

Africa and the 16th-17th century World

- a. Before the Slave Trade, focus on Gold
 - i. Portuguese first sail down Atlantic coast in the 1430s
 - ii. Royal African Company and Gold Coast
- b. Atlantic Slave Trade
 - i.

Slave exports from Africa on the Trans-Atlantic route		
Period	Number of slaves accounted for	%
1450-1500	[81,000] ¹	-
1500-1600	328,000 ²	2.9
1601-1700	1,348,000	12.0
1701-1800	6,090,000	54.2
1801-1900	3,466,000 ³	30.9
Total	11,232,000	100.0

1. Mainly traded as a commodity along the Atlantic coast for gold as well as a small number exported to Europe and Atlantic islands.
 2. Does not include up to 50,000 slaves exported to Europe and Atlantic islands.
 3. Includes those exported as *contract labourers* or *libertos* by the French and Portuguese.

Source: *Transformations in Slavery* by Paul E. Lovejoy
 Cambridge University Press, 2000,

- ii. at first focus on Mediterranean, Atlantic islands, and Arab markets
- iii. Portuguese lose out to the Dutch
- iv. English and French also move into Gold Coast
- v. Middle Passage
- vi. African kingdoms and slave trade
 - (1) relation between centralized African states and tributary, clan-/family-based societies on fringes of these states
 - (2) kingdoms trade slaves for firearms, cloth, and cowrie shells (basic currency in area)
 - (3) Asante Kingdom (Gold Coast), Benin (see above), and Kongo
 - (a) Kingdom of the Kongo (present-day Angola, Congo) has strong monarch and military structure which allows them to enslave others
 - (b) Nzinga Mbemba, King Afonso I, king of Kongo (1509-42), converts and establishes Christianity as state religion
 - (i) In 1526 Afonso writes to the king of Portugal, to stop slavery
 - 1) "Each day the traders are kidnapping our people - children of this country, sons of our nobles and vassals, even people of our own family. This corruption and depravity are so widespread that our land is entirely depopulated."
 - 2) "Many of our subjects eagerly lust after Portuguese merchandise that your subjects have brought into our domains. To satisfy this inordinate appetite, they seize many of our black free subjects.... They sell them."
 - (c) Seventeenth century Kongo actually defeat the Portuguese