

written differently. Reading that history through the lives of individuals, we become aware of the many and multiple processes and connections that were at play, ones that can too often be lost amid more aggregate renderings of the histories of globalization. Indeed, as Ogborn makes clear (p. 7), his account is very much a starting point, one that instances just a few of the many takes on globalization possible, and should act as a prompt for further research.

Women in the Portuguese colonial empire: the theatre of shadows

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This book is the first of its kind, and if only for that reason is a welcome contribution to the interdisciplinary study of the Portuguese empire. Comprising twenty-one essays by scholars in the fields of history, literature, law, anthropology, and Asian studies, the volume attempts to provide a corrective to the 'absence of women in Portuguese historiography ... throughout the vast Portuguese colonial and metropolitan empire' (p. xi). Although the quality of the essays is uneven, taken together they begin to illuminate the commonalities and divergences in the experiences of women – a multiply subaltern category that traverses the colonizer–colonized dichotomy – across the Portuguese empire.

The book is divided into three parts. The first section brings together seven chapters under the rubric of 'Female slavery', although one chapter ('Women's work in the fairs and markets of Luanda') details the activities of free women. The eight essays in the second section, 'Literature and female voices', address the works of Portuguese women writers, non-Portuguese women writing about the Portuguese colonies, and Portuguese male writers' representations of women in the colonies. The final section, with the catch-all title of 'Cultural behaviour', includes four historical essays on women in religious and civic institutions (the Santa Casa de Misericórdia in Macau and Brazil, the Portuguese Beneficence Society in Brazil, and

mystical Catholicism in Portugal); one essay on women and political power in contemporary East Timor; and a reflection on the potential for female power in patriarchal societies. Geographically speaking, the volume is weighted towards Brazil: eight essays focus on Brazil, four on Portugal, two each on Angola and Macau, one each on Mozambique and East Timor, and three on the empire as a whole or large parts of it.

What this volume makes abundantly clear is that the absence of women from studies of the Portuguese empire is not the result of their absence from the historical record. The kinds of sources that these authors draw on – newspapers, court records, sermons, maps, legal texts, annual reports, letters, and diaries; the works of travel writers and photographers, novelists, autobiographers, and poets; and oral histories and interviews with both women and men – are not all by or for about women. Yet, read creatively and meticulously, these sources can be made to reveal much about the lives and circumstances of women. For example, drawing on advertisements for the sale or purchase or recapture of slaves, announcements of runaways and suicides, and denunciations of owners who mistreated their slaves that were published in nineteenth-century local newspapers, Maria Ângela de Faria Grillo, in her article 'Memories of slavery', evokes the conditions of life for enslaved women – as well as for the women whose menfolk owned them – in Pernambuco, Brazil. Leny Caselli Anzai's 'Contribution of the *Anais de Vila Bela* to the study of slavery in the Portuguese empire' uses a newly uncovered set of documents from a town in frontier Brazil to reveal, through accounts of the destruction of a *quilombo* (a settlement of escaped slaves), the role of African and native American women running these outlaw communities. Exactly how much the archival record can reveal about the daily life of enslaved women – and exactly where the limits of this record lie – is amply demonstrated by the essay 'Female slavery, domestic economy and social status in the Zambezi *prazos* during the 18th century', in which Eugénia Rodrigues describes the unique division of labour and social institutions that held sway on the plantations of Mozambique, where slaves were often the property of women.

But the volume also reveals as much about men as it does about women, and as much about other aspects of life in the Portuguese empire as it does about gender. Thus, the case of a divorced woman whose ex-husband has her confined against her will in the Santa Casa de Misericórdia reveals not only

the 'Feminine ideals of 18th century colonial Brazil', as the title suggests, but also the avenues of recourse that were open to wealthy women with grievances against male members of their family, and the continued importance of class distinctions among the Portuguese in Brazil. Clara Sarmiento's analysis of the 'Representations of gender in the *Letters and writings* of St. Francis Xavier' is perhaps more useful in evoking the conditions that early Jesuit missionaries faced in their attempts to effect mass conversions throughout Portuguese Asia than it is for in-depth insights into the lives of women in those lands. Daniel Simião's observation, in his essay 'Equal before the law, unequal in the community', that in East Timor today women are barred from political participation at the village level but welcomed as judges, parliamentarians, and ministers at the national level is an important intervention not only into women's studies but also into the anthropology of the nation-state. These discoveries, though ancillary to the goal of the volume, contribute to its value for students of the Portuguese empire.

For all of its insights, however, this book is not without flaws. Its single greatest shortcoming is that it was not edited with the help of a native English speaker. Each chapter is translated by a different person, sometimes by the author herself (all but one of the authors are women), with the result that the quality of the English varies widely from chapter to chapter. I found the grammatical errors and many instances of Portuguese distracting at best; at worst, there were places in which the poor translation actually interfered with my ability to comprehend the author's meaning. In addition, two authors in the literature section chose not to translate the lengthy source quotes upon which they based their analyses, thus limiting the usefulness of their essays to non-Portuguese speakers. This 'English problem' is especially vexing given that, since the volume has also been published in Portuguese, non-Portuguese speakers are presumably the intended audience for the English edition.

Most of the essays would also have benefited from a sterner editorial hand. Several of them appear to be truncated versions of longer works, jumping abruptly into and out of their analysis and assuming an unwarranted degree of knowledge about the forms that Portuguese colonialism took in the disparate regions of the empire. Others lack focus or suffer from poor organization, making their argumentation difficult to follow or even discern.

In short, the value of the work, notwithstanding its flaws, lies in its status as the first step on a long

path towards filling a yawning and inexcusable gap in our understanding of the Portuguese empire: the social and cultural histories of the women who, willingly or not, made that empire possible.

The environment and world history

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In a series of brash but hubristic articles in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Russian writer Maxim Gorky declared, on behalf of the Soviet regime, a 'war to the death' against nature, arguing that 'the blind drive of nature to produce on earth every kind of useful or even harmless trash – must be stopped and eradicated' (cited on p. 288). The belief, as Douglas R. Weiner describes it in one of the most striking of the essays in this wide-ranging volume, that nature could be subdued and transformed by such 'pharaonic projects' as the Baltic–White Sea Canal reflected not just the overweening technological ambitions of the Stalinist regime but also the collective mindset of a 'tribute-taking state' that stretched back to the very foundations of the Russian state and disastrously persisted into the post-Soviet era. Weiner's startling, almost apocalyptic, account of Russian environmental history captures one of the several ideas in this book as to what environmental history and its relationship with world history might be about. It is not primarily about untouched 'nature', for nothing is pristine here; rather it illuminates the ways in which states and technological elites (there is much here for engineers to reflect on) conceive nature as a resource that exists for them to command and who, in trying to implement such transformative strategies, sacrifice not just plants, animals, and entire ecosystems but, as in the Soviet case, create ecological disasters that undermine human health and imperil once sustainable modes of existence. In Weiner's chilling take on environmental history, environmental attitudes are deep-rooted in state ambitions and ideologies,