



# Africa's Discovery of Europe

By David Northrup

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This groundbreaking book examines the full range of African-European encounters from an African perspective rather than from the customary European one. By featuring vivid life stories of individual Africans and drawing upon their many recorded sentiments, author David Northrup presents African perspectives that persuasively challenge stereotypes about African-European relations as they unfolded in Africa, Europe, and the Atlantic world between 1450 and 1850.

*Africa's Discovery of Europe* features thematically organized chapters that explore first impressions, religion and politics, commerce and culture, imported goods and technology, the Middle Passage, and Africans in Europe. In addition, Northrup offers a thoughtful examination of Africans' relations--intellectual, commercial, cultural, and sexual--with Europeans, tracing how the patterns of behavior that emerged from these encounters shaped pre-colonial Africa. The book concludes with an examination of the roles of race, class, and culture in early modern times, pointing out which themes in Africa's continuing discovery of Europe after 1850 were similar to earlier patterns, and why other themes were different. Brief, inexpensive, and accessible, the third edition of *Africa's Discovery of Europe* offers an insightful look at the tumultuous and enduring relations between these two continents.

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"*Africa's Discovery of Europe* is one of the rare accounts of the era of the Atlantic Slave Trade that places African perceptions and interactions with Europe at the center of its analysis. The book deftly covers a wide variety of geographical locations and societies in order for us to gain a better understanding of how African elites and societies grappled with the economic, political and cultural transformations brought about as a result of the growth in Atlantic commerce."--Hilary Jones, *University of Maryland, College Park*

Both in conception and execution, this is a very original piece of work. The author combs an enormous amount of literature to forge coherent and refreshing new interpretations from eclectically existing facts.

Arthur Abraham, Virginia State University

"This book provides an important reinterpretation of the position of the African continent in global history, clearly introducing complex historical topics to the students of African and world history. The comparative approach to the study of Africa's influence in Europe illustrates the neglected theme that many history textbooks fail to highlight."--Ibrahim Hamza, *Virginia Commonwealth University*

"Northrup's writing is clear and engaging and students respond well to the insights into the many sophisticated aspects of African culture and society they may not be exposed to otherwise. The book does an excellent job demonstrating that Africans were not simple victims of slavery but took an active role in shaping their world."--Matthew Hassett, *University of North Carolina Wilmington, Coastal Carolina University*

"The book is chock full of the sort of information that students won't find in the standard survey texts. The snapshots of the lives of Africans are the most appealing and invaluable contributions the book makes. The fact that *Africa's Discovery* stresses the agency, rather than the victimization, of many Africans (including some of those enslaved) adds a much-needed level of complexity to the standard presentation of the era of the Atlantic Slave Trade."--Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Northern Kentucky University*

"Northrup's book is a well-written, accessible, and valuable overview of how Africans interacted with Europeans during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Two characteristics that distinguish it from other books are its emphasis on African agency and its focus on African relations with Europe rather than with America. In focusing on mostly free Africans in Africa and Europe rather than enslaved Africans in America, Northrup counters the tendency-at least within the U.S.-to regard Africa primarily as an extension

of the African-American experience rather than as a continent with its own unique history."--Stephen Volz, *Kenyon College*

#### About the Author

**David Northrup** is Professor Emeritus of History at Boston College. He is the co-author of *The Diary of Antera Duke: An Eighteenth-Century African Slave Trader* (OUP, 2010) and author of *How English Became the Global Language* (2013), *The Atlantic Slave Trade, Third Edition* (2011), and *Crosscurrents in the Black Atlantic, 1770-1965* (2007). He is also a contributor to the *Oxford Handbook on the Atlantic World, c. 1450-1820* (OUP, 2009), *Oxford Bibliographies Online*, the *Oxford History of the British Empire* (OUP, 1999), and its companion series, *Black Experience and the Empire* (OUP, 2004).

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