

SECTION
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A Benin ivory carving (right) depicts a Portuguese sailor in a ship. Iron weights (top) were used in western Africa to weigh gold.



WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Great Seabirds Arrive

A Portuguese captain named Alvise Cadamosto reached West Africa in the mid-1400s. He described the reaction of the West Africans to the sight of his ship:

“It is said that the first time they saw sails . . . they believed they were great seabirds with white wings, which were flying and had come from some strange place. . . . Some thought the ships were fishes, others that they were ghosts that went by night, at which they were terrified.”

—Alvise Cadamosto, 1455

Focus Question What effects did European exploration have on the people of Africa?

Turbulent Centuries in Africa

Objectives

- Describe how the Portuguese established footholds on Africa’s coasts.
- Analyze how European actions affected the slave trade and the rise of African states.
- Explain how the European presence in Africa expanded.



European encounters with Africa had occurred for hundreds of years. Yet the European explorers who arrived in the 1400s brought great and unforeseen changes to Africa’s peoples and cultures.

Terms, People, and Places

- Mombasa
- Malindi
- plantation
- Affonso I
- missionary
- Asante kingdom
- Osei Tutu
- monopoly
- Oyo empire
- Cape Town
- Boers

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Effects As you read, record effects of European exploration in Africa in a chart like the one below.

Effects of European Exploration		
European Footholds	Slave Trade	New African States

Portugal Gains Footholds

As you have read, the Portuguese who explored Africa’s coasts in the 1400s were looking for a sea route to Asia that bypassed the Mediterranean. They also wanted to buy goods directly from their source, rather than trading through Arab middlemen.

The Portuguese began carrying out their strategy in West Africa, building small forts to collect food and water and to repair their ships. They also established trading posts to trade muskets, tools, and cloth for gold, ivory, hides, and slaves. These were not colonies peopled by settlers. Instead, the Portuguese left just enough men and firepower to defend their forts.

From West Africa, the Portuguese sailed around the continent. They continued to establish forts and trading posts, but they also attacked existing East African coastal cities such as **Mombasa** and **Malindi**, which were hubs of international trade. With cannons blazing, they expelled the Arabs who controlled the East African trade network and took over this thriving commerce for themselves. Each conquest added to their growing trade empire.



Over the next two centuries, some Portuguese explorers managed to reach parts of present-day Congo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, establishing limited trade. In general, however, the Portuguese did not venture far from the coasts. They knew little about Africa's interior, and they lacked accurate maps or other resources to help them explore there. Furthermore, Africans in the interior, who wanted to control the gold trade, resisted such exploration. As a result of all these factors, when the Portuguese empire declined in the 1600s, the Portuguese did not leave a strong legacy in Africa.

Checkpoint Why did the Portuguese establish a presence mainly along the African coast?



A Valuable Commodity

Since ancient times, gold was a valuable trade good in western Africa. Beginning in the 1500s, it became an important part of the slave trade. Europeans melted down African gold jewelry like the pieces above to make gold coins.

The African Slave Trade Explodes

In the 1500s and 1600s, Europeans began to view slaves as the most important item of African trade. Slavery had existed in Africa, as elsewhere around the world, since ancient times. Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Indians, and Aztecs often enslaved defeated foes. The English word *slave* comes from the large number of Slavs taken from southern Russia to work as unpaid laborers in Roman times.

The Arab empire also used slave labor, often captives from East Africa. In the Middle East, enslaved Africans often worked on farming estates. Others became artisans, soldiers, or merchants. Some rose to prominence in the Muslim world even though they were slaves.

Europeans Enter the Slave Trade Portuguese traders quickly joined the profitable slave trade, followed by other European traders. Europeans bought large numbers of slaves to perform labor on their **plantations**—large estates run by an owner or an owner's overseer—in the Americas and elsewhere. Rich Europeans also bought slaves as exotic household servants. By the 1500s, European participation had encouraged a much broader Atlantic slave trade.

Europeans seldom went into Africa's interior to take part in slave raids. Instead, they relied on African rulers and traders to seize captives in the interior and bring them to coastal trading posts and forts. There, the captives were exchanged for textiles, metalwork, rum, tobacco, weapons, and gunpowder. Over the next 300 years, the slave trade grew into a huge and profitable business to fill the need for cheap labor. Each year, traders shipped tens of thousands of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to work on sugar, rice, tobacco, and other plantations in the Americas. These slaves were considered to be property, and they had no hope of bettering their situations.

African Leaders Resist Some African leaders tried to slow down or stop the transatlantic slave trade. But in the end, the system that supported the trade was simply too strong for them. An early voice raised against the slave trade was that of **Affonso I**, ruler of Kongo in west-central Africa. As a young man, Affonso had been tutored by Portuguese **missionaries**, who hoped to convert Africans to Christianity.

A Portuguese observer described the first ship of African slaves arriving in Portugal in 1444 from West Africa. Judging from the writer's words, what was his opinion of what he saw?

Primary Source

“Some kept their heads low and their faces bathed in tears, looking at each other . . . others struck themselves in the face and threw themselves to the ground; and others sang sad songs—although we did not understand their words, the sound told of their great sorrow. . . . The mothers threw themselves flat on the ground. They were beaten but they refused to give up their children.”

