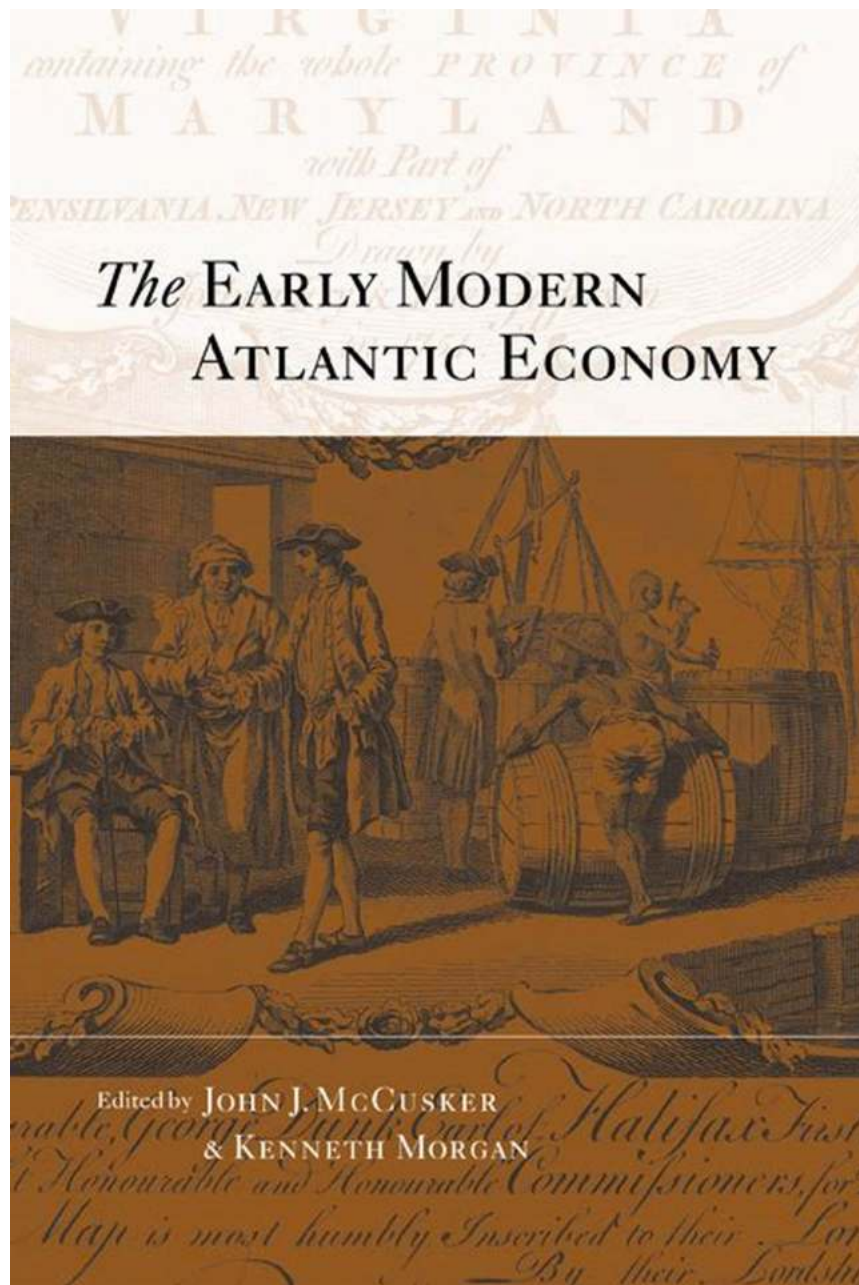


# Discover How Sovereignty and Dispossession Shaped the Early Modern Atlantic World

The Struggle for Power and Land in the Early Modern Atlantic

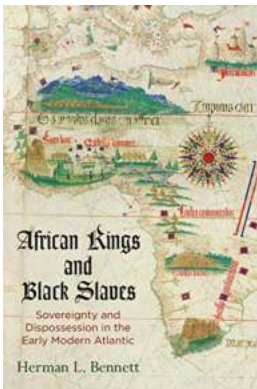


Throughout the early modern period, the Atlantic Ocean became a contested space where European powers fought for control and dominance. This article

delves into the intriguing history of sovereignty and dispossession in the early modern Atlantic, exploring how this struggle for power shaped the world we know today.

## Understanding Sovereignty and Dispossession

At its core, sovereignty refers to the supreme authority of a state or ruler over a territory. In the early modern Atlantic, European powers such as England, Spain, France, and Portugal sought to assert their sovereignty over newly discovered lands in the Americas and Africa. However, this quest for control often came at the expense of indigenous peoples who were dispossessed of their lands and resources.



