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Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade by David Eltis and David Richardson (review)

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people, resources, and infrastructure in the war's prosecution, is properly acknowledged.

The volume's major strength is that its chapters take broad themes (such as labor) and examine them across Africa and the various European imperial divisions that pertained at the time. Countries and regions featured include Cameroon, Equatorial Africa, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, French West Africa, Kenya, Portuguese Africa, Sierra Leone (Freetown, specifically), Tanzania, Eritrea, Niger, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda. This breadth means that when it comes to "flying the flag" for Africa's role in World War II the volume has greater traction than the many single-colony articles and books. It is also impressive in the ways in which it deepens our knowledge of the war. Even specialists will find new research here, especially on issues relating to the production of food and raw materials (including rubber, coal, and timber), both for the war effort and for subsistence, and the labor that it involved. Its major themes are the military and labor utility of Africans for the war effort, and the experiences of African soldiers and civilians recruited for local and overseas war-related purposes (including the plight of disabled ex-servicemen). There is also a chapter on the experience of African American servicemen stationed in Africa, one on French African soldiers in German prisoner of war camps, and one on Ethiopian women's patriot organizations. Another key theme is the effects of war on African societies and economies, and this embraces matters of gender as well as race, with chapters relating to masculinity, colonial fears regarding African soldiers' interaction with French women, and sex workers in British West Africa.

The historiography of World War II is at a crossroads. It can continue to focus overwhelmingly on the battles, strategies, personalities, and home fronts of the major Western belligerents. Or it can branch off and embrace the war histories of other regions and peoples, and get properly to grips with the conflict's extraordinary globality. *Africa and World War II* is a significant book, offering a genuine advance in the field of scholarship relating to Africa and World War II, and it will contribute to the emergence of a new history of the conflict that puts Africa in its proper place.

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David Eltis and David Richardson. *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010; 2015. xxvi + 336 pp. Maps. Illustrations. Glossary. Index. $35.00. Paper. ISBN: 978-0300212549.

The *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* is the culmination of decades of archival research and international collaboration among scholars, led by

David Eltis and colleagues. Though the data for the book are available online for free (www.slavevoyages.org), the repackaging of that data into 189 visually stunning maps and nine tables, complemented by some forty-two vignettes, has earned the creators of the *Atlas* a vast amount of praise and numerous awards. Like the human genome project, which focused on DNA sequencing through international collaboration and pooling of data, the *Atlas* is a testament to the value of collaborative effort, and book reviewers and endorsers have called it "monumental," "marvelous," "superb," "sophisticated," "erudite," "groundbreaking," and of "immeasurable value." It is possible that the *Atlas*'s accolades, however, may inspire too much self-congratulation and not enough humility toward the human lives transformed into data sets. Both the genome project and the *Atlas* are based on decades of research, but both also have limitations. The genome project, for example, has identified most genes, but the sequencing is not fully understood; we know comparatively little about the full functions of their proteins, and the human genome of most individuals remains uniquely unmapped. The *Atlas*, likewise, has mapped the economic contours of transatlantic slaving using available data, but there is a great deal of missing data; it cannot account adequately for the first century of slaving or for the illicit and contraband commerce in African bodies around the so-called Atlantic world. More important, its arithmetic methodology cannot represent the lost potentials of African lives. The sense of finality suggested by the authors of the *Atlas* or their public relations team should not, therefore, be accepted unconditionally.

