

How did Africa become connected to Europe in the 15th century?

¹Some of the first interactions among Europe and Africa include when the Portuguese set sail looking for new trade routes for Asia, but would eventually end up exploring the west coast of Africa. The Portuguese established a trade route through the southern tip of Africa, which opened many positive and negative effects among the nations.

A positive encounter among Europe and Africa would be trade opportunities that opened up for both nations. With the new found encounters each country was able to offer up valuable resources. Africa was able to trade things such as ivory, slaves, and gold for textiles, firearms, and improved metal tools from Europe. Another positive effect that came with the interaction of Africa and Europe was technological transfer. With both nations industrializing at different rates, each nation had different things they could learn from one another. In Africa's case they learned improved agricultural techniques, and new sea navigation techniques. To touch on one more positive effect that happened during this time would be the cultural exchange among people. Within this exchange they learned about each other's languages, customs, and beliefs. This may also be a negative effect as one culture may end up wanting to dominate the other.

²Not everything was a positive outcome for Africa's encounters with Europe, one example would be the breakdown of African culture by Europeans spreading Christianity. This caused conflict all throughout Africa as it was challenging traditional faction's beliefs. ³Another negative effect would be the transatlantic slave trade and all the damaging impacts it left. Due to the transatlantic slave trade millions of africans were stripped of their families, and sense of identity. West Africa became part of the triangular trade, but this would open up more

¹ Falola; Stapleton, A History of Africa, 116-121.

² Falola; Stapleton, A History of Africa, 121-126.

³ Falola; Stapleton, A History of Africa, 126-132.

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colonialism of African territory. With more European colonialism came disease and economic exploitation of Africa's valuable resources such as diamonds and rubber. Both of these negative encounters would go on to leave major demographic repercussions for Africa.

⁴I believe that the negatives truly outweighed the positives in that Africa got the short end of the stick. The negative effects of Europe's involvement would leave Africa in a very vulnerable political, social, and economic state. In a political sense the power shifted from old empires to coastal kingdoms such as Asante. When it comes to social impact many communities were left with a women heavy population leading to a rise in polygyny. Both continents were able to become connected but at the cost of resources and culture.

⁴ Falola; Stapleton, A History of Africa, 133-134.