

# Chapter 20: Africa, Africans and the Atlantic Slave Trade



# Pre-Existing Slave Trade

- Trans-Saharan, Red Sea, and East African trade routes had been trading slaves for centuries throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa
  - Mostly women: traded as concubines for harems; domestic servants
  - Some men: soldiers, field workers (salt production and gold mines), caravan laborers
- Europeans tapped into existing routes and supplies of slaves.
  - Used this to justify their own enslavement of Africans in New World
  - Mid 1400s: Europeans begin to utilize slaves in Europe as household servants

# Portuguese Exploration

- Portugal not isolated from slavery due to Muslim caliphate in Iberia – Most of Post-Classical Era.
- First used African slaves on islands overtaken near West African coast.
  - Success prompted further use of African slaves.
- Established trading posts along coasts throughout Africa.
  - Also searching for gold, spices, pepper
- Had to work with consent of local African rulers
  - Impressed with organization of African kingdoms (Kongo, Benin, Mali, Songhay)



# Portuguese Expansion and Major African Kingdoms

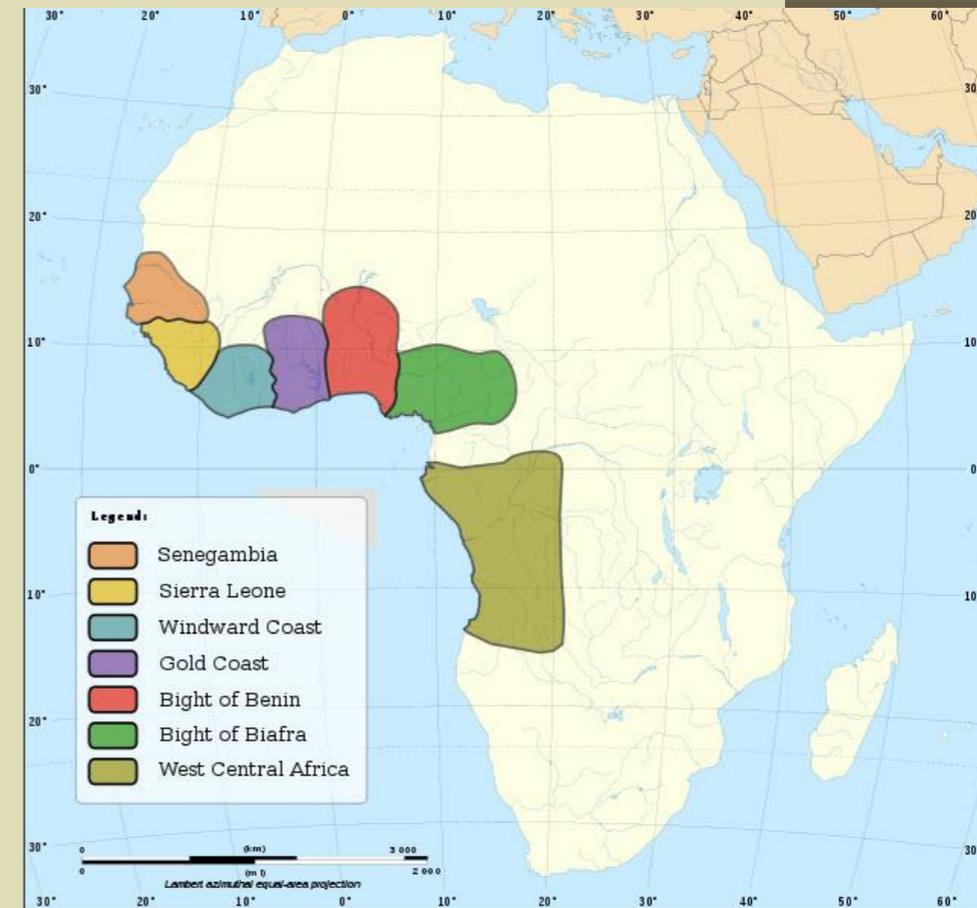


# QUICK REVIEW QUESTION

What other kinds of slave trades existed prior to Europeans' involvement?

