the debate about rice in South Carolina, Fields-Black asserts that tidal rice farming was not introduced to Rio Nunez by people from the interior or Europeans but was the indigenous creation of coastal peoples who were speakers of Atlantic languages.

Oddly, Europeans visiting the coast seem to have been mostly uninterested in the unique mangrove rice complex. One visiting English merchant who spent a rainy season on the coast in 1794 left an account of mangrove rice cultivation, but otherwise documentary evidence for this region's agriculture is sparse, and environmental conditions in the area do not lend themselves to the preservation of archaeological evidence. Thus, Fields-Black's argument for the indigenous origins of mangrove rice cultivation depends almost entirely on linguistic evidence. Even her dates derive from glottochronology. Some readers will undoubtedly be uncomfortable with the heavy dependence on virtually uncorroborated linguistic evidence.

Despite the heavy reliance on a single form of evidence, Fields-Black's description of rice farming in West Africa is more convincing than her efforts to weigh in on the controversy over the role of African technical expertise in the South Carolina rice industry. Here she argues that Eltis et al. are wrong when they say that very few enslaved Africans from the Upper Guinea Coast arrived in South Carolina ports. She contends that they have looked primarily for evidence of slaves who passed first through the Caribbean and then to the Carolinas and thus have missed voyages from the coast directly to South Carolina ports. This assertion depends on the plausible-sounding idea that direct voyages from the Upper Guinea Coast to South Carolina would have gone unnoticed by metropolitan record-keepers in Britain because they neither began nor ended there. This may be correct, but it is not concrete evidence for the existence of large number of these voyages. Further, she argues on the basis of a single advertisement for an auction that specifies the Sierra Leonean origin of the slaves on offer that there was a specific demand for such slaves in South Carolina. However, Eltis et al. have examined many such advertisements and reached the opposite conclusion, so it is hard to see Fields-Black's one example as definitive evidence. In the end, the book makes a significant contribution to our understanding of rice cultivation in West Africa but leaves unresolved the debate over the role of Africans in the South Carolina rice industry.

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SEASONED IN MOTION

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Captives and Voyagers: Black Migrants Across the Eighteenth-century British Atlantic World. By ALEXANDER X. BYRD. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2008. Pp. xi + 346. $49.95, hardback (ISBN 978-0-8071-3359-0).

KEY WORDS: West Africa, African diaspora, migration, slavery, slave trade, violence.

Much in the experience of black people moving across the late eighteenth-century Atlantic depended on whether they were captives on forced migrations or voyagers testing the limits of their freedom – but not as much as we might have thought before the publication of this compelling book. The slave trade from the interior of the African continent to the coast, across the ocean, and into a new world brought unfathomable terrors to the captives, commodities who were

handled as rationalized and impersonal units of freight. Free migrants, obviously, had much broader latitude in their courses of action as they took advantage of the turmoil caused by war, fled their owners, and sought out resettlement on more favorable terms. What is less obvious, and what Alexander X. Byrd demonstrates convincingly, is that there was much that was similar between free and coerced migration. Both entailed degrees of subjugation, duress, and suffering, and tragedy was most often the result. The 'same pressures – violence, privation, alienation, despair, and the power of slave traders and owners' shaped the experience of both types of migrants (p. 119). Above all, there were the transformative effects of dislocation. All were subject to the catastrophes of scattering, and none could avoid being indelibly shaped by it.

The book coheres around Byrd's analysis of 'seasoning' – black peoples' adjustments to the pressures that pattern social life. From Africa to America and back again, motion and its determining force was the most salient continuity, justifying Byrd's inspired decision to fuse what have generally been told as separate, almost antithetical, stories: the slave trade (in this case from the Bight of Biafra to Jamaica) and the repatriation to Africa by the founding generations of Sierra Leone. Byrd is remarkably perceptive in analyzing what might be called the logistics of society in motion – the organizational aspects of life that channel people's activities into noticeable patterns. By focusing on the process of migration, he is able to show how movement changed people and how the pervasive power of the Atlantic slave trade constrained them.

