Abstract

The study of the African diaspora has become a vibrant area of research and teaching in recent years across the disciplines. However, geographical contributions remain few. This article seeks to reverse that trend. Relevant work by geographers on the Black Atlantic is reviewed to identify promising themes for research. The dispersal of African plants, and the role of the enslaved in establishing them, holds particular promise. This research direction clarifies the African components of the Columbian Exchange while drawing attention to the importance of subsistence in the transatlantic slave trade and plantation economies. Foodstaples of African origin served subsistence as well as memory. African plants are featured prominently in diasporic foodways, the liturgical practices of Afro-syncretic religions, and in Maroon oral histories.

Keywords

African Diaspora, plants, Columbian Exchange, geography, subsistence