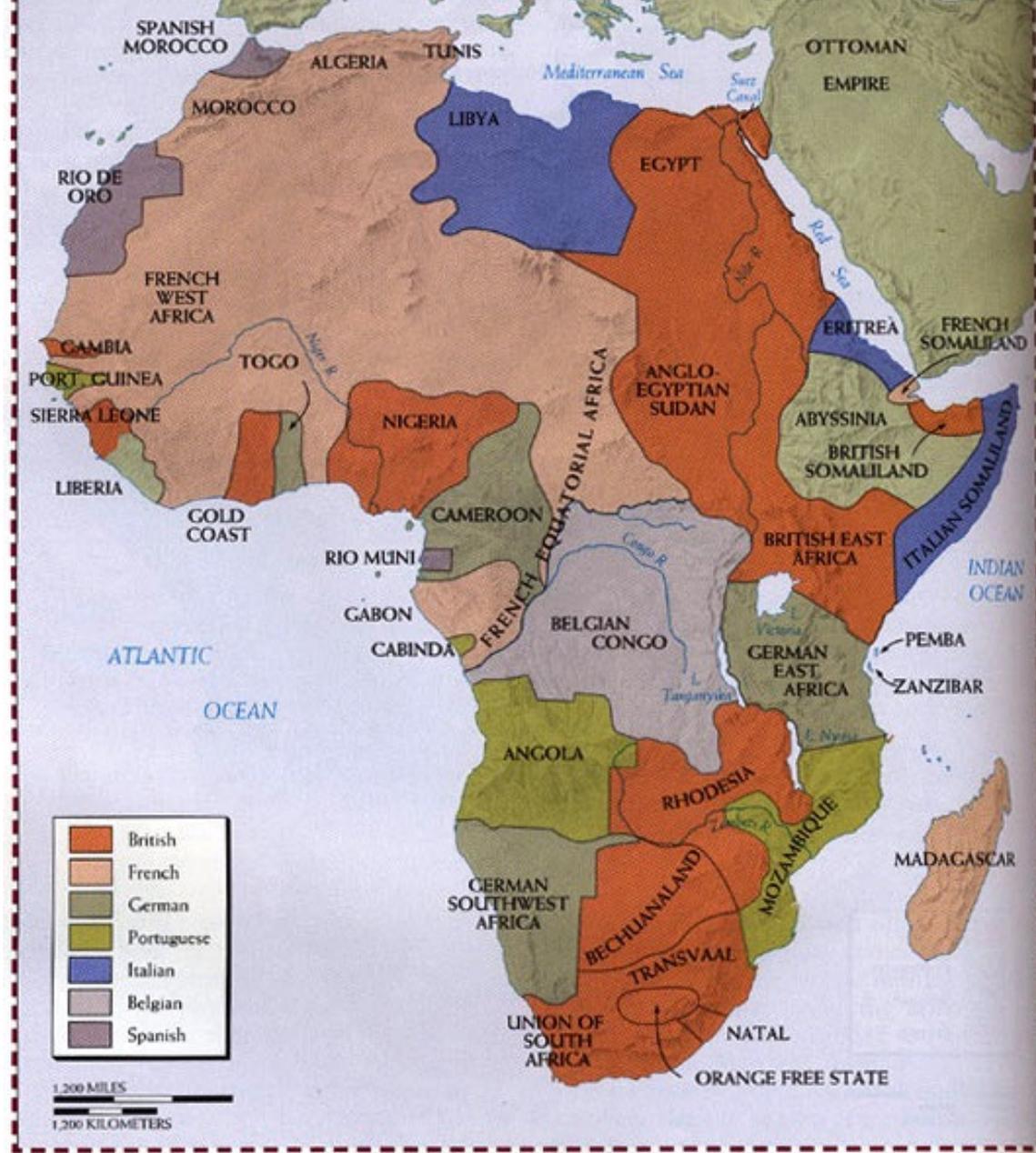
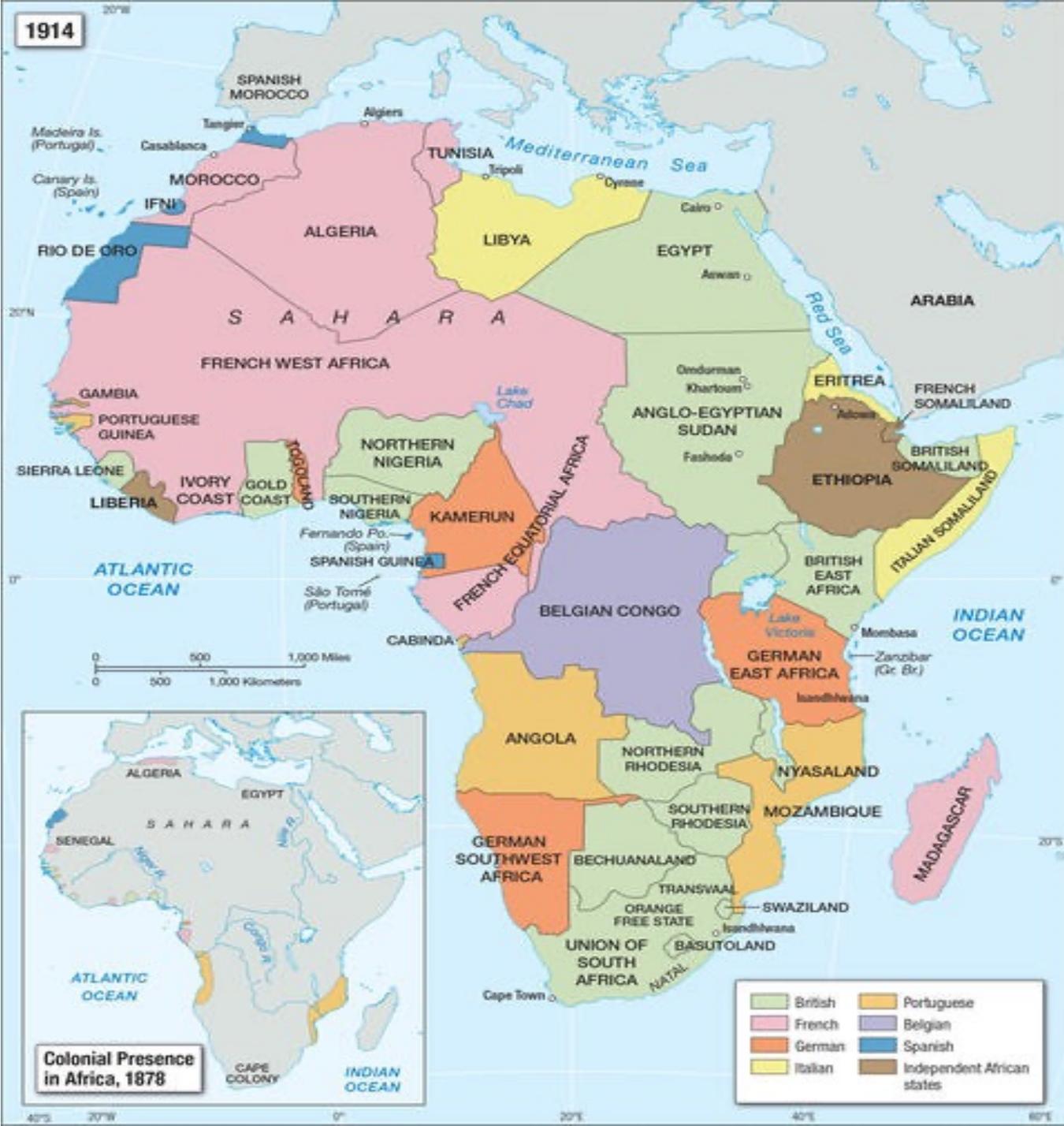