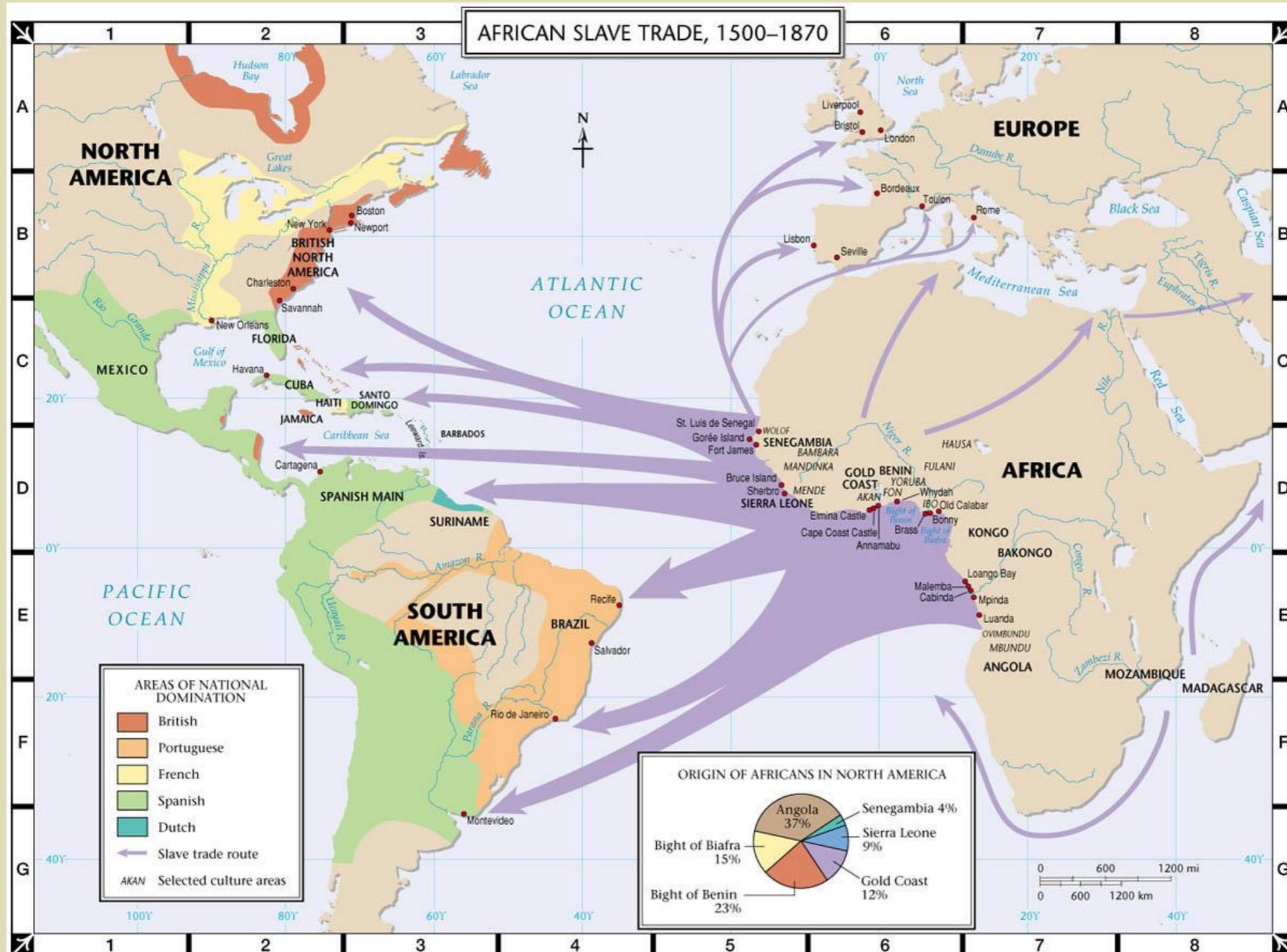
# Obtaining Slaves

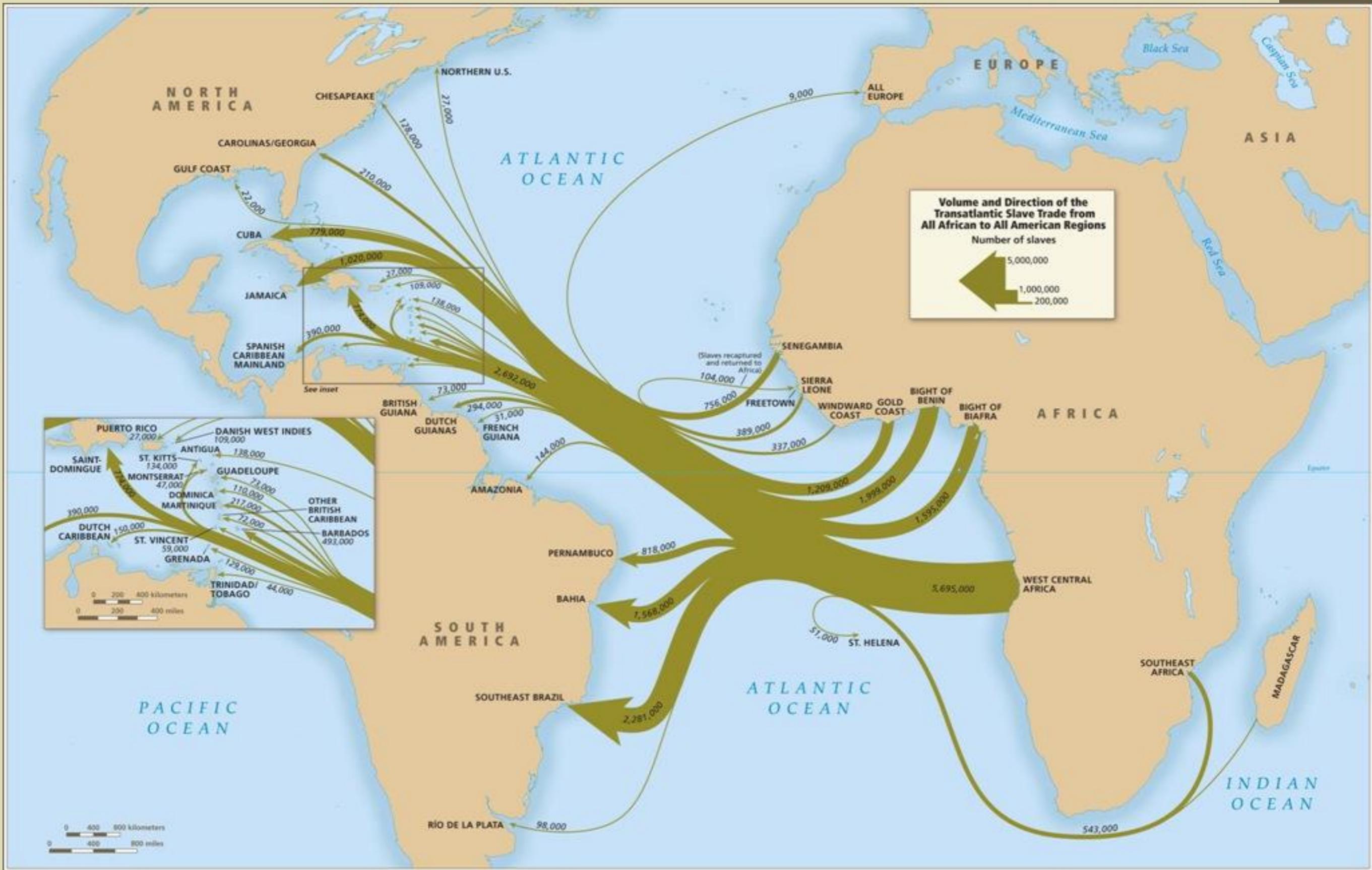
- Slaves were usually captured by neighboring African peoples.
  - Most slaves were then traded to Europeans (often for guns).
  - African slaves were then marched to ports (1/3 died) and were almost always taken to the Americas.
- Most slaves were taken from West Africa, though slaves were taken from all other African regions as well.
  - Simultaneously, over 3 million slaves were taken by Muslim traders for Trans-Saharan trade.



