

Dark Bullion Podcast Study Guide

PROJECT OVERVIEW	1
EPISODE SUMMARIES & KEY THEMES	1
EP01: A PORTAL TO OBLIVION.....	1
EP02: WEST AFRICAN PEOPLES	2
EP03: CAPTIVE MARKETS.....	2
EP04: PAPER BULLS.....	2
QUIZ: SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS.....	3
ANSWER KEY (QUIZ)	3
ESSAY FORMAT QUESTIONS	4
DETAILED TIMELINE OF MAIN EVENTS	5
CAST OF CHARACTERS	7
GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS	9

Project Overview

The *Dark Bullion* podcast is a historical project that delves into the Atlantic slave trade, focusing on lesser-known themes and contradictions rather than the widely documented horrors. It begins in mid-17th century West Africa and utilizes AI-generated voices. The content is drawn from historical records, traveler accounts, and European enslavers' reports, aiming for historical accuracy while acknowledging conflicting interpretations among historians. The project seeks to present the complexity and contradictions of the past with care, without simplification.

Note on Terminology: For accessibility, the podcast uses "Voodoo," though "Vodou" or "Vodún" are the appropriate spellings in the context of West African religious traditions.

Episode Summaries & Key Themes

EP01: A PORTAL TO OBLIVION

- **Setting:** Ouidah, Dahomey, 1685 – a crucial West African trading port heavily involved in the Atlantic slave trade.
- **Dynamics:** Explores the complex relationships between European powers (e.g., Royal African Company, Portugal, France) and African rulers.
- **Trade:** Captives are exchanged for goods like weapons, rum, and tobacco. The European strategy of trading weapons to "divide, control, and conquer" is highlighted.
- **Rituals & Symbolism:** The "Tree of Oblivion" ritual (or "Tree of Forgetfulness") is detailed, intended to erase the memories and identities of enslaved people. The symbolic depiction of Black figures in European art is also discussed, often as subservient, asserting the wealth and status of the European sitter.
- **European Complicity:** King James II of England's direct involvement in the Royal African Company and the branding of enslaved people is revealed. Major European powers (Portugal, England, France, Spain, Dutch Republic, Denmark, Sweden, Brandenburg, Prussia) are all shown to be deeply involved.

EP02: WEST AFRICAN PEOPLES

- **Stereotypes vs. Reality:** Contrasts 17th-century European stereotypes of West African peoples (e.g., Yoruba as compliant, Coromantee as rebellious, Ibo as melancholic) with the rich diversity of actual West African cultures.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Examines the political systems, economies, traditions, and clothing of groups like the Yoruba, Fon, Mandé, Wolof, Serer, Hausa, Fulani, Kru, and Akan.
- **Resistance:** Highlights varying degrees of resistance to the Atlantic slave trade, such as the Mandé resisting large-scale enslavement longer and the Kru fiercely resisting it.
- **Internal Dynamics:** Discusses internal trade networks, linguistic diversity, and the complex reality of these kingdoms before the peak of the Atlantic slave trade.
- **Artistic Depiction:** Contrasts stereotypical European depictions of enslaved Africans (naked or minimally dressed) with more accurate representations in indigenous art forms like Ife Bronzes and Benin Plaques.

EP03: CAPTIVE MARKETS

- **Methods of Capture:** Details the brutal methods of obtaining captives, including warfare, kidnappings (often politically, religiously, or economically motivated), and false accusations of witchcraft.
- **Witchcraft Accusations:** Explores how accusations of witchcraft were leveraged to condemn innocent people to slavery, distinguishing between the European notion of witchcraft and the Vodou religion. Poison, water, and fire ordeals were used as "trials." Women were particularly vulnerable.
- **Market Dynamics:** Describes the assessment, bargaining, and exchange of enslaved people for various goods (cloth, firearms, beads, iron bars). The valuation of individuals based on perceived strength, age, and skills is discussed.
- **Trans-Saharan vs. Atlantic Slavery:** Briefly contrasts the Atlantic slave trade with the older Trans-Saharan slave trade and pre-existing local enslavement within West Africa, noting differences in social mobility and hereditary status.
- **Evasion & Resistance:** Highlights efforts by communities like the Tofinu people to evade enslavement by establishing water-based settlements (Ganvié).
- **Cycle of Violence:** Emphasizes the escalating violence and fear that characterized the trade, leading to longer marches inland and increased suffering.
- **Gender Roles:** Notes the male-dominated nature of European trading on the African coast, contrasting it with the presence of powerful female African merchants.

