Institution: Lancaster University	
Unit of Assessment: 28, History	

Title of case study:

The Atlantic Slave Trade: enhancing heritage, public understanding and learning

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007 to 2020

Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:

Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Sarah Barber	Senior Lecturer	September 1993 to present
Nicholas Radburn	Lecturer	August 2017 to present

Period when the claimed impact occurred: December 2017 to December 2020

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N

1. Summary of the impact

Research by Barber and Radburn has enhanced the heritage and public understanding of Atlantic slavery [text removed from public version] and has enriched learning. [Text removed from public version]. The British Virgin Islands' Department of Culture endorsed an exhibition advised by Barber and Radburn as contributory to its heritage. A new and much revised edition of an open-access website, *Slave Voyages* (SV hereon, www.slavevoyages.org)*,* co-edited by Radburn, has enhanced public understanding of the Atlantic slave trade's history and changed how it is taught. It has inspired monument design and made a transformative impact on museum displays, memorialising slavery while communicating research findings.

2. Underpinning research

[Text removed from public version].

Radburn was recruited as part of a strategy to make the Atlantic World a key area of departmental research strength. [Text removed from public version]. His research on slavery, with co-author Eltis (Emory University, USA), involved cross-referencing 2,400 slave voyages from Liverpool with customs-house records of ship dimensions. They conclude that the 1788 images of the slave ship *Brooks*, known to millions of museum visitors, students, and scholars, are flawed. Instead, they argue that the recently discovered drawings of the French *La Marie-Séraphique* better capture the cramped and deadly conditions of the Middle Passage [R3]. Radburn has also co-created a 3D digital model of the interiors and exteriors of another slave ship, *L'Aurore,* which reconstructs the shipping conditions, the security apparatus used to control the captives, and their daily routine. The research sources included architectural drawings, custom-house records, and records of sailors, slave traders and abolitionists; collaborators provided other historical input and digital expertise. This melding of archival research and cutting-edge digital technologies has recreated the conditions of the trans-Atlantic Middle Passage with unrivalled accuracy [R4]. In other research exploring plantation records from St Kitts, Radburn and his co-authors employ linguistic methods and digital simulation to reconstruct the diverse origins of 331 enslaved individuals and trace their enforced passage across the Atlantic. This study represents a major advance in our ability to identify the African origins of the enslaved [R5].

In September 2017, Radburn's research expertise was acknowledged through his appointment to the Executive Committee of *Slave Voyages* which has, since 2008, coordinated data on the slave trade. One of only two UK members on the Committee, he also holds the role of Joint Editor on the network's 'Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database' and is one of four Editors on the network's 'People of the Atlantic Slave Trade' project. Radburn's contribution includes planning, preparing, creating materials for, publishing, and maintaining the much-revised new scholarly edition of the network's website, launched in February 2019 [R6].

Radburn's research activities in this role have included: updating his portion of the trans-Atlantic dataset while cross-referencing any current research; verifying the accuracy of user contributions through reference to primary sources (including 200 research contributions donated by himself since 2017); researching thousands of British and African slave traders and enslaved people (including those separately published in [R5]); designing a new interface to

enable continued updating; distilling data on slave voyages and routes; and continually updating the website to enable it to serve as the most comprehensive, reliable, and up-to-date research resource on the subject. To date, the website includes 36,110 trans-Atlantic voyages and 11,547 within the Americas, while also publishing estimates of the volume and routes of voyages through a resource created and continually updated by Radburn. The website's innovative 'Timelapse' feature (co-created in 2019) provides effective visualisations of data on the shipping of 12.5 million enslaved Africans. The scholarly co-created 3D model of *L'Aurore* is prominently linked to the website's opening page to highlight the human history of the slave trade [R4].

3. References to the research

[R1] [Text removed from public version].
[R2] [Text removed from public version].
[R3] Nicholas Radburn and David Eltis, 'Visualizing the Middle Passage: the Brooks and the reality of ship crowding in the transatlantic slave trade', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 49: 4 (2019), 533–65. Held at HEI. *Peer-reviewed.*
[R4] Arya Basu, Ian Burr, David Eltis, Nafees Khan, Nicholas Radburn, and Jane Webster, 'Slave ship in 3D Model video', in Alex Borucki, Daniel Domingues da Silva, Gregory E. O'Malley, and Nicholas Radburn, editors, *Slave Voyages* (new and revised ed., Feb. 2019). https://slavevoyages.org/voyage/ship#slave. *Funded through [G1]. Peer-reviewed.*
[R5] Stephen D. Behrendt, and Philip D. Morgan, and Nicholas Radburn 'A tower of Babel: African cultures and creolization on an eighteenth-century St Kitts', *Past & Present* 253 (Nov. 2021). [Delayed output owing to Covid-19; publisher's letter is available]. *Peer-reviewed.*
[R6] Alex Borucki, Daniel Domingues da Silva, Gregory E. O'Malley, and Nicholas Radburn, editors, *Slave Voyages* (new and revised ed., Feb. 2019), www.slavevoyages.org; timelapse: https://slavevoyages.org/voyage/database#timelapse. *Funded through [G2]. Peer-reviewed.*

Peer-reviewed research grants:
[G1] Radburn (Co-I), *Slave ship in 3D*, Emory and Harvard Hutchins Center: (2018 to 2020) USD100,000
[G2] Radburn (Co-I), *People of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, Andrew Mellon Foundation: (2018 to 2019) USD300,000

4. Details of the impact

Innovative and inclusive research produced in Lancaster has enabled individuals and institutions worldwide to engage more easily with, and better understand, a painful chapter in history. The research has: enhanced the memorialisation of Atlantic slavery and the slave trade in the UK, USA, France and the Caribbean; raised public understanding of the legacy of slavery; enriched learning and education; and affected the perceptions of millions of people around the world.

