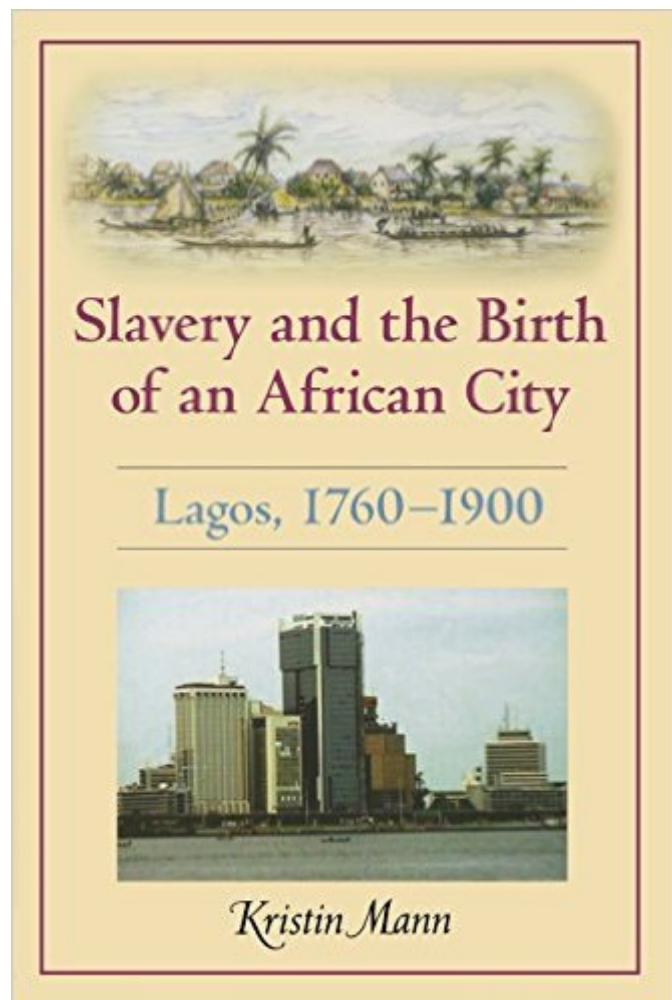


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Slavery And The Birth Of An African City: Lagos, 1760-1900



Synopsis

As the slave trade entered its last, illegal phase in the 19th century, the town of Lagos on West Africa's Bight of Benin became one of the most important port cities north of the equator. Slavery and the Birth of an African City explores the reasons for Lagos's sudden rise to power. By linking the histories of international slave markets to those of the regional suppliers and slave traders, Kristin Mann shows how the African slave trade forever altered the destiny of the tiny kingdom of Lagos. This magisterial work uncovers the relationship between African slavery and the growth of one of Africa's most vibrant cities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In my recent studies I've read several books about the impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade on various West African Societies. This is the best of them. It's quite comprehensive, dealing not only with how the slave trade turned Lagos from a minor settlement to a major West African trade center, but how the city managed to not only survive but thrive after the slave trade ended. The book achieves balance, not an easy thing to do when talking about a subject as emotionally charged as the mass-kidnapping of human beings. It examines both European and African complicity in the trade, looks at how coastal trading elites benefited from the system and, and examines the good intentions and moral compromises that characterized early British colonialism in West Africa. The text is strong both in its economic analysis of how Lagos and its hinterland shifted from a slave-exporting economy to one built around agricultural exports and the internal use of unfree labor, and in its legal analysis of how the elites, both black and white, controlled this labor in the

face of British law which declared slavery illegal. Without assuming a hectoring tone the book demonstrates very clearly how the British failed to properly apply their anti-slavery principles in the early years of their rule over Lagos. For any student of African history or colonialism, this is a worthwhile text. Lagos is one of the world's major cities and Nigeria one of the most important nations in the developing world, and this book tells a big chunk of the story of how that city and the country of which it is the metropolis became what they are today.

I had the great benefit of taking a class from Dr. Mann at Emory University. She remains one of the most knowledgeable professors in the field of African American History in the era of the Slave Trade. Excellent text to understand the history, geography, culture and details of Lagos.

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