

# The French Atlantic Triangle 1640 -- (1794-1802) -- 1848

## The *Exclusif*

France → West Africa (Gorée) → Antilles → France

1. European trading products loaded onto the slave boat in Nantes, Bordeaux, etc.
2. In West Africa cowry shells, gunpowder, cloth, silk traded for slaves
3. In the Antilles, 1 boat of slaves traded for 3 boats of colonial goods (sugar, coffee, cotton, indigo) which were sent back to France.

- *Le commerce en droiture* (ships that only travel between the Antilles and France)
- Direct commerce between the Antilles & Africa was strictly banned.
- Everything had to pass through the French “metropole” (and it still does) (55).

1640 – 1700: the French took 75,000 slaves into their colonies.

1700 – 1760: 388,000 slaves taken.

1781 – 1790: 27,000 were taken annually to Saint-Domingue between

- French took a total of **1.1 million slaves**
- **150,000** died on French ships during the Middle Passage
- Total slaves taken in the 1700s internationally was 6,000,000 (e.g. 80,000 per year).
- Captives were boarded naked and with no possessions; slaves were tattooed & branded on the ship

## Time & Distance:

- 3,200 miles from Senegambia to the Antilles: 25 days to 9 months (70 day average)
- In 1774 it took 8 months to accumulate 566 captives on the *Suzanne-Marguerite* (41)

## The Code Noir of 1685

Article 1: Jews are expelled from the colonies.

Article 2: It is ordered that all slaves be baptized and instructed as Roman Catholics.

Article 3: The exercise of all other religions is banned.

There was a strict **interdiction of literacy** (except for branding, Jean Fouchard 1953:97)  
Conditions were anything but conducive to human reproduction, requiring constant slave imports

“The first Europeans to trade in Africa enmeshed themselves in the practices of existing Muslim systems” (46)

“...the African slaves’ loss is the European’s gain – in money, happiness and freedom” (56)

“...Slavery... gave free men, especially the class of Muslim clerics, the leisure to devote themselves entirely to the study of the Koran...” (57)