Portuguese claims to Southern Africa

We Portuguese have much to be proud of in our efforts to explore and map the African continent. The members of this Conference from Britain, France, Belgium and Germany would never have made the progress you’ve been boasting about had it not been for early Portuguese navigators like Prince Henry and all that came after him. It was these Portuguese that “single handed[ly]…traced the contour of the west, south, and east coasts of Africa [and] initiated the modern European colonization of the Continent” back in the 1400s. Therefore, we Portuguese are confident that our claims to large areas in Central Africa will be accepted by this Conference, as WE were the first discoverers of Africa. We claim the entire land of Southern Africa, based on our 1607 Treaty of Monomotapa, which gave the Portuguese mining rights of the land. We also claim land in Senegal, the Gambia, Benin, and Congo, as we were the first country to establish trading factories there.

Portuguese reaction to Britain

We still remain in the East, particularly along the Zambezi river on the East. It should NOT be disputed that we remain the colonial powers in Mozambique due to our Treaty. We also have a 400 year claim to Angola, on the west coast. Therefore, it only makes sense that all the African land between these countries should remain ours as well. Of course, we also have the rights to land in Congo, which we shall speak about later.

Portuguese claims to Congo

But we found that area first! We claimed Congo well before Stanley was even born! But Portuguese claims to Congo have not been abandoned. We have had recent success in the area and we possess current treaties. We claim the area in West Africa from 5 degree South latitude to the Congo river. England, you yourself agreed to this claim earlier this year. We signed the Congo Treaty on February 26th of this year, 1884. We have had held the area along the mouth of the Congo River since 1484 and we have never ONCE led it out of our sights. When British ships hover along the coasts, we Portuguese have always been steadfast in our rights to own Congo. You British have been cruel to native Africans in factories near Congo, and we Portuguese have stood up for the rights of Africans.
Berlin Conference Portugal 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 Portugal, the country who sent the first explorers to Africa in the 1400s, which started the slave trade. You will read about Portuguese 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. Who was Prince Henry? Where did he and others like him explore?
2. What was the 1609 Treaty of Monomotapa?
3. Why do you claim land around the Zambezi River (now called Mozambique?)
4. What other colonies does Portugal claim?
5. Why does Portugal claim Angola in West Africa?
6. Why does Portugal claim Congo?
7. Explain the Congo Treaty signed with Great Britain

Berlin Conference Speech and Participation

Write a speech to give during the Berlin Conference.

• Your speech must be in first person (“We Portuguese 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 Portugal claims
Portugal: Speech guide

Portuguese claims to Southern Africa

We Portuguese have much to be proud of in our efforts to explore and map the African continent. The members of this Conference from Britain, France, Belgium and Germany would never have made the progress you’ve been boasting about had it not been for early Portuguese navigators like Prince Henry and all that came after him. They discovered

______________________________________________________________________________

We claim the entire land of Southern Africa, based on our 1607 Treaty of Monomotapa,

______________________________________________________________________________

We also claim the land of _______________________________________________________

because we were the first country to ______________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Portuguese reaction to Britain

We still remain in the East, particularly along the ___________ river on the East. It should NOT be disputed that we remain the colonial powers in Mozambique due to our Treaty. We also have a 400 year claim to Angola, on the west coast because ________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Portuguese claims to Congo

We claimed Congo well before Stanley was even born! But Portuguese claims to Congo have not been abandoned. We have had recent success in the area and we possess current treaties. We claim the area in West Africa from 5 degree South latitude to ________________ the Congo river. We signed the Congo Treaty on February

______________________________________________________________________________

We have had held the area along the mouth of the Congo River since 1484 and we have never ONCE led it out of our sights. For example,

______________________________________________________________________________

You British have been cruel to native Africans in factories near Congo, and we Portuguese
Full text available at

