

British reaction to Portuguese claims of Southern Africa

Portugal, I understand that 400 years ago, your ancient king sailed around Africa and drew some little maps. However, this does not mean that great swaths of the continent should automatically belong to you now! This map, drawn by one of the voyagers you mentioned is completely false. Someone just made up the position of these lakes and rivers, or perhaps they were drawn from native stories or fantasies. Even if your maps were accurate, you've had no power in the region for centuries, and any treaty you claim to have is out of date. Your colonies were overrun by Arabs who reported that "the Portuguese have left nothing behind them but ruined fortresses and palaces...nowhere is there to be seen a single trace of any real improvement." Therefore Portugal, limit your claims to areas where you actually have influence.

British claims: Part 1

Thank you, Germany and Portugal. We are here on behalf of William Gladstone, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, to discuss all the great work England has done in Africa. Our voyages to Africa began in 1553 as we traveled frequently to the Gold Coast. In 1662, The British Company was built in the Gambia, and we soon replicated our success in Southern Africa on the Cape of Good Hope, declaring war on the Dutch as necessary. By the 1750s, we successfully traded along the west coast between 20 degrees north and 20 degrees south latitude.

We claim Sierra Leone. We claim all of Nigeria, because Britain purchased Lagos (the capital) from an African King in 1861, and we've maintained a colony ever since. We claim all of South Africa. We've spent years fighting with the Dutch and various African tribes and have succeeded in controlling the entire area with the exception of Zululand, which we are still working on. A Constitution was established in Basutoland in 1853. We have built roads and railways throughout the land, and many British citizens have immigrated to the colony. The French want to give part of this area to the Portuguese, but we must remind this conference that the Portuguese Treaty of Monomotapa is defunct. The Portuguese left the area for the taking, and we British have succeeded in controlling it lately. Therefore, the land should belong to us.

We also claim central Africa and the entire east coast. Stanley will remember that Dr. Livingston's expedition through the Zambezi region was funded by Britain. He discovered Lake Victoria, and Lake Tanganyika for the British Empire. Later British expeditions returned to these lands, then controlled by Arabs, to discover Mt. Kilimanjaro and the source of the Nile. It is because of these brave English explorers that Central Africa was opened up to Europeans, and therefore, it should be us British who should continue to control the areas.

British claims: Part II

We're still not done. We British also claim all of Egypt and Sudan. We defeated the Egyptian army when they tried to take over Berbers. The Suez Canal, which just opened in 1869 should also be controlled by us, as we bought out Egyptian shares of the canal when the nation went bankrupt.

Berlin Conference Britain Speech: Instructions to students

On _____ you will be participating in a mock-Berlin Conference. The real conference was held in 1884, and it decided which European countries got to rule over which parts of Africa. No Africans were invited to the Berlin Conference. You represent Great Britain, the most powerful country in the world in 1884, with colonies all over the world. You will read about British claims to Africa and then give a speech about those claims.

Reading and Speech preparation

Answer the following questions in your notebook, using complete sentences. Be sure you thoroughly understand the questions/answers, because your speech must include information from each question.

1. Why do the Portuguese NOT deserve to colonize Africa, even though they explored the land first? What has happened to many colonies that Portugal first colonized?
2. What lands to Britain explore in the 1500s and 1600s?
3. What lands does The British Company claim?
4. What's Britain been doing in South Africa? (Transvaal, Orange Free, Basutoland, Natal)?
5. What lands did Dr. Livingstone explore and claim for Britain?
6. Why should Britain get control of Egypt, Sudan, and the Suez Canal?

Berlin Conference Speech and Participation

Write a speech to give during the Berlin Conference.

- Your speech must be in first person (“We British discovered...”)
- Your speech must be at least one minute long (no longer than 5 minutes)
- Your speech must include information from each question
- Your speech must include at least one quote (use “quotations”) from *Partition of Africa*

Speech:

- Speak so everybody in the room can hear you
- Use eye contact, gestures, and your voice to engage others in your speech
- Take turns speaking during the general debate.

During the Berlin Conference:

- Listen to all speeches, but non-verbally react as someone from your country would react to each speech
- Only speak when it is your turn, or during general debate time.
- Complete the “Berlin Conference” worksheet throughout the Berlin Conference.

Map: Draw in the areas that Britain claims



Britain: Speech guide

British reaction to Portuguese claims of Southern Africa

Portugal, I understand that 400 years ago, your ancient king sailed around Africa and drew some little maps. However, this does not mean that great swaths of the continent should automatically belong to you now! This map is completely false because _____

Besides, while in Africa, you started the slave trade that we are not trying to end. Your colonies were overrun by Arabs who reported that “the Portuguese _____

Therefore Portugal, please limit your claims to areas where you actually have influence.

