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Stephan PalmiÖ©, ed. *Slave Cultures and the Cultures of Slavery.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995. xlvii + 283 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-87049-903-6.

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Slave Cultures and the Cultures of Slavery is a collection of essays by historians and anthropologists presented at a conference at the Amerika-Institut of the University of Munich, Germany; it provides an excellent review of debates on slavery. The essays cover the geographical areas of the Danish West Indies, Suriname, Jamaica, Louisiana, the American South, and the Gold Coast. Although all of the selections do not deal directly with Latin America, they all pose questions and raise issues that need consideration in the study of Latin American slavery. The works in this volume assess the variety of factors that shaped the system of slavery and take their starting point from an idea of Sidney Mintz: "'[the] greatest of all divisions' [between slavery and freedom] involves in every instance a way of life, a conception of the human condition, an ideology of society, and a set of economic arrangements, in short, a cultural apparatus by which slaves and masters are related" (pp. xv-xvi).[1] Instead of focusing primarily on the legal or economic relation between slaveholders and slaves, the essays examine the daily life of slaves and struggles with masters. They also explore the "continuities of the cultural process across the historical threshold between slavery and freedom" (p. xxviii).

In the introduction to the volume, Stephan Palmie succinctly addresses themes and recent debates in slave historiography. In his discussion of definitions of slavery, he examines a variety of forms of dependent labor. David W. Blight also addresses major themes in recent slave historiography in "'Analyze the Sounds': Frederick Douglass's Invitation to Modern Historians of Slavery." He argues that Douglass's narrative, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*, has informed historians of areas to explore and analyze when discussing slave life. Blight agrees with Peter Kolchin that slavery historians must provide emphasis on the brutality of the system as well as a focus on slave strength and culture. He argues that slave culture enabled slaves to survive even though its roots were formed in rather brutal circumstances.

Sidney Mintz's "Slave Life on Caribbean Sugar Plantations: Some Unanswered Questions" proposes suggestions for the study of slave resistance. He cautions the reader that the intentions of slaves are not always known and some acts become resistant in the long run. Mintz argues that resistance does not need to be harmful or cause injury. He emphasizes the need to look at change over time because resistance could lead to accommodation.

In another study of slave resistance, Karen Fog Olwig examines "resistant responses" to slavery in the Danish West Indies. In "African Cultural Principles in Caribbean Slave Societies: A View from the Danish West Indies," she stresses the importance of analyzing slaves' perceptions of captivity in order to understand the slave experience. She examines the debate on African cultural forms, which disagrees about the extent to which slaves retained African customs or developed new cultural forms in the Americas (E. Franklin Frazier and Melville J. Herskovits). She also presents the argument of Sidney Mintz and Richard Price from *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past* that both retention and accommodation play a role because slaves of differing ethnic origins co-mingled. She argues for the primacy of African culture and ideas in shaping slave culture.

Fog Olwig's primary source in this article is the work of C. G. A. Oldendorp, who interviewed slaves in the Danish West Indies in 1767-68. She argues that slaves in the Danish West Indies, in order not to focus on their enslaved situation, "[created] ties which would generate a basis of social and cultural distinction and hence a source of identity within slave society" (p. 31). She shows how new slaves, *bussals*, not familiar with the plantation system, were put in care of more experienced slaves, similar to the African system of kinship. She also differentiates between African forms of slavery and slavery in the New World. While African slavery tried to incorporate slaves, slaves in the Americas were under the control of an owner. Slaves formed ties based on African cultural principles that were part of the resistant response.

Gudrun Meier also explores the use of the Oldendorp manuscripts, which have not been properly utilized, to contribute to the study of slavery in the Danish West Indies. In "Preliminary Remarks on the Oldendorp Manuscripts and Their History," she looks at Oldendorp, a member of the Moravian Church who visited mission stations in the Danish West Indies as an observer. His information came from direct conversation with slaves.

Richard Rathborne takes a different approach by examining the impact of the slave trade on African societies on the Gold Coast. In "The Gold Coast, the Closing of the Atlantic Slave Trade, and Africans of the Diaspora," he focuses on repatriates, slaves who returned to Africa, who were either integrated or reintegrated into African society. This essay is a starting point for future studies, because it allows for a discussion of how African society viewed repatriates and how they viewed Africa. He mentions how elite families with West Indian ancestry on the Gold Coast were classified by African societies similar to Europeans as the "other," the stranger. Further detail and explanation would prove interesting for comparative studies.

