

Felix Brahm, Eve Rosenhaft, eds.. *Slavery Hinterland: Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680-1850*. Rochester: Boydell Press, 2016. vii + 261 pp. \$29.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-78327-112-2.

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Commissioned by Camarin M. Porter (Western Colorado University)

Edited by Felix Brahm and Eve Rosenhaft, this volume grew out of a 2012 conference at the University of Liverpool. The eight body chapters offer perspectives on the economic roles of German-speaking Europe as well as Denmark, Switzerland, and Italy in the age of transatlantic slavery. The authors deem these regions the hinterlands, as they were geographically removed from the ports directly engaged in the Atlantic trade routes; yet, their place on the periphery did not preclude them from cultivating "a stake in" or being "shaped by the slave trade and its profits" (p. 7). With its novel approach to a well-studied subject like transatlantic slavery, this volume, in its entirety or as individual chapters, could be assigned in a variety of upper-division undergraduate and graduate classes, from general courses on early modern European, Atlantic world, or even world history to more specialized seminars on transatlantic slavery or early modern German history.

The majority of the volume's chapters explore connections between German-speaking Europe and the Atlantic world. In the first chapter, Craig Koslofsky and Roberto Zaugg reveal the micro-investments of "common sailors, soldiers and barber-surgeons" within the "Atlantic system" through their study of Johann Peter Oettinger and the Bradenburg African Company (p. 37). The short-lived Prussian slaving company influenced

migratory patterns from central Europe to coastal ports, as men like Oettinger inadvertently ended up a part of the Atlantic economy. Oettinger's journal shows he did not see any moral issue with his own involvement in the slave trade. Intriguingly, his great-great-grandson altered his journal to justify European colonization of Africa in the late nineteenth century. Chapters 4 and 7 are best read together to grasp the extent of the hinterland's connections with Atlantic slavery through textiles. While Anka Steffen and Klaus Weber open and close chapter 4 with claims about the importance of textiles in trading for slaves in Africa, the body of their contribution focuses exclusively on the lives of serfs producing such textiles in proto-industrial Silesia, with little discussion of the connections to the Atlantic world. In chapter 7, Anne Sophie Overkamp details the involvement of the company of Abraham & Brothers Frowein in selling textiles primarily in South American markets in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While two brothers operated their business from Port-au-Prince, Overkamp fails to cite any of the recent works on the Haitian Revolution or independent Haiti. Rebekka von Mallinckrodt's chapter, translated by Elizabeth Bredeck, explores Prussia's perceptions of and laws regarding the enslaved in the hinterlands in the eighteenth century. Focusing on a particular

case of a "Moor" who petitioned for his freedom in Copenhagen, she raises important points about how transatlantic slavery may not have necessarily been "perceived as something radically foreign or different by contemporaries" who lived in a society with serfdom. She explains that serfdom in central Europe should be seen as "embedded in global interactions" (p. 131). Steffen, Weber, and von Mallinckrodt present strong cases for studying central European serfdom and transatlantic slavery comparatively. Lastly, Sarah Lentz examines the abolitionist activities of Therese Huber in German territories in the 1820s. She belonged to a family of abolitionist men, including her uncle Johann Friedrich Blumenbach. However, Huber was extraordinary in her own right, as she was a female activist, managing editor of a journal, and hinterland abolitionist in the early nineteenth century. She engaged in correspondence with French abolitionist Henri Grégoire and used a leading literary magazine to push her abolitionist agenda. Lentz suggests her future research hopes to reveal the effects of Huber's efforts on her readers.