# African Diaspora

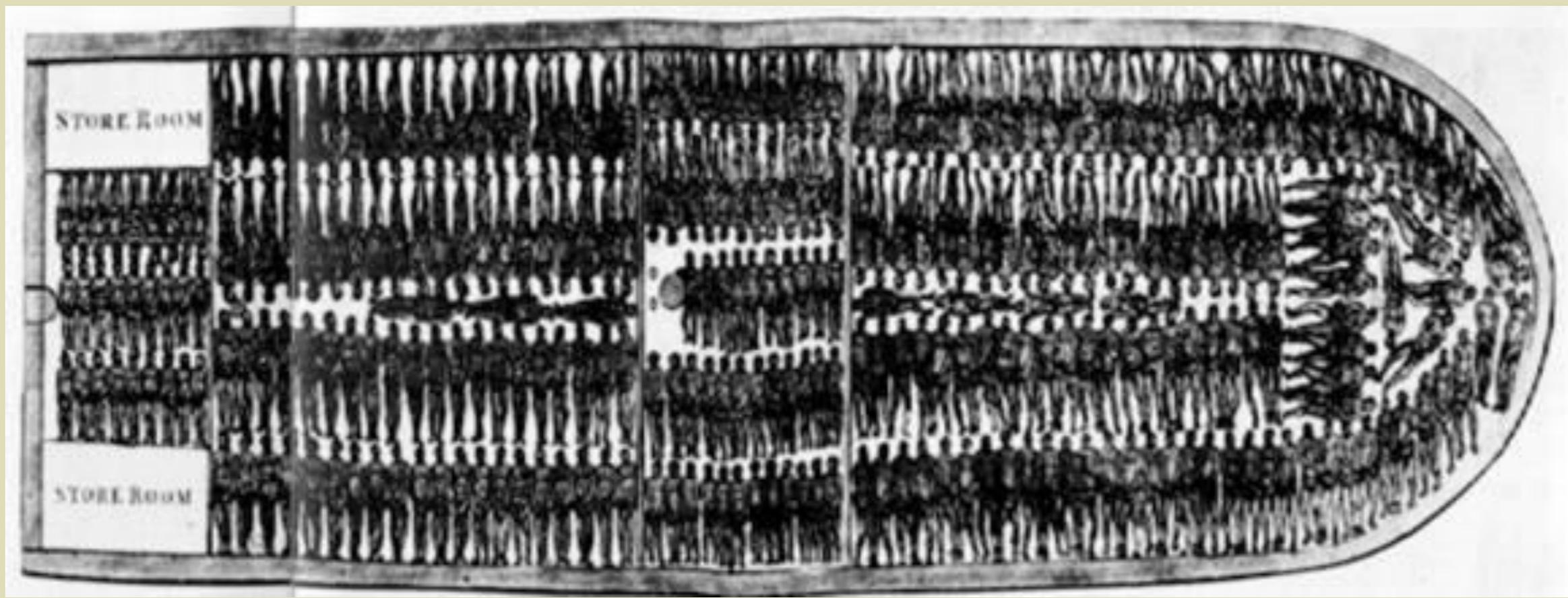
- Dispersion of Africans across globe; accomplished primarily by slave trade
  - African cultures adapt to the location in which they were placed
  - Retain unique African elements





# The Middle Passage: Journey across the Atlantic

- 1502-1850: 12 million Africans shipped across the Atlantic
  - Highest volume traded in 18<sup>th</sup> century
- Mortality rate on slave ships around 15-20%.



# The Middle Passage, cont.



- Cargo sizes varied; sometimes as high as 800 slaves in one ship
  - When supplies ran low, the weakest slaves were thrown overboard
- Incredibly traumatic
  - Slaves were taken, branded by hot irons, shackled, abused throughout journey
  - Slave ships were dirty, unsanitary; many suffered from poor hygiene, dysentery, disease, extreme anxiety, illness
    - Frequent suicides and attempts at resistance