EP04: PAPER BULLS

- **Religious Justification:** Explores the Church's reinterpretation of the "Curse of Ham" (Genesis 9:20-27) as a divine justification for the enslavement of Black people, despite the original biblical text not mentioning skin color or Africa.
- **Biblical Contradictions:** Contrasts this reinterpretation with biblical passages explicitly against enslavement, such as Exodus 21:16, which was often banned from public reading in colonies.
- **Church Complicity:** Details the involvement of the Roman Catholic Church, including papal bulls endorsing subjugation (e.g., Pope Innocent VIII, Pope Alexander VI) and the Church of England's economic benefits from slave labor.

- **African Spiritual Traditions:** Examines West African spiritual traditions like Vodou, including gods like Hevioso and Sackpata, and the supreme creator Mawu-Lisa. The role of Legba as a gatekeeper is also discussed.
- **Survival & Resistance in the Americas:** Explains how enslaved Africans carried their spiritual traditions across the Atlantic, where they re-emerged as Vodou in Haiti, Santería in Cuba, and Candomblé in Brazil, often fused with Christianity as a strategy of survival and resistance.
- **Modern Reckoning:** Discusses the Church of England's recent (2019) internal investigation and formal admission of its financial ties to the slave trade, specifically through Queen Anne's Bounty and the South Sea Company. The debate around proposed reparations and historical revisionism is also covered.

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the primary objective of the *Dark Bullion* podcast project, and how does it differentiate itself from other narratives about the Atlantic slave trade?
2. Describe the "Tree of Oblivion" ritual practiced in Ouidah and its intended psychological effect on the enslaved captives.
3. How did European slave traders use the strategy of supplying weapons to African communities, as described in EP01?
4. EP02 discusses European stereotypes about West African peoples. Provide an example of a stereotype and contrast it with the actual cultural diversity mentioned.
5. What were some of the key methods used to capture people for enslavement in West Africa, as detailed in EP03?
6. Explain how accusations of witchcraft were utilized as a means of acquiring captives for the slave trade, and describe one type of "ordeal" mentioned.
7. How did the pre-existing system of local enslavement in West Africa differ from the chattel slavery introduced by the Atlantic slave trade?
8. According to EP04, how did the Church reinterpret the "Curse of Ham," and what was the consequence of this reinterpretation for the Atlantic slave trade?
9. Describe how African spiritual traditions like Vodou survived and adapted in the Americas despite the attempts by colonizers to suppress them.
10. What action did the Church of England take in 2019 regarding its historical ties to the slave trade, and what criticisms have been raised about this action?

Answer Key (Quiz)

1. The *Dark Bullion* podcast aims to explore lesser-known themes and contradictions of the Atlantic slave trade, rather than just revisiting its well-documented horrors. It seeks to present the past's complexity and contradictions without simplification, drawing from various historical sources.
2. The "Tree of Oblivion" ritual involved forcing captives to circle a giant tree (nine times for men, seven for women) before being shipped. Its intention was to erase all memory of their family, identity, and homeland, effectively "rebranding" them for enslavement.
3. European slave traders supplied weapons to African communities to achieve a twofold benefit: an instant supply of enslaved people, and arming warring tribes to fight more efficiently. This strategy of "divide, control, and conquer" guaranteed an endless stream of future captives for their trade.

