

Book Reviews

General

The African Diaspora. Edited by ALUSINE JALLOH and STEPHEN E. MAIZLISH. Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures, no. 30. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996. Tables. Notes. vii, 152 pp. Cloth, \$24.95. Paper, \$16.95.

The contributions to this volume were first presented in 1995 at the Thirtieth Annual Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures organized by the University of Texas at Arlington. That year's theme, "Africa and the African Diaspora," produced a series of papers so wide-ranging that editor Alusine Jalloh felt it best to provide the most prosaic of introductions and leave bold new statements of synthesis for another day. Joseph E. Harris's sweeping chapter might have performed this task, but instead it simply summarizes his well-known work on the global African diaspora from ancient to modern times. Jalloh's chapter, by contrast, considerably circumscribes the notion of diaspora to focus on the inter-West African commercial migrations of the Fula people to Sierra Leone under colonial rule. In his chapter, Joseph E. Inikori makes an important contribution to the ongoing debate over whether dependent labor practices in the African historical past can be termed "slavery." He creatively draws from studies of medieval Europe concerned with distinctions between "serf" and "slave" to bring some terminological clarity to what has often been a muddled discussion.

The first section of Colin A. Palmer's "Rethinking of American Slavery" is of particular interest to readers of this journal. In it he argues that the origins of American racist attitudes are to be found in Spanish and Portuguese notions of racial superiority toward African populations that were brought to the Iberian peninsula in the fifteenth century. Palmer then makes a welcome plea for a more comparative approach to understanding Atlantic slavery, noting that "almost all our slavery scholars show an abysmal ignorance of African history" (p. 85). Though music to the ears of this Africanist, Palmer does not follow through on his suggestions, and his description of African "traditional kin arrangements" is written at a level of generalization that hardly does justice to the variety of political and cultural practices in West and Central Africa during the slave trade era. Douglas B. Chamber's interesting chapter on creolization in eighteenth-century Virginia comes closer to the mark given his demonstrated and more subtle understanding of the varied African origins of Virginia's slave population.

In an analysis of the mid-nineteenth-century abolitionist crisis in Salvador, capital of Bahia, Dale T. Graden argues that the combination of an unprecedented arrival of Africans in the late 1840s, the fear of future slave revolts, and the devastating effects of a yellow fever epidemic impelled Bahia's elite to end the international slave trade in 1850. At the same time, domestic and European abolitionist pressures pushed this elite

to fervently defend the continued practice of slavery in Brazil itself. By 1856 this tense situation was resolved due to a crackdown on African institutions like *candomblé*, the sale of slaves from Bahia to points further south, and the spread of a deadly cholera epidemic that killed many of the remaining slaves. The abolitionist crisis passed and slavery continued in Brazil until 1888. Though this chapter is clearly the most “Latin American” of the book, it is the call for more comparative approaches to the study of the Atlantic that makes *The African Diaspora* important reading for Latin Americanists.

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Alemania y América: la llamada del Nuevo Mundo: 500 años de presencia alemana en América. By INGRID SCHULZE SCHNEIDER. Colecciones MAPFRE 1492. Colección Europa y América, 9. Madrid: Fundación MAPFRE América, 1995. Maps. Bibliography. Index. 323 pp. Paper.

This volume, published by the Fundación MAPFRE of Spain, is part of the collection Europa y América, intended to analyze the contributions of non-Iberian nations to the Americas. It is divided into three major sections: a brief description of the activities of Germans in colonial Hispanic America, their experience in North America, and their presence in Ibero-America during the national era. The latter section includes chapters on all of the South American nations, one on Mexico, one devoted to Central America, and another to the Caribbean. Given this topic's magnitude, and the fact that the author limited her research to secondary sources available in Spanish libraries, coverage of the German experience in the Americas is only general in nature, and the author deliberately eschews interpretation. The United States, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile were those nations that most attracted German immigrants during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and, not unnaturally, receive the author's greatest attention.

German presence in the United States is a well-known story, and the author handles it adequately. Less known, and more intriguing, is this group's impact on Latin America. Even before independence, explorers, geographers, and naturalists such as Alexander von Humboldt had awakened interest in this vast area. German mercenaries played a role in the wars of independence, and soon afterward German merchants (often from Hamburg and other North German ports) made their presence felt. By the 1840s associations had formed to promote immigration to agricultural colonies in the New World, particularly the United States, Chile, Brazil, and later Paraguay. Some succeeded, though many failed. Nevertheless, the colonization experience, particularly in the tropics, is a fascinating tale. At the same time, the author notes, the concentration of Germans in their own agricultural colonies, combined with the marked differences between Teutonic and Latin cultures, greatly retarded the migrants' integration into the national communities of Latin America.

While discussion of nineteenth-century German immigration is generally focused on explorers, merchants, and agriculturists, the twentieth century receives a different