British claims: Part 1

Thank you, Germany and Portugal. We are here on behalf of William Gladstone, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, to discuss all our the great work England has been doing in Africa. Our voyages to Africa began in _____ as we traveled frequently to _____

In 1662, The British Company was built in _____, and we soon replicated our success in Southern Africa on the Cape of Good Hope. By the 1750s, with the support of the British Parliament, we maintained the African Company of Merchants, successfully trading along the west coast between 20 degrees north and 20 degrees south latitude.

We claim _____. We claim all of Nigeria, because Britain purchased Lagos (the capital) purchased from an African King in 1861, and we’ve maintained a colony there ever since. We British claim all of South Africa. We’ve spent years _____

The French want to give part of this area to the Portuguese, but we must remind this conference that the Portuguese Treaty of Monomotapa is defunct. The Portuguese left the area for the taking, and we British have succeeded in controlling it lately.

We’re not done. We British also claim central Africa and the entire east coast. Stanley will remember that Dr. Livingston _____

British claims: Part II

We’re still not done. We British also claim all of Egypt, the Sudan, and the Suez Canal because _____

The Suez Crisis by BBC History

By Laurie Milner

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/suez_01.shtml

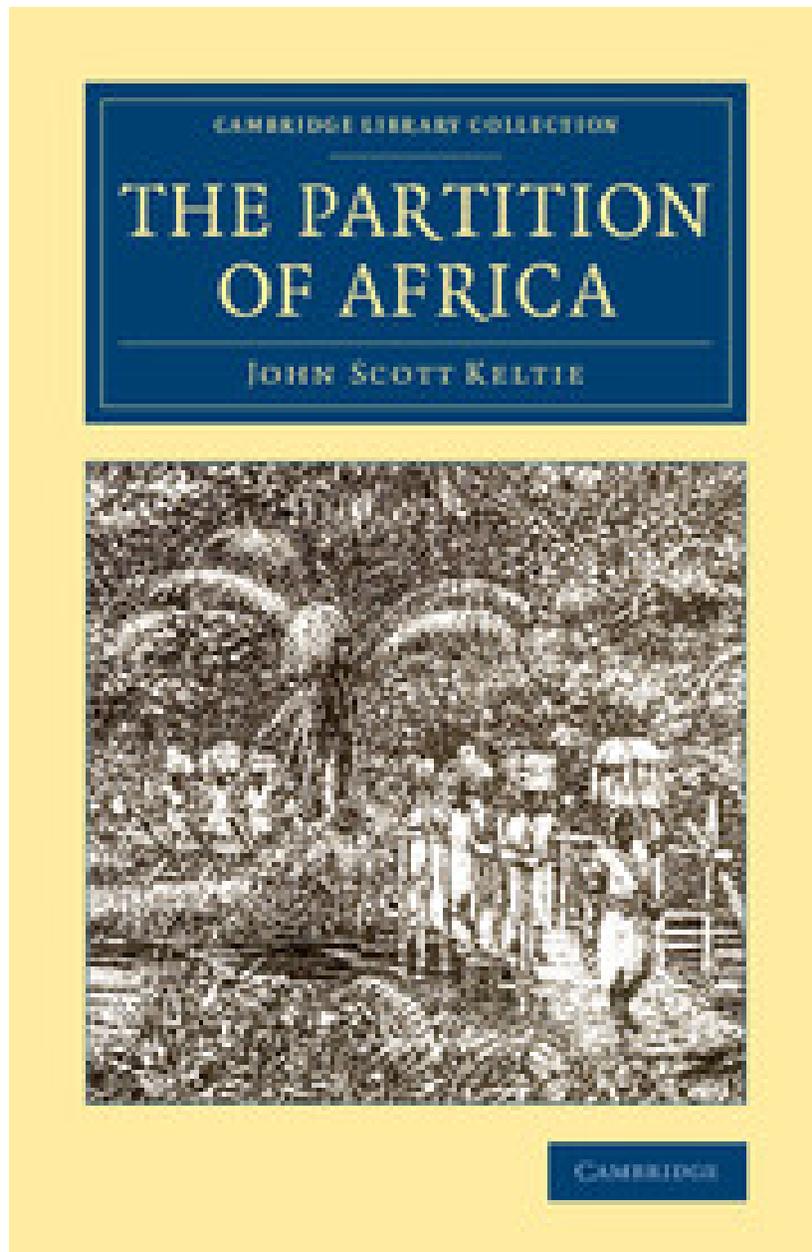
Creation of the Canal

In 1854 Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French former diplomat, persuaded the Viceroy of Egypt, Mohamed Said, to permit the construction of a shipping canal through the 100 miles of desert between Africa and Asia. A prospectus was circulated and on 20 December 1858 the Universal Company of the Suez Maritime Canal was constituted.

