

CHARTING THE MIDDLE PASSAGE: Recent Reference Books on the African Diaspora

Laurence Hallewell
Ohio State University

- THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE AND ITS SUPPRESSION: A CLASSIFIED AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS, PAMPHLETS AND PERIODICAL ARTICLES.* By PETER C. HOGG. (London: Cass, 1973. Pp. 409. \$65.00.)
- AFRO-BRAZILIANA: A WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY.* By DOROTHY B. PORTER. (Boston: Hall, 1978. Pp. 294. \$46.50.)
- THE AFRO-SPANISH AMERICAN AUTHOR: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CRITICISM.* By RICHARD L. JACKSON. (New York: Garland, 1980. Pp. 129. \$20.00.)
- BLACK LATIN AMERICA: A BIBLIOGRAPHY.* Directed by TIMOTHY F. HARDING. (Los Angeles: Latin American Studies Center of California State University, 1977. Pp. 73. \$5.50.)
- BLACK SLAVERY IN THE AMERICAS: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY, 1865–1980.* By JOHN DAVID SMITH. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1982. Pp. 1847 in 2 vols. \$95.00.)
- BRAZILIAN SLAVERY: AN ANNOTATED RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY.* By ROBERT CONRAD. (Boston: Hall, 1977. Pp. 163. \$19.00.)
- THE COMPLETE HAITIANA: A BIBLIOGRAPHIC GUIDE TO THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE, 1900–1980.* By MICHAEL S. LAGUERRE. (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus International, 1982. Pp. 1562 in 2 vols. \$250.00.)
- HAITI.* By FRANCES CHAMBERS. (Oxford: Clio, 1983. Pp. 179. \$27.00.)
- DICTIONARY OF AFRO-LATIN AMERICAN CIVILIZATION.* By BENJAMIN NÚÑEZ. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1980. Pp. 525. \$45.00.)

Although Black colleges and universities in the United States have been engaged in teaching and research on the Latin American and Caribbean aspects of the African diaspora for over forty years, wider interest on the subject had to await the introduction of Black studies into the mainstream of American academic life. This event did not occur until 1968, that *annus mirabilis* of revolution throughout higher education in the Western world. The first such course at a traditional Latin American studies center seems to have been "Black Latin America," given by Timothy Harding and Donald Bray at the California State University at Los Angeles in the spring of 1973. Their course resulted in a namesake bib-

liography, a seventy-three-page pamphlet of twelve hundred unannotated references arranged by country; it was published in 1977 in anticipation of the First Congress of Black Culture in the Americas at Cali, Colombia. Ten years after that pioneer course, more substantial reference works are now beginning to appear. Benjamin Núñez's dictionary apart, all the works published so far have been bibliographies arranged in the same general pattern: a numbered listing by broad subject groupings, accompanied by an introductory essay and an index; however, differences in coverage, details of arrangement, extent of information and indexing, size, and cost are considerable.

One British work, Peter Hogg's *African Slave Trade and Its Suppression*, antedates them all, having appeared in November 1973. It might be considered too old to be worth reviewing (the United Kingdom Library Association thesis on which it was based was completed in 1970) were it not so excellent an example of how such a work should be compiled and presented. The title is a clear and accurate statement of its scope, which the introduction defines more closely: English-language material is emphasized (although Spanish, French, Portuguese, German, Italian, and even Russian items have been liberally included); government documents represent only a sampling of the "thousands" that the author assures us exist on the subject; and the only temporal limitation is the exclusion of imaginative literature first published after 1900. Arrangement is by the two fields of the title: "Slave Trade" and "Abolition and Suppression," but these are broken down into a total of twenty-seven thematic or geographic categories, some of which are divided into "Contemporary Accounts," "Controversy," and "History." Unlike the other authors reviewed here, Hogg has wisely made his ultimate subarrangement of entries chronological, leaving author access to the index. Most entries are critically annotated, there are frequent cross-references (for example, from a polemical work to the responses it provoked), and any item not examined by Hogg himself is asterisked. Indexes are provided for places and persons, although not for other subjects, and for authors, both personal and corporate. Portuguese names are unexpectedly to be found by the first surname, but this curious practice is at least followed consistently. Hogg's total of 4,675 items within his limited field seems to represent comprehensive coverage. On Haiti, for instance, his 63 entries compare well (especially in view of his earlier cutoff date) to Michel Laguerre's 66 on the same subject area, or John Smith's 21. Hogg's 173 items on Brazil (59 in English) compare similarly to Robert Conrad's 174, Dorothy Porter's 41, and Smith's 22.

