

Early African Civilizations

Up to 1500 AD

GEOGRAPHIC SETTING:

Africa



- **Deserts** (Sahara, Namib, & Kalahari) are above and below the equator
 - Provide protection from invaders
 - Desertification (transformation of arable/livable land to desert)

Grassy plains or Savannas in the center of Africa

Great Rift Valley was the home to the first homo sapiens

Rain forests are near the equatorial region

- Hinder travel across

Large rivers provide transportation routes

- Nile, Zambezi, Congo, Niger, Senegal

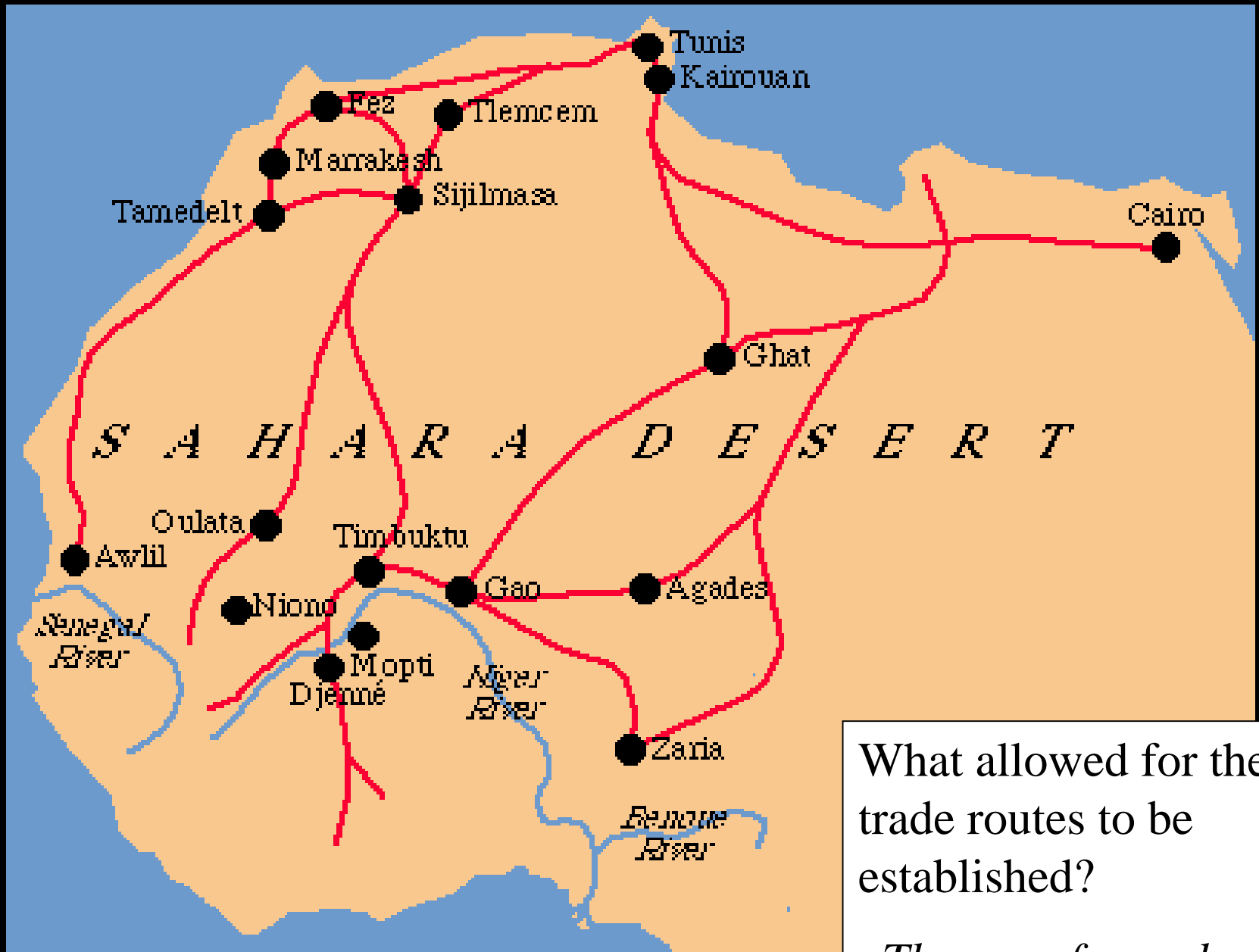
Early African Civilizations

- Introduction of camels opens trade in the north
 - could carry loads up to 500 pounds and could travel 20-30 miles/day with little or no water
- Nubia
 - Traded gold, ivory, animal skins, perfumes, and slaves with Mediterranean world and Middle East
- Bantu
 - Originally lived in the Congo
 - Migrated throughout most of southern Africa in search of better farmland

What may have caused the Bantu to look for new farmland?

Desertification

African Trade Routes



What allowed for these trade routes to be established?

The use of camels

Early Empires of Western Africa



Ghana, Mali, & Songhai

• Background: • Achievements: • Downfall:

- Traditional kingdom
