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The Anatomy of Blackness: The Science of Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment

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New Book

The Anatomy of Blackness:

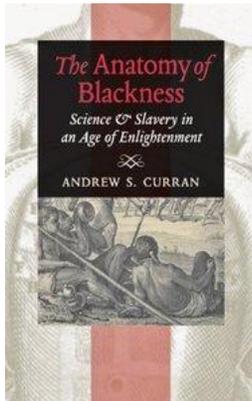
The Science of Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment

By Andrew S. Curran

Johns Hopkins University Press,

Paperback, 328 pp., ISBN-13: 9781421401508, 2011.

Description from the Publisher:



This volume examines the Enlightenment-era textualization of the Black African in European thought. Andrew S. Curran rewrites the history of blackness by replicating the practices of eighteenth-century readers. Surveying French and European travelogues, natural histories, works of anatomy, pro- and anti-slavery tracts, philosophical treatises, and literary texts, Curran shows how naturalists and philosophes drew from travel literature to discuss the perceived problem of human blackness within the nascent human sciences, describes how a number of now-forgotten anatomists revolutionized the era's understanding of black Africans, and charts the shift of the slavery debate from the moral, mercantile, and theological realms toward that of the "black body" itself. In tracing this evolution, he shows how blackness changed from a mere descriptor in earlier periods into a thing to be measured, dissected, handled, and often brutalized.