In coverage, John David Smith's *Black Slavery in the Americas* is at least as impressive. On Brazil, for instance, he has 372 English-language items, as against 353 English-language items in Porter and 100 in *Black Latin America*. On slavery in Brazil, Smith has 221, compared to 287 in

English in Conrad and 64 in Porter. Moreover, much of what Smith has is unique. A check of his first 128 items on Brazil revealed only 52 duplicated by Conrad and only 38 by Porter; of Smith's first 40 items on Haiti, Laguerre has 32 and Chambers 19. But his title, *Black Slavery in the Americas*, is misleading. In one sense, it is too limiting because he includes so much relating to Negro life outside of servitude (6 of 15 items on a randomly chosen page). In another sense, only his 1865 starting point hints at his preoccupation with the United States (the setting for at least two-thirds of his 15,667 entries). Moreover, one has to read through eight paragraphs of his introduction before finding out that all non-English material is excluded.

Direct reproduction of computer printouts detracts from the physical appearance of what is an expensive book (its effective cost of six mills per entry is hardly cheaper than that of Porter or Hogg—slightly below one cent—if the lack of annotation or conformity in author headings is taken into account). Although Smith claims that his subject index provides “a more thorough, accurate and interdisciplinary subject assessment” than the omitted annotations, its compilation through a mechanical use of the computer (with apparently neither revision nor even adequate proofreading) leaves much to be desired. Some subjects are left out, even when the descriptive term appears in the title of the item (for example, “Rastafarians” or “Apprenticeship”), or they have to be sought under a broader heading (works on repatriation are indexed under “Colonization,” which includes resettlement on this side of the Atlantic). Little attempt has been made to define terms (“Abolition” covers the ending of both the slave trade and slavery while “Emancipation” is used for slavery abolition and for individual manumission). No effort has been made at consolidation (the work contains all these forms: “Dominican Republic,” “Haiti,” “Hispaniola,” “Saint Domingue,” “San Domingo,” “Santo Domingo,” and “St. Domingue,” according to the form and spelling used in the individual title catalogued). In the author index, duplication such as “Boxer, C. R.” next to “Boxer, Charles R.” must occur a hundred times or so. Smith's cross-referencing is seldom adequate. The entry “Runaway Slaves” directs the reader to see also the synonymous “Fugitive Slaves,” but not vice versa. Frequently, the user is faced with a solid phalanx of undifferentiated index entries (106 under “Cuba,” 568 under “Free Blacks,” 664 under “Religion”). Errors include the transposition of four columns of the index, confusion between “Abolition” and “Abortion,” and the entering of Naipaul's *Overcrowded Barracoon* (on Mauritius) under “Caribbean.”

Among the bibliographies on specific countries, Robert Conrad's *Brazilian Slavery* contains 992 entries that are usefully annotated but are arranged in only four broad subject groups. The work lacks a subject index. Conrad provides a very useful bibliographic essay, and his cover-

age seems adequate, although many official publications and all imaginative literature have been excluded. (Surprisingly, no works were listed by Wagley or Herskovits.) Conrad is inconsistent in his choice of which editions to enter and to what extent to include translations.

Dorothy Parker's *Afro-Braziliana* is, as its title indicates, much wider in scope. Although her arrangement is similar (again with no subject index), the fact that she has twenty-three subject groups makes subject access rather easier. Some subjects have been omitted or given only token recognition simply because, as she disarmingly explains, "time limitation did not permit [her] to search for them" (p. x). Items she personally examined are indicated by location symbols for one of eleven U.S. libraries, all but two of them in Washington, D.C., or the Northeastern seaboard states. Her apparent total of 5,228 items is inflated by repetition under different subject heads, often in different editions. The annotating is inconsistent. Under "History," for example, one finds Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões* in both its 1914 and (textually identical) 1923 editions, together with the Putnam translation, none of which is annotated, while under "Social Conditions" one finds the 1927 edition (no different textually and far from being the latest available), which is annotated. There are also some surprising omissions. "Travelers' Accounts" does not include Ave-Lallement or Canstatt, and Luccock is present only in Portuguese translation.

Michel Laguerre's *Complete Haitiana* follows a similar arrangement in a far more lavish presentation. It has three times as many subject groupings as the Porter bibliography, but several of them are too large for convenient access in the absence of any subject index (for example, "Politics and Government" has 1,127 entries and "Religion" has 738). The work contains no annotations but does translate non-English titles. Library locations (mostly in Haiti, France, or the United States) are also given. The work's coverage is wide enough to justify the title in general terms, but inevitably, there are some omissions. Of the first 63 authors indexed in Frances Chamber's *Haiti*, only 50 are found in *The Complete Haitiana*, despite its total of 9,674 items as compared to a mere 500 in the much smaller work. Like other volumes in the "World Bibliographical Series," Chamber's *Haiti* does not pretend to do more than introduce its subject, yet it has more subject categories than Laguerre's work (79 against his 65), full annotations, as well as a complete index combining personal and corporate authors, titles, and subjects (Laguerre indexes only personal authors).

