

Impact case study (REF3b)

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| Institution: University of Hull |
| Unit of Assessment: D30: History |
| Title of case study: Tracking and visualizing transatlantic flows of enslaved Africans 1500-1867 |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Two of the UOA's research outputs - the <i>Slave Voyages</i> website (2008) and the <i>Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade</i> (2010) - not only transformed knowledge and understanding of the movements of enslaved Africans, but also generated a wealth of documentary, visual and statistical material relating to this human trafficking business, c.1500-1867. These research findings are disseminated through media as diverse as searchable webpages, educational packs, artistic exhibitions, TV features, newspaper reports and theatre performances. The far-reaching impact of the research benefits schoolchildren, policy-makers, theatre-goers, arts communities and the general public across the globe.</p> |
| <p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The launch online in 2007-08 of a multi-source database of 35,000 transatlantic slave voyages (www.slavevoyages.org) was the culmination of a collaborative international project ([A] in section 3). Led primarily by Professors David Eltis (Emory) and David Richardson (Hull), with inputs from Professor Stephen Behrendt (now Wellington, New Zealand), the project aimed to track the scale, composition and direction of enslaved people trafficked between Africa and the Americas down to 1867. Available to anyone with access to a computer, the database became the basis of several publications [C] [D] [E], including an <i>Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade</i> published by Eltis and Richardson in 2010 [B]. First conceived in 2004-05, when Richardson was visiting fellow at Yale, the <i>Atlas</i> was designed to maximise public awareness of one of history's greatest crimes against humanity. It comprises 189 newly drawn maps, together with tables and pictographs, which illustrate how the slave trade operated and its principal routes.</p> <p>Specific findings highlighted by the <i>Atlas</i> are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the breadth of acceptance and patterns of concentration of trafficking of enslaved Africans in the Atlantic world, notably the relative standing of ports in Europe and the Americas as outfitting centres for slaving voyages and the patterns of their connections with primary slave embarkation centres in Africa; • the size, age and gender composition of flows of slaves between specific African ports and their American counterparts; • the human costs of transatlantic slave trafficking, as well as the capacity of Africans to resist and survive enslavement; • the processes by which the Atlantic slave trade was dismantled and ended. <p>More generally, the database and the <i>Atlas</i> underline the value of digital approaches to studying the humanities; reinforce and refine the role of Africa and Africans in shaping Atlantic history [F]; and provide new resources for comparative approaches to the study of slavery and other forms of forced labour, past and present, and their global legacies.</p> <p>Research in constructing the slave voyages database began in 1993. Translation of the database into a website and then atlas format occurred in 2006-10. The History UOA at Hull and (since 2005) the University's Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE), of which Richardson was director until 2012, were vital to the delivery of both. While at Emory, Eltis served as part-time research professor at Hull from 1995 to 2005. External grants in 2001-05, for which Richardson and Eltis were Principal Investigators, allowed the buy-in of graduate student support for data collection in Africa, Brazil, Cuba and Europe, some of it supervised by Professor Manolo Florentino (Universidade Federal Rio de Janeiro). Recent research grants to Hull from the EU (with Richardson as PI) will allow continuing investment in related projects going forward.</p> |
| <p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>[A] David Eltis, David Richardson, Stephen D. Behrendt, and Manolo Florentino, <i>The Transatlantic Slave Trade: an Enhanced and On-line Database</i> (2008) http://www.slavevoyages.org</p> <p>[B] David Eltis and David Richardson, <i>Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade</i> (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2010), with foreword by David Brion Davis and Afterword by David W. Blight, pp.xxvi + 307.</p> <p>[C] David Eltis and David Richardson, editors, <i>Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New</i></p> |

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Transatlantic Slave Trade Database (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2008), pp. xv + 377.

[D] David Eltis, Philip Morgan and David Richardson, 'Black, Brown or White? Color-Coding American Commercial Rice Cultivation with Slave Labor', *American Historical Review*, 115, no. 1 (2010), 164-171.

[E] David Richardson, 'Involuntary Migration in the Early Modern World, 1500-1800', in David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery, Volume 3, AD 1420-AD 1804* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp.563-593.

[F] David Eltis, Philip Morgan, and David Richardson, 'Agency and Diaspora in Atlantic History: Reassessing the African Contribution to Rice Cultivation in the Americas', *American Historical Review*, 112, no.4 (2007), 1329-1358.

The high quality of the research underpinning the impacts is evidenced by:

Research grants

- c. £450,000 in 2001-04 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Wellcome Trust to Hull to support data collection relating to slave voyages;
- \$346,000 in 2006-8 from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to Emory for the design of the voyages website;
- c. \$100,000 in 2006-10 from internal Yale grant funds, Yale's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and the Papenfuse Foundation, to assist in its conversion into the *Atlas*.