4. One stereotype was that the Yoruba people were "religious, spiritual, somewhat resistant, but generally more compliant." In reality, West Africa was a vast region of diverse kingdoms, city-states, and profound traditions, with groups like the Yoruba being a network of closely related polities, not a single compliant tribe.
5. Primary methods of capture included warfare between rival tribes and kingdoms, kidnappings driven by political, religious, or economic conflicts, and false accusations of witchcraft. State-sponsored bounty hunters, bandits, and brigands also carried out raids.
6. Accusations of witchcraft were particularly effective because they allowed for the condemnation of innocent individuals to slavery, with the accused having little chance to prove innocence. One "ordeal" was the poison test, where the accused drank a substance; if they died, their guilt was confirmed, and their family was sold.
7. Local enslavement in West Africa often resembled indentured servitude, allowing for some social mobility, and children of the enslaved could sometimes be born free. In contrast, Atlantic chattel slavery codified individuals as permanent, hereditary movable property, with no possibility of social mobility.
8. The Church falsely reinterpreted the "Curse of Ham" from the Book of Genesis, claiming Ham was the ancestor of African peoples and that his curse justified their perpetual enslavement. This interpretation became a "divine endorsement" for slavery, allowing Christian empires to present it as acceptable and even beneficial for the souls of the enslaved through conversion.
9. Enslaved Africans carried their spiritual traditions across the Atlantic, where they re-emerged as syncretic religions like Vodou in Haiti, Santería in Cuba, and Candomblé in Brazil. They appeared to adopt Christianity as a protective strategy, reinterpreting Catholic saints as their own deities and masking possession rituals within Christian processions.
10. In 2019, the Church of England launched an internal investigation into its financial ties to the slave trade, leading to a formal admission of guilt regarding its investment in the South Sea Company through Queen Anne's Bounty. Criticisms include that the admission was not "full," only acknowledging a specific case rather than broader complicity, and that the proposed £1 billion fund for repair is a wish, not an allocated sum.

Essay Format Questions

Instructions: Choose one of the following questions and write a comprehensive essay addressing the prompt. Do not provide answers for these.

1. Analyze the complex and often contradictory roles played by both European and African actors in the Atlantic slave trade, drawing specific examples from the podcast to illustrate the dynamics of power, collaboration, and resistance.
2. Discuss how European religious institutions, particularly the Church, justified and perpetuated the Atlantic slave trade. How did this religious narrative contrast with other biblical interpretations and African spiritual traditions, and how did these traditions adapt in the Americas?
3. Examine the concept of "rebranding" in the context of the Atlantic slave trade, focusing on both the literal and symbolic ways enslaved Africans were stripped of their identity and how European art contributed to this dehumanization.
4. Compare and contrast the European stereotypes of West African peoples with the actual diversity and complexity of their societies as presented in the podcast. How did these stereotypes influence the market value and treatment of enslaved individuals?
5. The podcast highlights that "No words" adequately describe the suffering of the Atlantic slave trade. Discuss the various methods of capture and market dynamics

detailed in the podcast, explaining how these mechanisms contributed to the immense suffering and violence that defined the trade.

Detailed Timeline of Main Events

Mid-17th Century (c. 1650s):

- **Royal African Company established:** The Royal African Company, with King James II (then Duke of York) as a chief stockholder, is set up along the West Coast of Africa (Gold and Slave Coasts) to trade in gold and slaves. They install six forts on the Gold Coast and a post in Ouidah. Within 30 years, their income from slave trading surpasses that from gold.
- **European powers expand involvement:** Portugal, England, and France become firmly established in Ouidah, maintaining complex relations with African rulers. Other European empires like Spain, the Dutch Republic, Denmark, Sweden, and Brandenburg-Prussia also set up slave trading companies and forts along the Gold Coast.

Early Centuries of Christianity (Approx. 1st - 10th Century AD):

- **"Curse of Ham" interpretation:** The biblical passage Genesis 9:20-27 (the "Curse of Ham") is primarily interpreted as a moral story of family respect, with no mention of skin color or Africa.

