Damian Alan Pargas (ed.), *Fugitive Slaves and Spaces of Freedom in North America*.

Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018. xii + 321 pp. (Cloth US\$90.00)

Damian Alan Pargas has assembled 11 research-based essays on “fugitive slaves” for this book. The authors are historians and most are university-affiliated. The research chapters are traditional historiography; quite limited in scope, they are focused on details found in primary sources and seem to be consciously apolitical and neutral in their presentations and authorial voices. An introduction by Pargas lays out some basic ideas on fugitivism and a simple geography-centered model of modes of freedom.

The book contains detailed insights about relatively specific fugitive populations, such as those found in northern U.S. colonies and states; Ontario; north-west Ohio; the American South; Richmond, Virginia; and the Texas-Mexico borderland (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8–10, respectively). Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850; Chapter 5 explores fugitives in the South; Chapter 7 elaborates on borderland Maroons; and Chapter 11 draws attention to the U.S. coastal travel to the Caribbean among Maroons. The volume will be of interest to readers looking for straightforward case studies and basic analyses of historical Maroons, fugitive slaves, refugees, and runaways (there is no consensus in this volume on which label to use) that rely almost exclusively on insights from documents. Pargas’s focus on expanding typical understandings of the geographic scope of fugitivism in the United States develops new perspectives on the complexities of marronage and related phenomena, such as the so-called Underground Railroad, which also contributes to its usefulness.

Sadly, there is astoundingly limited reference made to, and use of, scholarship on Maroons, fugitives, and the Underground Railroad that has been published in other disciplines, such as anthropology and historical archaeology—I counted only three citations to (two) publications in these disciplines and saw virtually no narrative engagement with any social science research. As a result, many of the contributions suffer from moments of naiveté, severe analytical limitation, and/or bad scholarly form where major studies are not cited, much less explored. To provide just one example, the Maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia and North Carolina are referenced only a few times and their importance is downplayed. There is no use made of the many readily available academic and general audience publications that provide archaeological data and anthropological insights into their lives and communities. Because the book largely ignores this and much other social science research, it often unknowingly replicates the work, ideas, and perspectives of scholars in those other disciplines who have long worked to understand Maroons, the Underground Railroad and related phenomena in North America and beyond. In

NEW WEST INDIAN GUIDE

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addition to these gaps in coverage, there are precious few engagements with recent perspectives developed in cultural geography and anthropology in areas of Diasporic spatial studies and geography despite the volume's focus on the latter. Meanwhile, the neutral tone and approach that the authors take leaves the significance of these histories unclear (which is strange, given that this is a volume on resistance and Maroons). This neutrality is not consonant with the radical people who are being explored in this work nor with most previous Maroon research.

There is also no recognition of how important this range of historical topics is to publics, descendent communities, and society in general. Those who take such a uni-disciplinary and Ivory Tower approach when working in this vast area of North American history would do well to raise their eyes from their archival sources and favorite history publications and take a look around. They would see that there is active, powerful and impactful scholarship on marronage, the so-called Underground Railroad, and abolitionism in the social sciences, especially in anthropology and historical archaeology. Clearly, the hegemony of the documentary record is still quite alive in certain quarters as is the related dismissal of oral traditional, anthropological and archaeological insight and research. While we researchers outside of the discipline of history have long survived these kinds of slights, it is always a shame to see it in new publications because our collective understanding of the magnitude of African American resistance to systemic oppression, Eurocentrism, and enslavement suffers for it. In sum, although *Fugitive Slaves and Spaces of Freedom in North America* has some positive practical contributions to make at a case-study level, its treatment of "fugitive slaves" shows no interest in (or knowledge of) work that has been done outside history. Importantly, in classic Ivory Tower style, it shows no awareness of the contemporary political importance of its subject for society and publics.

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