

# Itinerario

volume xxx (2006) number 2



LEIDEN  
GRAFARIA  
2006

abolitionism Portugal could muster, mulattoes opposed the struggle against the slave trade by framing it as a European attempt to take away their power.

The lack of attention to local conditions in Africa stems from two factors. First, although the book deals with issues that involved countries on several continents, most of the research was undertaken in Portuguese archives. A more nuanced viewpoint, including the specificities pertaining to the different players in the struggle to end the trade, would have been possible if additional research had been undertaken in archives in Angola and Brazil. Second, the author's Portuguese research focused primarily on diplomatic dispatches, newspapers, records of parliamentary debates, and contemporary accounts. Surprisingly, several key collections in Lisbon archives that contain voluminous and rich information on Africa were not analyzed. If properly examined, these collections would contribute to a more nuanced approach and more comprehensive analysis of the social and economical aspects of the end of the slave trade in Africa.

Finally, the book could have benefited from engaging the recent historiography on Central Africa and the slave trade to Brazil. Luiz Felipe de Alencastro's ground breaking study of the Brazilian slave trade is duly quoted, but the author does not engage it whatsoever. Two key studies of the Brazilian trade by Jaime Rodrigues – one of them dealing with the abolition of imports of slaves to Brazil – could also have been used. The same is true with at least two pieces on the demographic impact of the slave trade in Luanda by José Curto. Finally, the author misquotes Joseph Miller by stating that in Angola, the word *Tumbeiro* was used to refer to slave dealers (actually called *Pumbeiros*) operating in the interior of the country.

Despite these shortcomings, this book will remain a useful source of information to analyze the diplomacy and politics of abolitionism in Portugal.

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## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Jonathan D. Amith, *The Möbius Strip: A Spatial History of Colonial Society in Guerrero, Mexico*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005. xxi + 661 pp. ISBN: 0-8047-4893-4 (hbk.).

At 553 pages of text (footnotes included), this work presents what is arguably one of the most detailed socio-political and economic analyses to be written on any given region in colonial Spanish America. Briefly stated, Amith's book presents a closely argued, richly detailed, and empirically dense portrayal of the political economy of colonial Guerrero and its myriad spatial dynamics. The region in question – whose geographical descriptor shifts among north-, south- and 'central' colonial Guerrero – is, as Amith argues following the geographer Doreen Massey, 'an area of focused interest' rather than a domain delimited by independent or neutral criteria, or a 'region' delimited by colonial structures of feeling. On the other hand, the Möbius strip of the title is a trope that astutely presents the author's approach: instead of relying on default antinomies like structure and process, political and moral economy, labour and capital, indigenous and Spaniard, Amith claims that such an approach would create the appearance of a nonexistent dimensionality, and the illusion of impermeable boundaries, which were in fact often crossed by actors and processes. Another element that confers a distinctive tone to this book is Amith's interest in presenting a *longue-durée* perspective that embraces human existence in a colonial society in all its ambivalence and complexity, following Gustave Flaubert's call for a middle ground narrative between heroes (the long-suffering natives) and monsters (the Spaniards, of course!).

The end result conveys many hard-earned insights attained after more than two decades of ethnographic, linguistic, and historical research in Guerrero. However, to return to Flaubert, there is something here that brings to mind the Baroque heterodoxy of his *dictionnaire des idées reçues* – Flaubert's posthumously published compendium of what one needed to know about any topic brought up in polite society. Amith weaves a heterogeneous theoretical and methodological tapestry that privileges neither political or human geography (Massey, Roberts, Skinner and Tuan, for instance) nor anthropology or social history (Anderson, Appleby, Barth, Bourdieu, Farriss, Tilly, Thompson, among many others). His empirical vision is similarly broad; while the quantitative data showcases the relative abundance of evidence that characterizes the Bourbon period, the text interrogates and contextualizes chronologically heterogeneous data about patterns of land tenure, litigation over land rights, elite genealogy and land holdings, divination practices and witchcraft accusations, mule transportation activity, collective memory and toponyms, the cacao trade between Guayaquil and Acapulco, sugar production, grain redistribution and trade, sale tax income figures, average rainfall, confraternity land holdings, and regional migration patterns.

