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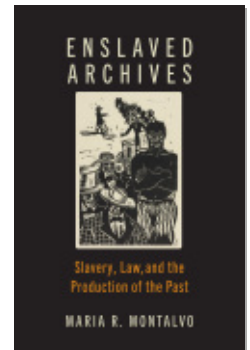
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Enslaved Archives

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ENSLAVED ARCHIVES

*Slavery, Law, and the
Production of the Past*

MARIA R. MONTALVO



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There is no telling this story—
In its potent ability to decree what is is not, as in a
human ceasing to be and becoming an object, a thing
or chattel, the law approaches the realm of magic
and religion. The conversion of human into chattel
becomes an act of transubstantiation the equal of the
metamorphosis of the eucharistic bread and wine into
the body and blood of Christ. Like a magic wand the
law erases all ties—linguistic, societal, cultural,
familial, parental, and spiritual; it strips the African
down to the basic common denominator of man,
woman, or child, albeit sometimes meagre. Without
a history, name, or culture. In life but without life.
Without life in life—with a story that cannot but
must be told.

—M. NOURBESE PHILIP, *Zong!*

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