Britain, which had regarded France's increased influence in this region with suspicion, declined the offer of shares and even organised a boycott resulting in a shortage of investors. Egypt therefore acquired 44% of the shares.

Construction began on 25 April 1859 and the canal was opened in November 1869 complete with a statue of de Lesseps dominating the harbour. Said, who died in 1867, was succeeded by his nephew Ismail. In the first year of the canal's existence, some three-quarters of the vessels using it were British.

By the mid 1870s, Ismail, who had set out to modernise Egypt, but had incurred massive debts, offered his country's shares in the canal for sale. British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli bought Egypt's shareholding for £4 million establishing Britain's influence in the running of this new and extremely important waterway.



Full text available at

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Partition_of_Africa/mskTAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&prints_ec=frontcover

Relevant pages included here

Britain

us . . . we have travelled through many of its lands." Even if we grant, however, all that the Portuguese claim for their early travellers and missionaries, the results, as given in the maps and in the old treatises on geography, are so erroneous and misleading as to be of little value. The probability is, as may be seen from Pigafetta's narrative, that much of the information rudely embodied in the maps of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries of great "seas" or lakes or waters, which existed in the interior, was obtained from the natives, who then, as now, in some parts, had relations with Central Africa. Similar rumours had been brought down to the east coast long before Burton and Speke set out to "discover" Tanganyika. It is possible enough that rumours reached the missionaries in the kingdom of Congo—who certainly seem to have journeyed occasionally for considerable distances into the interior—of a great sheet of water in the far interior, from which rivers took their rise; similar rumours may well have reached Mombasa as to Victoria Nyanza; and putting this information alongside the Ptolemaic maps, the cartographers and geographers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had no difficulty in filling up the centre of the Continent with a congeries of features that no doubt proved satisfactory enough to the ignorance of their time. Even in our own days the map of Central Africa exhibits features which no white man has seen, but which have only been heard of from Arab traders or wandering natives. That the crowded maps of Africa of the sixteenth century represented throughout the results of discovery in our

sense of that term, is an idea that cannot be entertained. The task which the Portuguese really did accomplish requires no fanciful addition of this kind to enhance its importance, or heighten the glory of their enterprising princes and daring navigators.

All this would have only an academic interest, were it not for the fact that in recent years Portugal based her claims to large areas in Central Africa on priority of discovery. But even if she were the first in the field, if her early explorers had wandered on the shores of Tanganyika, Victoria Nyanza, and Nyasa, had navigated the Congo and the Zambezi from their sources to the sea, this would hardly constitute a reason for leaving millions of square miles of the Continent to remain unutilised and unoccupied merely because Portugal was not in a position to turn them to account. Even old treaties, if not followed by continuous and effective occupation, accompanied by security to life and property, cannot be held as giving any Power the monopoly of a territory. And yet it must be said that in these early days of European connection with Africa, the planting of a fort on the coast seems to have been held as constituting a claim to an immense tract of land in the interior.

In the early years of the Portuguese occupation there seems to have been more activity on the west coast than on the east, and there existed but little rivalry with other powers. The influence of Portugal in the Congo region and in Angola continued to extend, both on the coast and towards the interior, as also on the Guinea coast and north to the Bay of

the East Africans with a rod of iron, and her pride and cruelty had their reward in the bitter hatred of the natives. In East Africa the Portuguese have left nothing behind them but ruined fortresses, palaces, and ecclesiastical buildings. Nowhere is there to be seen a single trace of any real improvement effected by them." Sef bin Sultan, the Imaum of Oman, at the request of the people of Mombasa, sent a fleet to East Africa and captured Mombasa, Zanzibar, and Kilwa, and laid siege to Mozambique in 1698. Portuguese power in East Africa was shaken, for although they reoccupied the coast fort of Mombasa, which they held up to 1730, there was from this time practically an end to their sovereignty between Cape Guardafui and Cape Delgado. After this the Imaum of Muscat held a nominal sovereignty over the East Coast of Africa; Mombasa was the centre of the government, the rulership becoming to some extent hereditary. In the end, as will be seen, this led to the supremacy of the Imaums of Oman over the East Coast from Magdoshu to Cape Delgado, and to the establishment of Zanzibar as an independent state in 1861.