European Imperialism  
 Scramble for Africa  
 Muhammad Najm Akbar  
 Gentrain 413

MAP 26-2 PARTITION OF AFRICA, 1880-1914 Before 1880, the European presence in Africa was largely the remains of early exploration by old imperialists and did not penetrate the heart of the continent. By 1914, the occupying powers included most large European states; only Liberia and Abyssinia remained independent.



MAP 26-2 PARTITION OF AFRICA, 1880-1914 Before 1880, the European presence in Africa was largely the remains of early exploration by old imperialists and did not penetrate the heart of the continent. By 1914, the occupying powers included most large European states; only Liberia and Abyssinia remained independent.



## Intro: European Imperialism

- We learned in the last unit from Historian Paul Kennedy that the post-1815 era marked the eclipse of the non-European world.
- Despite the dismemberment of the Latin American empires of Spain and Portugal in the early nineteenth century, the European colonial outreach expanded stupendously. In the year 1800, they occupied or controlled 35% of the land surface of the world; by 1878, 67%, and by 1914, over 84%.
- In the old world, minerals, raw materials, commodities, and human resources-rich Africa was the biggest territorial prize.

## Africa

- European powers retained control of Africa until decolonization was completed in the second half of the twentieth century.
- Just to help imagine the scope of the conquest and control: Africa is the second-largest continent, with 11.73 square miles, more than three times the size of the continental United States.
- The European powers subdued local populations, particularly their opponents, reshaped the existing societies to fit their purposes, and introduced Western culture and institutions.
- The scramble for Africa gained stupendous pace in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

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# The Berlin Conference: Why 1884?

- Bismarck had only gradually adopted colonial ambitions. Dutch historian Kees van Dijk says, “To Bismarck, shaping the new Empire and solving domestic problems came first...Invariably, he turned down the pleas from German businessmen, among them also owners of German firms in Australia, and consuls abroad asking for a German annexation of spots in the Pacific and elsewhere” (p. 97). He believed, however, that if the German entrepreneurs took possession of so-called unclaimed territories, they were entitled to protection which an expanding German naval force could offer.
- By 1884, he had changed his mind. Like the existing European Joint Stock Companies, Bismarck believed, “The commercial firms to which the colonization was to be delegated were expected to bear the costs involved in administering a colony themselves, with, at most, an initial financial incentive from the government...” (p. 100).
- Bismarck’s change of mind coincided with tensions over rival claims of Europeans, particularly in the Congo River Basin. The Conference offered a peaceful partition of the African prize.

