

Atlantic Cataclysm

In this comprehensive work, David Eltis offers a 2,000-year perspective on the trafficking of people, and boldly intervenes in the expansive discussions about slavery in the last half-century. Using new and underexplored data made available by slavevoyages.org, Eltis offers compelling explanations of why the slave trades began and why they ended, and in the process debunks long-held assumptions, including how bilateral rather than triangular voyages were the norm, and how the Portuguese rather than the British were the leading slave traders. Eltis argues that two-thirds of all enslaved people ended up in the Iberian Americas, where exports were most valuable throughout the slave trade era, and not in the Caribbean or the United States. Tracing the mass involvement of people in the slave trade business from all parts of the Atlantic world, Eltis also examines the agency of Africans and their experiences in the aftermath of liberation.

David Eltis is Professor Emeritus at Emory University and the University of British Columbia. He is a founding member of www.slavevoyages.org, a publicly accessible transatlantic slave trade database. His three previous books have won twelve prizes, including the Frederick Douglass award.

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Rethinking the Atlantic Slave Trades

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