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Cover Page Footnote

This article is from an earlier iteration of *Diálogo* which had the subtitle "A Bilingual Journal." The publication is now titled "Diálogo: An Interdisciplinary Studies Journal."

From **Slavery**
to **Freedom** in
Brazil *Bahia, 1835–1900*



DALE TORSTON GRADEN

Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 297 pages.

Reviewed by **John Tofik Karam**
DePaul University

Based on exhaustive research and written in an engaging style, Graden's *From Slavery to Freedom in Brazil* approaches enslaved and freed persons of African origins as active agents of their own history, helping to bring about the end of the international slave trade to the Northeastern Brazilian state of Bahia as well as the abolition of slavery in Brazil. Taking into account international processes, including the English abolitionist movement, as well as domestic forces, such as industrial expansion, Graden puts special emphasis on the acts and events authored by persons of African origins themselves. In so doing, he uses an array of primary sources from a dozen archives as well as numerous secondary sources on slavery and abolition in Brazil and throughout the Americas.

Following a succinct introduction to the historiography of slavery and abolition, Graden's book is thematically organized into four parts with a total of eight substantive chapters. In part one, Graden discusses the 1835 Malê rebellion in Bahia (which represented the second largest revolt of enslaved Africans in the Americas), and the oppositional movements against slavery spearheaded by black and brown individuals which arose in its wake. Framing such currents as contributing to the end of the slave trade between Africa and Brazil in 1851, the second part of the book addresses the subsequent emergence of the abolitionist struggle and the poetry of Castro Alves that embodied and propelled it. Though suffering an untimely death at age 24 in 1871, Castro Alves composed a "poetry of liberation" that articulated criticisms and denunciations of slavery – as well as praise of slave resistance, as in "Salute to Palmares" – which reached a wide audience and served to hasten opposition to slavery itself. Attentive to this cultural struggle, Graden uses the book's third part to focus on the Afro-Brazilian religion, Candomblé, as a lightning rod to end slavery, as well as the growing political reach of the abolitionist struggle which resulted in the 1888 "liberation" of enslaved persons. This journey "from slavery to freedom" reaches its conclusion in part four as Graden

soberly explores the continuing violence perpetrated by state and federal military forces against the sizeable Canudos settlement, founded by poor persons of color who supported the charismatic leader, Antônio Conselheiro, in Bahia's backlands.

By foregrounding the historical agency of enslaved and freed persons of African origins in the context of intersecting local, national, and international processes, Graden's book serves as a significant contribution to scholarship on slavery, abolition, and slave resistance in the Atlantic World.

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