- Located on a trade route between north and south Africa
- Rulers would convert to Islam

- Traded gold and salt with other empires
- Protected trade routes and ensured fair trade practices

- Fell to Muslim invaders from the north
- Would become part of Mali later

Why were gold and salt so valuable?

Gold was used for trade payments and salt was needed to preserve food and to survive

Ghana (300 - 1100 AD)

Mali

(1200 – 1400 AD)

- **Background:**
 - Theocracy (Muslim)
 - Established by King Sundiata
 - Centered around the city of Timbuktu
 - Became very wealthy trading gold & salt
 - Greatest leader is Mansa Musa
 - Suffered from weak leaders after Mansa Musa
- **Achievements:**
 - Center of learning & knowledge
 - Had a very able government workers



A map drawn in 1375 A.D. shows a trader on camelback coming to the great leader of the Mali empire, Mansa Musa. He is holding a huge gold nugget.

Songhai (1400 – 1600 AD)

- Background:

- Empire with efficient bureaucracy
- Centered around the city of Timbuktu
- Traded gold, cattle, & salt
- Founded by Sunni Ali

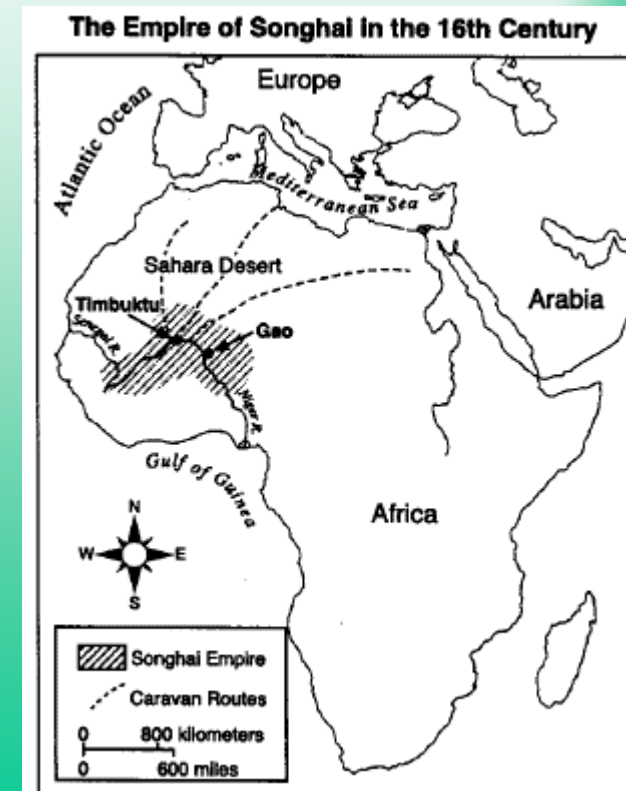
- Achievements:

- Traded with Europe
- Last great West African trading empire



- Downfall:

- Invaded by Moroccans
- Lack of strong, effective leaders



Axum (300-700 AD)

