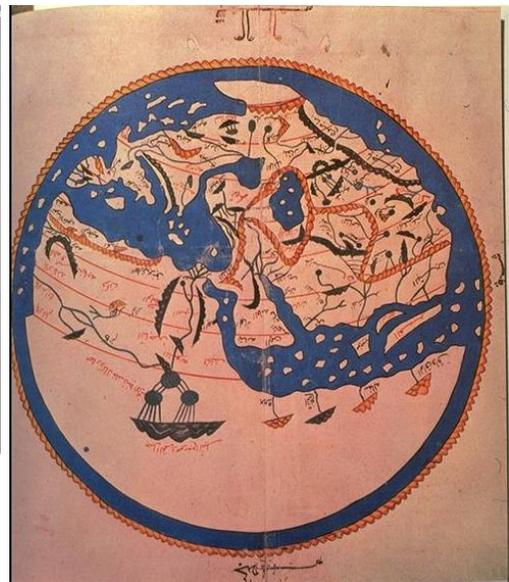


C. The Period of European Domination

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

- a) The tribal existence of Africa was changed forever the arrival of Portuguese explorers under the command of Prince Henry “the Navigator,” who began the project of seeking a sea route to Asia in **1415**.
- b) 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 to see if Portugal could gain a commercial advantage over other nations.



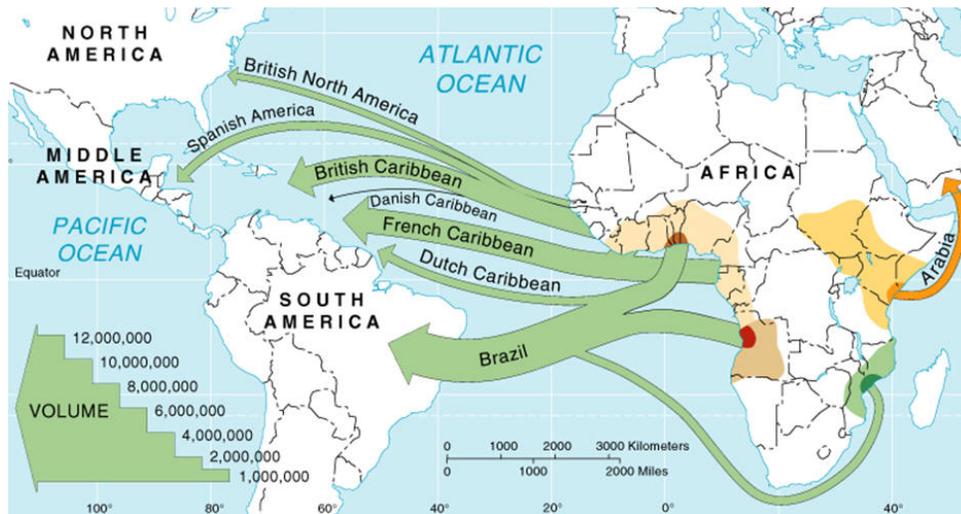
Knowledge of Africa was scarce prior to modern times, as shown by the ancient Greek map of the world created by the geographer Ptolemy. It shows Europe in the top left, surrounded by the dark blue color of the water, and a massive, but misshapen Africa that seems to fill up the bottom left of the map. 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.

- c) The Portuguese began a series of “coasting” voyages and in **1498**, under the command of Vasco Da Gama, they became the first European to reach India by a sea.
- d) Along the way, the Portuguese cataloged their encounters with native tribes, all of whom were primitive and of little interest to them.

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

- a) 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.

- b) The Spanish “conquistadors” began to take over the Caribbean, the Aztec empire of Mexico, the Inca empire of Peru, and everything in between, engaging in characteristically brutal conquest, and unintentionally spreading all the diseases, which caused the population of the Americas to drop dramatically.
- c) The result of this depopulation of the Americas was that a trans-Atlantic slave trade was begun by the Spanish and the Portuguese (who started to colonize Brazil).
- d) The tragedy of this phase of African history is that slavery was viewed as *normal* by the people of every major culture in the world, so the Africans enslaved each other and were willing to sell slaves from other tribes to the Europeans, who didn’t have to conquer them in order to buy slaves.



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.

- e) Thankfully, a moral awakening took place in the British Empire, both in England and in its American colonies, with groups of people challenging the *normalcy* of slavery by independently arguing its immorality. The positive influence of these rare individuals became a cultural movement of abolitionism throughout the English-speaking world.
- f) Britain (1807) and the United States (1808) became the first countries in the world to outlaw the slave trade.
- g) Subsequently, even though it was under constant threat from France, the British navy dedicated a squadron of its ships to stopping the Atlantic slave trade. This squadron was responsible for saving the lives of some 150,000 slaves, and, ultimately, making the trade so unprofitable that it was ceased altogether.
- h) Brazil was the last country in the Americas to outlaw slavery in 1888, thus putting an end to the demand for slaves.
- i) The slave trade robbed African culture of its single most important resource: its people. It also created a profoundly malevolent relationship between Europe and Africa that would continue into modern times.