### African Kings and Black Slaves: Sovereignty and Dispossession in the Early Modern Atlantic (The Early Modern Americas)

by Herman L. Bennett (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 789 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

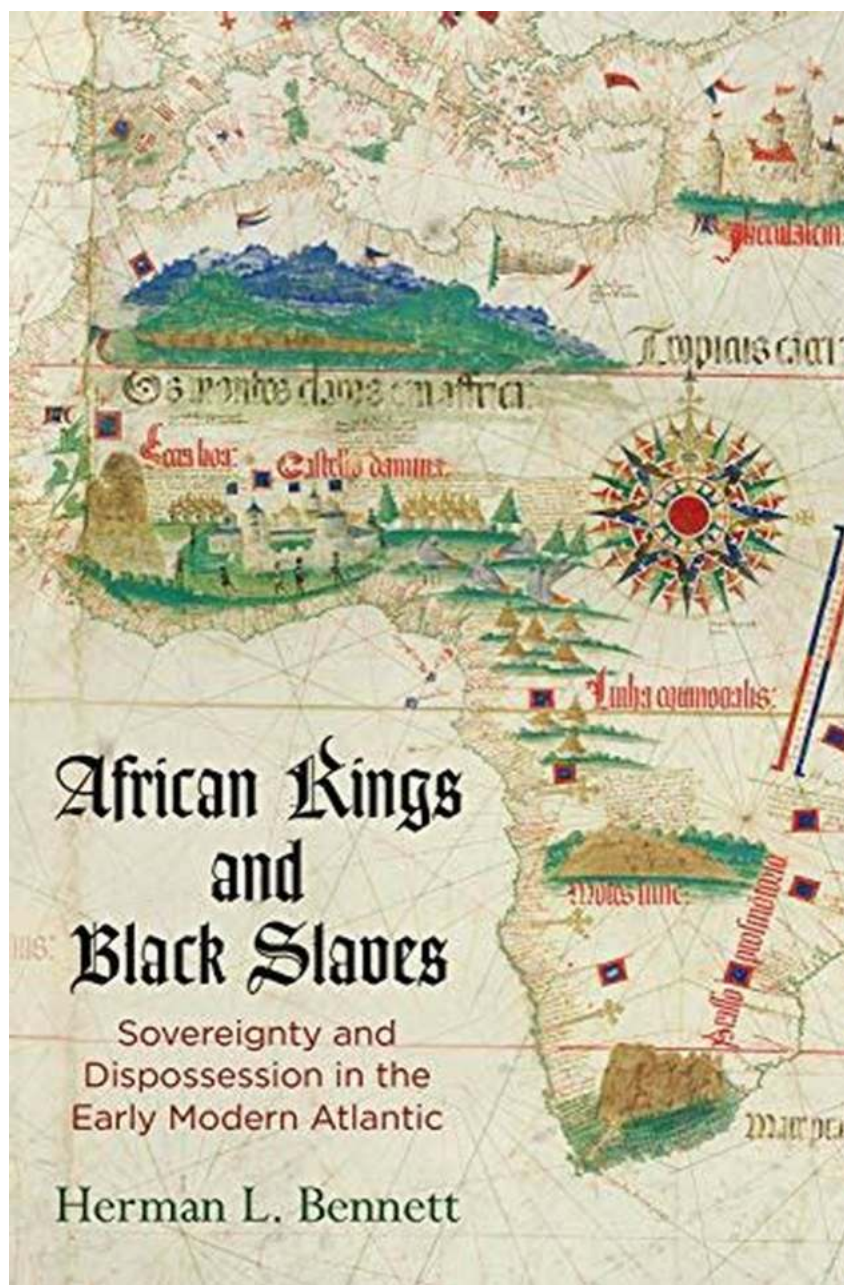
Print length : 241 pages



In many cases, European powers justified their actions through religious, economic, and legal ideologies. The doctrine of terra nullius, for example, declared that indigenous lands were "empty" and therefore open for European

colonization. This mindset not only facilitated dispossession but also contributed to the genocide and displacement of countless indigenous communities.

## A Clash of Cultures



The encounter between European colonizers and indigenous peoples in the early modern Atlantic was marked by a profound clash of cultures. Europeans brought

with them their own social, political, and economic systems, often seeking to impose them on indigenous communities.

This clash of cultures led to a significant disruption of indigenous ways of life. Traditional economies based on subsistence agriculture were replaced by cash-crop plantations, while indigenous political structures were undermined and replaced by European-style hierarchies. Indigenous peoples were forced into labor systems, including slavery, that exploited their labor and resources.

## **Consequences and Legacies**

The consequences of sovereignty and dispossession in the early modern Atlantic are deeply intertwined with the legacies of colonialism and imperialism. The European powers that established dominance in the Atlantic went on to create vast colonial empires, exploiting the lands and peoples they encountered.

The impacts of dispossession are still felt today. Indigenous communities in the Americas and Africa continue to fight for their rights and land, seeking justice for centuries of exploitation and marginalization. The cultural, economic, and social disparities resulting from early modern dispossession persist and contribute to ongoing struggles for sovereignty and self-determination.