Before the Atlantic Slave Trade peaked:

- **Thriving West African societies:** Yoruba, Fon, Mandé, Wolof, Serer, Hausa, Fulani, Kru, and Akan peoples have established and thriving societies with diverse political systems, economies, beliefs, and rich cultural traditions.
- **Trans-Saharan Slave Trade:** The trans-Saharan slave trade operates for centuries, transporting captives to North Africa, the Mediterranean Coast, Europe, Arabia, and the Western Hemisphere.
- **Local Enslavement in West Africa:** A system of local enslavement exists, differing from chattel slavery. It sometimes resembles indentured servitude, allowing for social mobility and the possibility of children of the enslaved being born free.

Middle Ages onwards (Approx. 11th Century AD - 17th Century AD):

- **Church reinterprets "Curse of Ham":** The Roman Catholic Church begins to falsely claim that Ham was the ancestor of African peoples and that his supposed curse justifies the perpetual enslavement of Black people, accelerating this interpretation with the rise of the transatlantic slave trade. This interpretation allows Christian empires to justify slavery as both acceptable and beneficial for the souls of the enslaved.

Late 15th Century:

- **Pope Innocent VIII's complicity:** Pope Innocent VIII receives enslaved Africans as a gift from the Spanish monarchy and distributes them among his cardinals and Roman elites, thereby sanctioning human chattel slavery.

Late 15th Century - Early Stages of Atlantic Slave Trade:

- **Roman Catholic Church's contradictory role:** The Church issues papal bulls endorsing the subjugation of non-Christian peoples, while sporadically condemning certain forms of slavery with narrow limits.

- **Pope Alexander VI's indirect validation of slavery:** Pope Alexander VI's papal bulls, though not explicitly endorsing slavery, are routinely interpreted by colonial powers to justify the lifelong bondage of people in the Americas and the colonization of the New World.

Beginning of 17th Century:

- **Queen Amina of Hausa city-states:** The warrior queen Amina, known for refusing to marry and choosing temporary husbands from vanquished foes, reigns until this period.

October, 1685 (Ouidah, Dahomey):

- **The slave ship *Prosperous*:** The ship, commanded by Captain Henry Clarke for the Royal African Company, awaits captives at the Port of Ouidah.
- **King James II's role:** King James II of England is the governor and chief stockholder of the Royal African Company. As Duke of York, he branded enslaved people with "D-O-Y."
- **"Code Noir" established by King Louis XIV:** King Louis XIV of France establishes the "Black Code" (Code Noir) to regulate slavery in the French Caribbean, defining enslaved people as movable property and authorizing owners to punish or mutilate them.
- **Salem witch hunts:** Coincidentally, in late 17th-century Massachusetts, the Salem village witch hunts intensify, also driven by power, revenge, and settling grudges. Puritans reinterpret Leviticus 25:46 to justify chattel enslavement.

18th Century:

- **Church of England's prominence in slave trade:** The Church of England becomes more prominent as Britain dominates the transatlantic trade, with Anglican clergy and bishops benefiting financially from enslaved labor on colonial plantations.
- **Queen Anne's Bounty:** A Church of England fund (Queen Anne's Bounty) invests heavily in the South Sea Company, which transports over 34,000 enslaved Africans.

1960s:

- **Ouidah Museum of History established:** The Ouidah Museum of History, dedicated to exploring the legacy of enslavement, is established at the site of the former Portuguese Fort (o Forte de São João Baptista de Ajudá) in Ouidah.

20th Century:

- **Replanting of the Tree of Oblivion:** The original Tree of Oblivion is replanted to commemorate its significance.

2019:

- **Church of England's internal investigation:** The Church of England launches an internal investigation into its financial ties to the slave trade.
- **Formal admission of guilt (partial):** The Church formally admits guilt for its connection to Queen Anne's Bounty's investment in the South Sea Company, but does not address its broader complicity.
- **Proposed reparations fund:** The Church initially proposes a £100 million fund, later revised to £1 billion (a wish, not an allocated sum).

June 2, 2024:

- **Tree of Oblivion uprooted:** The replanted Tree of Oblivion in Ouidah is found uprooted and split in two after a night of heavy rain, described as an "incomprehensible phenomenon" by a local Vodou dignitary, as the tree was "supposed to live forever." This event is linked to Hevioso, the Vodou god of thunder, lightning, and rain, manifesting his wrath.

