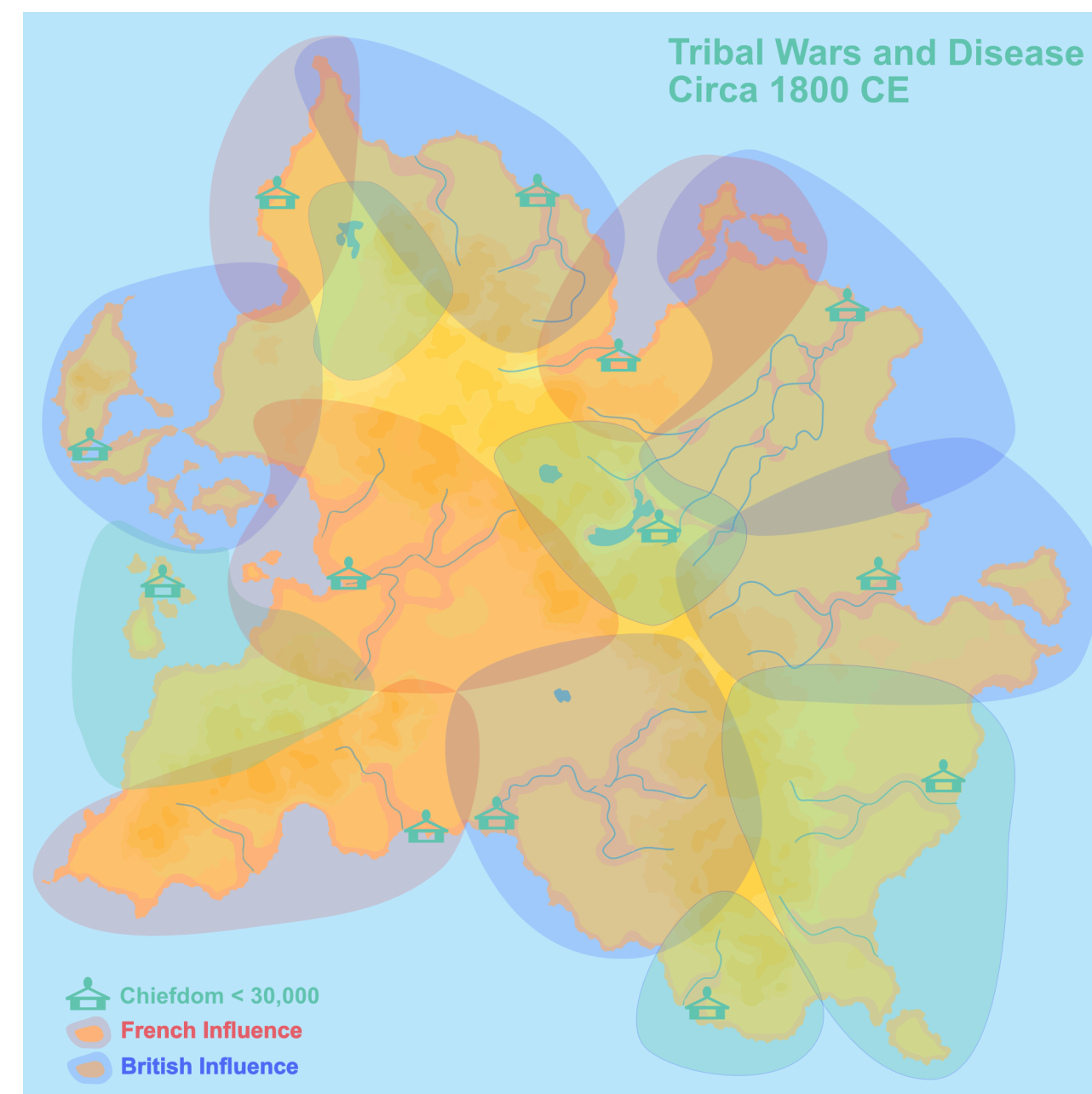
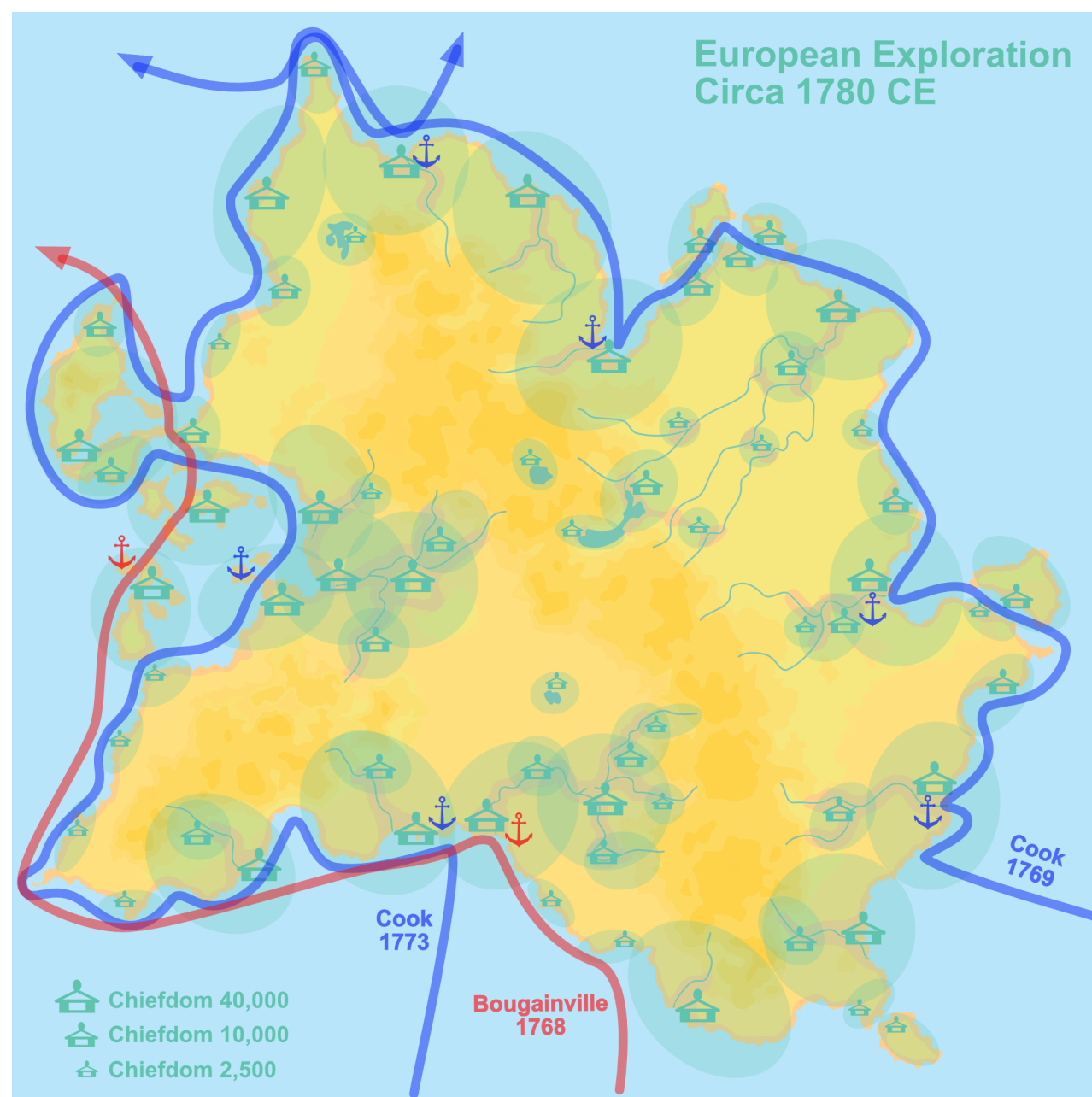
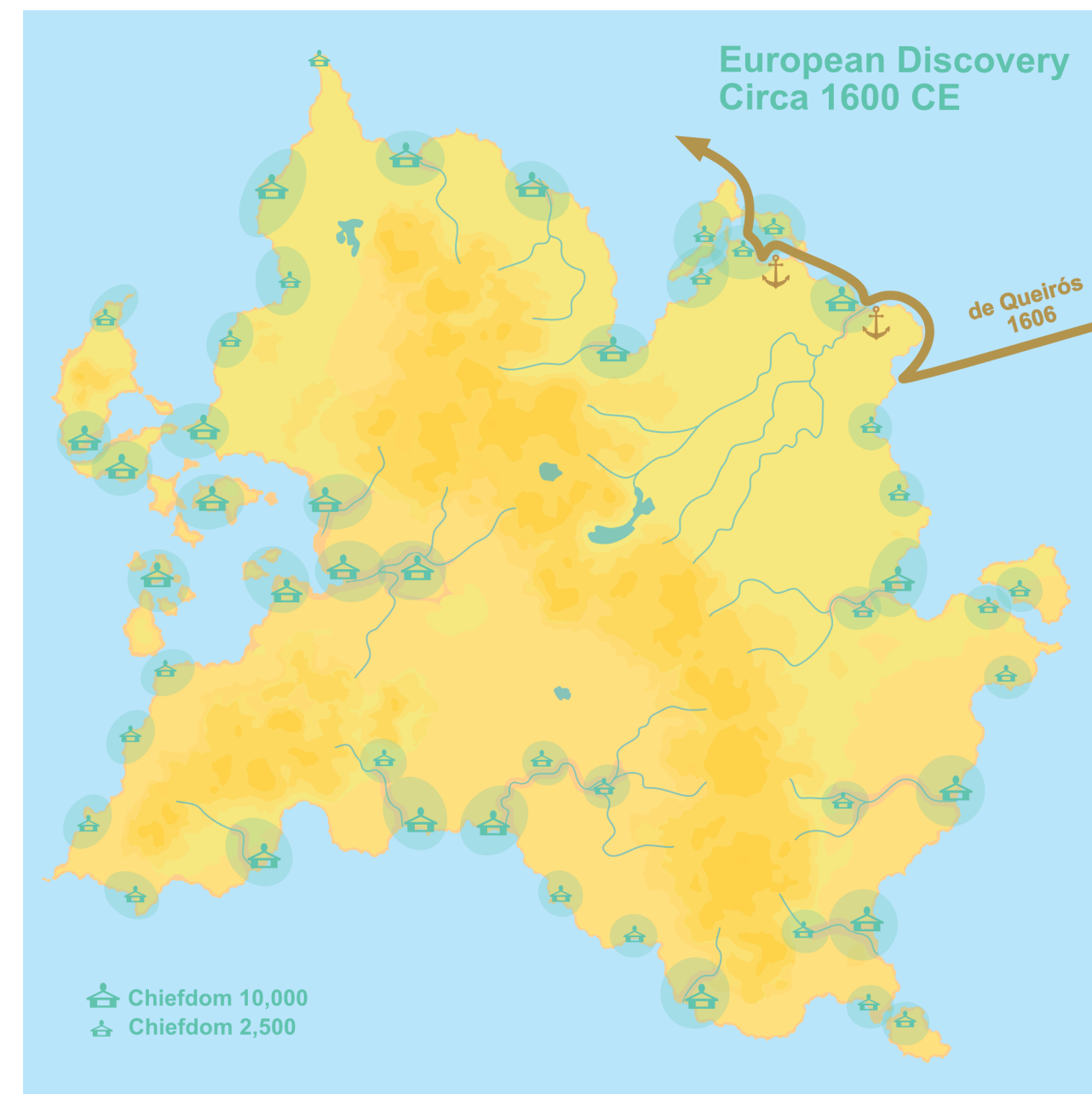
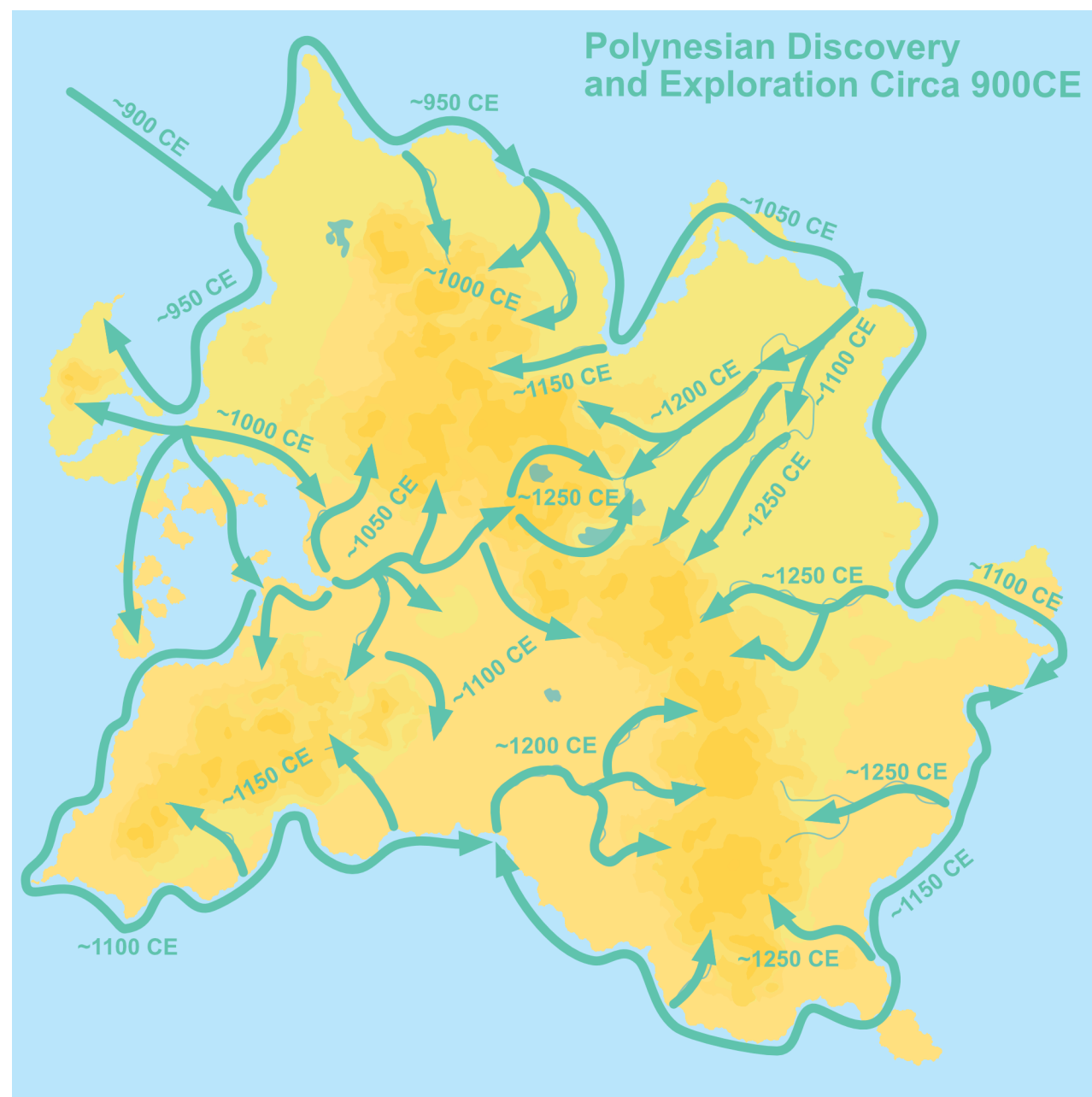


## THE HISTORY OF MATATUAROI 900-1800



Polynesians from the Tuamatus Archipelago discovered and first settled Matatuaro in approximately 900 CE. As they explored and settled the new land over 400 years, the original tribe fractured into independent chiefdoms with their own political hierarchies and allegiances. At the time the Spanish explorer, Pedro Fernandes de Queirós, discovered Matatuaro, in 1606 there were approximately 280,000 polynesians living mostly along the coast in 50 major tribes. In 1768, Louis Antoine de Bougainville rediscovered the south coast of Matatuaro while on the first world circumnavigation for France. At almost the same time, James Cook made landfall on the east coast and made a detailed survey while on his first Pacific voyage. Both Bougainville and Cook claimed the land for France and Britain respectively. By 1780, there were more than 1 million people living on Matatuaro. Many of the river systems had been settled, deforestation was accelerating, and portions of the island's interior had been developed for agriculture. Between 1780 and 1800, several thousand Europeans immigrated, mainly missionaries, wanted criminals, and small military detachments. During this period, the French and British waged a proxy war by supplying selected chiefdoms with firearms, horses, and training. Favored chiefdoms conquered neighbors and expanded their influence, but the entire population also suffered substantial attrition due to casualties and diseases brought by the Europeans. By 1800, the population of Matatuaro had declined to about 500,000.

*melist 2020*