Richard Jackson's *Afro-Spanish American Author* is a slim, but very serviceable, volume of 526 items. It provides for the black writer in Spanish what the second part of Porter's book provides for the Afro-Brazilian: an annotated listing of anthologies and general criticism, followed by bibliographies of individual authors.

Despite their minor imperfections, all these bibliographies are highly useful works. All deserve a place in any academic library with a Latin American emphasis as well as in the private collections of any scholar whose individual specialty they cover. It is difficult to make so unequivocal a recommendation for Benjamin Núñez's *Dictionary of Afro-Latin American Civilization*. His criteria for what is African seem narrow in the extreme. Thus, African religious survivals are well covered, but Carnival, whether Brazilian or Trinidadian, is hardly mentioned, presumably because it is tainted by Christian origin. There is much on African traditions in music but nothing on the steel band because pans did not come from Africa. Sport, despite its significance in the social ascent of the Afro-American, is ignored, so no Sobers, no Constantine, no Pelé. "Capoeira" is included, but only because Núñez believes the term to refer to some sort of dancer in a religious procession (p. 111). One finds entries for Marcus Garvey and for the Rastafarians, but not for C. L. R. James, the New Jewel, or any other political figure or movement of the twentieth century, whatever their importance in the development of Black consciousness and self-confidence. *Casa Grande e Senzala* merits an entry (wherein its thesis is approved, without being elucidated) but not *Capitalism and Slavery*; Eric Williams does not even make the bibliography. The white abolitionists are well covered, but apparently only those whose motivation was spiritual: one finds John Newton, Granville Sharp, John Wesley, and William Wilberforce, but not Charles James Fox or the Earl of Mansfield. Food and drink are extensively, but unevenly, treated. Sorrel is described at equal length and in almost identical terms under "French Sorrel," "Red Sorrel," "Sorrel" *tout court*, and "Yellow Sorrel," and also has a *see* reference from "African marrow." Cachaça, guaraná, and even rum (in the spiritous sense) one seeks in vain.

The manner in which Núñez presents his information is quite odd at times. Sometimes it seems pointless, as when one is told that Granville Sharp was the son of an uncharacterized "Thomas Sharp." The reader unaware that blue was simply the cheapest dyestuff available before the advent of chemical dyes in the middle of the last century (whence its use in the British Navy, the French and American armies, and England's "Bluecoat" charity schools) can only be puzzled by the reference to slave garments being of blue cloth, "the same as apprentices' costumes in England" (p. 433). Some information is positively misleading, such as the description of "Anti-Slavery Society" in the past tense as if it were defunct, and "Yaws" in the same manner, as if the disease had vanished with slavery. The "Lei do Rio Branco" and "Lei do Ventre Livre" are given two separate (and coincidentally successive) entries, with nothing to suggest that they are synonymous. Under "Abolition of Slavery," France is credited with the date 1794, with no hint that Napoleon reinstated slavery in 1802, while England's 1772 repudiation is left

unmentioned. There are also some outright errors. Argentina did not abolish slavery in 1813, but in 1853 (the earlier law merely abolished birthright slavery). Barbados was not acquired in 1603 (it was claimed in 1605 and settled in 1625). The Brazilian Law of the Free Womb was not passed in 1869, merely discussed. The Ceará Clube de Lavoura was neither unique nor typical of a widespread institution, and *lavoura* is hardly to be translated "labor."

The dictionary's alphabetization is also unconventional. There are noun phrases entered under the article ("Las Siete Partidas" and "De Surinaamsche Lettervrieden") and verb phrases in the indicative ("É cheio de arte") or even entered under a pronoun ("Ele tem dedo na cozinha"). "Utrecht, Peace of" is inverted, but not "Act of Emancipation," which thus is effectively separated from "Emancipation Bill." Portuguese names show no consistent pattern of inversion either.

There is little cross-referencing between different forms of a heading or linking related headings (for example, between "Parcel" and "Slave Jettisoning"). Indeed, the work is bulked by the repetition of similar information under near-synonyms (such as "Country Higgler," "Higglering," "Planter Higgler"). The author apparently tried to remedy the lack of synthesis in the body of the dictionary by the device of an index (divided into "General" and "Name") that refers the user not directly to the headings used in the dictionary part, but to undifferentiated page numbers. Thus, there is nothing in the dictionary itself under "Slave Trade," but the index provides under this heading and "Slave Traders" a block of a hundred page numbers, which is tantamount to inviting the reader to wade through one-fifth of the book. While the idea of a general dictionary covering Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin American studies was excellent, the ideal such work, which would be accurate, comprehensive, dispassionately objective, and efficiently organized, is yet to be achieved.