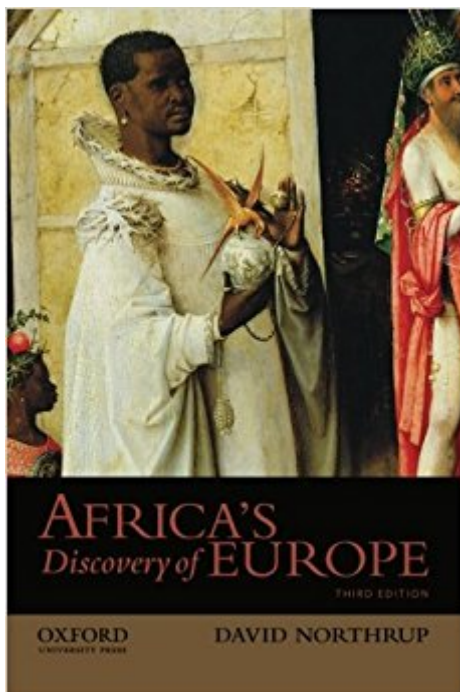


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# Africa's Discovery Of Europe



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"*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

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).

OK

The intent of this work by Northrup was not necessarily to add new knowledge to what we already knew about Africa, but to introduce entirely new ideas. Northrup's thesis is in essence to dispel the notion of African positivity in regards to European relations during the slave trade, and essentially taking ideas regarding the role of Africans in a new direction and telling a very vivid and personal counter narrative to Eurocentric history. In "Africa's discovery of Europe," Northrup provides not only a vivid counter narrative, but also a very effective and descriptive one. He presents to us a beautiful and diverse culture, as well as a side that was violent and unforgiving, as was the case in many places during these centuries. These perspectives leave a detailed impression on the reader. Undoubtedly, Northrup's book would cause any scholar to question their previous knowledge about Africa's existence and encounters with Europeans prior to the 19th century version of the slave trade. Given such an intense topic, he has an obligation to readers to produce more detailed knowledge about the encounters. The initial encounters Africans had with Europeans were exaggerated in description, these exaggerations were especially noticeable when Northrup describes African facial features. Northrup acknowledges that there were some downfalls related to the understanding of the sources. It is fair to make the assumption that an individual who didn't know much about Africa would be overwhelmed with the information in the text. Due to these slight issues, we give this book a 4 out of 5 review. - Jon, Amber, Renaldo, David

In "Africa's Discovery of Europe," David Northrup engages primary sources to refute the metanarrative that Africa was unequivocally dominated by the Europeans. Northrup contends that prior to the European influence Africa was economically interdependent with rich political traditions. Intended for an academic audience, "Africa's Discovery of Europe" incorporates primary source narratives, travel ledgers, letters, and other historical media. This text is organized into six chapters, which spotlight primary sources relevant to the chapter's theme called "Voices." Although Northrup provides ample sources, explanatory footnotes that offer background information not readily available or known would improve the reading experience. Northrup's text centers around the assumption that readers feel sympathetic towards Africans' relations with Europeans during this period of discovery. The book's brevity does not undercut its academic content. Northrup successfully builds a foundation of the interactions of Africans and Europeans from points of view that are rarely depicted. Despite the abbreviated length of this history text, Northrup's incorporation

and analysis of primary sources enrich the understanding of Africa from 1450-1850.-The Blue Crew (Mia Cabello, David Berumen, Lauren Williams, and Daniel Cisneros)

Northrup's "Africa's discovery of Europe" provides an alternate narrative to the mostly Euro-centric histories. Northrup's use of primary resources was prevalent throughout the book, however it could have benefited by more sources of an African origin. The assumptions of the treatments of the enslaved and their journeys and the points connected in between, which had no basis in the primary resources except for the imagination of a very talented author. The lack of chronology also gives the reader a sense of discontinuity and allowed for a confusion to occur in placing the events in history. This book, which was intended for a scholarly review, could also spark the interest in a laymen on the topic of the Atlantic slave trade. If Northrup was to release a revised edition, this book would benefit from more background information on the ethnicity of each region and the communities entailed in the dark trade process. The book focused on a specific geographical area near the Ivory and the Gold Coasts and a larger sample size would have benefited the story telling process. All in all this book did a great job of describing actual events that occurred during a 400 year period. It gave the reader knowledge of the history of the Atlantic slave trade with some shortcomings in the stories which may cause the reader some doubt in the veracity of their of the story being told.

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