

# Africa and the Africans in the Age of the Atlantic Slave Trade

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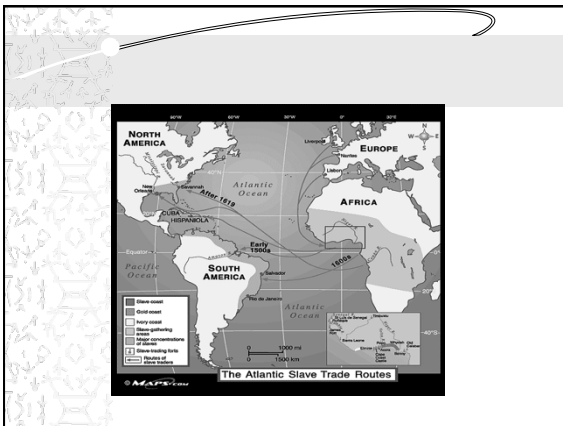
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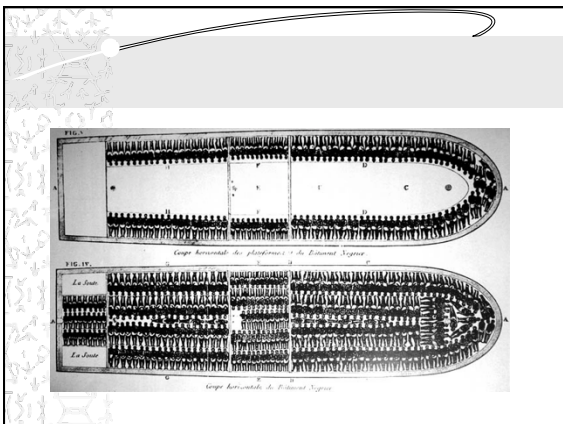
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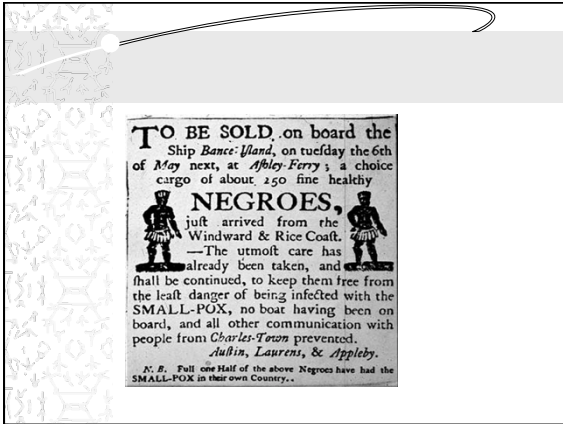
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### The Atlantic Slave Trade

- ✦ SLAVERY ALREADY EXISTED
- ✦ Portuguese ships on the Cape of Good Hope in 1487 where they established forts and trading posts- most important was the El Mina (gold producing).
- ✦ Mutually beneficial trading between the Africans and Portuguese. Portuguese success due to ability to penetrate existing African trade routes
- ✦ Attempted to convert rulers of Benin, Kongo, etc. Kongo successful with conversion of ruler, Nzinga Mvemba
- ✦ Curiosity about European culture- showed up in African art, for example. Portuguese saw Africans as savages and pagans
- ✦ Portuguese settle in Luanda- later Angola
- ✦ Other Europeans soon competed with them- Dutch, English, French
- ✦ 1441 first slaves brought from Africa directly to Portugal
- ✦ Sugar plantations in Madeira and the Canaries increased slave trade

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### Trend Toward Expansion

- ✦ 1450-1850 about 12 million shipped across the Atlantic, 10-20% mortality rate on board. 18<sup>th</sup> century had greatest numbers.
- ✦ Mortality high, fertility low, so need to import more
- ✦ Dimensions varied based on economic and political situation. Spanish America and Brazil received the most from 1530-1650 and then English and French later
- ✦ Slave trade in Africa continued to exist
- ✦ Slaves came from Senegambia in the 16<sup>th</sup> c., west central Africa by 17<sup>th</sup> century, and gold coast and slave coast by end of 17<sup>th</sup>

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### Demographic Patterns

- ✦ More men transported to Americas, while women traded within Africa
- ✦ New crops helped population grow to replace lost Africans

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### Organization of the Trade

- ✦ Until 1630 Portugal controlled most of the trade
- ✦ Dutch seized El Mina in 1637 and began to rival Portugal
- ✦ 1660s English created the Royal African Company
- ✦ High mortality rate for Europeans in Africa due to diseases
- ✦ Slaves obtained by military conquest and by trade with local African rulers
- ✦ Triangular Trade
- ✦ Profitability of slave trade debated

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In 1792, there were 140 slave ships in Liverpool alone.