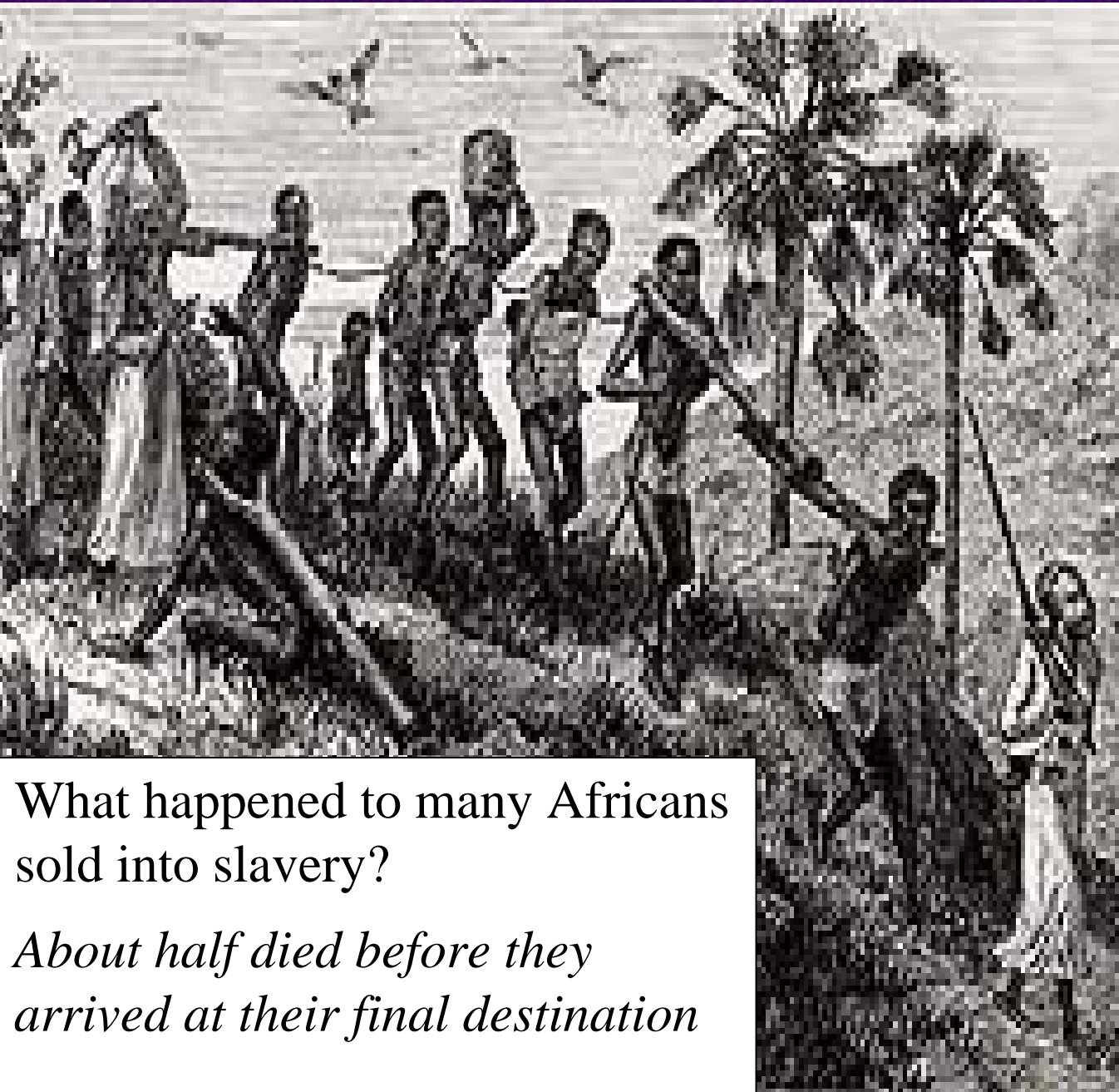


- King Ezana conquered Nubia
- Controlled trade in region
- Quickly adopted Christianity
- Traded agricultural items for luxury goods
- Location allowed it to trade with others using Red Sea ports
- Lost farmland to desertification
- Fell to Muslim invaders