# QUICK REVIEW QUESTION

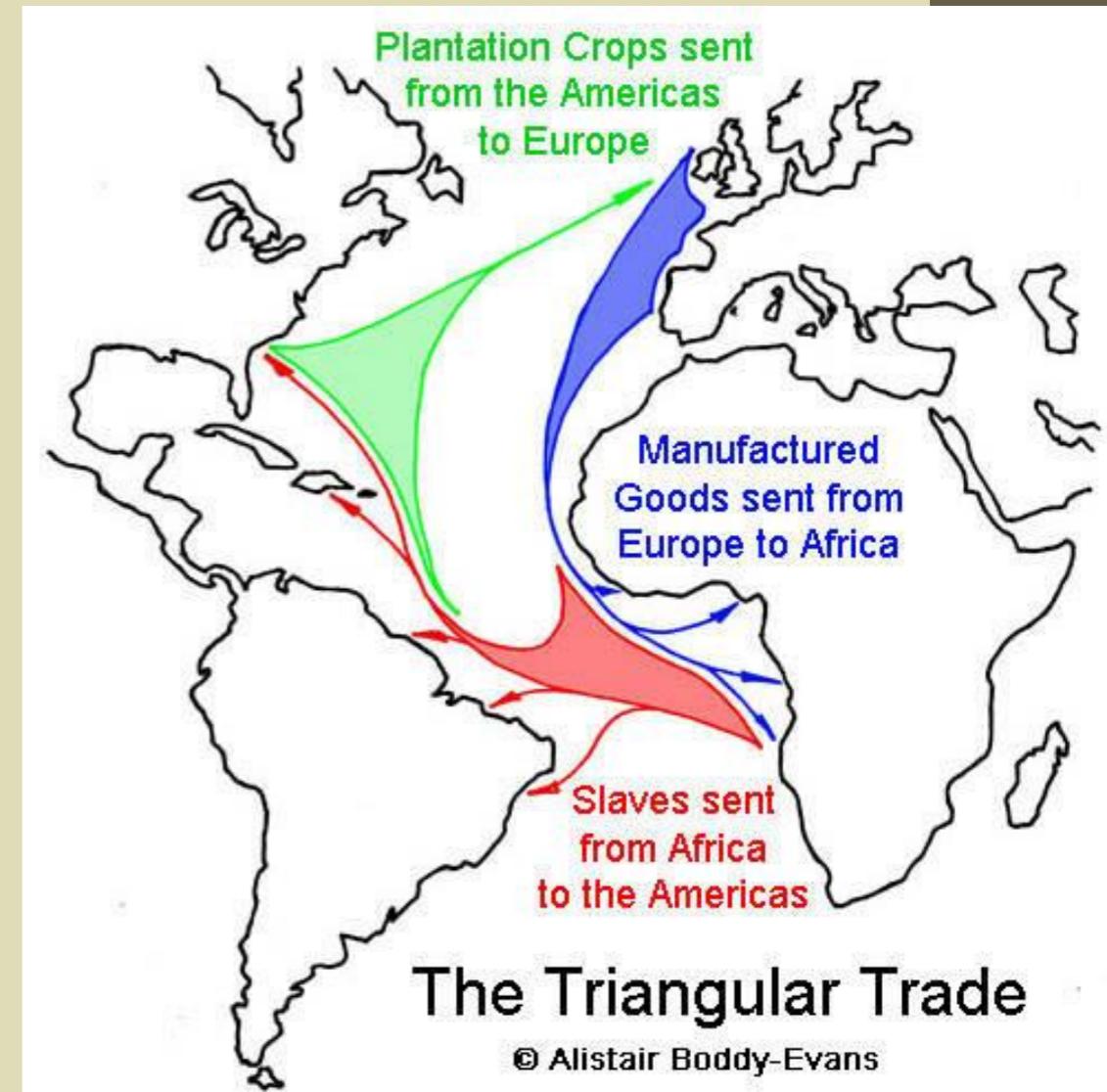
What regions were Atlantic slave trade slaves taken from?

What is a diaspora?

Describe a slave's Middle Passage journey.

# Profitability of Trade

- Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (triangular trade).
  - Portuguese were the first, the other major maritime European empires followed.
    - Spanish
    - British (English)
    - Dutch
    - French
- Trade profitable enough to continue throughout the Early-Modern Period.
  - Peaked in 18<sup>th</sup> century.