## The Berlin Conference

- Beginning in November 1884, the West African Conference of Berlin deliberated for 104 days, ending on February 26, 1885.
- At the time of the conference, 80 percent of Africa remained under traditional and local control. The Europeans only influenced the coastal areas.
- Trade and contact with Europeans affected Africa, but except for coastal and certain other limited areas, such as South Africa, most of Africa remained free from European control.

## General Act of the Berlin Conference on West Africa, 26 February 1885

- Signatories and participants included the representatives of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, the United States of America, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Sweden-Norway, and Turkey (Ottoman Empire). No representation of Africans.
- The United States did not ratify the General Act.
- The Act stipulated free navigation in the Niger and Congo Rivers and a free trade regime in the region for the signatories.



# General Act of the Berlin Conference, Article 6

- I have [linked the General Act](#) here but would like you to read Article Six and Chapter VI , Article 34, with me:
- PROVISIONS RELATIVE TO PROTECTION OF THE NATIVES, OF MISSIONARIES AND TRAVELLERS, AS WELL AS RELATIVE TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
- Article 6: All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the slave trade.

# General Act of the Berlin Conference

## Article 6

- They shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organized for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization. Christian missionaries, scientists and explorers, with their followers, property and collections, shall likewise be the objects of especial protection. Freedom of conscience and religious toleration are expressly guaranteed to the natives, no less than to subjects and to foreigners. The free and public exercise of all forms of divine worship, and the right to build edifices for religious purposes, and to organize religious missions belonging to all creeds, shall not be limited or fettered in any way whatsoever.

## Wiped Out

- Seats of vital civilizations in the north.
- Long-established Islamic societies in sub-Saharan Africa particularly in the western and central Sudan.

## **CHAPTER VI: DECLARATION RELATIVE TO THE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS TO BE OBSERVED IN ORDER THAT NEW OCCUPATIONS ON THE COASTS OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT MAY BE HELD TO BE EFFECTIVE**

- Article 34

Any Power which henceforth takes possession of a tract of land on the coasts of the African continent outside of its present possessions, or which, being hitherto without such possessions, shall acquire them, as well as the Power which assumes a Protectorate there, shall accompany the respective act with a notification thereof, addressed to the other Signatory Powers of the present Act, in order to enable them, if need be, to make good any claims of their own.