Thus by the beginning of the eighteenth century the power of Portugal in East Africa was at the lowest possible ebb; she had only a precarious footing at one of the ports on the coast; and her main trade was the export of slaves. She had even abandoned Delagoa Bay, and the Dutch from the Cape had built a fort and a factory there, which, however, were destroyed by the English in 1727.

Fifty years later it is curious to find that even

time they had built forts at other points on the coast. Old Richard Eden speaks of the "arbitrary monopoly of the Portuguese on this coast, of such who, on account of conquering 40 or 50 miles here and there, certain fortresses or block-houses among naked people, think themselves worthy to be lords of half the world, and angry that others should enjoy the commodities which they themselves cannot wholly possess."

**England
begins the
slave-trade.**

These private English ventures to the coast of Guinea went on during the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth. Sir John Hawkins has the credit or discredit of having been the first Englishman to engage in the slave-trade. In 1562 he fitted out three ships, sailed to Guinea, obtained 300 negroes, conveyed them to Hispaniola, sold them, and returned to England with the proceeds. Notwithstanding the indignation of Elizabeth, Hawkins continued the lucrative trade, which the Portuguese and Spanish had already been carrying on for many years. But commercial and political relations were also being established between England and Barbary, and in 1585 Queen Elizabeth granted a patent or charter to the Earl of Warwick, the Earl of Leicester, and others, for exclusive trading with Morocco for twelve years. But the first real English chartered African Company was that for which Elizabeth granted a patent in 1588. Three voyages were made under this Company (1589, 1590, and 1591). It was found that the Portuguese had been expelled from the Senegal by the natives, though they still had stations on the Gambia,

**First
English
chartered
Company.**

in 1618 by James I., and in 1631 by Charles I. The first Company, though its special object was to trade with the Gambia, does not seem to have obtained any permanent footing there. The Company chartered in 1618 made strenuous efforts to push its way up the Gambia in the hope of reaching Timbuktu, which was then regarded as the great trade emporium of the interior. Both the Senegal and the Gambia, it should be remembered, were at the time conjectured to have a connection with the Niger, on which Timbuktu was known to be situated. Several expeditions pushed their way up the Gambia, but ended in disaster. It was intended to build a series of forts on the river, but it soon became evident that the gold which it was hoped would be found in abundance was practically non-existent; and so the English quest for Timbuktu was abandoned. At the time of the Restoration the only forts possessed by Englishmen were on the Gambia, and at Cormantine, near Anamabo, on the Gold Coast.

The Company, chartered by Charles II. in 1662, was more successful, and a fort was built on James Island in the Gambia. This Company was formed for the purpose of trying to checkmate the Dutch, who were constantly harassing English traders, seizing their ships, and destroying the stations they attempted to establish. The conduct of the Dutch became so intolerable that Charles II. declared war against them in 1665, and the English captured forts at Seconda, Cape Coast Castle, and other places, and built new ones for themselves. But the British Company continued to be unfortunate, and in 1672 its rights

The British
Company
of 1662.

South
side

Meanwhile, Cape Colony itself had its hands full of trouble. War after war with the Kaffirs kept up for years a feeling of insecurity, and compelled the Cape to push its boundaries farther and farther north. Kaffraria was annexed in 1865; in 1871 Basutoland came under British rule. A constitution was established in 1853, and responsible government in 1872. By opening up the country by roads and railways, and encouraging immigration, the colony steadily developed. The Orange River had been reached; the Orange Free State and the Transvaal had been founded and recognised, the former in 1854 and the latter in 1852; Natal had been created an independent colony in 1856; and, though patches of native territory still here and there awaited formal annexation, by 1875 all the country up to the Orange River and the Orange Free State was virtually under British influence, though the extension of this influence was carried on slowly and with reluctance on the part of the Home Government. Beyond Natal there remained the Zululand gap between the British and Portuguese spheres, the latter undergoing little or no change during the long interval. Movements were taking place among the native tribes both to the north and the south of the Zambezi; thirty years before 1875 the Matabele had crossed the Limpopo and established themselves by force in the country of the Mashonas and kindred tribes. In 1823 Captain Owen, while carrying out his surveys on the east coast, obtained from native chiefs a cession of Delagoa Bay, which was, moreover, claimed for England in virtue of

