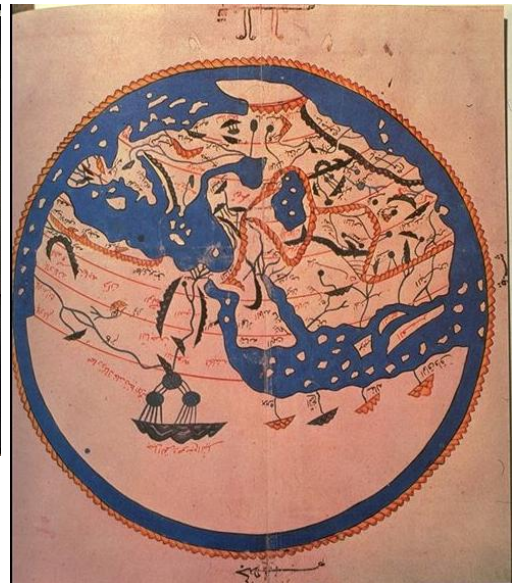


## C. The Period of European Domination

### 1. The Portuguese Circumnavigation of Africa (1415-1498)

- a) The tribal existence of Africa starts to come into focus with the arrival of Portuguese explorers under the command of Prince Henry “the Navigator,” who began the looking for a sea route to Asia in 1415.
- b) Portugal, like Spain, had spent most of its national life fighting off a Muslim invasion (starting in **c.711AD**). Once the country achieved its independence, it began looking for ways to enrich and strengthen itself at the expense of the Muslims in northern Africa.
- c) In 1415, Prince Henry led the conquest of Ceuta, a port in Morocco. There he learned about the trading network across the Sahara, and decided to take control of that trade and at the same time seek a sea route to Asia .

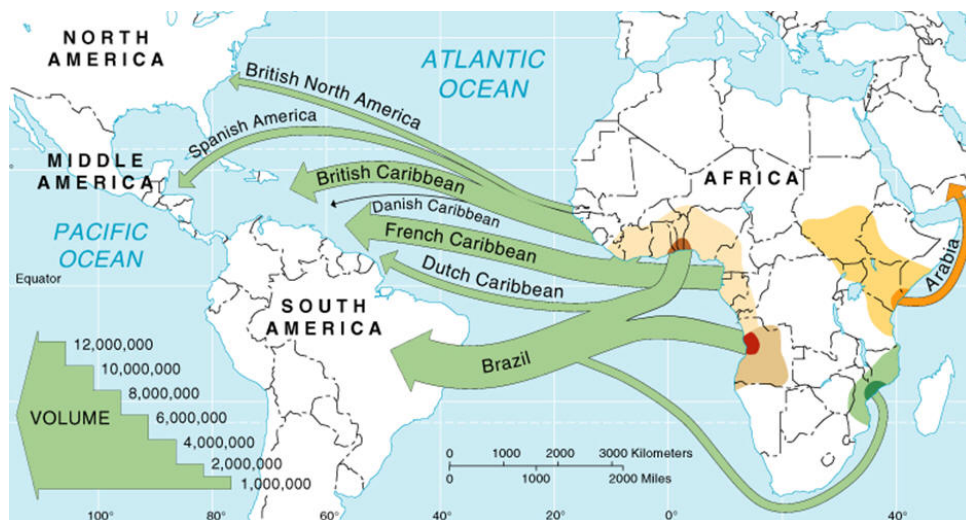


Knowledge of Africa was scarce prior to modern times, as shown by the ancient Greek map of the world created by the geographer Ptolemy. It shows Europe in the top left, surrounded by the dark blue color of the water, and a massive, but misshapen Africa that seems to fill up the bottom left of the map. An Arab map from the Middle Ages, shows the same basic layout, but one tantalizing difference: there’s a band of water around the bottom of Africa leading to Asia. This hinted at the possibility of circumnavigation.

- d) The Portuguese began a series of “coasting” voyages soon thereafter, reaching Cape Verde, the westernmost point of Africa by 1455, the Equator by 1471, and, in a voyage under the command of Bartolomeu Dias in 1488, the very bottom of Africa, which came to be known as the Cape of Good Hope, in 1488.
- e) This success is why the king of Portugal chose not to help Christopher Columbus with his idea of sailing *west* to try to reach the East. Columbus would have to wait for Spain’s approval.
- f) Vasco Da Gama became the first European to reach India by a sea route in 1498.

## 2. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (1526-1888)

- Before the Portuguese had completed their circumnavigation of Africa, Columbus had achieved a partial success on his mission of sailing west. He had not reached Asia, but instead discovered America.
- The Spanish began to take over the Caribbean, Mexico, Peru, and everything in between, engaging in brutal conquest, and unintentionally spreading all the diseases that they carried to the native population, which had no immunities to them, causing a great depopulation of the Americas.
- The result of the unintentional depopulation of the Americas was the intentional depopulation of Africa. A trans-Atlantic slave trade was begun by the Spanish and the Portuguese (who started to colonize Brazil).
- The tragedy of this phase of African history can hardly be exaggerated. Africa's first encounter with a more advanced civilization was a predatory age that lasted for over 350 years.
- Although Britain (1807) and the United States (1808) were the first countries in the world to outlaw the slave trade and both actively used their resources to stop it, it continued nonetheless.



A map of the slave trade shows the size of the flow of peoples taken and their destinations. By far the largest destination was Portuguese Brazil and the Caribbean.

- Brazil was the last country in the Americas to outlaw slavery in 1888, thus putting an end to the “demand” for slaves, and ending the trans-Atlantic conduit of slavery.
- The consequence for Africa of the centuries-long slave trade can hardly be fathomed. Tens of millions of slaves were taken (usually by enemy tribes), sold to Europeans, and deported to the Americas. This robbed Africa of its single most important resource: its people. And it created a profoundly malevolent relationship between Europe and Africa that would continue into modern times.

### 3. The Scramble for Africa (1882-1914)

- a) If the impact of the slave trade were not bad enough, the European of nations, having exhausted other options by taking over everything else available, set its sights directly on Africa as a target for empire.
- b) The Scramble for Africa began with the rise of the German empire in the heart of Europe, which defeated France (the previously dominant nation in Europe) in the *Franco-Prussian War* of 1870-1, and the takeover of Egypt by Britain in 1882.
- c) Germany’s leaders looked at the world map and realized that if they didn’t act quickly, there would be no other part of the world they could take control of for themselves. They created companies to establish outposts and look for available resources on every available spot on the coast of Africa.
- d) Afraid of Germany’s ambitions, the other European powers — mainly France and Britain — also began to work feverishly to take over anything they could. Within a couple decades, the map of Africa almost as we know it today, had been drawn — by Europeans.
- e) The complete picture of the first period of Africa history — *The European Domination* — looks like this:

