

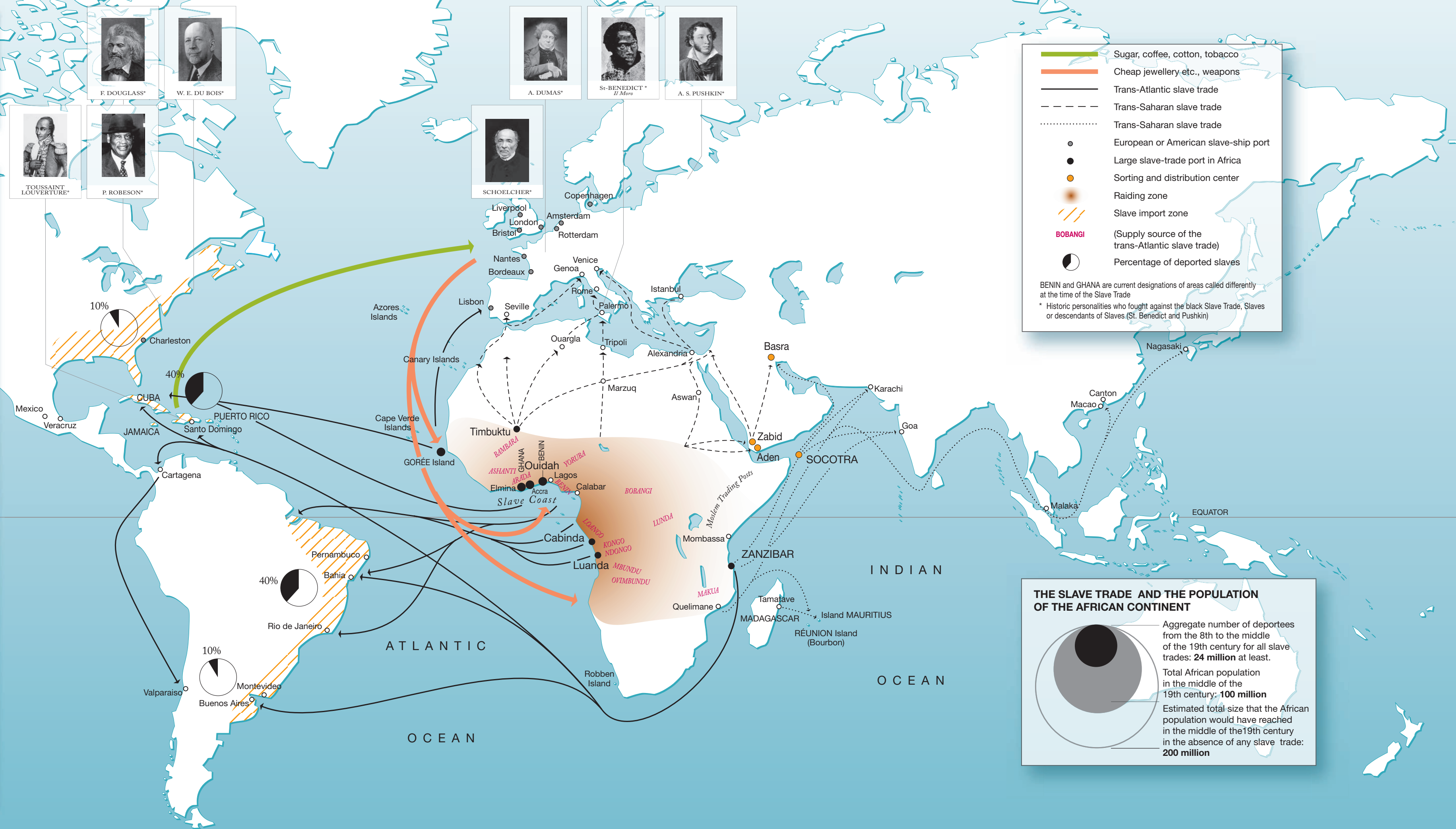
THE SLAVE ROUTE

The slave trade represents a dramatic encounter of history and geography. This four century long tragedy has been one of the greatest dehumanizing enterprises in human history. It constitutes one of the first forms of globalization. The resultant slavery system, an economic and commercial type of venture organization, linked different regions and continents: Africa, the Arab World, Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean and the Americas. It was based on an ideology: a conceptual structure founded on contempt for the black man and set up in order to justify the sale of human beings (black Africans in this case) as a mobile asset: For this is how they were regarded in the "black codes", which constituted the legal framework of slavery in the Americas.