# Plantations

- Plantations became the focus of African slave life
- Atlantic slaves were mostly men and used for plantation labor.
- Slaves performed many occupations: shop helpers, street vendors, household servants



# Slavery: Latin America vs. North America

## Latin America and Caribbean

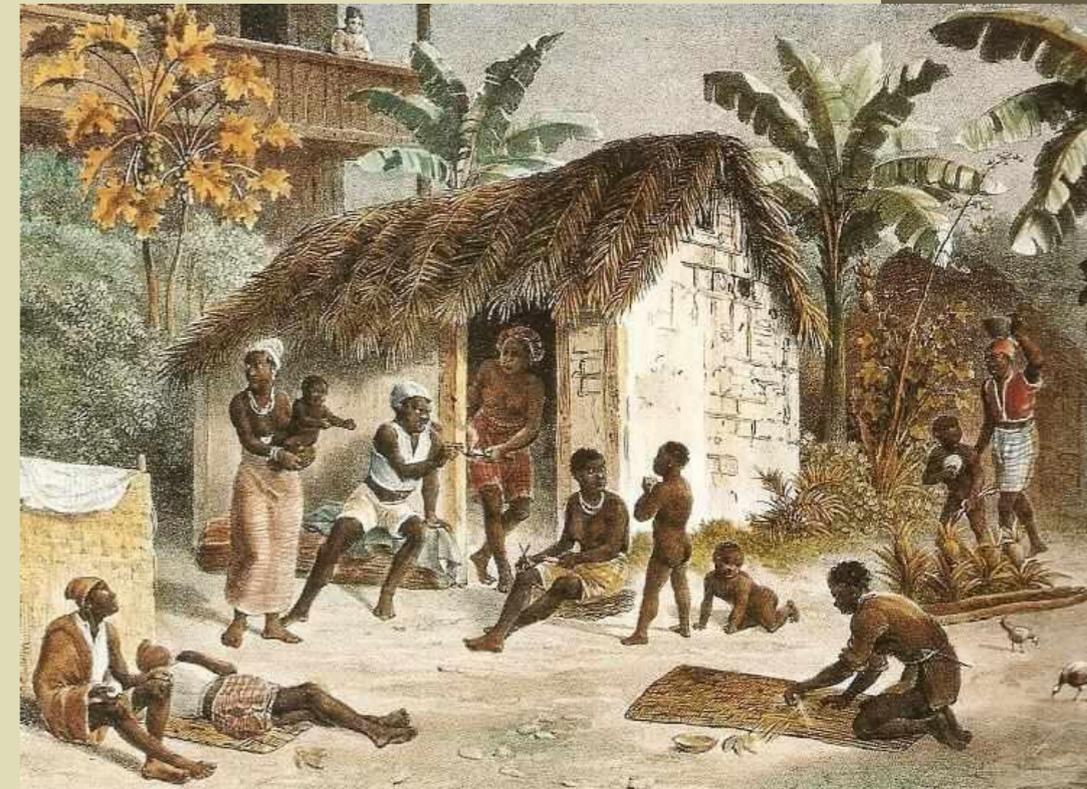
- Almost all African slaves were taken to Latin America.
- Most worked on plantations.
  - Sugar dominant cash crop.
- Declining population
  - Higher death rates
    - Sugar, mines
  - Low birth rates (way more men than women).
  - Manumission common

## North America

- Few African slave imports.
- Most worked on plantations.
  - Tobacco and later cotton.
- Mainly in the South
- Increasing population
  - More temperate climate
  - Work less dangerous
  - Higher birth rates
  - Almost no manumission

# Nature of chattel slavery

- New racial classifications
  - Mulatto (almost always white father and black mother, often the result of rape).
    - Usually had higher status than black slaves.
      - Skilled jobs.
      - Household servants.
- Family formation was difficult for slaves as families may be separated at any time
  - Male to female ratio sometimes 3:1
- Despite obstacles, most slaves lived in family units.