Present Day (2025):

- **Ongoing historical revisionism:** Historical revisionists continue to minimize, deny, or dilute the Church of England's historical responsibility for its involvement in slavery.

Cast of Characters

Historical Figures & Groups:

- **King James II of England (formerly Duke of York):** Monarch of England and chief stockholder/governor of the Royal African Company in the mid-1600s. He was personally involved in the slave trade, having branded enslaved people with his initials "D-O-Y."
- **King Louis XIV of France:** Established the "Code Noir" (Black Code), which regulated slavery in the French Caribbean and defined enslaved people as movable property.
- **Captain Henry Clarke:** Commander of the slave ship *Prosperous*, operating on behalf of the Royal African Company in Ouidah in 1685.
- **Françoise Marie de Bourbon:** A noblewoman depicted in a European aristocratic portrait, shown with a young Black page boy, a common representation asserting wealth and status during the period of the slave trade.
- **Pope Innocent VIII:** A late 15th-century Roman Catholic Pope who personally received enslaved Africans as gifts from the Spanish monarchy and distributed them among his cardinals, thereby sanctioning human chattel.
- **Pope Alexander VI:** A morally corrupt Roman Catholic Pope from the late 15th/early 16th century, known for his affairs and advancing his family's fortunes. His papal bulls, though not explicitly endorsing slavery, were interpreted by colonial powers to validate enslavement and colonization.
- **Queen Amina:** A warrior queen who reigned over Hausa city-states until the early 17th century. She was known for refusing marriage and choosing temporary husbands from vanquished foes.
- **Noah (Biblical Figure):** Figure from the Book of Genesis whose story of drunkenness and Ham's actions led to the "Curse of Ham," later reinterpreted by the Church to justify African enslavement.
- **Ham (Biblical Figure):** Son of Noah, whose supposed actions led to his son Canaan being cursed. The Church falsely claimed Ham was the ancestor of African peoples to justify slavery.
- **Canaan (Biblical Figure):** Son of Ham, cursed by Noah. The "Curse of Ham" was erroneously linked to the enslavement of African people.
- **Hevioso:** The Vodou god of thunder, lightning, and rain in Dahomey, believed to have manifested his wrath in the uprooting of the Tree of Oblivion in 2024.
- **Sakpata:** The Vodou divinity of smallpox, capable of healing or inflicting insanity and disease.
- **Mawu / Mawu-Lisa:** The single great creator in Fon belief, representing the moon and sun, mother and father in one. People do not pray directly to them.

