

John M. Lipski: *A History of Afro-Hispanic Language: Five Centuries, Five Continents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005. Electronic appendix:
<http://www.cambridge.org/9780521822657>.

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John Lipski needs no introduction to Hispanic linguists. His long record of contributions to the study of the Spanish language begins with his monograph on *The Spanish of Equatorial Guinea* from 1985 and he has since investigated varieties of Spanish around the world with special emphasis on contact with African languages. *A History of the Afro-Hispanic Language* brings together the knowledge accumulated during this research journey. Lipski covers an unparalleled rich documentation of *bozal*¹ language, for which he has coined the English term 'Afro-Hispanic language.' His study presents a unique attempt to assess the African contribution to the history of the Spanish language and to analyse the status of Afro-Spanish in comparison with other Caribbean contact varieties such as the numerous Creole languages spoken in the region. As the first comprehensive volume to synthesize a body of research compiled by an ever-growing number of scholars in the past years the book is of major interest to linguists working on the Romance languages, historical linguistics and language change as well as for those engaged in the expanding field of language contact.

In his introduction (pp. 1–13), Lipski sets out the aims and the scope of the present study: to reconstruct Afro-Hispanic language through careful analysis of the mostly literary documents that represent the speech of *bozales*; to compare the recurrent grammatical features found in the historical documents with existing Afro-Iberian language forms; to evaluate the linguistic impact of African languages on Spanish, i.e. whether a Creole language ever evolved from the contact situation, and what lasting imprint the Afro-Hispanic language has left on different varieties of Spanish.

As part of the effort to reconstruct Afro-Hispanic language, Lipski includes an electronic resource available at <www.cambridge.org/9780521822657>. This pdf-file contains a formidable corpus which alone deserves our attention. It is mostly compiled from other publications by numerous researchers who are given credit in the detailed description of the corpus. The literary documents contain only the extracts in which Afro-Hispanic language is depicted. The book is organised around this corpus. Lipski starts with some historical background and presents the documents assessing their representative quality given that few non-literary attestations exist. Only after this careful description of the corpus does the author proceed to a full-fledged analysis of the linguistic features recurrent in the documents. This structure inevitably leads to some repetition since the salient features of the texts are already described in the presentation of the documents. Nevertheless, this approach is fully justified as it allows for a

¹ *Bozal* or *boçal* is the term used in Spanish and Portuguese for slaves born in Africa and was soon applied to characterize their different use of the European languages.