African Slave Trade

16th century to the 19th century

Abduction



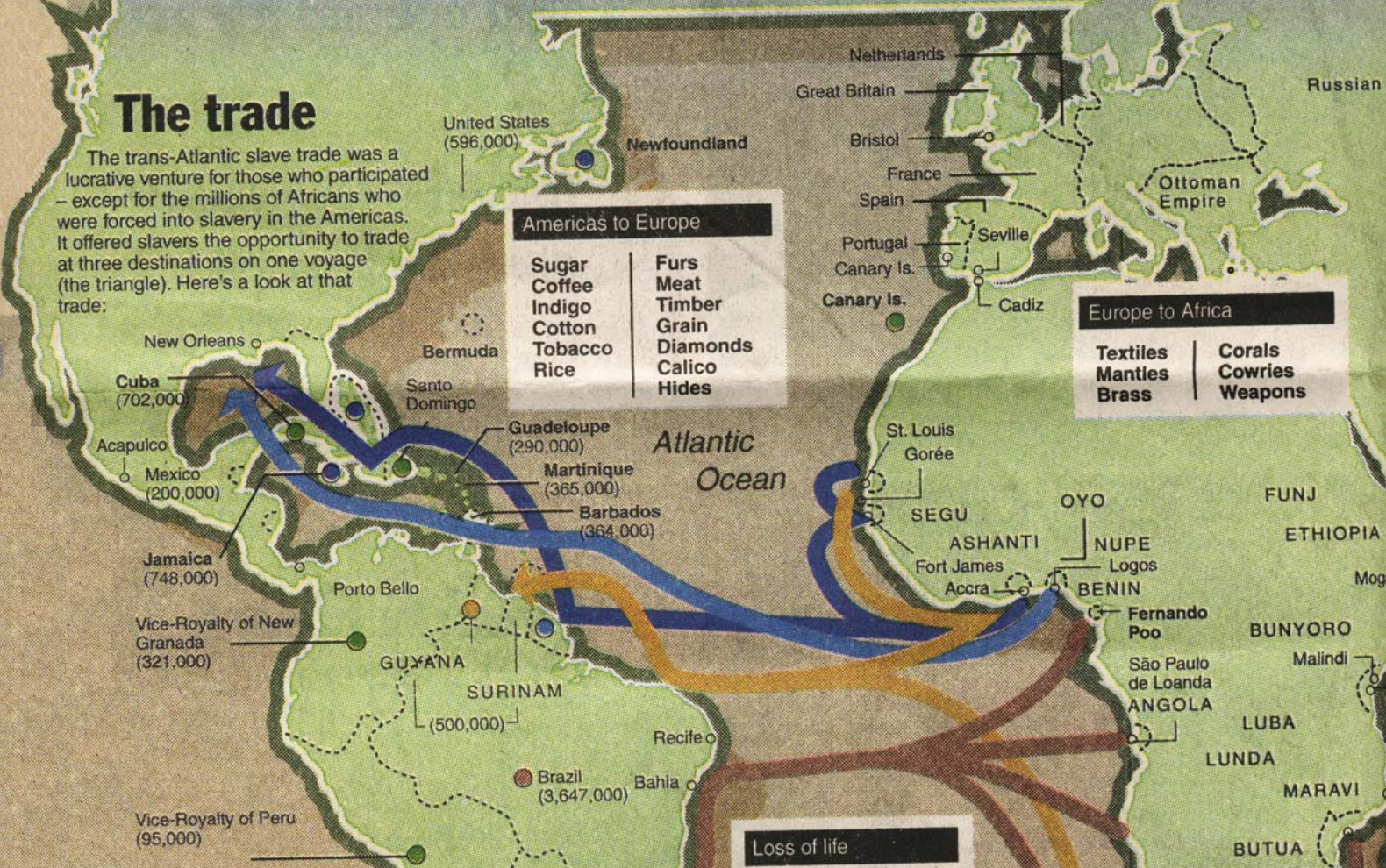
What happened to many Africans sold into slavery?