- **Legba (Papa Legba):** The gatekeeper between the creator (Mawu-Lisa) and humanity in Vodou. He stands at spiritual crossroads, granting or denying permission to speak with spirits, and is believed to speak all human languages.
- **African Rulers/Kings:** Maintained complex working relations with European slave trading powers in Ouidah. They were involved in trading captives for weapons.
- **African Traders/Merchants:** Operated independently or as part of established merchant families, bringing captives to European buyers on the coast. Some inflated the value of captives; female African merchants were actively present at markets.
- **European Slave Traders:** Established in Ouidah, they traded goods like weapons and alcohol for captives. They also stereotyped African peoples based on perceived traits to influence market value.
- **Yoruba People:** A cultural and linguistic group from Southwestern Nigeria, Benin, and Togo, known for their oral traditions, divination systems, and complex art forms. Stereotyped by Europeans as religious, spiritual, somewhat resistant but compliant, suitable for varied tasks.
- **Coromantee People:** From the Gold Coast (Ghana), stereotyped by Europeans as strong, brave, resilient, but rebellious and prone to uprisings, used for hard labor and requiring harsh punishments.
- **Ibo People:** Stereotyped by Europeans as less physically strong, prone to melancholy and suicide, preferred for domestic work due to perceived docility.
- **Fon People:** From Dahomey, in Southern West Africa, known as traders, warriors, and rulers of emerging coastal kingdoms. Their religious fears of water were exploited by groups like the Tofinu.
- **Mandé Peoples (including Mandingo):** Descendants of the Mali Empire, from further north in West Africa. Merchants, blacksmiths, and scholars who spread Islam and trade. They resisted large-scale European enslavement longer than many others.
- **Wolof and Serer Ethnic Groups:** Controlled West coastal areas of Senegambia (Senegal and The Gambia), farmers, warriors, and fishermen, balancing Islamic and ancestral traditions.
- **Hausa People:** From city-states in present-day Nigeria and Niger, merchants and metal workers connected to the trans-Saharan trade.
- **Fulani People:** Nomadic herders, tall, slender, and lighter-skinned, among the first West African ethnic groups to widely adopt Islam. Some actively participated in the Atlantic slave trade but drew the line at trading Muslim people.
- **Kru People:** From the Ivory Coast, known as seafarers and traders who fiercely resisted the slave trade.
- **Akan People:** From the Gold Coast, predominantly gold miners, traders, and warriors, known for their Kente cloth.
- **Tofinu People (Ajitado group):** An ingenious group that evaded slave raids by creating stilt villages in the water, such as Ganvié, exploiting the Fon people's religious fears of water.
- **Puritans:** In 17th-century Massachusetts, they engaged in witch hunts and adopted chattel enslavement of Africans, reinterpreting biblical passages to justify subjugation.
- **Church of England Clergy/Bishops:** In the 18th century, they reaped economic benefits from enslaved labor on plantations and invested church funds in slave trading companies.
- **South Sea Company:** An 18th-century company trading in enslaved people, in which Queen Anne's Bounty (a Church of England fund) heavily invested, transporting over 34,000 Africans.

- **Historical Revisionists:** Individuals or groups who attempt to minimize, deny, or dilute the Church of England's historical responsibility for its involvement in slavery, often using selective data and unsourced claims.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Akan People:** An ethnic group from the Gold Coast (modern-day Ghana), known for gold mining, trade, and warrior traditions. Their kings wore kente cloth.
- **Akissowa:** One of the AI-generated voices in the *Dark Bullion* podcast, often providing historical context or narrative points.
- **Atlantic Slave Trade (Transatlantic Slave Trade):** The forced migration of millions of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas, lasting from the 16th to the 19th centuries.
- **Barracoön:** A type of barracks or enclosure used for holding enslaved people before their forced transportation across the Atlantic.
- **Candomblé:** An Afro-Brazilian religion developed in Brazil by enslaved Africans, incorporating elements of African spiritual traditions.
- **Captives/Enslaved People:** Individuals forcibly taken from their homes and subjected to slavery. The podcast avoids "slaves" to emphasize their humanity.
- **Chattel Slavery:** A system of slavery in which enslaved people are treated as personal property, able to be bought, sold, and inherited. This was a key characteristic of the Atlantic slave trade.
- **Christopher:** One of the AI-generated voices in the *Dark Bullion* podcast, often providing historical context or narrative points.
- **Code Noir (Black Code):** Established by King Louis XIV of France, this set of regulations governed slavery in the French Caribbean, defining enslaved people as movable property and authorizing owners to punish or mutilate them.
- **Coromantee People:** A European categorization for enslaved people from the Gold Coast (Ghana), often stereotyped as strong, rebellious, and prone to uprisings.
- **Curse of Ham:** A biblical narrative (Genesis 9:20-27) that was misinterpreted by the Church to justify the enslavement of Black people by falsely associating Ham with African peoples and a perpetual curse.
- **Dahomey:** A powerful West African kingdom (located in present-day Benin) that played a significant role in the Atlantic slave trade, particularly through its port of Ouidah.
- **Dark Bullion:** The title of the historical podcast project.
- **Fon People:** An ethnic group from Dahomey, known as traders, warriors, and rulers of coastal kingdoms. They speak the Fon language.
- **Fulani People:** A nomadic ethnic group in West Africa, known for herding and being among the first to widely adopt Islam. Some Fulani participated in the slave trade while drawing a line at trading Muslim people.
- **Ganvié:** A stilt village founded by the Tofinu people in a lagoon in Benin, created as an ingenious method of evading slave raids due to the Fon people's religious fears of water.
- **Gold Coast:** A historical name for a region of coastal West Africa, roughly corresponding to modern Ghana, known for its gold resources and later for its involvement in the slave trade.
- **Harriet:** One of the AI-generated voices in the *Dark Bullion* podcast, often providing historical context or narrative points.