—From *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*





Major African States About 1700



After becoming king in 1505, he called on the Portuguese to help him develop Kongo as a modern Christian state. But he became alarmed as more and more Portuguese came to Kongo each year to buy slaves. Affonso wanted to maintain contact with Europe but end the slave trade. His appeal failed, and the slave trade continued.

In the late 1700s, another African ruler tried to halt the slave trade in his lands. He was the almany (from the Arabic words meaning “religious leader”) of Futa Toro, in present-day Senegal. Since the 1500s, French sea captains had bought slaves from African traders in Futa Toro. In 1788, the almany forbade anyone to transport slaves through Futa Toro for sale abroad. However, the inland slave traders simply worked out a new route to the coast. Sailing to this new market, the French captains easily purchased the slaves that the almany had prevented them from buying in Futa Toro.

Map Skills By about 1700, many of Africa’s states and kingdoms were involved in the slave trade.

- 1. Locate** (a) Malindi (b) Kongo (c) Asante (d) Bornu
- 2. Describe** Which states were part of a major slave trading region?
- 3. Synthesize Information** In general, where were most slave trading regions located? Explain.

Geography Interactive

For: Audio guided tour
Web Code: nap-1421

Vocabulary Builder

dominate—(DAHM uh nayt) *v.* to rule or control by superior power

Vocabulary Builder

unified—(YOO nuh fyd) *v.* combined into one

Checkpoint How did the African slave trade expand?

New African States Arise

The slave trade had major effects on African states in the 1600s and 1700s. In West Africa, for example, the loss of countless numbers of young women and men resulted in some small states disappearing forever. At the same time, there arose new states whose way of life depended on the slave trade. The rulers of these powerful new states waged war against other Africans to dominate the slave trade.

The Asante Kingdom The **Asante kingdom** (uh SAHN teh) emerged in the area occupied by present-day Ghana. In the late 1600s, an able military leader, **Osei Tutu**, won control of the trading city of Kumasi. From there, he conquered neighboring peoples and unified the Asante kingdom. The Asante faced a great challenge in the Denkyera, a powerful neighboring enemy kingdom. Osei Tutu realized that in order to withstand the Denkyera, the people of his kingdom needed to be firmly united. To do this, he claimed that his right to rule came from heaven, and that people in the kingdom were linked by spiritual bonds. This strategy paid off when the Asante defeated the Denkyera in the late 1600s.

Under Osei Tutu, government officials, chosen by merit rather than by birth, supervised an efficient bureaucracy. They managed the royal monopolies on gold mining and the slave trade. A **monopoly** is the exclusive control of a business or industry. The Asante traded with Europeans on the coast, exchanging gold and slaves for firearms. They also played rival Europeans against one another to protect themselves. In this way, they built a wealthy, powerful state.



The Oyo Empire The **Oyo empire** arose from successive waves of settlement by the Yoruba people of present-day Nigeria. It began as a relatively small forest kingdom. Beginning in the late 1600s, however, its leaders used wealth from the slave trade to build up an impressive army. The Oyo empire used the army to conquer the neighboring kingdom of Dahomey. At the same time, it continued to gain wealth by trading with European merchants at the port city of Porto-Novo.

Checkpoint What caused some African states to grow?

The European Presence Expands

Following the Portuguese example, by the 1600s several European powers had established forts along the western coast of Africa. As Portuguese power declined in the region, British, Dutch, and French traders took over their forts. Unlike the Portuguese, they established permanent footholds throughout the continent.

In 1652, Dutch immigrants arrived at the southern tip of the continent. They built **Cape Town**, the first permanent European settlement, to supply ships sailing to or from the East Indies. Dutch farmers, called **Boers**, settled around Cape Town. Over time, they ousted, enslaved, or killed the people who lived there. The Boers held a Calvinist belief that they were the elect, or chosen, of God. They looked on Africans as inferiors and did not respect their claims to their own land. In the 1700s, Boer herders and ivory hunters began to push north from the Cape Colony. Their migrations would eventually lead to battle with several African groups.

By the mid-1600s, the British and French had both reached present-day Senegal. The French established a fort in the region around 1700. In the late 1700s, stories about British explorers' search for the source of the Nile River sparked an interest in Africa among Europeans, especially the French and British. In 1788, the British established the African Association, an organization that sponsored explorers to Africa. Over the next century, European exploration of Africa would explode.

Checkpoint How did the European presence in Africa expand?



Elmina Castle

European traders called the places where they held and traded slaves "castles." Built by the Portuguese in 1482, Elmina Castle in present-day Ghana was used as a base for trading slaves, gold, and imported European products.

SECTION

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Assessment



Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1421

Terms, People, and Places

1. What do many of the key terms and people listed at the beginning of the section have in common? Explain.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Identify Effects** Use your completed chart to answer the Focus Question: What effects did European exploration have on the people of Africa?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Determine Relevance** How did the Portuguese strategy of building forts instead of permanent colonies affect Portugal's history in Africa?
4. **Recognize Cause and Effect** How did Europeans change the nature of African slavery?
5. **Analyze Information** Why did the Asante and Oyo need to trade with Europeans to maintain power?
6. **Predict Consequences** Would the Europeans have taken the same course in Africa if the people there had been Christian like themselves?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Write a Thesis Statement
Write a thesis statement that will support a biographical essay about either Osei Tutu or Afonso I. Remember that the facts and events you cite in your essay should support your thesis statement. For example, the following thesis statement is not supported by the facts in the text: Afonso I was instrumental in slowing the slave trade in Africa.