## **The Importance of Remembering**

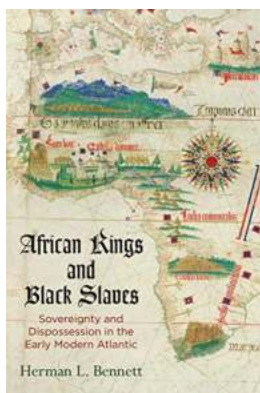
Understanding the history of sovereignty and dispossession in the early modern Atlantic is vital for comprehending the roots of our present global system. By acknowledging and learning from this history, we can work towards dismantling the structures of power and inequality that continue to marginalize certain communities.



Remembering the past also allows us to honor and support indigenous peoples who have fought and continue to fight for their rights and sovereignty.

Recognizing the voices and experiences of those who were dispossessed is crucial for building a more inclusive and equitable future.

The early modern Atlantic was a complex and contested space where sovereignty and dispossession shaped the course of history. Understanding the struggles and legacies of this period is essential for addressing the ongoing challenges of inequality and injustice in our world today.



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A thought-provoking reappraisal of the first European encounters with Africa

As early as 1441, and well before other European countries encountered Africa, small Portuguese and Spanish trading vessels were plying the coast of West Africa, where they conducted business with African kingdoms that possessed significant territory and power. In the process, Iberians developed an

understanding of Africa's political landscape in which they recognized specific sovereigns, plotted the extent and nature of their polities, and grouped subjects according to their ruler.

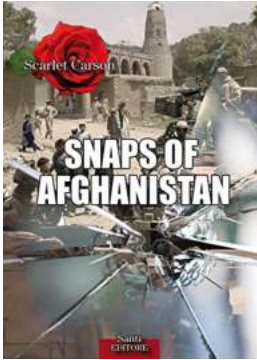
In *African Kings and Black Slaves*, Herman L. Bennett mines the historical archives of Europe and Africa to reinterpret the first century of sustained African-European interaction. These encounters were not simple economic transactions. Rather, according to Bennett, they involved clashing understandings of diplomacy, sovereignty, and politics. Bennett unearths the ways in which Africa's kings required Iberian traders to participate in elaborate diplomatic rituals, establish treaties, and negotiate trade practices with autonomous territories. And he shows how Iberians based their interpretations of African sovereignty on medieval European political precepts grounded in Roman civil and canon law. In the eyes of Iberians, the extent to which Africa's polities conformed to these norms played a significant role in determining who was, and who was not, a sovereign people—a judgment that shaped who could legitimately be enslaved.

Through an examination of early modern African-European encounters, *African Kings and Black Slaves* offers a reappraisal of the dominant depiction of these exchanges as being solely mediated through the slave trade and racial difference. By asking in what manner did Europeans and Africans configure sovereignty, polities, and subject status, Bennett offers a new depiction of the diasporic identities that had implications for slaves' experiences in the Americas.



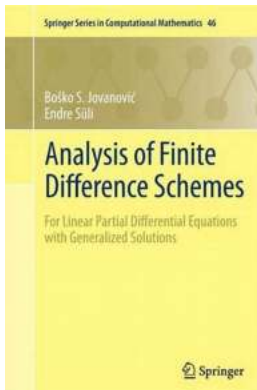
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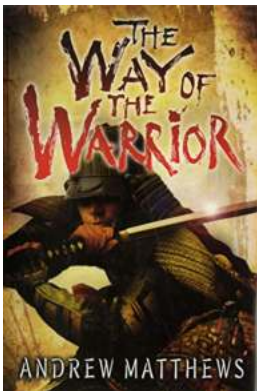
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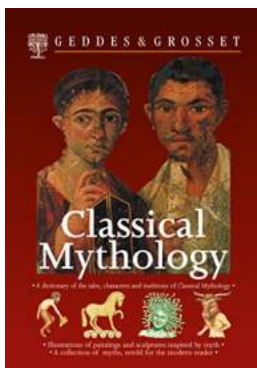
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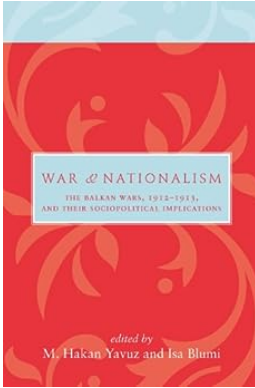
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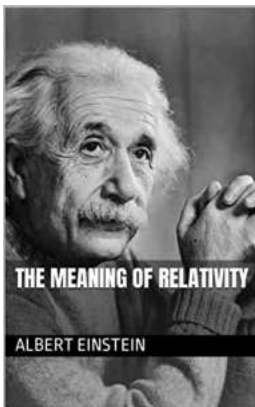
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