The *Atlas* opens with a foreword by David B. Davis and a general introduction, followed by six parts containing a total of 189 maps. Part 1, which focuses on the nations that procured and distributed captives from Africa throughout the "Atlantic world," functions as an illustration of Davis's comment that the "overriding motive" behind transatlantic slaving was the greed of European colonizers (xvii). The second part centers on the outfitting of ports where the slaving voyages were organized, while part 3 turns our attention to the slaving regions and enclaves where slavers obtained their captive cargo along the coast of Atlantic Africa and southeast Africa. In a book driven stubbornly by "big data," the authors concede that information on the origins or sources of captives, in addition to data on the circumstances and mechanisms through which Africans were captured and transported to the coast, is "limited" (87). They do make it clear, however, that the distribution of captives and their "ethnic characteristics" in the Americas "was far from random" (87) and that this has explicit implications for the cultural history of the region. Part 4 ("Middle Passage"), which focuses on the voyage, is the most fascinating part of the book because here the authors do speculate about the human lives behind the numbers. They comment on the obvious "despair and degradation" captives felt on the vessels, and caution that "it is impossible to measure psychological trauma in ways that can be represented on maps" (159). Part 5 focuses on the American destinations of captives who survived the first leg of the Atlantic

crossing, although there are no visual representations of their final destinations. Part 6 concentrates on the European-led abolition and suppression of the slave trade. By the early nineteenth century, most European and American nations legally ended their participation in the trade itself, although they did not eradicate their existing "slave societies." David W. Blight's afterword closes the book with the observation that the transatlantic slaving was "a massive economic enterprise" along with a reminder that the "slave trade was about people" (296–97). The *Atlas*, however, is a more successful representation of the trade as an "economic enterprise" than it is "about people."

The 189 professionally drawn maps certainly are among the book's strengths, as we would expect in an atlas. But even the maps do not deserve the complete and unmitigated adulation that the *Atlas* has received thus far. A few examples should suffice. First, none of the maps details the captives' movements *before* embarkation and *after* disembarkation. More than bookends to a life, this absent and unmapped data constituted the heart and soul of the captives' lived experiences. Second, while the authors boast that the maps represent "just over 80 percent of *all* the slave ventures" (xxv; emphasis added), they do not account for missing data and likely underestimate one or more slaving regions due to un(der)recorded and contraband slaving.

This criticism should not be taken lightly. According to the database on which the *Atlas* is based, there are no numbers for the mid- to late-fifteenth century slaving between the foremost European slavers in Iberia and Atlantic Africa. Between 1500 and 1540 only fourteen recorded voyages appear in the database; all were carried out by Portuguese slavers who supplied the major ports in Spanish America. In all forty-nine recorded voyages to Europe from Africa between 1500 and 1750, the vast majority went to Portugal and Spain. While the Iberians held a quasi-monopoly on Atlantic slaving up until the mid-seventeenth century, there was widespread contraband trafficking, bribes to royal and other officials, and intentional concealments of arrivals and departures. Viewed from this perspective, the database and the resulting *Atlas* may have underrepresented the number of Africans from Upper Guinea/Senegambia who came to dominate the first century of captive Africans in the Americas through Spanish and Portuguese slaving and Brazil. For these captives, comparatively little information exists before the nineteenth century.

Finally, the more than forty vignettes scattered throughout the book are supposed to "humanize" the maps and tables therein. However, only five Africans (i.e., Mahommah Baquaqua, Ottobah Cugoano, Phillis Wheatley, Venture Smith, and Antera Duke) are represented in those vignettes, which include an ill-suited poem in which Wheatley praises Christian slavers for having "brought me from my *Pagan* land" (101). Even in its attempts to bring some humanity to the faceless data, the *Atlas* gives more attention to slaver-merchants and their bookkeeping than to the Africans who are the principal subjects of transatlantic slaving.