On first impression, the reader will probably wish that this work had been edited into at least two (if not three) separate monographs. As a whole, however, this text rewards the reader's patience by introducing a slow, incremental, and masterful portrayal of spatial dynamics in colonial Guerrero – a vision that calls for its own road map. In Part I, Amith introduces the ecological, historical, and economic specificity of colonial Guerrero, and provides a superb outline of the emergence of legal discourses on land property rights in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century New Spain.

Part II investigates the ebbs and flows of land, labour, and capital – which Amith periodizes as a series of successively peaking waves in the regional political economy – through a painstaking analysis of land acquisition and territorial disputes, migration patterns, and changes in market structures. This six-chapter sequence forms the core(s) of this work, and proves highly resistant to synopsis, although some of the major points in Amith's spatiotemporal narrative deserve to be summarized. Amith performs a sober reassessment of the rapport between Taxco (the regional mining centre that experienced a first peak by the 1630's, and a second one by the 1750's) and its hinterland. This hinterland – which included the fertile Iguala Valley and the communities along the 'royal road' that ran through Acapulco and Mexico City – proves to have a rather complex regional dynamic, which is punctuated by several decisive moments in spatial reconfiguration: the indigenous *congregaciones* between 1590 and 1610; the official recognition (or confirmation) of village and hacienda land titles through *composiciones* between the 1690's and 1720; a decisive shift away from sheep and cattle ranching around 1680 in the Iguala Valley; the concomitant migration of mostly indigenous agricultural labour into former ranching areas; and a late colonial mercantile boom that placed northern Guerrero at the forefront of economic activity.

Part III chronicles the failed viceregal attempts to redistribute maize to mining enterprises through *repartimiento* – as opposed to maize sales in the open market – and analyzes the decrease in state control of prices and redistribution as a transition from Colbertian mercantilism to a growing acceptance of self-regulating markets.

In the end, this work will serve as a valuable and lasting reference for graduate students in anthropology, geography, and social and economic history. Some chapters, nevertheless, stand out as circumscribed treatments of topics for less specialized readers. For instance, Chapter 3 presents a contextualized view of the Spanish colonial legal discourse on land rights. Chapter 6 (which this reviewer was asked to assess as an article submission for *American Ethnologist*) investigates the case of

Palula as a rich ethno-historical and anthropological case study of regional processes of 'place making' and 'place breaking'. Chapter 8 examines the moral economy underpinnings of the much maligned *alcabala* sales tax, and explores the role of cacao as a valued commodity in the emergence of novel transportation networks. Like the proverbial head of cattle at the colonial slaughterhouse that was consumed from snout to tail, this thick but erudite book will undoubtedly satisfy the variegated intellectual appetites of several types of readers.

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Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint, *Documents of the Coronado Expedition: 'They Were Not Familiar With His Majesty, Nor Did They Wish to be His Subjects'*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2005. x + 746 pp. ISBN: 0-87074-496-8 (hbk.).

From 1540 to 1542 Francisco Vázquez de Coronado (1510-1553) led an expedition from Nueva Galicia, on the northern edge of Spanish Mexico, further north in the search for new American societies. Under the sponsorship of the Viceroy of New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza (1535-1550), the expedition, prompted by glowing reports about the potential of the area, was part of the effort to search the hemisphere for new conquests. If the prospect of golden cities in the present U.S. Southwest now reads like a medieval fable, at the time the vision was fuelled by credible reports and the recent past. A generation of Spaniards had ground out their lives in the Caribbean in the quarter century that passed between Columbus' arrival in the Americas and Cortés' conquest of the Aztec Empire. Another decade of expeditions without glory had passed before Pizarro and Almagro had done the same to the Inka Empire of the Andes. Expeditions continued to pour out of these newly established imperial centres as quickly as they could be financed and legally arranged, seeking other great civilizations, a route to Asia, or some other unnamed incredible prospect. Indeed Cortés himself was still a significant presence in New Spain, vying unsuccessfully for control over the right to mount this expedition. None of these ventures achieved their goal. There were no more great empires to find or conquer in the Americas. By the end of the decade it was clear that great silver strikes in Mexico and Peru would be the defining events of the second half of the century. Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's expedition took place as this transition took hold.

