

slave trade to slavery and of slavery to America. I wanted to see more sustained discussion of the place of slave trading in American capitalism. For instance, Rothman writes that Franklin “cultivated relationships with bankers and commission merchants across the United States,” but most of the book’s examples seem limited to the slave states (p. 156).

Rothman has written a terrific book and one that convincingly demonstrates how the business of slave trading became the backbone of the slave economy. It is an especially timely message for a nation that has still not faced the consequences of slavery.

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Captives of Conquest: Slavery in the Early Modern Spanish Caribbean. By Erin Woodruff Stone. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021. 288 pp. Hardcover, \$49.95. ISBN: 978-0-8122-5310-8.

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Reviewed by Alejandro García-Montón

In *Captives of Conquest*, Erin Stone addresses the making of the business of Indigenous slavery in the Caribbean, roughly from 1491 to 1546. By recovering and knitting together the attitudes and responses of a multitude of actors vis-à-vis the institution and practice of Indian slavery—including European settlers, priests, caciques, royal officials, natives, and maroons—the book shows how this heinous trade not only became a central activity during the early Spanish conquest and colonization of the Americas but also an endeavor that shaped both processes on a day-to-day basis. In Stone’s words, “The search for enslaved [Indigenous] laborers inspired exploration, drove conquest (both military and spiritual), and kept early Spanish colonies afloat” (p. 156).

The historiographical implications of Stone’s perspective are important. First, it nuances those narratives of the Conquest in which the settlers’ ambitions were driven by the search for gold and silver. Second, it underscores how slavery had a much more important role in the decimation of Indigenous lives than traditionally thought. Thus, *Captives of Conquest* offers a very much needed new angle on a relatively neglected topic like Indian slavery—especially if compared to studies on African

slavery in Spanish America—and in relation to a period about which considerable light still needs to be shed.

The book's geographical scope covers the Spanish circum-Caribbean, comprising the Greater and the Lesser Antilles, the Lucayan Archipelago, Florida, and the coasts of Venezuela, Colombia, Central America, and Mexico. The author should be commended for this ambitious choice. During the years under examination, the island of Hispaniola served as the political hub of the region. As the pioneering Spanish colony, it infamously set the earliest stage for Indian slavery—as well as for Indian resistance—and worked as a platform for Spaniards to weave the first extensive enslaving networks. However, rather than offering just a center-periphery approach to the region, the author unveils the gradual establishment of connections frequently bypassing Hispaniola. The many slave voyages uncovered in the book—linking, for instance, Venezuela with Jamaica, Nicaragua with Panama, Cuba with Florida, or the Yucatan peninsula with Puerto Rico—speak to the early formation of intra-Caribbean markets for Indian slavery, their geographies, and inner hierarchies. They also locate transshipment points from where the captives were successively moved, around the Caribbean or across the Atlantic. These are aspects that we must be aware of if we aim for a refined understanding of a tragedy which, according to Stone, subjugated between 250,000 and 500,000 Indigenous peoples from 1493 to 1542 (p. 7).

Captives of Conquest consists of six chapters, plus an introduction and conclusion. It follows a chronological order. Yet, other readings are possible. Chapters 1 and 6 work in tandem in showing how Hispaniola became a laboratory where different slavery cultures came into coexistence, frequently permeating each other, and giving birth to new ones. While Chapter 1 interrogates how pre-contact Taino and Carib cultures of bondage and their logistics shaped the enslaving practices of the newly arrived Spaniards, Chapter 6 focuses on the connections between Indian and African slavery during the 1520s and 1530s. Chapters 2 and 3 can be grasped as another duo, preoccupied with Spaniards' shifting attitudes toward Indigenous slavery, ranging from prohibition to promotion. Concretely, the position of the Crown and imperial legislators, and that of the first religious orders present in the Caribbean, are scrutinized.

The final pair concentrates on the scale, logistics, and mechanisms of Indian slavery. Due attention is paid to the role of Indigenous people in the forging of the business. Certainly, there were native “involuntary collaborators” performing as interpreters, guides, or porters, but it is no less true that others participated willingly too, for instance as slave providers (p. 94). Chapter 4 underscores how enslaving raids inspired

Spaniards to explore territories like Florida, Mexico, and Nicaragua. By uncovering important court cases against major enslavers in the province of Pánuco (Mexico) and how the Pearl Islands (off the Venezuelan coast) were transformed from pearl fisheries into a prime enslaving zone, Chapter 5 explains how this slave trade worked in practice by the late 1520s and into the next decade. Brutal enslaving methods, illegal activities, competition among slave traders, and disputes over taxation are brought into the limelight.

From a business history perspective, the emerging chronology proceeds like this: prior to the 1520s, natives were captured to fulfill labor needs from mining industries and sugar plantations and ranches in Cuba and Hispaniola, while others were enslaved as consolation prizes. Later, demand for Indigenous slaves was “consistent,” prompting the emergence of specialized slave traders (p. 102). According to Stone, although the business’ profitability was “a limited one,” this activity consolidated to the point that “by the 1530s the commerce of Indian slaves was one of the largest businesses in the Spanish Empire” (pp. 101, 129). A general discussion about the economic organization of the early Spanish Caribbean and its industries would have better grounded such a bold statement and added context to the stories told in this book. Throughout the chapters, precious information on slave voyages, captive Indians, raids, and their perpetrators emerges, as well as data on captives’ prices. Readers would have benefited if all this valuable data was presented in a more systematic way—like, for example, in Table 1 (p. 39) or compiled in appendices.

Captives of Conquest appears in an appropriate moment, in which the experience of Indian slavery is gaining the historiographical importance that it should have always had. It appeals to scholars interested in Indigenous slavery, the early slave trade in the Caribbean, and the Spanish Conquest, and it will become an inspiring reference for undergraduate students. Erin Stone has weaved a canvas on which future researchers will color and nuance the story of a business that was a human tragedy.

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