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### African Societies, Slavery, and the Slave Trade

- ✦ Slavery as an institution common in Africa- a form of labor control and wealth
- ✦ Domestic slavery and the extension of lineages through the addition of female members remained a central feature in many places
- ✦ Africans, as a rule, did not enslave own people but neighboring ones, so the expansion of states allowed rulers to enslave more people

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### Slaving and African Politics

- ✦ Most states of central and west Africa small and fragmented, so instable caused by competition and warfare by need to expand. Warrior /soldier emerged as important social type/class. Sale of captives into the slave network an extension of African politics

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### Asante and Dahomey

- ✦ Response to the realities of Europeans in Africa
- ✦ Asante from the Akan people (Ghana). 1650 expansion and centralization under the Oyoko clan. Under Osei Tutu – supreme civil and religious leader- asantehene. Remained dominant power on the Gold Coast until 1820s
- ✦ Dahomey developed on the interior and by 1720s (with firearms) ruled an autocratic and brutal state based on the slave trade
- ✦ Growing divine authority paralleled rise of absolutism in Europe
- ✦ Artisan guilds
- ✦ Best artisans worked for the royal court

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### East Africa and the Sudan

- ✦ Swahili trading cities continued their commerce in the Indian Ocean
- ✦ Zanzibar and other offshore islands followed the European model and set up clove-producing plantations using African slave labor
- ✦ Luo people exercised great power in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries
- ✦ End of 18<sup>th</sup> century Islamization entered new phase which was violent and linked it to the external slave trade
- ✦ 1770s Muslim reform movement sweeping down western Sudan. Intense impact on Fulani people. 1804 Usman Dan Fodio- upheaval and creation of Sokoto

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### White Settlers and Africans in Southern Africa

- ✦ little affected by the slave trade
- ✦ Bantu-speaking people (hunter-gatherer societies) organized into chiefdoms began competing for land, which led to further expansion
- ✦ 1652 Dutch East India Company established colony at Cape of Good Hope- post for ships going to Asia
- ✦ By 1760s Dutch had crossed for new land
- ✦ 1795 Britain seized colony and by 1815 had it under control
- ✦ Early 19<sup>th</sup> century series of wars between Bantu and settlers

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### Mfecane and Zulu Rise to Power

- ✦ Nguni people- process of unification
- ✦ 1818 leadership fell to Shaka- brilliant military genius
- ✦ Zulu Chiefdom became center of military organization
- ✦ 1828 Shaka assassinated
- ✦ 1840s power still growing as successors continued his policies
- ✦ Mfecane- wars of crushing and wandering as Zulu expanded
- ✦ New African states emerged following Zulu model- Swazi and Lesotho emerged but successfully did not use Zulu example

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### African Diaspora

- ✦ Africa's integration into mercantile structure of the world
- ✦ Prices of slaves rose in 18<sup>th</sup> century and terms of trade favored African dealers
- ✦ Slave lives- destruction of villages and separation of families
- ✦ Trauma of the Middle Passage
- ✦ Plantation system in the Americas prompted the demand for slaves

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### American Slave Societies

- ✦ Salt water slaves- African born
- ✦ Creole Slaves- American born
- ✦ Rebellions often organized along African ethnic lines
- ✦ Slave-based societies varied in their composition
- ✦ Slavery in North American less influenced by Africa

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### People and Gods in Exile

- ✦ Family life difficult- few women, separated families
- ✦ Elements of culture and language survived
- ✦ Religion- adoption of Christianity
- ✦ Resistance common

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**End of the Slave Trade**

- ✦ Mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century opposition to trade appeared
- ✦ Enlightenment thinkers like Rousseau and Smith condemned the practice
- ✦ William Wilberforce fought for the end of the trade in England and in 1807 the British ended the trade
- ✦ 19<sup>th</sup> century opposition huge and by 1888 Brazil abolished slavery

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