International prizes won by the *Atlas*:

- 2010 Association of American Publishers PROSE award for Excellence in Reference Works.
- 2010 Association of American Publishers PROSE award for Single Volume Reference (Humanities and Social Sciences).
- 2010 R.R Hawkins prize, Association of American Publishers, chosen out of 491 entrants, as 'an inspiring example of the extraordinary level of excellence honored by the Hawkins prize'.
- 2011 Anisfield-Wolf book awards (Cleveland Foundation) for non-fiction, awarded for contributions to 'understanding of racism and appreciation of the rich diversity of human cultures'.
- 2011-12 Louis Gottschalk prize, American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, awarded for 'an outstanding historical or critical study on the eighteenth century'.
- 2012 James A Rawley prize for Atlantic History, American Historical Association, 'to recognize outstanding historical writing that explores aspects of integration of Atlantic worlds before the 20th century'.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Slave Voyages has transformed at all levels the evidential base for studying the Atlantic slave trade and in ways that improve access to and representation of data in multiple formats to diverse audiences. Historian Bernard Bailyn (Harvard) sees analogies between the project's impact on understanding slavery historically and the Hubble Space telescope's impact on astronomy. For fellow Harvard professor, Henry Louis Gates Jr, the *Atlas* is 'the Rosetta Stone of slave historiography', while Professor Trevor Burnard (Melbourne), leading historian of the West Indies, sees it as a 'monument to multi-author and multi-disciplinary research' and 'one of the great historical achievements of our time'.

The mechanisms through which *Slave Voyages* and the associated *Atlas* have impacted public understanding of slavery include public lectures, conferences, educational outreach, exhibits and memorials, artistic performance and academic publications. Beneficiaries range from scholars to teachers and students and informed members of the public with an interest in the history of slavery and the slave trade. This activity can be summarised as follows:

To date, over 2.2 million people have visited the *Slave Voyages* website, with a mean pages per view of 7-8. It is also listed in major research guides on the slave trade, including those produced by both the National Archives and the New York Public Library – and has been cited in teaching resources produced in the United States (see, for example, www.usd116.org/profdev/ahtc/resources/MiddlePassagesites.htm). The *Atlas*, in particular, has generated worldwide interest. It was a featured news story on CNN in January 2011 and generated

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over 3,000 comments on CNN's notice board. The American Public Broadcasting System (PBS) ran a feature on the *Atlas*, while it was covered in newspapers and journals, among them the *Trinidad Express* (16 January 2011) and *Humanities*, the official magazine of the US National Endowment for the Humanities. Richardson and Eltis supported the *Atlas* through public lectures – e.g. Case Western Reserve University, September 2011 – and TV and radio interviews.

The *Slave Voyages* database and the *Atlas* have had a broader cultural impact, not just in schools but also in the arts community. For instance, they provided the inspiration behind the Hull sponsored 'Cargo' project, which involved collaboration with acclaimed musician and songwriter Paul Field in producing and performing an original music and dance score relating to slavery past and present. Employing local young people, 'Cargo' has been performed professionally to over 70,000 people at more than 100 venues worldwide. The database and *Atlas* have also informed the creation and presentation of public memorials commemorating the slave trade, notably the permanent Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery in Nantes, which includes 1,710 commemorative transparent plaques of Nantes slaving expeditions (with names and dates taken from the database) located in walkways, as well as maps modelled on the transatlantic flows of slaves charted in the *Atlas*.

The research findings of Richardson and Eltis have informed exhibitions on the transatlantic slave trade, most notably the joint Hull-Connecticut Venture Smith exhibit presented at Black History month events in Washington, DC (February 2011), Hull's History Centre (October 2011) and the Marcus Garvey Library, London (October 2012). Richardson's involvement in the Venture Smith project has broadened in 2013 to include the preparation of materials distributed to all state schools and libraries in Connecticut to guide the teaching of slavery. Backed by the state's senators and congressmen, 800 educational packages have so far been distributed.

Slave Voyages and the *Atlas* have been used by WISE to inform educational engagement with 35 Hull and East Riding schools on the citizenship/history curriculum. Engagement included attendance in November 2009 by two teachers and four pupils from St. Mary's College, Hull, at 'Bridging Two Oceans', an international conference organised by WISE in Cape Town, South Africa.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [i] <http://urlmetrics.co.uk/www.slavevoyages.org>
- [ii] <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/education/1807-rationale.pdf>
- [iii] <http://abolition.nypl.org/links>
- [iv] <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/01/05/eltis.richardson.slave.trade/index.html>
- [v] http://www.voicebase.com/voice_file/public_detail/22238/refine/%22david+richardson%22
- [vi] http://www.trinidadexpress.com/sunday-mix/New_Revelations_About_Slaves_Slave_Trade-113857434.html
- [vii] <http://www.neh.gov/humanities/2010/septemberoctober/features/gross-injustice>
- [viii] http://www.cleveland.com/books/index.ssf/2011/top_authors_to_speak_in_cleveland
- [ix] Data supplied by and available from Dr Nigel Shaw (Hull). A CD of 'Cargo' was released by Nearfield Records in 2007-8. The sleeve notes reference Richardson's input into the project.
- [x] <http://memorial.nantes.fr/en/le-memorial/decouvrir-le-memorial/le-parcours-commemoratif>
- [xi] <http://www2.hull.ac.uk/news-and-events-1/news-archive/2009-news-archive/november/bridging-two-oceans.aspx>