Because the expedition reached as far north and east as Kansas it is more often discussed in the context of U.S. South-western history than in the literature on colonial Latin America. Whether this relative inattention on the part of Latin Americanists is just, this collection is a welcome addition to published resources available on sixteenth-century Spanish America and an outstanding contribution to borderlands history. When general readers interested in this area turn their attention to the primary sources of this world, they gravitate toward chronicles, an eclectic body of lengthy works, which were often written explicitly as introductions to the Americas for a literate European audience. This collection brings these readers, and researchers, something quite different than these chronicles or the document collections that have been put together for the classroom. It is a compilation of thirty-four documents related to Coronado's expedition. As is made clear in the introduction, the volume does not include every important text, a few important but longer documents are simply referenced, but it boasts a wealth of material. There is something refreshingly old-fashioned about the volume with two columns of text on each page and a size that hints at libraries rather than personal collections. It is solidly constructed and physically pleasant, containing clear maps and nineteenth-century photographs that relate to the texts, though only one colour image. In keeping with this tenor, the work does not

feature dense textual analysis, interpretation, or other post-modern approaches. It is defined by detailed research and lucid explication that will simultaneously prove accessible to most readers and useful for scholars. The Flints' intent is to provide a full sense of the history in question and the nature of the individual documents in the collection.

The documents run from the King's confirmation of Coronado's appointment, a single page, to Pedro de Castañeda de Nájera's *Relacion de la Jornada de Cigola*, a mini-chronicle in its own right. The documents include contracts between the sponsors of these expeditions, formal instructions, inventories, wills, and official reports. Taken together, they go beyond describing the expedition to give a sense of the broader sweep of early colonial Mexico. There is information on Cortés' disputes with Mendoza and a wealth of evidence on the intensely legal and commercial nature of Spanish American society. With regards to the expedition itself, a reader gains a sense of the stakes for those involved in such efforts, and the bitter disappointments and financial risks for the men who undertook these long and dangerous affairs – a point that looms larger as the expeditionaries convey their disappointment in what they found. There is also an array of smaller details, from the efforts to coordinate nautical support to Spanish fascination with buffaloes. A few of the documents shed light on daily life and provide ethnographic information but most do not.

Publishing translations of these documents alone would comprise a worthwhile effort, but that is only one part of the work. The volume is exceptional because of the context that the Flints have provided for each document. Each is preceded by a brief essay outlining contents, discussing the nature of the source, and noting alternations that might have been made in copying or transit. They also discuss how many copies of this text there are, their locations, and survey earlier translations. These points educate not only on the history in question, but also on the development of the field of Latin American colonial history. After the English translation the text of the original document is replicated with precision in a letter by letter transcription complete with folio markings, original spelling, and odd touches. Here the reader is presented with legible yet accurate versions of the sources in their original forms. The translations can be checked and the documents used for research. Several of these translations are from Italian copies of the original documents, now lost, that were published at the time – a fascinating testament to the Atlantic nature of these New World ventures. Every reader will find something of value in this expert and accessible collection, which will stand the test of time.

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Doris Garraway, *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005. xvi + 416 pp. ISBN: 0-8223-3453-4 (hbk.); 0-8223-3465-8 (pbk.).

*The Libertine Colony* offers complex and varied readings of a series of important primary published texts that many historians have used, more or less critically, to pin down the history of the islands colonized by the French in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Whereas historians typically read the works of Jean-Baptiste du Tertre (1610-1687), César de Rochefort (1630-1691), Raymond Breton (1609-1679), Alexandre-Olivier Oexmelin (1646-c. 1710), Jean-Baptiste Labat (1663-1738), Michel-René Hilliard d'Auberteuil (c. 1740-1789), Justin Girod de Chantrons (1750-1841), Alexandre-Stanislas, Baron de Wimpffen (fl. 1788-1790), Médéric L.E. Moreau de St. Méry (1750-1819), and the Code Noir (1685) as evidence of the historical events that took place *outside* the text, Garraway is primarily concerned with