# Colonization of Africa

## European colonization by 1800

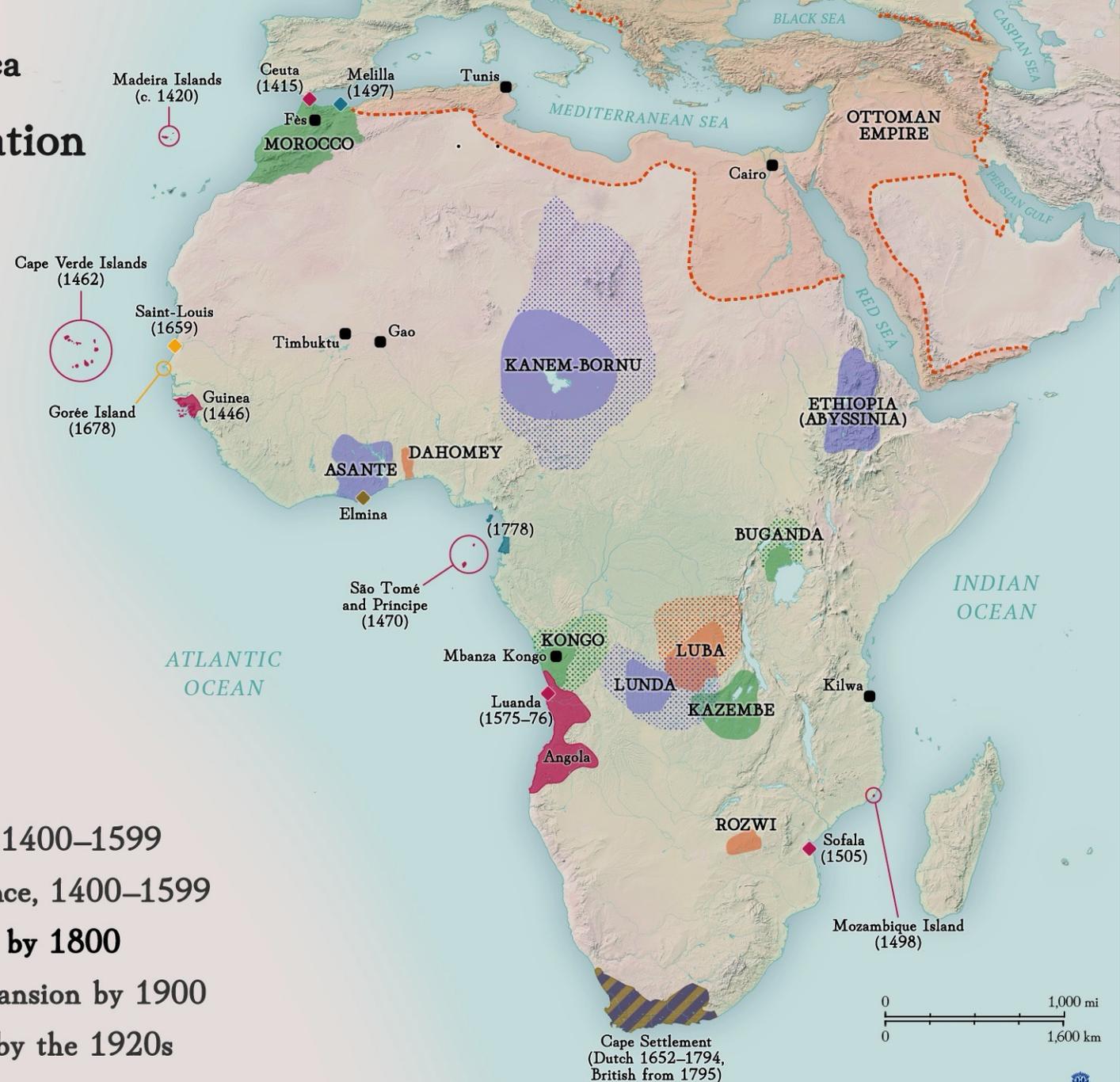
### MAJOR AFRICAN STATES

- Core territory
- Greatest extent
- Major cities

### EUROPEAN CLAIMS (APPROXIMATE EXTENT)

- (1415) Year claimed
- Portuguese
  - Spanish
  - French
  - Dutch
  - British

- Major African states, 1400–1599
- Early European presence, 1400–1599
- **European colonization by 1800**
- European colonial expansion by 1900
- European possessions by the 1920s





## Push Factors

- Several factors drove the colonization of Africa beyond the interest in the slave trade.
- By the time Germany and Italy joined the ranks of unified nation-states, 1860-1871, they could see that the European colonies had spread all over the world. African coasts were familiar to Europe, and their understanding of the African heartland had been increasing with the French experience in Algeria and the Dutch-British control of South Africa.

## Push Factors

- One colony is not enough: Guaranteed access to existing possessions also required control of the passageways to safeguard colonial interests against other rivals.
- Growing financial markets looked for new investment opportunities.
- A generation of adventurous merchant financiers and settlers was willing to take risks for profiteering.
- Joint Stock Companies led the effort. Imperial powers took over from them.

## Push Factors

- Africa experienced a burst of colonial expansion between about 1880 and 1914, following the Congress of Berlin, which discussed and regulated the last bit of the scramble for Africa.
- The Industrial Revolution-led manufacturing capacity needed markets and raw materials. African colonies were essentially mono-economies, good for the increased production, for export, of a single commodity. Thus, Senegal had peanuts, the Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast (Ghana) had cocoa; Kenya had tea and coffee; Uganda produced cotton; the Belgian Congo was rich with rubber and copper, and Northern Rhodesia had copper.

## Push Factors

- Colonial competition and conquest were also part of an unavoidable Darwinian struggle for survival of the fittest.
- Says James, “ Social Darwinism was now fashionable and its theories, a rough and ready transfer of Darwin’s principles from the world of plants and animals to that of men, suggested that certain races were better fitted to survive and flourish than others...(and) they were ideally qualified to rule,” (p. 205).
- The West found justification for imperialism also in its civilizing mission. Rudyard Kipling invited them to “Take up the White Man’s burden...”

## Push Factors

- Gaining colonies became a measure of status, proof of a nation's political and economic prowess.
- The French found solace in colonies for the losses suffered in the Franco-Prussian War.
- Italian conquest overseas promised to enhance Italy's credentials to seek first-rate power status on the continent.

## The Destination

- Africa had been known to the European explorers since the beginning of the fifteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century, they had about five centuries of accumulated knowledge about the coastal belts of the African continent.
- The Portuguese had been the pioneers. They began with the conquest of Ceuta on the Moroccan coast in 1415. From 1420 to 1434, they ventured beyond southern Morocco. In 1444, Cape Verde became a staging ground for further exploratory initiatives. Bartolomeu Dias crossed the southernmost tip of Africa in 1488, and Vasco de Gama sailed along the Indian Ocean coastline of Africa to reach India in 1497-1498. Other powers followed, later.

## The First Destination

- The Portuguese started with the conquest of Ceuta on the Moroccan coast in 1415. For Henry the Navigator, the victory sparked a lasting passion for sea exploration.



# The Monopoly

- Along the Coast, the European powers built castles and entered alliances with the native chiefs. The Portuguese had already strategized the use of force.
- On the East African coast, the Portuguese had a fort at Sofala in 1505, Mozambique in 1507, and an alliance with the Sultan of Malindi.
- The Portuguese held on to their possessions of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe up to the 1970s. Equatorial Guinea was a Portuguese colony (1474–1778) and then a Spanish colony (1778–1968).

# The Advantage

- Boxer says that the spice trade initially drove the exploration expeditions. As late as 1611, Lisbon maintained that pepper was still the basic commodity of the Portuguese Indian trade, and the only one which yielded a satisfactory profit to the crown (p. 59-60).
- The success of the exploratory adventures was in leveraging the resources from one part of the possessions for another. The Portuguese, for example, mined the gold needed for the pepper trade from Southeast Africa, 1547 onwards (p. 61).

## The Joint Stock Companies

- While the Portuguese Crown engaged with the exploration and control of African coasts directly, their immediate followers, the Dutch and the British, and other Europeans entrusted it to specially created Joint Stock Companies, maintaining strong public-private partnerships.
- These charters granted these companies a monopoly over the trade, including the slave trade, to undertake exploration, and to defend themselves against European rivals or the natives.
- These Joint Stock Companies laid down the framework for European Imperialism.