Enhancing memorialisation of the Atlantic slave trade in the heritage sector

[Text removed from public version.]

In July 2019, Radburn was approached by Georgetown African American Historic Landmark (GAAHL) to assist the US National Park Service in memorialising eleven slave voyages that had arrived at Georgetown's historic waterfront between 1731 and 1761. Radburn's research, alongside data from *SV* [R6], was used to inform the signs subsequently erected in the landmark site and an accompanying pamphlet, all depicting Liverpool ships. In December 2019, Radburn's expertise was called upon again during GAAHL's successful petition to the US Congress to have a permanent monument installed; the Bill was being processed as of December 2020. In November 2020, after a public competition in Richmond, Virginia, a plan was elected to line Monument Avenue with bronze plates. As the winning architects explain, this will be sourced from a statue of Robert E. Lee and will form 'a spatial timeline of a dataset', which will replicate *SV*'s 'Timelapse' feature, co-created by Radburn [S3].

Radburn and Barber joined forces in 2018 to provide research-based advice to Lancaster's Regional Heritage Centre and the city's Maritime Museum on a travelling exhibition, documenting the history of the Lancaster ship *Abram*, which carried slave-grown sugar from the Virgin Islands. This included editorial work on the banners and publicity, and adapting the

exhibition, previously presented in Lancaster, for audiences in the West Indies. When the display reached the British Virgin Islands, the governmental Culture Department decided to promote it more widely and actively than originally planned. Prior to the exhibition opening, local museums had been damaged by a hurricane, so the Department designated alternative venues, in sports centres and public halls, with opening times extended to enable citizens to access the exhibition during public holidays. The Culture Department further prepared a documentary on the exhibition, which was broadcast through a Government site. Two guest speakers interviewed emphasised the exhibit's merit for enhancing local heritage: "*why are we putting a display on a British [ship and plantation] owner? [Because] it's important for us, and for any people on the earth, to know who we are, and from where we came*". One of the speakers encouraged "*all the people who live in the Virgin Islands to see this, and to understand a particular aspect of the history of the Virgin Islands*". As she explained, the display also sheds light on historical understanding of the local economy [S4].

The launch of the revised *SV* resource in February 2019 catalysed further knowledge exchanges with Radburn and heritage museums in the USA, UK and France. Radburn has twice advised the Smithsonian's National Museum of African-American History and Culture, Washington DC (2 million visitors a year), which employed *SV* in its galleries "to create our transatlantic slave trade walls with ship names". The Smithsonian has embedded the resource in its Department of Education's learning labs, alerting visiting students to the resource. The Curator has also used the 3D model in seminar teaching to bring the website's data 'to life in a whole new way' [S5]. At Liverpool's International Slavery Museum, the Curator commended this "*fantastic resource*", installed in the museum's galleries and made available to the general public and students through its Educational Department. In France's principal slave-trading port of Nantes, the Head Curator of its Musée d'histoire was so inspired by the quality of Radburn's research on the images of the *La Marie-Seraphique*, which hang in the Musée, that he partnered with *SV* to produce a new 3D digital model of that specific vessel. A video of the digital model will become a permanent installation at the Musée in 2021, and will give visitors a sense of what a slave ship was really like (also enriching the study programmes of approximately 50,000 school and university students who visit the Musée each year) [S5].

Enhancing public understanding of the history of the Atlantic slave trade

In addition to activities in [text removed from public version], the Virgin Islands, USA, UK, and France, the research has had rapid impact further afield. Since its launch in February 2019, *SV* has attracted 860,000 unique visitors, 70% of whom were located in the USA. The remainder came from 228 countries and world territories, identified by Google Analytics, including places in Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, revealing particular demand in localities connected with Atlantic slavery [S6]. Radburn's 3D ship model has been viewed at least 187,000 times, with average sessions showing repeat use. It was accessed by teachers, students, and journalists, indicating not only frequent and diverse use but also spiralling effects. Pulitzer-prize winning *New York Times* journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones was so affected that she tweeted in May 2019 to 215,000 followers that if they want to understand why "enslaved people did not simply overtake the vastly outnumbered slavers during the Middle Passage", they should watch the 3D video [S7]. Some followers evidently rushed to view the website, leaving messages such as "*stunning, SV is an amazing resource*", "*It's been on my mind all day*". In December 2019, popular historian Dan Snow encouraged his 300,000 Twitter followers to view this "*astonishing resource*". Snow said that "*I haven't seen a better visualisation of historical data*" than the new 'Timelapse' feature. His followers visited the site leaving messages such as "*Brilliant visualisation of the scale of this horrific piece of history*", and "*This should be available in every school*" [S7].