The first section of the book, 'Captives', examines the slave trade from the Bight of Biafra to Jamaica, paying fine-grained attention to the circumstances and routines of forced migration and labor management that shaped slave life. Here, Byrd wades into the contentious debates on the meaning of African 'ethnic' or 'national' categories of belonging in the Atlantic World, arguing that the designation 'Igbo' owes much of its origin to the serial displacement, alienation, and regrouping that occurred during the multi-staged process of enslavement. Captives arrived at the Biafran littoral as strangers, and 'the foreigners brought down to the river to be sold into waiting ships, whatever and whomever they used to be, were called Igbo' (p. 29). Regrouping under the force of a kind of 'urbanism' that marked their clustering in towns and ships, the enslaved responded to their desperate condition by making the name their own, even as the slave trade gave way to the grinding hardship of American slavery. Byrd's persuasive assertion that the 'ethnic identities previous scholars have considered proof of the connections uniting American slaves to their African homelands may in some cases be better understood as consequences of the violence and terror of their exile' is destined to set a new standard for the interpretation of ethnic or national categories of enslaved Africans in the Americas (p. 56).

As the dislocations of enslavement generated new forms of belonging, the power of slaveholders and the severity of material life set the conditions in which communities could be formed in slavery. White power combined with routine environmental disasters and the turbulence wrought by the late eighteenth-century revolutions to make black life precarious and chaotic. Because he is tightly focused on life's material constraints, Byrd has less to say about the content of black intellectual and cultural life that has so engaged folklorists, anthropologists, and cultural historians who have stressed 'connection and continuity'. For such scholars, his emphasis on the shaping pressures of the slaves' predicament poses less a challenge than an invitation to consider disruption, disjunction, violence, and terror as continuous features of cultural life in slavery.

'Voyagers', the second part of the book, shows that life in freedom presented similar challenges. In Byrd's account of the migrations that led to the founding of

Sierra Leone, he has found a novel way to represent the passage from slavery to freedom, the classic arc of black historical narrative. His consideration of the ill-fated emigration of the poor black people from London and the mass exodus of African Americans from post-revolutionary North America portrays repatriation as yet another series of dislocations rather than as redemption. Byrd's sensitivity to the churn and turmoil confronting the migrants yields important insights. He is able to discern the fundamental importance of marriage in the decision of the London migrants; he tracks the growing sense of independence and enfranchisement engendered by the wartime experience of blacks in ports, and of loyalty to the British crown as the policies of empire converged with the migrants' interests; and he demonstrates the importance of evangelical Christianity and radical democracy to the nature of black politics. How black people migrated, the actual stages through which they moved, constantly shaped and transformed their desires and decisions. But this story, too, was largely about constraint and catastrophe. The dispersions and resettlements of free black migrants were marked, like those of slaves, by 'extremes of suffering', which 'complicated their ability to reproduce their old societies in new lands as it likewise facilitated important social transformations' (pp. 246–7). If the very concept of an 'African diaspora' implies the coupling of exile with repatriation and return, and the hope that violent dispersion yields at some point to peaceful resettlement, Byrd suggests instead that for black people during the Age of Revolution it was exodus all the way down.

Some readers may find this view too pessimistic. An earlier generation of scholars, riding a wave of enthusiasm for popular social struggles, emphasized the vital resistance movements and cultural creativity of Black Atlantic peoples, perhaps tending toward a romantic view of the opportunities for black self-determination. More recently, a number of authors, Byrd included, have been writing in a more tragic register, finding novel ways to describe the material determinants of social life. When this latest movement has crested, *Captives and Voyagers* will be a necessary point of departure for scholars who again seek new ways to explain the heroic achievements of those seasoned in turmoil and tragedy.

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AN UNBALANCED STUDY OF PORTUGUESE EXPANSION IN AFRICA

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Moorings: Portuguese Expansion and the Writing of Africa. By JOSIAH BLACKMORE. Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009. Pp. xxiv + 209. £15.50/$25, paperback (ISBN 978-0-8166-4833-7).

KEY WORDS: Exploration, imperialism, travel literature.

'Moorings' in the title refers both to the Portuguese maritime voyages and to 'Moors' (Muslim Africans), whom the Portuguese regarded as their implacable enemies. The wordplay also signals two aspects of this study that historians will find troubling. First, the author – a specialist in Iberian literature at the University of Toronto – is concerned with how Portuguese maritime expansion produced 'a sustained textual productivity on Africa as one of the characteristic practices of empire' (p. 34) but not with the actual realities of these encounters. Second, having committed himself to a study of literary imagination, the author deals with the inconvenient fact that most Africans whom the Portuguese encountered south of