that he is quoting selected excerpts reprinted in the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* (e.g., 250–1, 452). Although the bibliography includes major works of scholarship on African history, these are seldom brought into play in Heartfield's treatment of Africa, which effectively follows the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*'s lead.

This book is the first broad survey of the Anti-Slavery Society, but readers will be better served by a combination of previously published texts that employ a range of sources to offer fuller, multifaceted perspectives on the organization and its work. These include Howard Temperley, *British Anti-Slavery, 1833-1870* (1972), Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (2012), and the many fine works by Miers extending from the nineteenth century into the late twentieth century.

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SIERRA LEONE AND BRITISH ANTISLAVERY IN THE AGE OF REVOLUTION

Freedom's Debtors: British Antislavery in Sierra Leone in the Age of Revolution.
By Padraic X. Scanlan.
New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017. Pp. 320. $40.00, hardback (ISBN: 9780300217445).
doi:10.1017/S002185371800107X

Key Words: Sierra Leone, slavery, slavery abolition, trade, labour.

In Padraic X. Scanlan's own words, this book 'is a history of the ideology of British antislavery in practice' (3). Scanlan specifically offers a perspective on how ideas about abolition and free trade capitalism manifested themselves as policies in the early nineteenth century in the British colony of Sierra Leone. For many Britons in the Age of Revolution, Sierra Leone, which became home to freed slaves from across the Atlantic world, served as a significant experiment, a 'pilot plan intended to prove that free workers could produce cash crops as profitably as slaves could' (3). Aspirations of freedom combined with an ideology of free trade produced an abolitionist regime in Sierra Leone that was, as Scanlan asserts, acquisitive, gradualist, and militarized (20).

Throughout this meticulously researched work, Scanlan demonstrates how the 81,745 men, women, and children who disembarked from slave ships were seen by colonial officials not simply as the recipients of humanitarian charity, but as 'a source of flexible, fungible labour' who could service the needs of the colony (3). However, in Sierra Leone, 'Liberated Africans', that is, Africans liberated from slave ships, joined formerly enslaved black settlers from Nova Scotia and Jamaica. The diversity of these groups and their experiences made the British administration's goal of transforming freed slaves into colonial labor much more complex in practice than in principle. Scanlan shows how these distinct groups of 'freed slaves' came to be implicated in a coercive imperial web that wove together both anti-slavery and slaving forces.

The book is organized into five chapters. Chapter One charts the transition of Sierra Leone from a settlement ruled by the Sierra Leone Company to a Crown Colony in

1808. Prior to 1808, British abolitionists in London exercised a heavy hand in shaping Freetown policies; they ensured, for example, that the first two governors appointed to serve in the colony were strong opponents of slavery and the slave trade. But efforts by British officials to introduce and promote agrarian policies were blocked by former slaves hailing from Nova Scotia, who preferred to be merchants over farmers; these initiatives were furthermore hampered by the ready availability of agricultural goods produced by indigenous producers and networks. In 1800, the Nova Scotians threatened rebellion, which was quelled by the arrival of a shipload of Maroons from Jamaica. This episode, Scanlan argues, militarized the settlement and promulgated its formal colonization.

Chapter Two begins with the passing of the Slave Trade Act in 1807 which banned the Atlantic slave trade. Scanlan reveals the improvisational and haphazard reception of the first 'captured Negroes' who arrived in Freetown; they were essentially sold at auction as apprentices to local merchants and settlers. This ongoing, and often abusive, practice was seen by some officials as too closely resembling slavery. One weakness of this chapter, however, is that it does not undertake a more nuanced exploration of how black settlers, the primary households who acquired through these auctions the labor of newly arrived liberated Africans, understood the system of apprenticeship. Did black settlers believe in gradual emancipation? Most of them had literally fought for their freedom in the Americas and resumed that battle in Sierra Leone. How did their perception of emancipation shape their interactions with newly liberated Africans? In this chapter, and perhaps throughout the book, Scanlan's arguments might have been strengthened by illuminating how black settlers' conceptualization of freedom engaged with and refashioned British abolitionist policies on the ground.

Chapters Three and Four consider the Vice-Admiralty Courts, the courts that processed property and settled people taken off captured slave ships, and they offer the most original historical contribution. Scanlan exposes how these courts from 1808–1815 were the product of collusion between England's antislavery lobby, colonial officials, and the British Navy. In the transactions of the court, the labor of liberated Africans proved just as valuable to the growing British colony and its officials as the cargos of goods and merchandise seized from those same ships. Given the ongoing Napoleonic War with France, many British colonial officials saw liberated Africans as ideal soldiers whose recruitment could help to solidify control over black settlers within the colony, as well as manage the colony's neighbors.

But with the end of the conflict with France in 1815, Freetown transformed from being a commercial and military enterprise into an imperial project that focused on the 'civilizing mission'. In his final chapter, Scanlan demonstrates how this shift bolstered the importance, expansion, and indeed budget of the Liberated African Department. This argument presents a fresh interpretation of how the image and operation of the resettlement of Liberated Africans into villages surrounding Freetown solidified Sierra Leone's image as the center of British colonization — and which inspired groups like the American Colonization Society in their abolitionist endeavors in West Africa.

Freedom's Debtors offers a much-needed account of how British abolitionist principles were developed and applied in West Africa. But this is not a book that focuses particularly on the voices and experiences of African settlers and workers, nor does it explore their ideas about freedom and abolition. Instead, Scanlan's study emphasizes how British and

other non-African actors developed and profited from new forms of coercive labor as a result of the abolition of the slave trade. As with other schemes, such as the importation of indentured labor from Asia to the Caribbean, colonial officials used nominal contracts and paltry wages to justify the exploitation of liberated slaves' labor as free and fair. Scanlan's book provides a strong foundation for exploring the connections between the 'abolitionist' laws and policies imposed on Sierra Leone's 'Liberated Africans' and those that were applied to other imperial subjects during this dynamic time of ideological revolution and global expansion.

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HISTORY, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY ON A WEST AFRICAN ROAD

The Nature of the Path: Reading a West African Road.
Marcus Filippello.
Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. Pp. 232. $27.00 paperback, ISBN 978-1-5179-0283-4)
doi:10.1017/S0021853718001081

Key Words: Benin, migration, technology, trade, politics, environment.

Marcus Filippello's book is a history of the Ohori people of southeastern Benin. Drawing on extensive Ohori oral histories and French archival records, Filippello traces the emergence and growth of this community from its early development in the eighteenth century through various periods of instability and transformation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While the timeline for the earliest settlement of the Lama Valley remains a bit murky, it is clear that by the eighteenth century refugees from the collapsed empire of Oyo migrated into the valley in large numbers, transforming what had once been a loosely organized community of farmers into a centralized, politically independent state. While the Ohori are often considered members of the Yoruba diaspora, they resisted various efforts by outside forces to incorporate or conquer them. The political independence of the eighteenth century served as a point of pride for the Ohori, who fought first the French colonizers and later the Dahomey and Benin governments to protect their autonomy and secure prosperity for the community in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Quite notably, the Pobe-Ketu Road anchors Ohori narratives of the past. The road is a space of danger and protection, risk and opportunity, continuity and change. It is simultaneously the path that brings people to the Lama Valley while it also offers a means to protect the community from invaders. This sort of ambivalence about roads has been widely discussed by Africanists. However, Filippello argues that the road is more than a palimpsest of Ohori narratives or a mnemonic device through which the Ohori recount the past. The Pobu-Ketu Road constitutes 'a material and metaphorical space on which Ohori allegorically "record" their memories and perceptions of changing relationships with the natural and material worlds' (9).