Radburn has been repeatedly sought out for his expertise on understandings of the Atlantic slave trade. In 2019, he consulted with programmers on the BBC's *A House Through Time*, to enable historian David Olusoga to identify a Bristol slave ship captain and highlight the pervasiveness of the slave trade [3.2 million viewers, S8]. Olusoga's on-screen use of *SV* to undertake his research led to an immediate leap of 260% in UK-based user figures [S6, S8]. In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, the *Wall Street Journal* (2.8 million circulation) turned to Radburn to compile maps and infographics from *SV* to underpin an article on

Liverpool's historic links to the slave trade [S9]. Owing to his twin specialities in digital humanities and slave trade history, Radburn has also been approached by *PC Gamer* to explain the difficulties in depicting slavery in video games: an article citing him reached an online audience of 14.1 million unique monthly visitors and 12,708 more in print in June 2019 [S10]. Radburn is contacted regularly by members of the public for information on the history of enslavers and the enslaved. Following correspondence with him, an American citizen used the research to discover that her ancestor was a slave trader, whereupon she became active in racial healing, sharing her story in the local press (100,000 readers) [S11].

Enriching understanding of the history of the Atlantic slave trade in diverse educational settings

During academic and school terms between April and November 2019, *SV* user numbers almost doubled from an average of 25,157 hits per month to 46,338. By October 2020, hits had almost trebled, reaching 74,066. At the same time, the average session length had nearly doubled, indicating that the resource has had a particular impact in classrooms worldwide, from primary to tertiary education, especially in the USA [S6]. Users' comments received by Radburn as joint editor of *SV*'s trans-Atlantic portion testify to its informative nature and usefulness. A Year 12 student at Atlanta Girls' School had accessed an outdated version of *SV* prior to 2019 to trace her African ancestry but was disappointed that the "website wasn't as interactive as she'd hoped". By contrast, she highly valued the interactivity of the revised 2019 edition and especially the new research-informed 'Timelapse' feature [R6], which "she wished had been there before". A teacher from the Atlanta area recommended the "*incredible*" resource that helped her students understand the "gravity and impact" of the slave trade. Another reported use of *SV* "with 5th and 10th graders, both groups equally *in awe of the data story it tells*". A teacher from Pretoria, South Africa, praised the "*excellent resource*" employed in a unit on "slavery, labour inequality, and the nature of discrimination". A session by Radburn recorded in October 2020 for a free online course (MOOC), offered by the Universities of Glasgow and the West Indies, had been viewed by 9,218 individuals within the first month, 11% of whom were from the Caribbean. Having studied the 'Timelapse' feature, users found "*The graphics about the amount of trips were really shocking, yet eye opening"; "I never really understood the horrid actions that happened in the slave trade. I really don't know what to say*"; "*The barbarous treatment of our ancestors; no words*" [S12]. Award-winning poet Clint Smith was so inspired by the resource, he wrote a poem and tweeted, "*I wrote this piece after exploring the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*". He placed the poem in the *New York Times*' 1619 Project special edition, where it reached an audience of over 3.5 million subscribers, and millions more online readers [S13]. One such reader, a lecturer in Decatur, Georgia, encouraged her students to read the poem while the new 'Timelapse' feature played in the background. She reported the emotional reaction: "*After the poem, we sat in silence until the voyages stopped*" [S12].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[S1a-c] [text removed from public version].
[S2] [text removed from public version].
[S3] Director, Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project; posts by winning architects Shane Neufeld Shane Neufeld and Kevin Kunstadt Kevin Kunstadt (2020).
[S4] Government of the Virgin Islands, 'The Abram Cultural Maritime Exhibition' (16/11/2018).
[S5] Emails from museum curators: Washington DC, Liverpool, Nantes (2019).
[S6] User figures: Google Analytics Report (2020).
[S7] Users' Tweets, media use, and related emails (2019).
[S8] BBC, *A House Through Time,* Broadcast (26/05/2020); BBC viewing records (2020).
[S9] Max Colchester, 'In a city built on the slave trade, Britain's oldest black community seeks a reckoning', *Wall Street Journal* (03/08/2020).
[S10] Samuel Horti, 'What anno 1800 gets wrong, and right, about colonialism and the industrial revolution', *PC Gamer* (06/06/2019). Online audience figures and print circulation provided by Agility PR Solutions (2021).
[S11] Jennifer Berry Hawes, 'A white woman bridged the races. Then she found slave traffickers in her family', *Charleston Post and Courier*, (1/07/ 2018); related emails (2018).
[S12] Feedback by users who viewed the 'Timelapse' feature on the Altantic Slave Trade website (2020).

[S13] Poem by Clint Smith in 'The 1619 Project', Special Issue of the *New York Times* https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html (2020) and https://twitter.com/clintsmithiii/status/1161676823438270465?lang=en (14 August 2019).