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MISEVICH, Philip & MANN, Kristin (eds.). — *The Rise and Demise of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Atlantic World*. Rochester, Rochester University Press (“Rochester Studies in African History and the Diasporas, Book 71”), 2016, 408 p., bibl., index.

- 1 *The Rise and Demise of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Atlantic World*, edited by Philip Misevich and Kristin Mann, is a sweeping and compelling account of the connected histories of slavery, the slave trade, abolition, and emancipation throughout the Atlantic world. Each of the volume’s twelve chapters are based on papers presented at the conference, “New Frontiers in Economic, Cultural, and Digital History of Atlantic Slave Trade,” held at Emory University in March 2013. The conference and this subsequent publication are dedicated to historian David Eltis, with every contributor drawing inspiration in some manner from Eltis’ immense and transformative scholarship on the history of slavery and the slave trade. The collection probes the rise, decline, and legacy of the Atlantic slave system with new and under-used sources from archives located around the Atlantic basin and beyond. The contributors employ diverse and innovative methodologies in their studies, which include, for example, compiling life histories on the enslaved, using demography, tracking the effects of ocean and wind currents, analysis of historical images, and even the use of African names as historical evidence. At its most micro-level, this selection of essays can tell us about the everyday struggles of the very people who were caught in the maelstrom of

Atlantic slavery, and in its broadest strokes, it emphasizes slavery's truly global consequences and its legacies in the twenty-first century.

- 2 These studies investigate diverse areas, such as Sierra Leone, the Bight of Benin, Trinidad, Brazil, and the United States, to name just a few. Together, the authors demonstrate the transformations wrought by the emergence and demise of slavery on all four continents of the Atlantic world. By covering both coastal and inland locations, they also illuminate the effects of slavery within and well beyond the Atlantic littoral. Woven throughout the entire volume are the authors' reflections on historical debates which have roiled Atlantic scholarship for decades, including the connection between patterns of mass consumption and ethical labour practices, conceptions of one slavery *versus* many slaveries, the impact of Africans in the history of the slave trade and abolition, and the shortcomings of emancipation and the enduring structural inequalities faced by former slaves and their descendants.
- 3 The book is divided into two thematic and chronological sections. The book opens with Part One, "Slavery and the Slave Trade," which investigates the origins, nature, adaptability, and duration of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The five essays in the first chapters collectively offer new insight on the forces fuelling the demand for slaves in the Americas and how the Atlantic slave trade continued for well over three centuries. David Richardson authors the first chapter, displaying a masterful analysis of a wide-range of quantitative data, from the tracking slave voyages to the Americas to evaluating the changing costs of purchasing slaves in Africa. He reflects on the relationship between slavery and consumption by arguing that the emergence of mass markets for slave-produced sugar and other commodities expanded and transformed slavery and slave trading on both sides of the Atlantic. In chapter two, Philip Morgan explores the histories of Native American and urban slavery in the Spanish Caribbean as testaments to slavery's diversity and counterpoints to the assumption that sugar cultivation was the essential characteristic of slave life in the West Indies. Next, Rik van Welie's aptly titled chapter, "What Happened in the Colonies, Stayed in Colonies," assesses how European countries with long-established traditions of liberty and free labour, such as the Dutch Republic, reconciled their complicity within the systems of imperial subjugation and mass enslavement employed in their overseas possessions. Chapter three, by Jelmer Vos, examines the impact of European slaving on the Windward Coast, an area of Africa that produced the least number of slaves for export to the Americas. In his impressive assessment of a large part of West Africa, Vos addresses the relative importance of the transatlantic slave trade to certain African societies. In the first part of his essay, he shows how commodity trading, including the gold and ivory trade, represented the majority of the Windward Coast's export activities during its integration into the Atlantic slave trade. The latter part of Vos' chapter identifies patterns of small-scale enslavement, such as kidnapping and raiding villages, which developed in the region to meet European demand for captives. In the final chapter of the volume's first section, Daniel B. Domingues da Silva tracks the effects of ocean and wind currents in shaping transatlantic connections and the cultural demography of the African Diaspora in transit to the Americas.
- 4 In the second part of the book, Misevich and Mann bring together seven essays to tackle the immediate and long-term consequences of the ending of the slave trade and slavery. The contributions in this section survey abolition from multiple angles, evaluating its origins, accomplishments, and legacies in present times. In chapter six,

“Liberty, Equality, Humanity,” historian Seymour Drescher compares French and British anti-slavery movements to highlight how the successes and failures of abolitionism were shaped by political culture and the efficacy of civil society activism. Drescher ultimately frames abolitionism as a forerunner of the eventual push for universal human rights in the twentieth century. Leonardo Marques, in chapter seven, tests the limits and impact of anti-slave trade legislation in his case study of American shipbuilding during the era of the illegal slave trade. Marques concludes that while the United States government was able to prevent its citizens from directly participating in the illicit trade, it could not eliminate their indirect contributions to the traffic, particularly the continued use of US-built vessels as slave ships. Next, Kristin Mann masters archival sources on both sides of the Atlantic to piece together the life trajectory of a singular Yoruba man who circulated in the Atlantic world as both a slave and freed person. By examining the changes spurred by the illegal slave trade in the Bight of Benin through the lens of biography, her study reminds us that vast, impersonal processes, such as enslavement, slave trading, and manumission, were indeed experienced and lived by real human beings. The ninth chapter, written by Philip Misevich, investigates the adaptability and composition of slave trading around the colony of Sierra Leone, a former slave-supplying region that was transformed into a major hub of British slave trade interdiction in the nineteenth century. His deft analysis of the names found in Sierra Leone’s “Registers of Liberated Africans” offers convincing evidence on the common ethno-linguistic and geographic origins of slaves shipped from near the colony, and sheds bright new light on the cultural characteristics of the African Diaspora.

- 5 The volume shifts to the twentieth century in its final three chapters. In chapter ten, Stanley L. Engerman’s powerful essay investigates post-emancipation slave societies across the Americas and argues that legal emancipation did not equate to “full freedom” for ex-slaves. His chapter underscores the varying economic, political, social, and even geographic factors that both maintained the uneven power relations of slavery and hindered access to equality for former slaves and their descendants. To end the volume, historians Robert Goddard and Olatunji Ojo provide chapters on British colonies in the Caribbean and West Africa. Goddard’s analysis of what the terms “creole” and “Indian” meant in colonial Trinidad contributes to a new and more nuanced understanding of the black-Indian rivalry that emerged after the abolition of slavery on the island. Ojo, in chapter twelve, examines African slave trading in southern Nigeria in the wake of British colonial rule and abolitionism. Using new sources of evidence, his essay uncovers the unsettling rise of the trafficking of children, particularly young girls, as a strategy to curtail colonial anti-slavery efforts in the early twentieth century.
- 6 *The Rise and Demise of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Atlantic World* is a welcome addition to Atlantic scholarship. It is thought provoking, yet still easy to read. The volume should appeal to undergraduates, graduate students, and specialists alike. While it does cover a wide range of locations across the Atlantic world, the volume could have included more coverage of West Central Africa, as well as more detailed discussions of the slave traffic into the territories of Spanish America.
- 7 Nonetheless, Mann and Misevich have still put together a truly impressive publication, with each chapter presenting innovative analyses of the people and processes that shaped the Atlantic world. In tune with twenty-first century concerns, the volume pulls

readers into engaging historical debates about transatlantic slavery, while simultaneously forcing them to ponder the profitability and prevalence of coerced labour systems in our world today. This is Atlantic history at its best!