# Religion and Rebellions

- African Religion in the Americas
  - Conversion to Christianity by Europeans
  - African religions continued despite attempts by slave owners to suppress them
    - Often Christianity and African religions (including Islam) were fused
- Resistance occurred wherever there was slavery.
  - Rebellion (uncommon)
  - Sabotage
  - Working slowly
  - Harming master
  - Running away

# QUICK REVIEW QUESTION

What is the Triangular Trade?

Describe American slave life: what did slaves do; how did they live; what did they worship?

# Effects of Slave Trade on Africa

- Endless wars in Africa.
  - Guns influential.
- African communities that traded slaves to Europeans became most powerful.
  - Asante
  - Dahomey
- Result: Gun and Slave Cycle
  - Those villagers that were targets of African kingdoms that traded slaves were always in danger and always trying to avoid capture.
- Many more women than men many areas.
- Europeans intensified African enslavement that had already existed.



# East Africa

- Swahili cities continued Indian Ocean Trade
  - Ottomans now involved
  - Europeans now involved
- Trade brought ivory, gold, slaves for harems and households of Arabia
- Islam continues to spread
- South from the East coast into modern-day Sudan.
  - In some societies, Islam is still confined to upper classes
  - Other communities see Islam accepted at all levels



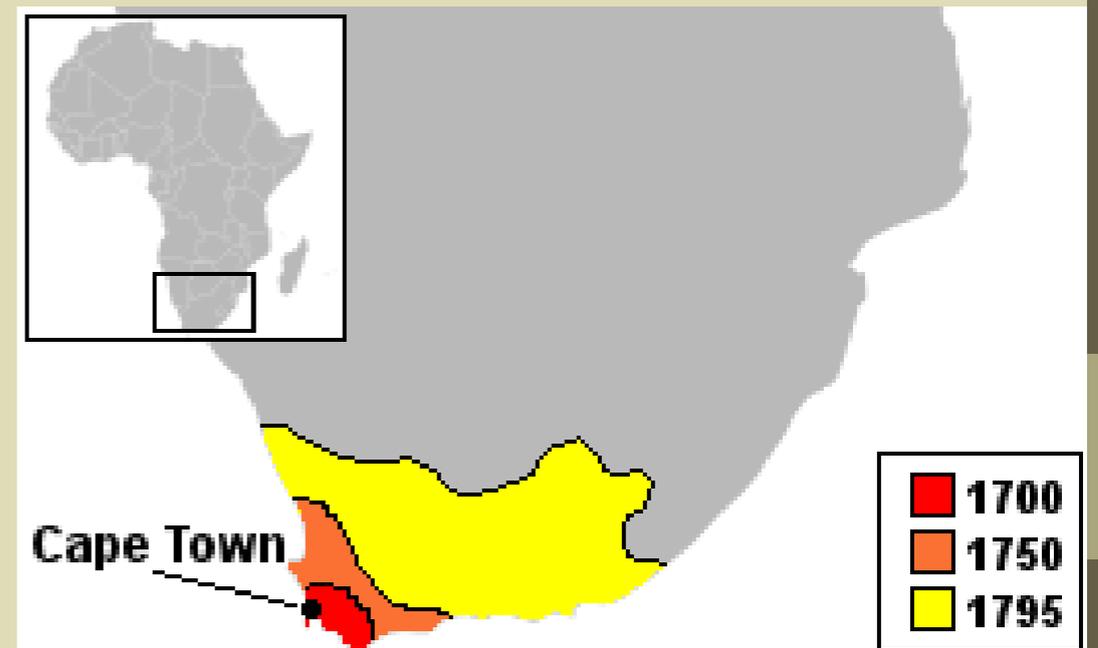
# QUICK REVIEW QUESTION

What is the Gun and Slave Cycle?

Why were Asante and Dahomey important African communities?

- 1652 Dutch establish a colony as a post to resupply ships sailing into Indian Ocean.
- Settlers, called Boers, establish farming communities, immigrate north.
  - Enslave Africans.

# White Settlers and Africans in Southern Africa



## QUICK REVIEW QUESTION

Who was Shaka Zulu? What is the relationship between the African Unification Process and the Mfecane?

Describe abolitionist attitudes; what reasons do they give for why slavery is wrong?