Other than the maps, the *Atlas* contains a significant amount of analysis in the texts of the foreword and afterword, the general introduction, and the brief introductions to each of the six parts. (The text accompanying each map amounts to standard knowledge and would be of little value to readers of this journal.) On a number of issues, the commentary in these sections seems inadequate. The first issue is that of race and the racial thinking linked to transatlantic slavery, including the afterlife of transatlantic slavery in the first and last of the European slavers—Portugal and Spain. These nations developed durable racialized "slave societies" and an extensive race lexicon, but the *Atlas* contains no discussion, for example, of how race was ideologically determined in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Iberia and grafted onto African bodies through a knowledge feedback loop fashioned by European merchant-slavers, engravers, cartographers, publishers, financiers, theologians, nobles, and "enlightenment" thinkers. Another key issue that is handled somewhat inadequately is that of African complicity with the "slave trade." In the preface David B. Davis discusses the "indispensible complicity of Africans in creating and maintaining the slave trade" and the "eagerness of African rulers and merchants to sell slaves," and also states that "it was uncontrolled market forces that determined how many African slaves could be crammed into the hold of a ship" (xx–xxi). Surely these were very different matters, but the equal weight given to these three clauses has the effect of understating the reality that the slave trade was created and maintained by unrestrained "free market" forces, not by African complicity and eagerness. To be sure, some Africans became willing participants *after* the means of oceanic transport were made viable, *after* the terms of exchange, raid, fraud, use of arms, and other mechanisms of procurement were negotiated and settled, and *after* the destabilizing consequences of Atlantic commerce began to permeate what became African slaving regions. But these slaving regions were created and maintained by the "overriding motive" of European and American greed for human bodies and the capital into which they could be converted.

Also, if Africans were that central in creating and maintaining the trade, why couldn't they stop it? Why was it only the British, who dominated the trafficking of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who were able to convince Europeans and Americans to end "the free market in slave labor" (xxii)? In other words, if there had been a movement in Africa to abolish the slave trade in any one of the slaving regions identified in the *Atlas*, would this have terminated transatlantic slaving? The answer, undoubtedly, is that for an abolition movement to be viable it needs to be initiated by those who have made the greatest investments and who have reaped the greatest profits. And surely the procurement of global goods, the oceanic transport of human and other cargo, and the financial, shipping, and organizational complexities of the slave trade were well above the pay grade of any African ruler or merchant, all of whom lacked the financial base, legal and theological foundations, multilingualism, political cooperation, seafaring infrastructure, and industrial port cities that were

necessary for the trade. Ultimately the slave trade was based not on complicity but on a system of greed (some call it *capitalism*) that atomized communities and cultures into fragments and lost possibilities, that transformed humans into commodities, and that allowed Europeans and Americans to underwrite global societies built on the racial and economic violence targeting African bodies. The authors write that in "much of the early modern era people accepted slavery and the slave trade as legitimate and moral" (273). But surely enslaved Africans and their natal communities and kin did not accept their captivity "as legitimate and moral."

Overall, the authors of the *Atlas* have made a substantial and lasting contribution to the economic history of transatlantic slaving and our understanding of the subject through the lens of the greed of multiple participants and the "market forces" that were at the heart of the centuries-old enterprise. Rather than joining the chorus of praise, however, I prefer a narrower ruling. The "unprecedented empirical discoveries" heralded by the introduction as forming the basis of the *Atlas* do not, in fact, cover "virtually every aspect" of transatlantic slaving (xviii). Impressive as the visuals of the *Atlas* are, we need the voices and remembrances of the enslaved—whether archived in texts, memories, graphic signs, performances, or oral narratives. The *Atlas* is an excellent reference text that works well as a supplement to life histories, biographies and autobiographies, and other testaments to the lived experiences of the enslaved. Though it is tempting in an era of "big data" to search for an understanding of human action in the crunching of numbers, we should be wary of re-enslaving the victims by objectifying them via the same kind of data-driven blueprint honed by merchant-slavers.

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S. H. Fazan. *Colonial Kenya Observed: British Rule, Mau Mau and the Wind of Change.* Edited with a foreword by John Lonsdale. London: I. B. Tauris, 2015. xliii + 358 pp. Map. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. £35.00. Cloth. ISBN: 978-1780768656.

I distinctly remember first coming across Sidney Fazan's reports and memoranda in the Kenya National Archives in 2006. More than any other documents, Fazan's writings had inspired in me an odd mix of delight and annoyance: delight, because Fazan was an extraordinary observer of Kenyan life and his reports were always valuable; annoyance, because delving into a Fazan memo meant hours of careful reading that stalled my personal research schedule! *Colonial Kenya Observed* is Fazan's memoir, written in 1969 and rescued from obscurity by John Lonsdale. It is perhaps more a