

# Liverpool, the African Slave Trade, and Abolition

edited by

Roger Anstey and P. E. H. Hair



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LIVERPOOL, THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE,  
AND ABOLITION

Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire  
Occasional Series

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# Liverpool, the African Slave Trade, and Abolition

*Essays to illustrate current knowledge and research*

Edited by

Roger Anstey

*Professor of Modern History, University of Kent*

and

P.E.H. Hair

*Reader in Modern History, University of Liverpool*

Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire  
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## PREFACE TO THE ENLARGED EDITION

Since this collection of essays was first published, the out-pouring of writings on the Atlantic slave trade has continued. Yet little of what has appeared bears specifically on the subject of this volume, the Liverpool contribution to the trade and to its abolition. It is notable that when the most recent work cited below (Eltis) discusses these topics, it makes extensive use of our first edition.

However, the collection now also includes an essay on the slave trade from certain ports of North-West England other than Liverpool, an essay which regrettably had to be excluded in the first edition for reasons of space only, and which appeared in the Society's *Transactions*.

The argument in Seymour Drescher's essay was later presented in expanded form in his book, *Econocide: British slavery in the era of Abolition* (1977); and attention is also drawn to relevant essays in C. Bolt and S. Drescher, eds., *Anti-slavery, religion and reform: essays in memory of Roger Anstey* (1980), to Herbert S. Klein, *The Middle Passage: comparative studies in the Slave Trade* (1978), and to the chapter summarising current knowledge of the Liverpool trade, in J.A. Rawley, *The Trans-Atlantic slave trade* (1981). References to later general work on the Atlantic trade and on abolition can be found in the most recent study, David Eltis, *Economic growth and the ending of the Transatlantic slave trade* (1987).

Finally, the profits of the Liverpool trade have been the subject of a controversy (to be found in 1981, 1983 and 1985 issues of the *Journal of Economic History*) between J.E. Inikori on the one hand and David Richardson and B.L. Anderson on the other. The controversy takes off from David Richardson's essay on this subject in the present volume.

I cannot conclude this preface without referring to what cannot be indicated elsewhere in a photographic reprint, the deaths of three of the original contributors. Roger Anstey (my fellow editor) and Frank Sanderson died not long after the first publication of this volume, both tragically in middle life; Marion Johnson died a few months ago, a scholar advanced in years but still active in research and wise in counsel.

P.E.H. Hair  
1.7.1988

slavery and the slave trade constitute crimes against humanity. And last year, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon designated December 2 as the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery expands upon an already good body of literature on the ports that were so central to the trade in Africa and the Americas, but the authors in this edited volume bring to this area of inquiry the kinds of quantitative data that historians of the ports in Africa would love to access in regard to African ports. The scholarly literature has long noted the connection between the abolition movement in Britain and Britain's imperialist ambitions. Slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire by the Slavery Abolition Act 1833, with exceptions provided for the East India Company, Ceylon, and Saint Helena. These exceptions were eliminated in 1843.<sup>[9]</sup> By the 18th century, the slave trade became a major economic mainstay for such cities as Bristol, Liverpool and Glasgow, engaged in the so-called "Triangular trade". The ships set out from Britain, loaded with trade goods which were exchanged on the West African shores for slaves captured by local rulers from deeper inland; the slaves were transported through the infamous "Middle Passage" across the Atlantic, and were sold at considerable profit for labour in plantations.