# The Joint Stock Companies

- The British created the most extensive network of the JSCs:
- 1600 East India Company
- 1618 Guinea Company
- 1672 Royal African Company
- 1694 Bank of England
- 1752 African Company of Merchants
- 1792 Sierra Leone Company
- 1886 Royal Niger Company
- 1888 Imperial British East Africa Company
- 1889 British South Africa Company

## The Joint Stock Companies

The Dutch had two extremely successful JSCs:

- 1602–Dutch East India Company (VOC)
- 1621-Dutch West India Company

The French had four of them:

- 1604 First French East Indies Company
- 1664 French West India Company
- 1664 Louis XIV's East India Company
- 1672 Compagnie du Sénégal

# The Joint Stock Companies

The Germans had four:

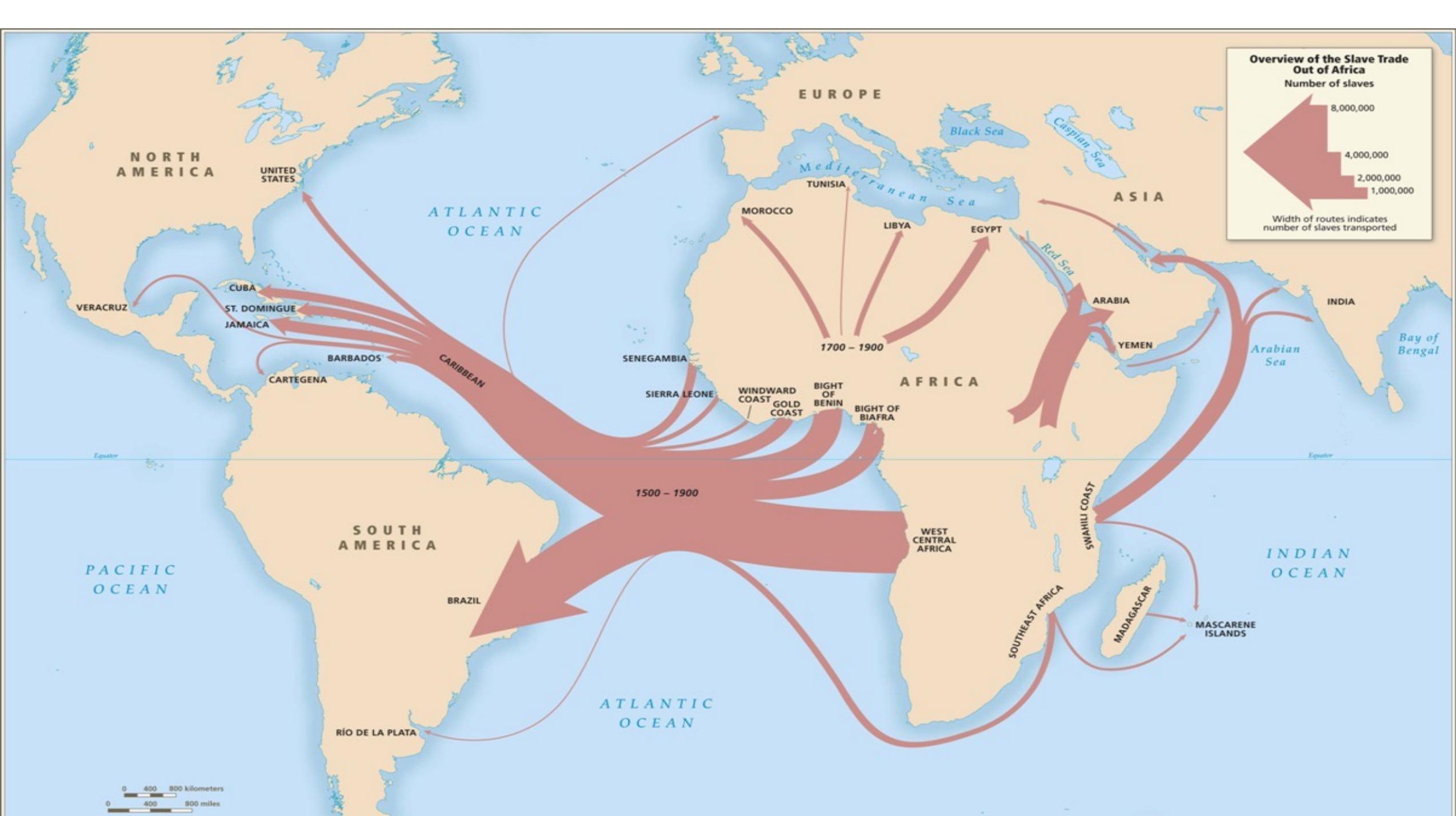
- 1682 Brandenburg African Company, created and closed by the Prussian Crown before the unification of 1871.

The remaining three were functional a little before or by the time of the West African Berlin Conference.