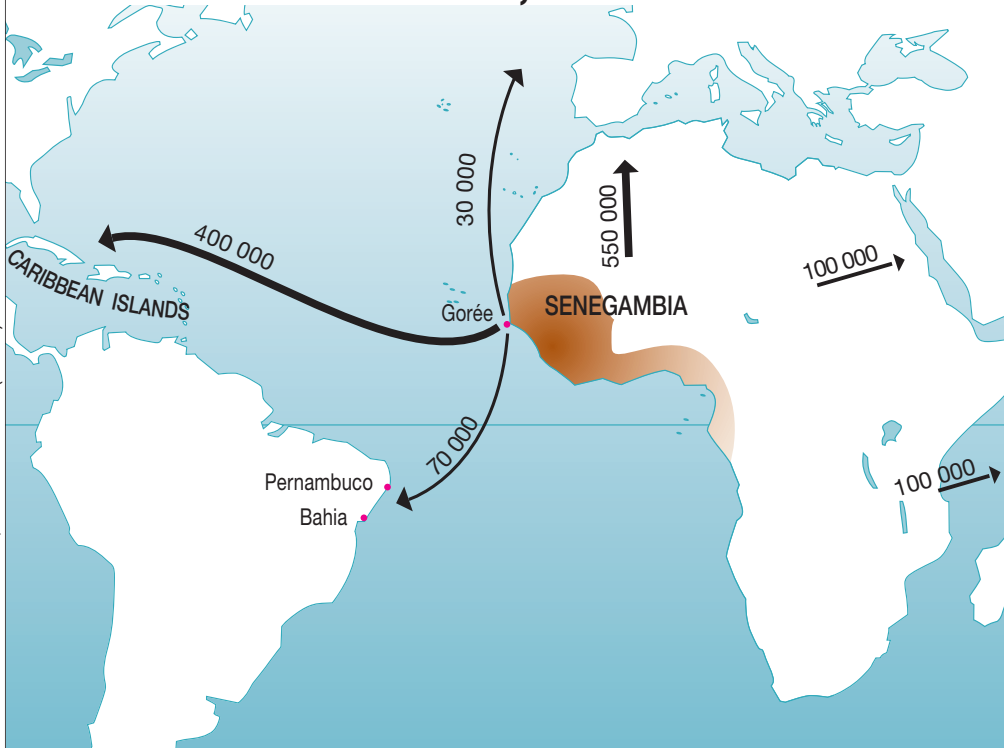
The history of this dissimulated tragedy, its deeper causes, its modalities and consequences have yet to be better elucidated: This is the basic objective that the UNESCO's member states set for the "Slave Route" Project. The issues at stake are: historical truth, human rights, development, identity and citizenship in the modern multicultural societies. The idea of "route" signifies, first and foremost, the identification of "itineraries of humanity", i.e. circuits followed by the slave trade. In this sense, geography sheds light on history. In fact, the slave trade map not only lends substance to this early form of international trade, but also, by showing the courses it took, illuminates the impact of the system.

These slave trade maps are only a "first draft". Based on currently available historical data gathered by Joseph Harris (USA) about the slave trade and slavery, they should be completed to the extent that the theme networks of researchers, set up by UNESCO, continue to bring to light the deeper layers of the iceberg by exploiting archives and oral traditions. It will then be possible to understand that the black slave trade forms the invisible stuff of relations between Africa, the Arab World, Europe, the Indian Ocean, Asia, the Americas and the Caribbean.

The Coordination of the Slave Route Project



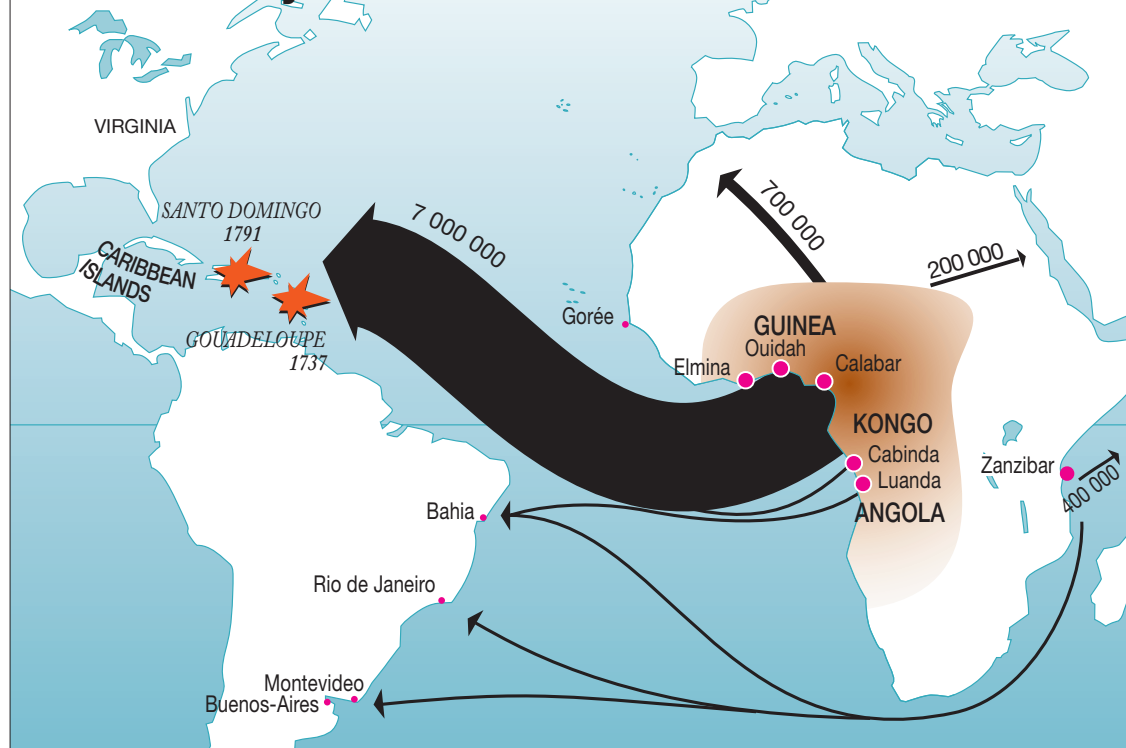
DEPORTATION FLOWS, 15th-16th Centuries



17th Century



18th Century



19th Century

