

Enslaved Africans across the Atlantic world

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We already mentioned in the past about the theme of the slave trade heritage digitization projects, that is a topic of extensive research especially for American Institutions. One of these projects developed the site www.slavevoyages.org, that is a database built in three years of development by a multi-disciplinary team.



I was personally very impressed with the project description: "This digital memorial raises questions about the largest slave trades in history and offers access to the documentation available to answer them. European colonizers turned to Africa for enslaved laborers to build the cities and extract the resources of the Americas. They forced millions of mostly unnamed Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas, and from one part of the Americas to another. Analyze these slave trades and view interactive maps, timelines, and animations to see the dispersal in action".

Introductory Maps

Source: David Eltis and David Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven, 2010), reproduced with the permission of Yale University Press.

Map 1: Overview of the slave trade out of Africa, 1500-1900
Captives followed many routes from their homelands to other parts of the world. The map shows the trans-Atlantic or Indian Ocean routes from 1500 to 1900. Estimates of the ocean-borne trade are more robust than are those for the trans-Saharan, Red Sea and Persian Gulf to 1900 about the same number of captives crossed the Atlantic, as left Africa by all other routes combined.

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Map 2: Migration of sugar cultivation from Asia into the Atlantic
Sugar cultivation began in the Pacific in the pre-Christian era and gradually spread to the eastern Mediterranean, the Gulf of Persia, and the Indian Ocean. Eighty percent of all captives carried from Africa were taken to sugar-growing areas.

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Map 3: Old World slave trade routes in the Atlantic before 1759
Before the Atlantic slave trade began and for two centuries thereafter, some African captives were taken to Europe as well as estimates of these flows, but they were certainly much smaller than the trans-Atlantic traffic. Many of the captives involved in the trans-Atlantic trade were taken to the Americas.

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You can immediately notice that the home page has a very captivating design and the graphic reflects the theme treated, starting from the strong contrast between the black background containing in transparency an image of a slave ship and the white of the caption. Through this page we have access to a large amount of resources such as maps, 3D video, timeline.

The section titled "Introductory Maps" permits to be aware of the slave trade since 1500. These maps show us not only the slavery trade routes in the Atlantic, but also the number of the slaves from Africa and Asia to America and Intra-America slave trade. We can have an idea of how ships were, viewing a 3D Video reconstruction of the slave vessel *L'Aurore*. A particular timeline shows the number of captives embarked and disembarked per year and it permits to understand the number of people who died along the voyages.



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Website: <https://www.slavevoyages.org>