Arguing that the historiography on slave societies in sub-Saharan Africa is underdeveloped compared to the Americas, Adam Jones examines female slave holders in West African societies in "Female Slave-Owners on the Gold Coast: Just a Matter of Money?" He finds that in addition to the economic value of slaves in providing labor, females purchased slaves for other reasons. Slaves were valued by women because they helped in petty commerce, worked as sellers, cared for the young and old, and were signs of status and prestige. This is the only study in the volume that addresses questions of gender.

In "Slavery and Slave Cultures in a Hydraulic Society: Suriname," Gert Oostindie and Alex van Stiprian examine variations of slavery within the Dutch colony of Suriname in the Caribbean. This essay analyzes the ecology and physical environment of a plantation economy. The authors attribute the unique working and living conditions of slaves in Suriname to the "polder" system of agriculture ("a tract of low land reclaimed from water by means of high embankments"), which demanded hard manual labor. Throughout the essay they argue that slavery in Suriname was not as harsh as has been viewed by previous historians. The demanding nature of the "polder" system did not translate into the overworking of slaves. They found higher negative demographic growth rates on sugar plantations. The authors also examine how slave culture, including language, music, and religion showed the influence of the physical setting. They conclude that an ecological viewpoint is one way of analyzing slave culture.

Jean Besson's essay, "The Creolization of African-American Slave Kinship in Jamaican Free Village and Maroon Communities," compares the creolization of kinship in two case studies. She finds that in the post-emancipation free villages of Trelawny Parish the formation of nuclear families through legal marriage coexisted with forms of African-Caribbean kinship. In addition to the conjugal system, there existed large kinship networks and processes through which family estates were inherited. On the other hand, the post-treaty maroon community of Accompang permitted community endogamy and cousin conjugality. Besson does not address in detail the factors that accounted for these differences. She also notes that both communities prohibited incest and also established exogamous conjugality and bilateral kinship. This essay shows that slave communities require individual examination.

H. U. E. Thoden van Velzen's article, "Dangerous Ancestors: Ambivalent Visions of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Leaders of the Eastern Maroons of Suriname," focuses on maroons' visions of past leaders in the Ndyuka nation in eastern Suriname. He discusses Ndyuka maroon historians who expressed both positive and negative views of past historians by looking at many dimensions of their leaders. He concludes that maroon communities are characterized by egalitarian relations and thus listen to all voices.

Two of the contributions discuss relations between blacks and Indians in North America. In "Indian-Black Relations in Colonial and Antebellum Louisiana," Daniel H. Usner, Jr., explores interaction between Indians and blacks. Whereas the historiography tends to focus on the two groups separately, Usner examines lawmakers who attempted to prohibit interracial contacts by promulgating laws aimed at social control such as keeping blacks on plantations. He shows that inter-ethnic interaction occurred because Indians and blacks worked together in the marketplace.

Renate Bartl examines another aspect of Indian-black relations in "Native American Tribes and Their African Slaves." He also notes that this topic is not addressed in the historiography on North American slavery because of its marginality and its controversial nature. Bartl focuses on Native American tribes that enslaved Africans in a manner similar to European enslavement of Africans in the plantation economy. He suggests that Indian tribes enslaved Africans as a result of their desire to be viewed by Europeans as "civilized" and of their adoption of as-

pects of the southern legal system. The selections by Usner and Bartl focus on topics that need to be addressed in Latin American slave historiography.

These essays could have been organized in a better manner. In the introduction, Palmie briefly discusses each work and provides a thematic organization but does not follow this in the setup of the book. These essays tend to focus on slaves as a homogenous group without discussing differences such as gender or type of labor performed. Ethnic identity also contributes to differences in slave systems. Nevertheless, this work is essential for those interested in comparative slave systems. It provides theoretical approaches to the study of slave culture and case studies.

Notes

[1]. Sidney Mintz, "Slavery and Emergent Capitalism," in *Slavery in the New World*, ed. Laura Foner and Eugene D. Genovese (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969), 27-28.

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