- **Hausa People:** An ethnic group from city-states in present-day Nigeria and Niger, known as merchants, metalworkers, and for their richly embroidered clothing and ornate shields.
- **Hevioso:** The Vodou god of thunder, lightning, and rain in Dahomey, mentioned in relation to the Tree of Oblivion's destruction.
- **Ibo People:** An ethnic group from present-day Nigeria, often stereotyped by Europeans as less physically strong, prone to melancholy, and suicide.
- **Ifé Bronzes:** Highly sophisticated bronze sculptures created by the Yoruba people, offering accurate representations of indigenous hairstyles and adornments.
- **Kente Cloth:** A brightly-colored, handwoven textile of silk and cotton, characteristic of the Akan people of the Gold Coast.
- **King James II of England:** A key figure and chief stockholder of the Royal African Company, directly involved in the slave trade and the branding of enslaved people.
- **Kru People (K.R.U.):** Seafarers and traders from the Ivory Coast, noted for fiercely resisting the slave trade.
- **Legba (Papa Legba):** In Vodou, the gatekeeper spirit between the creator and humanity, standing at a spiritual crossroads and granting or denying permission to speak with the spirits.
- **Mandé Peoples:** A large group of culturally and linguistically related people in West Africa (including the Mandingo), known as merchants, blacksmiths, and scholars who spread Islam and trade. They resisted large-scale European enslavement longer than many.
- **Mawu-Lisa:** In Fon belief, the single great creator, seen as moon and sun, mother and father in one. People do not pray to them directly.
- **Ouidah:** A key West African trading port in Dahomey, deeply involved in the Atlantic slave trade, serving as a hub for European powers.
- **Papal Bulls:** Official decrees or letters issued by the Pope, some of which endorsed the subjugation of non-Christian peoples, thus legitimizing the slave trade for colonial powers.
- **Pawns:** Relatives or associates left by African traders on European slave ships as a guarantee against receiving goods (like weapons) in advance of delivering captives.
- **Royal African Company:** A British mercantile company chartered in the mid-17th century, holding a monopoly on the English slave trade and responsible for shipping the greatest number of enslaved Africans to the Americas.
- **Sackpata:** The Vodou divinity of smallpox, capable of both healing and inflicting insanity and disease.
- **Santería:** An Afro-Cuban religion developed in Cuba by enslaved Africans, incorporating elements of African spiritual traditions, particularly Yoruba.
- **Serer People:** An ethnic group controlling coastal areas of Senegambia, known as farmers, warriors, and fishermen, balancing Islamic and ancestral traditions.
- **South Sea Company:** A British trading company in which Queen Anne's Bounty (a Church of England fund) heavily invested, despite the company's significant involvement in transporting enslaved Africans.
- **Tofinu People:** Part of the Ajitado group, known for their ingenious method of evading slave raids by building settlements on water, forming Ganvié.
- **Trans-Saharan Slave Trade:** An older slave trade network that transported captives across the Sahara Desert to North Africa, predating the Atlantic slave trade by centuries.

- **Tree of Oblivion (Tree of Forgetfulness):** A Vodou ritual site in Ouidah where enslaved captives were forced to circle a tree, intended to make them forget their past and identity.
- **Vodou/Vodún:** The appropriate spellings for the complex West African religious tradition, used interchangeably with "Voodoo" for accessibility in the podcast. It is a religion, not merely "witchcraft."
- **Wolof People:** An ethnic group controlling coastal areas of Senegambia, known as farmers, warriors, and fishermen, balancing Islamic and ancestral traditions.
- **Yoruba People:** A large cultural and linguistic group whose heartland is in Southwestern Nigeria, known for highly developed oral traditions, divination systems, and complex art forms. Stereotyped by Europeans as compliant but were a network of related polities.