Relevant pages included here
CHAPTER V

THE BEGINNING OF RIVALRY


Before the close of the fifteenth century the Portuguese had erected forts at Arguin and El Mina, had established trading factories on the Senegal, the Gambia, the Rio Grande, on the Gold Coast and the Gulf of Benin, and on the Congo; had planted colonies on Madeira, the Cape Verd Islands, and the Island of St. Thomas. By about 1520 Portugal, as we have seen, had made herself mistress of all the coasts of Africa, except that of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and even in the latter, a few years later, attempts were made to obtain possession of Massawa and other ports, and to establish Portuguese influence over Abyssinia. While, no doubt, Africa was valued by Portugal for its own sake, and especially for its gold, and ultimately for its slaves, it was probably, especially the east coast stations, regarded mainly as a half-way house to India and the East, the conquest of which absorbed the energies of
should be remembered that in the population of the Iberian peninsula there was a large infusion of Teutonic blood, of that blood which, under different climatic conditions, has led to such different results. In whatever way it is to be explained, the fact remains that after a century and a half of energetic enterprise, during which all Africa, and it may be said all India, was within her power, Portugal suddenly collapsed, and never again recovered the place she had won before her sixty years' incorporation with Spain. But this opens up wide and fundamental questions which cannot be entered upon here. Portugal has a right to be proud of the part she played as a pioneer among the European nations in the exploration of Africa. Under Prince Henry and his successors, within the space of some seventy years, single-handed she traced the contour of the west, south, and east coasts of Africa, initiated the modern European colonisation of the Continent, and began that partition which is only now being concluded. The record of this with the record of her conquests and explorations in Asia and in America must render the name of Portugal for ever memorable in the history of the world.

Ceuta itself may be said to have been the first annexation in Africa by a modern European power. Into a detailed history of the Portuguese exploration of Africa it is not of course possible to enter; a brief sketch of the successive stages must suffice. In order to be as near as possible to the contemplated scene of operations, Prince Henry established himself upon the lonely point of Sagres (near Cape St. Vincent), which may be said to
d'Evora and Gonsalvez Eanes, sent by the King of Portugal in 1487, actually reached Timbuctu. It was not till 1462 that Pedro da Cintra succeeded in getting three degrees beyond Sierra Leone. Prince Henry had died two years before, but his great undertaking was continued by Alfonso V. and John II. During Henry's lifetime 1800 miles of the West African coast had been followed out from Cape Nun southwards during half a century of effort. Before the Prince's death a company had been formed for the purpose of carrying on a trade in slaves and gold dust between Portugal and Africa, the first of those companies which have formed so prominent a feature in the European connection with the Continent. The first expedition despatched by the Company returned with a cargo of 200 slaves. In 1471 the Guinea Coast was doubled and followed round by the Bight of Benin as far as the delta of the river Ogové. At the Ogové the Portuguese were content to rest for thirteen years, having been the first Europeans to cross the line.

So early as 1448 Prince Henry had begun a fort on the Bay of Arguin, south of Cape Blanco, from which an attempt was made to carry on intercourse with the interior, and by which the traders, who had stations on the islands in the bay, might be protected. This fort seems to have been rebuilt in 1461, and for many years afterwards continued to be the headquarters of Portuguese commercial enterprise in West Africa. This was in the reign of John II., on whom the Pope conferred the title of "Lord of Guinea," a title attached to the crown of Portugal even to our own time. But
probably the first regular modern European settlement or colony established on the continent of Africa was on the Gold Coast, at a spot to which the name of St. Jorge da Mina, or briefly A Mina (now generally known as El Mina), was given, and where the Portuguese flag was raised in January 1482. Here a fort was built, one of the strongest on the coast; it may be seen at the present day. But long before this, traffic in the gold from which the Gold Coast gets its name had begun, and attempts had been made to establish relations with the interior. Thus may be said to have commenced the Portuguese annexation of Africa, though of course all the coast discovered by the navigators of Portugal was regarded as the perquisite of their sovereign.

In 1482 exploration was again started with renewed vigour. In that and the two following years Diogo Cam pushed his way for 1200 miles south of the Ogové, discovering the mouth of the Congo, up which he sailed for some distance. On board Diogo Cam’s ship was the great German geographer, Martin Behaim, whose map of Africa in 1492 shows at least some of the results of exploration up to that date. The year after Diogo’s return Bartholomew Diaz set out, and all unknowing passed the south-west point of Africa and pushed eastwards as far as Algoa Bay; it was only on his return journey that he sighted what he called the Cape of Storms, but which King John rechristened the Cape of Good Hope.

Thus the turning-point in the history of Africa was reached, for Diaz had almost come to within hail of the Arab settlements on the east coast. The true contour of the Continent had been gradually outlined, and even
PORTUGAL IN POSSESSION

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 Zambesi 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

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were built. This went on through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it was only disasters in India, and the discovery of gold and diamonds in Brazil, that led to the practical abandonment of the mines and fairs and churches in the Monomotapa's empire. That the Portuguese had stations or establishments of some kind as far in the interior as what is now known as the Mashonaland plateau, in the early days of their occupation, must be admitted, unless we are prepared to treat the historians and chroniclers of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries as writers of fiction.