in 1868, the Dutch were confined to the west of the Sweet river, their extensive possessions of the previous century having now dwindled down to Dixcove, Apollonia, Secondee, and Commenda, with a protectorate over the two Wassaws, Denkera, and the country of Apollonia. In 1871 Holland transferred all her rights on the Gold Coast to Great Britain. Although France claims to have acquired portions of the coast (Grand Bassam and Assinie) to the west of the British Colony in 1838 and 1842, and a station on the east, Porto Novo, in 1868, these were really unoccupied till 1884, and at any time up to within the past few years there would have been no obstacle to declaring the whole of the coast from the Liberian boundary to the Gaboon under British protection. Had this been done it would have prevented much of the international bitterness of late years.

Lagos.

In 1861 Lagos was acquired by England from the native king; since which time the colony has been extended east and west, until now it stretches from the Benin river to the Denham Waters at Kotonu, and includes the Yoruba country in the interior as a protectorate. It is interesting to note that in the seventeenth century the French attempted to effect a settlement at the mouth of the Niger (at that date of course not known to be connected with the great river), but nothing came of it. Meantime British trade continued to be developed along the rivers which may be regarded as constituting the Niger delta, though some of the streams or creeks are independent of that river. British traders have been settled on the Oil Rivers for a century, at first mainly for the purpose of carrying on the slave-trade.

The Niger.

the Dutch settlement there in 1820. England went so far as to found a station named Bombay opposite Lourenço Marquez, and there were continual disputes for possession between her and Portugal up to 1875, the Transvaal also putting in a claim for a patch of coast. At last the rival claims were referred for arbitration to the President of the French Republic, Marshal MacMahon, who decided in favour of Portugal, even going to the extreme of giving Portugal more territory than she had claimed in her statement. The chief ground of Portugal's claim was the "Treaty of Monomotapa," which had lapsed long before. The present town of Lourenço Marquez was only founded in 1867 on the site of an old village of the same name.

Living-
stone's
work.

But a new era for the Continent had begun. Livingstone had entered Africa, and had initiated those explorations which opened up the heart of the Continent, and led to that scramble which is now all but completed. Before his death in 1873 he had been to Lake Ngami, had completed that journey across the Continent which revealed the course of the Zambezi, gave us the first authentic information as to the character of the country watered by it and its tributaries, and carried the British name and British influence into regions which only the other day have become appanages of the Imperial Crown. Others had followed in Livingstone's footsteps—Galton and Andersson in Damaraland, Baines in the same region and east to Matabeleland (whose riches he revealed to the modern world) and the Zambezi; while others—missionaries, explorers, hunters, and traders—were

event in the partition of Africa. As a new highway to India it greatly enhanced the value of Egypt, and led to a more intense rivalry than before between England and France for paramount influence in that country. Moreover, it greatly increased the strategical value not only of Aden, but of the ports on the opposite coast of Africa, and of the island of Socotra, which was taken under the wing of England in 1876, though it was looked upon as under British influence long before joined with England in guaranteeing the Sultan's independence.

Proceeding northwards, we find but little alteration in the position between 1815 and 1875. Massawa had been occupied by the Turks early in the seventeenth century, and from that date the whole of the Red Sea coast may be regarded as Egyptian, Abyssinia's attempts to obtain a port always ending in failure. Early in the century France began to seek for a footing on the Red Sea. The port of Ait, to the north of the Straits of Babelmandeb, was purchased by a French merchant in 1835 in the hope of attracting the trade of Abyssinia. Various other attempts were made to obtain a footing near Massawa, and to intrigue against Abyssinia, with no permanent result, except at Obock on Tajura Bay opposite Aden, which was bought in 1862, but not effectively occupied till 1883. Italy had not yet appeared on the Red Sea. Egypt had taken possession of Berbera and aimed at extending her influence through Harrar to Shoa, but happily her purpose was defeated. Abyssinia was much as it had been, notwithstanding the attempts of France in the first half of this century, its invasion by a British army, and its troubles with Egypt. This latter Power, whose connection with Turkey had become more and more slender, had by 1875 pushed her way southwards along the Nile, and had virtually annexed Kordofan and Darfur, and the whole of the country up to the Albert Nyanza. Gordon was already in her service, and Emin Pasha joined him in the year following.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 is a notable

The Red Sea.

Egyptian conquests.

The Suez Canal.

The Suez Crisis by BBC History

By Laurie Milner

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/suez_01.shtml

Creation of the Canal

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