

# New research project to examine the trans-Atlantic slave trade

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he transatlantic slave trade represents one of the most traumatic chapters in world history and is now widely recognised as a crime against humanity. EUROTAST is a new European-funded research network that will bring together an unprecedented range of young researchers to examine the history of the transatlantic slave trade and to explore its long-term effects. The project will be by lead Professor Tom Gilbert from Centre for GeoGenetics at the Natural History Museum of Denmark, University of Copenhagen.

"One of the really exciting things about the project is the level of collaboration between academics in Europe and other parts of the Atlantic world," says Professor Tom Gilbert from the Centre for GeoGenetics in Copenhagen who is leading the project.

"We are thrilled to have the participation of specialists from West Africa and the Caribbean, as the main aim of the network is to explore our common [history](#) and to investigate the persisting long-term legacies of racial slavery and the transatlantic slave trade."

Funded through the Marie Curie Actions, the €4.3 million project will support 15 young researchers who will be based at 10 partner institutions in seven European countries. The researchers will be recruited from a wide range of disciplines, including history, archaeology, genetics and social anthropology.

## **Interdisciplinary research**

“By bringing in experts from these various fields, including some that are not usually associated with research into the slave trade, we will generate new data that will significantly add to our knowledge of how the slave trade operated and how it impacted the lives of millions of people,” says Dr. Hannes Schroeder from the Centre for GeoGenetics and co-coordinator of the project.

Using a combination of historical research, archaeology and cutting edge genomics, the students in the network will address various pressing questions relating to the transatlantic slave trade, one of which deals with the captives’ origins in Africa.

“This project represents a milestone in promoting interdisciplinary research, as it enables collaboration between historians and scientists in the search for the origins of the 12,5 million Africans carried into the Atlantic slave trade,” says Professors David Eltis from Emory University (USA) and David Richardson from the University of Hull (UK), two of the historians involved in the project.

Other questions that will be addressed during the course of the four-year project, deal with the captives’ physical quality of life and the material legacy of the slave trade in Europe, West Africa, and the Caribbean.

## **Engage a wide audience**

A unique feature of EUROTAST is that the research will be widely disseminated through school projects, museum exhibitions and media products. Guided by Professor Helen Weinstein, Director of IPUP (York, UK), each of the students will be encouraged to document their research and their findings through podcasts and video diaries.

“The scale of this project is ambitious and it is essential that the findings reach a wide audience beyond the walls of academia,” says Professor Weinstein.

“The use of popular media products will help engage a wide audience but in addition we will develop learning materials for museums and schools in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean which will have a significant impact on the way that this traumatic history is taught and understood across the world.”

Provided by University of Copenhagen

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