According to the authority of Boccaro, who was keeper of the archives at Goa, in the early part of the seventeenth century, the Emperor of Monomotapa (as he was called) in 1607 ceded to the Portuguese all the mining rights of his territories by a treaty, the original of which still exists in the Goa archives. But the celebrated Treaty of Monomotapa, which was adduced in connection with the Delagoa Bay arbitration, and given more recently as a proof that Portugal had a claim to Mashonaland, is dated 1630. It has the "emperor's" mark (X) and a host of signatures of Portuguese officials. It would be against the weight of evidence to deny the genuineness of those two treaties. We fear, it must be admitted, that had Portugal been a strong power like Germany or France, the treaties would have had much more weight with the British government in adjusting the claims to Mashonaland. But then if either of these powers had obtained such a claim it would not have neglected and abandoned the territories thus made over to them as Portugal had done. Throughout his
Palmerston, Clarendon, and Aberdeen to take a similar view. It is not our purpose here to give a history of the slave-trade, otherwise these Blue Books would afford many thrilling incidents.

In all this long correspondence, extending down to 1877, Portugal never let an opportunity pass of claiming sovereignty over the West African coast from 5° 12' to 8° south latitude. British vessels were constantly hovering about these coasts on the watch for slavers, and Portugal constantly protested against their presence. It even seemed at one time as if Great Britain would take possession of part of this coast, a procedure which, according to the voluminous correspondence on the subject, the native chiefs would have welcomed. Portugal was particularly jealous of any attempt to dispute her right to the territories of Molembe and Cabinda, lying immediately to the north of the Congo mouth—territories which figured among the titles of the Portuguese monarch, and which she maintained had been in her possession since 1484. But England never once admitted Portugal's claim to this stretch of coast. Her Angola territories were held to end on the north at Ambriz, well south of the mouth of the Congo; no effective possession could be proved anywhere to the north of this.

After 1877 there seems to have been a lull in the reiteration of these claims. About that time there had been some inhuman cruelties perpetrated by traders on the unfortunate natives around the factories on the lower river—cruelties which formed the subject of investigation on the part of the British Government.
for a Power so well known to have the interests of civilisation at heart, to have jurisdiction, not only over the coast-line in question, but for an indefinite distance up the Congo. She would give pledges that only the most moderate tariffs would be imposed; that traders of all nations would have equal privileges with those of Portugal; that the navigation of the river would be absolutely free to all flags; and that every means would be taken to suppress slavery in every form. Lord Granville, with all his pliant urbanity and his apparent indifference to the extension of the empire, was astute enough to doubt the zeal of Portugal for the suppression of slavery, and to demand substantial concessions on behalf of the interests of British trade and British missions. He saw insuperable objections to permitting Portugal to claim the right of indefinite extension in the interior, for she more than hinted at her ambition to unite her East and West African colonies. More stringent stipulations as to tariffs were demanded; a definite limit to Portugal's claim to the Congo; respect for the interests of the Congo Association, and for the treaties which Britain had made with the chiefs on the coast. On the other side of Africa the free navigation of the Zambesi was insisted on; the limit of the claims of Portugal on the Shiré to be drawn at the Ruo; the recognition of the claims of Portugal in the interior only as far as she had effectively occupied stations. After much interchange of letters and draft treaties, and much casuistry on the part of Portugal, a "Congo Treaty" was at last agreed upon, and signed on the 26th of
February 1884, by which Great Britain acknowledged the claim of Portugal to the line of coast between 5° 12′ and 8° south latitude, with an interior limit at Nokki, on the south bank of the Congo, below Vivi. Other stipulations with reference to the Congo and Zambesi were agreed to, similar in character to those already mentioned. In the original draft Lord Granville proposed that the navigation of the Congo should be under an International Commission, but in deference to the resistance of Portugal this was finally changed to an Anglo-Portuguese Commission.

It must be stated in excuse for Lord Granville's apparently ready assent to an arrangement which seemed to make over the Congo to Portugal—and the statement is made on very high authority—that he was under the impression that the King of the Belgians, after organising an administration on the Congo, intended to make over all his claims to England, which would thus have command of the whole river above its mouth. On the same authority, there is reason to believe that Mr. Stanley himself was under this impression during all the time he was pushing the interests of the King on the river. Whether it was that the King had been misunderstood, or whether it was that in the end he changed his mind—for his scheme seems to have developed in magnitude in spite of himself—we know that he stuck to his river. At all events, it is only right to refer to these conditions in justice to Lord Granville, on whose motives and action as Foreign Minister it has been the fashion to place the worst construction.