- 1882 German New Guinea Company
- 1884 German East Africa Company
- 1885 German West African Company

# The Rivals

- The European rivalries played out in the possessed territories.
- By 1638, for example, the Dutch founded settlements on the Guinea coast and captured Elmina from the Portuguese on the Gold Coast. They turned it into the headquarters of the Dutch West India Company's slave trade with the Americas.
- The West African coast was a passageway to the Indian Ocean spice trade, but more so fully integrated with the Americas because of the slave trade.
- The British banned the slave trade in 1807, and the Dutch followed suit in 1814. Elmina, along with the Gold Coast, moved into British control in 1872.



**Overview of the Slave Trade Out of Africa**  
Number of slaves

8,000,000
4,000,000
2,000,000
1,000,000

Width of routes indicates number of slaves transported

**NORTH AMERICA**

UNITED STATES

**EUROPE**

**ASIA**

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Mediterranean Sea

Black Sea  
Caspian Sea

MOROCCO

LIBYA

EGYPT

VERACRUZ

CUBA

ST. DOMINGUE

JAMAICA

BARBADOS

CARTEGENA

CARIBBEAN

SENEGAMBIA

SIERRA LEONE

WINDWARD COAST

GOLD COAST

BIGHT OF BENIN

BIGHT OF BIAFRA

1700 - 1900

**AFRICA**

WEST CENTRAL AFRICA

ARABIA

YEMEN

INDIA

SWAHILI COAST

SOUTHEAST AFRICA

MADAGASCAR

MASCARENE ISLANDS

Arabian Sea

Bay of Bengal

INDIAN OCEAN

PACIFIC OCEAN

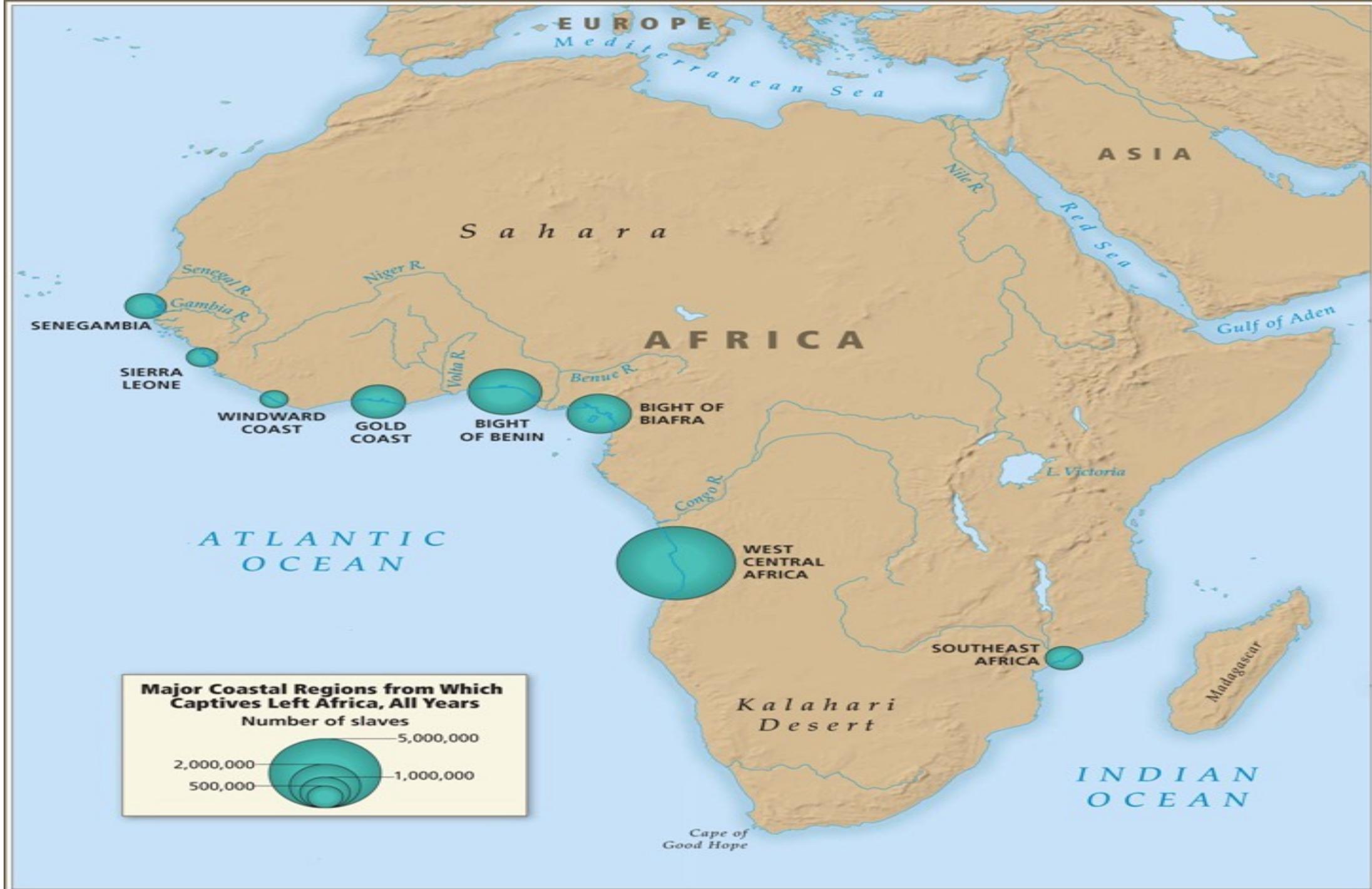
**SOUTH AMERICA**

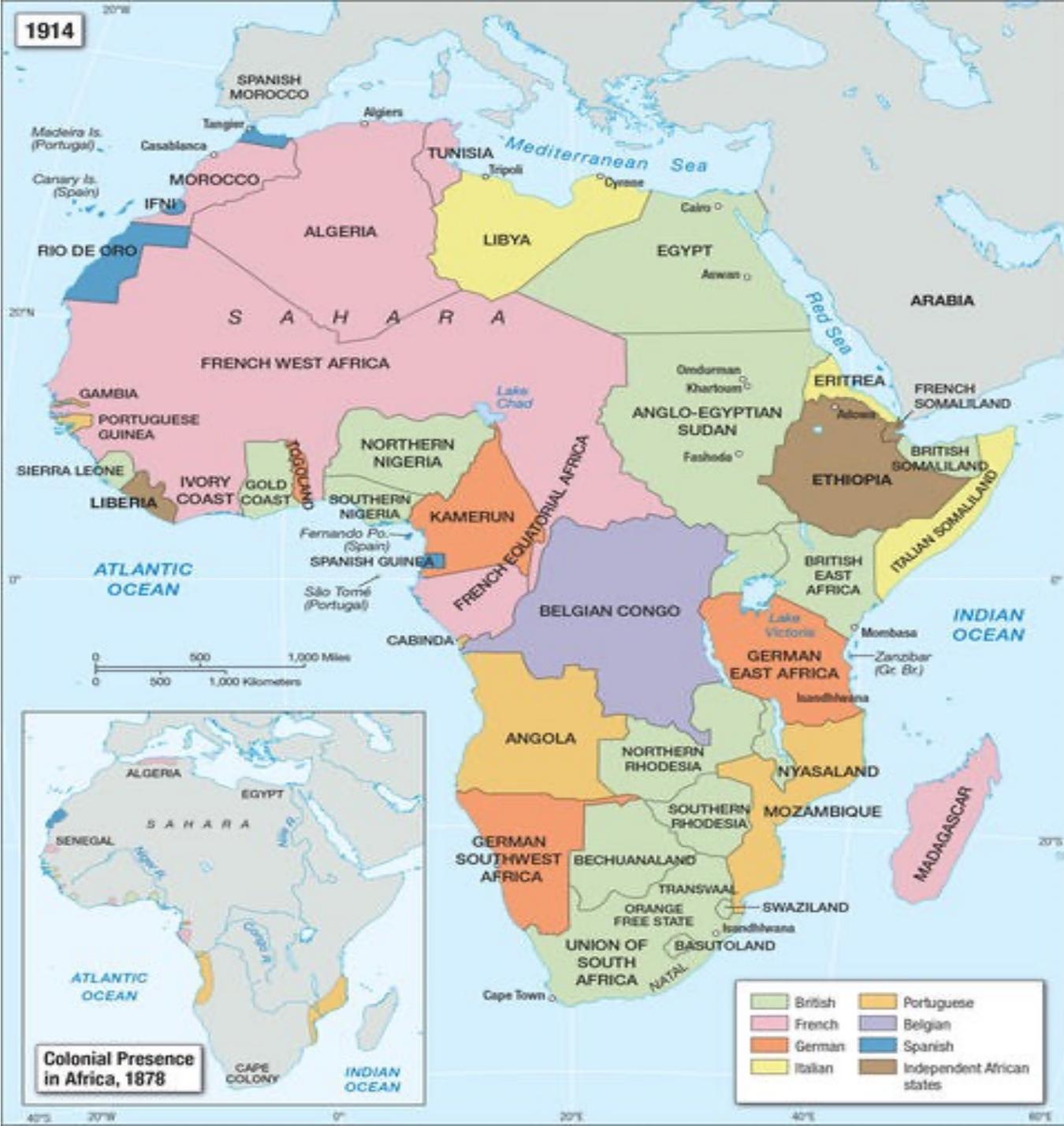
BRAZIL

RÍO DE LA PLATA

ATLANTIC OCEAN







## The French

- North Africa: France began its conquest and colonization of Algeria in 1830, integrating it into the French Republic in 1848 as multiple overseas departments. While the resistance persisted, the French control and stakes increased over time with the steady increase in the number of settlers. The tensions over this colony persisted until Algeria won freedom in 1862.
- France expanded from its stake in Algeria to Tunisia, Morocco, and most of northwestern Africa.
- They also pushed their way up the Senegal River in the West, focusing on West Africa.

## The British

- Napoleon had alarmed the British (and the Ottomans) with his Egyptian campaign in 1798.
- Both Britain and France had an interest in this ancient North African state, not only for commercial reasons but also as a bridge to Asia.
- European bankers financed the construction of port facilities, railroads, and telegraph lines in Egypt. They also granted high-interest loans to Egypt's government in 1869 when Ferdinand de Lesseps completed the Suez Canal, the vital link from the Mediterranean Sea through Egypt to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

## The British

- The British desired control over the canal because it was the gateway to India as well.
- In 1875, Great Britain rescued the financially distressed Egyptian government and purchased the Egyptian ruler, the Khedives' controlling portion of the canal stock.
- Four years later, France and Britain seized Egypt's treasury to secure their investments.