About half died before they arrived at their final destination

- Most Africans who became slaves were kidnapped or sold by family members or village leaders to the slave traders
- Somewhere between 10 and 12 million Africans were taken to the Americas and other parts of the world

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

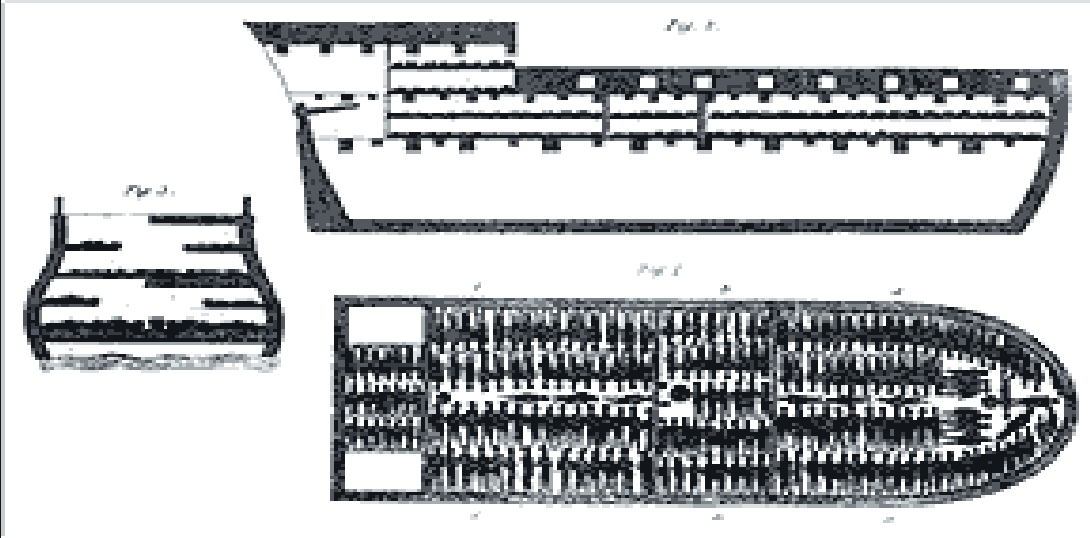
The journey of slave trading ships from Africa's west coast across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas



Why was this called the Middle Passage?
Many of the ships passed through the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and most slaves came from the middle part of Africa and arrived in the middle part of the Americas

SLAVE SHIPS

- Slaves were treated like cattle and packed like cargo between decks often had to lay in each other's feces, urine, and blood
- Diseases such as smallpox and yellow fever spread like wildfire
- Diseased were sometimes thrown overboard to prevent wholesale epidemics
- Sometimes their bodies were just left chained to others



Why were so many slaves packed into the ships & treated like this?

