

ATLANTIC SLAVE WAR

Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War. By Vincent Brown. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020. Pp. 320. Abbreviations. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$35.00 cloth.
doi:10.1017/tam.2020.116

Vincent Brown significantly widens the scope of what historians have called Tacky's Revolt. He challenges older narratives on the subject and reconceptualizes and repositions servile warfare within the historiography of European imperial history. Tacky's Revolt has traditionally been limited to the year 1760; however, Brown looks back and beyond this year. He contends that the revolt was brewing from as early as 1756, when one of the lesser known leaders, Wager, also known as Apongo, was pushed to fight against enslavement when his expectations of manumission were dashed (77).

Brown also widens the time frame by emphasizing that Tacky's Revolt, confined to St. Mary's Parish, was just one in a series of revolts and conspiracies (4) that were largely suppressed by the end of April 1760 (164). Nevertheless, it spilled over into the following year and into what Brown terms the Coromantee War, led by several black abolitionists such as Wagner, Simon, Goliath, Fortune, Pompey, and Davie (172, 178). Brown's brashest claim about the lengthened timeline is that "[t]he slave revolt of 1760 was a war within the Seven Years War and a war within the long history of conflict beyond the African coast" (84). He supports this assertion by demonstrating that several individuals, both black and white, including Apongo, were locked in other wars within the sprawling British empire and were also agents in the Jamaican Servile War of 1760-61.

Brown also charts a new cartography of the Servile War in Jamaica. Not content simply with moving the event beyond the parish of St. Mary to include Westmoreland, St. Elizabeth, and Hanover, he also convincingly makes the point that maroon wars and Coromantee-led uprisings such as those of 1675 in Barbados (103), 1733 in St. John (105), 1736 in Antigua (105), and 1739 in Jamaica and Surinam (113-16), constituted layers that bound the Caribbean region to the Jamaican rebellion of the early 1760s. When Brown examines what he calls the reverberations of the revolt, he widens the geographical parameters even further, noting that insurgents who were transported away from Jamaica carried the news beyond, to Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, British Honduras, and Cuba (211). Additionally, Brown makes the point that the Jamaica revolt drew together not only the Caribbean region and other sections of the American continent, but also Africa and Europe. He notes that African military strategies shaped the fighting of insurgents (94), and that once the British military was mobilized to crush the rebellion, the presence of European imperialism itself was brought to bear upon the colony (166, 180).

The expansive revisionism of Brown's work is most forcefully demonstrated in his attack on the scholarship of two leading contemporaneous observers of the revolt: Bryan

Edwards and Edward Long. In particular, he rejects Long's racist profiling of enslaved Africans in general and his butchered reconstruction of the Jamaican revolt. Brown asserts that Long is an "unreliable guide" who "offers an erroneous chronology of events" (160), set down only when "Long sat down a decade later in London to reconstruct the sequence" (162). These are serious charges, substantiated by Brown's careful reading, not only of the work of Edwards and Long but also of primary sources created by other colonists functioning at different levels, both in Jamaica and in the mother country, including the diary of Thomas Thistlewood. Brown also consulted a host of primary and secondary sources covering the wider Caribbean, the Americas, Africa, and Europe.

This text is a welcome addition to the growing body of publications on enslaved resistance and revolt in the Caribbean. It leads the way in advancing the thesis that an enslaved revolt was not simply a parochial event between white enslavers and enslaved Africans. It was integral to the wider context of European colonialism in the Caribbean.

University of the West Indies–St. Augustine
Saint Augustine, Tunapuna-Piarco, Trinidad and Tobago
gelienn.matthews@sta.uwi.edu

GELIEN MATTHEWS

COMPARATIVE LEGAL HISTORY OF SLAVERY

Becoming Free, Becoming Black: Race, Freedom and Law in Cuba, Virginia, and Louisiana.

By Alejandro de la Fuente and Ariela J. Gross. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. 281. \$24.95 cloth.

doi:10.1017/tam.2020.117

This book combines broad historical synthesis with painstaking archival research and skillful interpretation of primary sources. The authors shed light on the role of law in structuring the worlds of bondage, freedom, and race in three quite different American slave societies.

Fuente and Gross organize the volume into five chapters that take the reader from the introduction of slavery in the seventeenth century to the mature systems of slavery that had developed in each of three venues by 1860. Each chapter offers a three-way comparison of the three societies. The role that law was to play in Cuba was clearest from the start. Cuba, which remained a Spanish colony until the end of the nineteenth century, was governed by the law of Spain and the manumission-friendly legal doctrine found in the thirteenth-century reception of Roman law *Las Siete Partidas*. Although Spain and local Cuban authorities would adopt later codes governing the lives of masters, slaves, and free people of color, those subsequent expressions of the law were still anchored in the receptivity toward manumission that had existed in metropolitan Spain before the Columbian voyages to the Americas.