## The British

- When nationalist groups in Egypt revolted, British troops occupied Egypt formally.
- The Khedive remained in office but after 1882 Britain held most of the real power. By then, 3000 ships a year passed through the Suez Canal.
- The British reshaped Egypt's economy so that it produced cotton, silk, and wheat for export in return for manufactured goods.

## The British: South Africa

- The Dutch had colonized South Africa in 1652. In 1806, the British had taken over the Cape colony from the Dutch during the Napoleonic wars.
- Early in the 19th century, British settlers began to move into the South African Cape Colony.
- The Dutch Boers, Afrikaners, settled there since the 17th century, and resented Britain's abolition of slavery. They trekked northward far into the interior, defeating the resisting Zulus in their way.
- Eventually, the British recognized the independence of the two Boer states, Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

## The British

- The colony discovered diamonds in 1867 and, in the 1880s, rich gold mines in Transvaal. These mines attracted more British immigrants.
- The British entrepreneur and empire builder Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902), backed by powerful interest groups and concerned about the growing German presence in southwestern Africa, decided to brush aside the two little Boer republics. Boers, after an era of conflict, became a part of the British Union of South Africa, created in 1910.
- Beginning in the 1890s, Rhodes also acquired control over most of the territory of present-day Zambia and Zimbabwe, known then as Rhodesia.

## Congo Free State

- King Leopold had meticulously built his case for personal possession of Congo through the creation of a philanthropic veneer under the name of the International Association of Congo. He convinced the United States that the area would be another Liberia for the freed slaves.
- Henry Stanley, a major explorer of Africa and the Congo region, began working for him in the region in 1778.

## Congo Free State

- Once the Berlin Conference agreed to the Belgian King's claim, Stanley managed the vast territory on behalf of the King.
- Badawi details how the colonial troops, natives, and Belgian agents brutally killed and mutilated thousands of local people if they failed to comply with their ambitions. They forced people into the forest to collect rubber. If they did not go, they were shot down, or their left hands were cut off and taken as trophies (p. 406-408).
- Congo, named as the Congo Free State, remained King Leopold's personal holding until 1908, when it became the Belgian Congo, a colony of the Belgian kingdom.

# Southwest Africa

- The Germans had colonies in Southwest Africa, which preceded the Berlin Conference.
- While the German missionaries had existed in the sub-region since 1840, the commercial interests began in 1882 and by 1884 had evolved into a colonial status, although the Crown did not attach its name to it until 1890.
- The Berlin Conference recognized it as a German possession. Until World War I, Britain and its dominion, the South African Union, respected that agreement and collaborated in the development of mining diamonds (1908), gold, copper, and platinum.
- German-native relations, beginning of the apartheid era, like in the Union of South Africa, suffered several setbacks. Badawi writes that in 2021, Germany apologized for the massacres of the early twentieth century. Germany agreed to pay US \$ 1.3 billion over the next 30 years for development needs in Namibia (p. 412).
- Historian Birthe Kundrus explores the debates among German scholars about the Herero and Namaqua Genocide, 1904 to 1907.

## East Africa

- The Germans spelled out their East Africa claims after the Berlin Conference.
- The German Hanseatic Republics of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck had commercial relations with the Sultan of Zanzibar since 1859. In the wake of expansive colonialism, Carl Peters, a German entrepreneur, began to contract what he called treaties with several rulers inland of the coastal area directly controlled by the Sultan, recognized as an independent state by the British.

## East Africa

- By February 1885, says Meritt, the German authorities moved to formalize Peter's claim, believing "...the establishment of a mainland protectorate on the basis of Peters' treaties could still provide the Germans with a useful base for the commercial penetration of East Africa. That consideration may have counted all the more in Bismarck's calculations, given the concurrent competition between Germany and Britain on the western coasts of Africa..." (p. 113).

## East Africa

- German East Africa comprised present-day Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and parts of Mozambique. Administered and expanded through agents, brutality defined the policy towards natives. Maji Maji was their most assertive response to the German coercion.
- Considers Alexander De Juan, mapping multiple occurrences of resistance, among reasons for this rebellion, “...the oppressive character of German colonial rule as well as the resulting hardships and grievances among the population...” (p. 9).
- The Germans, says Badawi, “adopted a scorched earth policy to put down the uprising between 1905 and 1907” (p.433).

## East Africa

- By 1914, most of the huge continent had been carved up by the various European powers.
- The main exception was Ethiopia, where Emperor Menelik II (r. 1889- 1913) cleverly played one European power off another. In the process, he acquired modern arms to defeat the invading Italians in 1896.
- In 1914, the Europeans' costliest struggles occurred among themselves. The war and the League of Nations changed the colonial map of Africa.

## Conclusion

- By the second half of the twentieth century, the decolonization of Africa would be complete. We will discuss this in a future lecture.
- Decolonization will unfurl in settler and non-settler colonies differently.
- European Imperialism realized by then that physical control over natural resources and colonized subjects was not sustainable, given the rising tide of nationalism and depleting justifications for colonizing in Africa.
- Successful colonizers then sought a continuation of economic and political relationships and preferred that path over direct control.

Email

Questions/Comments

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