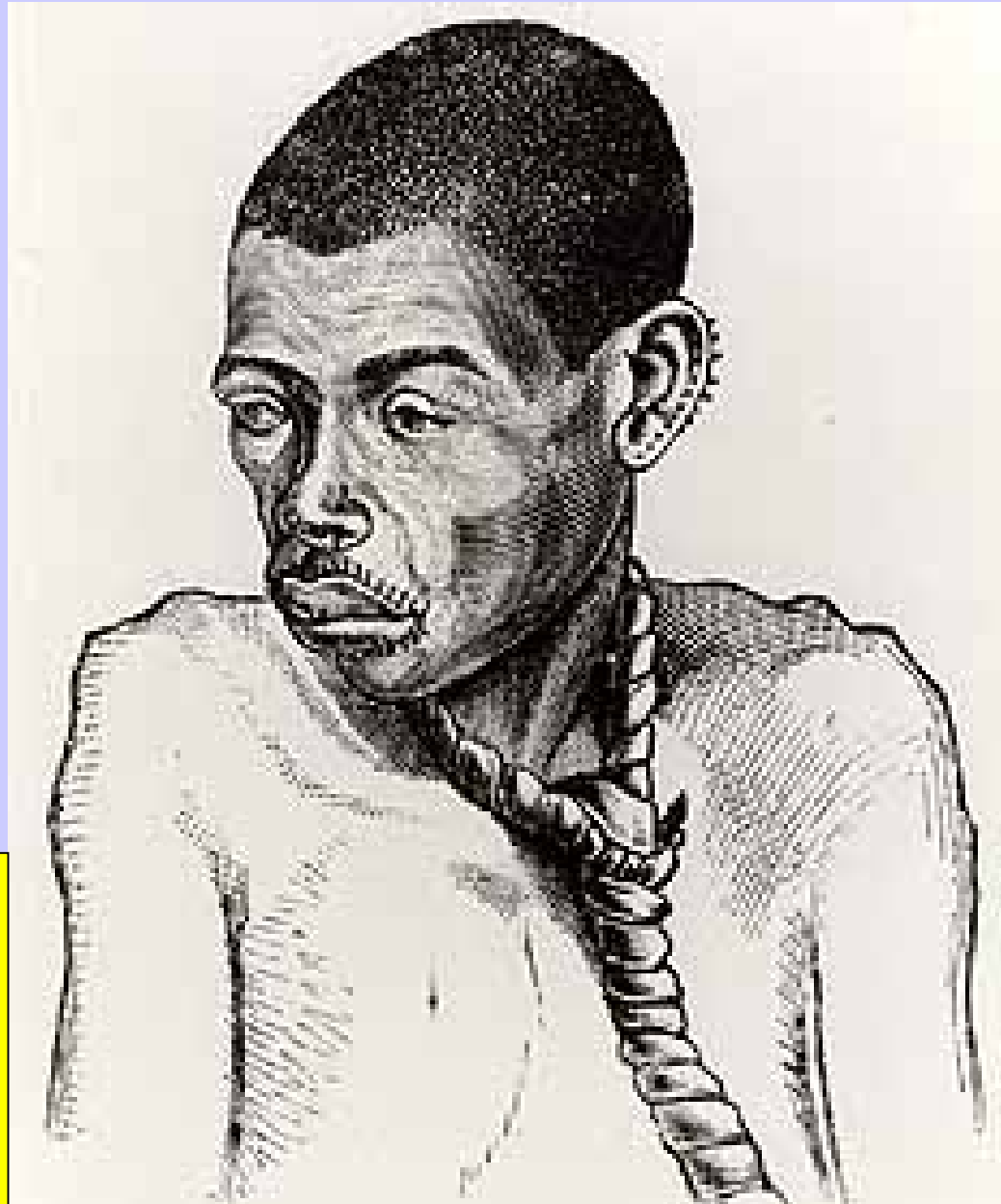
To increase profits per voyage

SLAVE MARKETS

- By the 17th century slaves could be purchased in Africa for about \$25 and sold in the Americas for about \$150
- Profits were as great as 135% for the slave traders

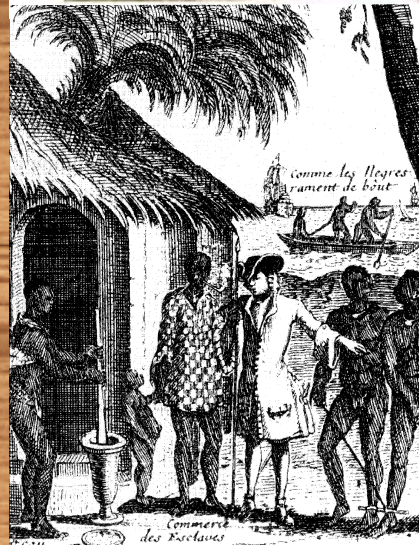
Why were African leaders so willing to sell their people into slavery?

