

gelization, he can find parallels in the mission methods, but no direct connection.

Garrido Aranda has performed a service in both his positive and negative demonstrations. Unfortunately, his book suffers all the traditional defects of doctoral dissertations. It is written in a pedestrian style; the arrangement of topics is confused and confusing; facts and citations are amassed uncritically and without analysis. As a result, the work is far longer than necessary and is filled with numerous lengthy digressions. His use of the term *morisco*, which he defines somewhat inaccurately in the glossary, is ambiguous. To refer to Pedro de Alcalá (p. 115) as a *morisco converso* complicates matters still more. Why he finds it surprising that there were parallels between mission methods in Granada and those in the Indies (p. 255) is hard to say.

The book has an attractive format and interesting illustrations. The appendix of documents is good, as are the glossary, bibliography, and index. All in all, this is a potentially valuable work marred by poor organization and undigested data.

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Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America, 1700–1739. By COLIN A. PALMER. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1981. Notes. Maps. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xv, 183. Cloth. \$19.50.

One of the prizes England won by the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 was the *asiento*, the monopoly of supplying Spain's American colonies with slaves. The *asiento* was turned over to the South Sea Company until 1739 when the War of Jenkins's Ear effectively terminated it. The *asiento* also served as Britain's Trojan horse, permitting British merchants both legally and clandestinely to penetrate the hitherto closed colonial trade of Spanish America. In this concise monograph Palmer has mined the extant records of the South Sea Company as well as the papers in the Archivo General de Indias to produce a valuable analysis of the British slave trade to Spanish America during the early eighteenth century.

This slave trade was as important for the supply of servile labor to Spain's colonies as it was financially lucrative to the South Sea Company. Palmer estimates that 80 percent of the slaves landed in Spanish America during the *asiento* period crossed the Atlantic in British-owned vessels (p. 159). While the overall number of slaves transported between 1714

and 1739 does not compare with the enormous importations of the late eighteenth century, Palmer's careful calculations suggest an upward revision of Philip Curtin's figures for the *asiento* years. Even though the South Sea Company never achieved its annual quota of 4,800 *piezas*, Palmer credits it with transporting approximately 75,000 African slaves to Spanish America between 1714 and 1739. His audit of the company's financial records also verifies that its slave-trade operations turned a handsome profit, at least on paper. As Palmer notes, the company "never complained that the slave trade was a financial burden too heavy to bear" (p. 155).

Palmer delineates the paradox of contraband trade during the *asiento* years. The South Sea Company had won the right to send an annual ship filled with goods to be sold at the yearly fair in Spanish America, a right designed to help the company offset any losses from the slave trade. In fact, only eight annual ships were sent during the twenty-five years of the *asiento*. Company complaints of harassment of their ships by Spanish privateers and persecution of British sailors by Spanish officials, however, were matched by Spanish anger at the large clandestine trade in textiles and other British goods that company officials encouraged under the cover of their slave-trade operations. At the same time, the South Sea Company suffered from an expanding contraband trade in slaves carried on by aggressive private traders who undersold the company. Palmer suggests the company had only itself to blame for the flourishing contraband slave trade because of its own "half-hearted commitment to the slave trade" (p. 94).

Palmer's analysis of the structure of the *asiento* trade in the Americas is an admirable summary of a complex topic and he has short but useful chapters on the distribution of slaves imported to Spanish America and the health, age, and prices of the slaves brought over from Africa. Palmer's conclusion, that the *asiento* provided the expertise and infrastructure that enabled Britain to respond to the growing demand for slaves in the later years of the eighteenth century, is an intriguing hypothesis that awaits further proof.

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