The remaining three chapters examine connections between Italy, Denmark, and Switzerland, and the Atlantic world. In chapter 2, Alexandra Robinson demonstrates "the degree to which the slave trade was closely bound up with ancillary trades" through her study of the account books of the Earle family (p. 45). Liverpool merchants in Venice, they re-exported slave-produced commodities into the Mediterranean and supplied trade goods for the slave trade, such as glass beads. With the connections to the Atlantic world as well as the Levant, this chapter would be appropriate for a world history course. Translated by Eve Rosenhaft, Peter Haenger's case study of Swiss merchants, the Burckhardt Company, in chapter 3 would make an ideal reading for a historical methods course. He begins with the 2001 UN conference, showing the modern relevance of transatlantic slavery, to broach the subject of historic responsibility. The Swiss government denied

state involvement in the slave trade, but admitted the participation of individuals and private firms. He also explains how descendants of those involved in the slave trade from the Burckhardt Company insisted the records be placed in "sealed boxes," where they remained until the 1970s (p. 69). It is important for students to understand, as Catherine Hall notes in her afterword, "the construction of histories is a complex process involving choices at many points" (p. 214). Lastly, in chapter 6, Daniel Hopkins explores the Atlantic career of Julius von Rohr, a German botanist sent by the Danish government to the West Indies in the mid-1700s. Hopkins emphasizes the linguistic challenges of making connections between the hinterlands and the Atlantic world, as von Rohr's journal and reports were written in German and some of his scientific correspondence was penned in Latin. Von Rohr went to West Africa in the late eighteenth century, which Hopkins uses to assert that the "decisive impetus towards" colonization in Africa began in the era of abolitionism, nearly a century before "the establishment of European territorial regimes" (p. 160).

The volume aims to engage with the existing historiography on transatlantic slavery as well as abolition. While many of the contributors do this with works related to Anglophone and Francophone contexts, the authors miss many valuable opportunities to make connections with the English-language literature on the Iberian Atlantic.^[1] For instance, Peter Haenger, Anka Steffen and Klaus Weber, and Anne Sophie Overkamp include discussions of Spanish traders, Portuguese slave ships, and the Iberian empires in their chapters without citing relevant works. The omission of Iberian Atlantic historiographies reflects the somewhat narrow definition of the Atlantic world used for this volume. Along with this geographic exclusivity, the volume is also chronologically limited. While Atlantic history, including that of slavery, generally starts in the late fifteenth century, this volume begins in 1680. Further, in their introduction, Brahm and Rosenhaft suggest a need to

push studies beyond 1850, even though their volume ends in 1850, to better understand transatlantic slavery and abolition. While the Age of Revolutions had traditionally been confined to the period from 1750 to 1850, most Atlanticists include the whole of the long nineteenth century in their studies, typically ending with the abolition of slavery in Brazil.[2] Consequently, the volume's historiographical engagement would likely provoke thoughtful classroom discussion.

For Atlantic historians who typically do not have mastery of central European languages, which dominate the citations in most of these chapters, this volume provides valuable insight into the exciting work being done to show the connections between the continental European hinterlands and the Atlantic world. Hopefully, scholars of central European history will continue to engage with Atlantic historiographies, incorporating more works on the Iberian Atlantic. Bridging the gap between continental European and Atlantic historiographies is a significant step in our understanding of the reach of transatlantic slavery that educators can then bring into their classrooms.

Notes

[1]. Some examples include Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, "Empires against Emancipation: Spain, Brazil, and the Abolition of Slavery," in "The Second Slavery: Mass Slavery, World-Economy, and Comparative Microhistories," part 1, ed. Dale Tomich and Michael Zeuske, special issue, *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center* 31, no. 2 (2008): 101-119; Schmidt-Nowara, *Slavery, Freedom, and Abolition in Latin America and the Atlantic World* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011); Cristina Nogueira da Silva and Keila Grinberg, "Soil Free from Slaves: Slave Law in Late Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Portugal," *Slavery and Abolition* 32 (2011): 431-446; Schmidt-Nowara,

"Spanish Antislavery and Africa, 1808-1898," *Republic of Letters: Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics, and the Arts* 3, no. 1 (2012): 1-6; Schmidt-Nowara, *Slavery and Antislavery in Spain's Atlantic Empire* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013); and Gabriel Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions: The Luso-Brazilian World, c. 1770-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[2]. See Joseph C. Miller, ed., *The Princeton Companion to Atlantic History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

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