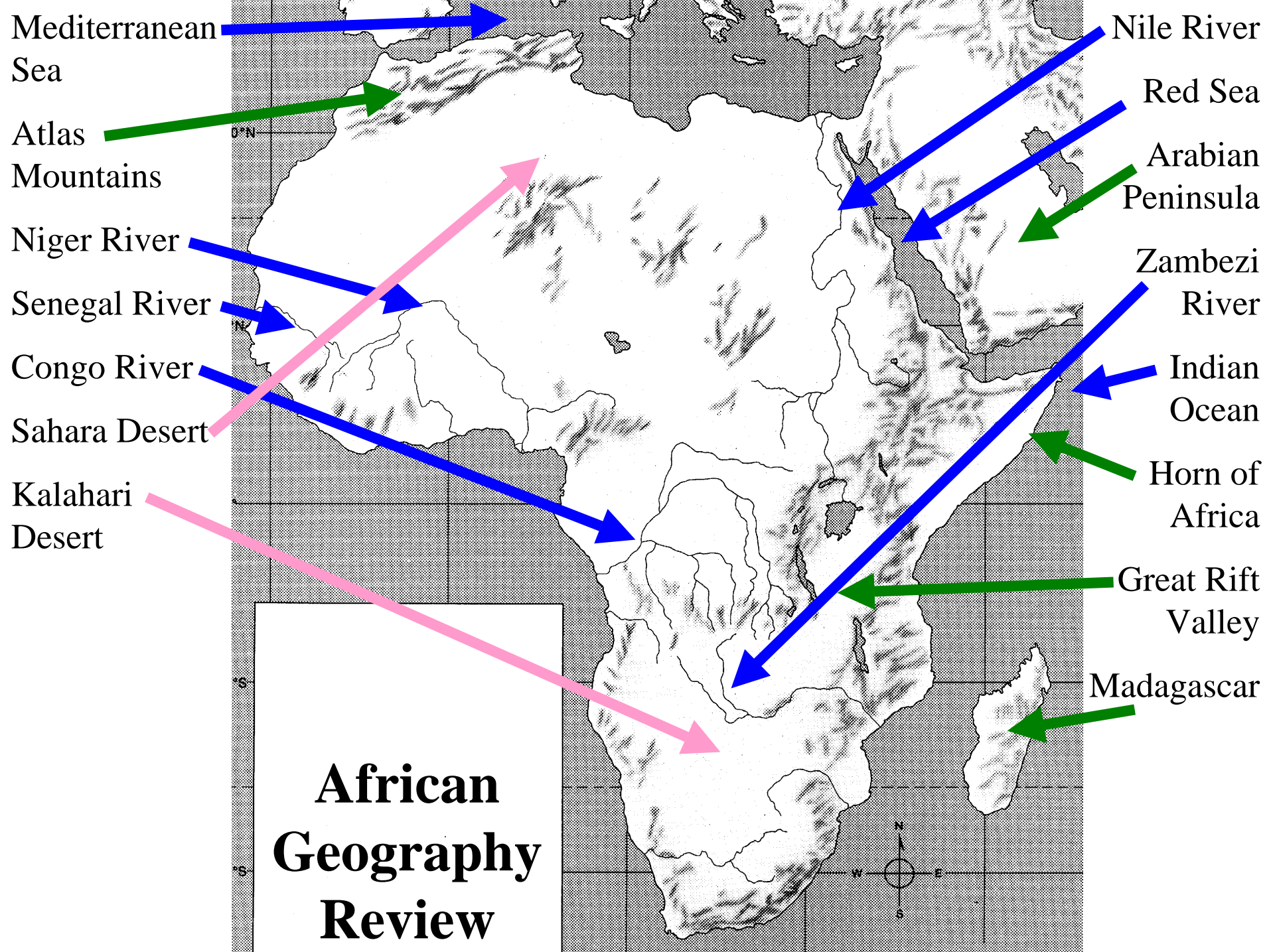
They could make huge profits



Slavery's Impact on Africa

- **Loss of many young men & women**
- **Extreme suffering on those sold & those families left behind**
- **Decline of some African tribes (some are lost completely)**
- **Loss of technological advancements because some areas have been so depleted**





Credits

