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Manuel Lucena Giraldo, *A los cuatro vientos: Las ciudades de la América Hispánica* (Madrid: Fundación Carolina; Centro de Estudios Hispánicos e Iberoamericanos; Marcial Pons Historia, 2006), pp. 245, €18.00, pb.

The Spanish empire is often described as an urban-based empire, with power and wealth concentrated in cities that acted as springboards for the colonisation of new regions and centres from which the administration and exploitation of land and native communities in the surrounding countryside could be conducted. Although cities played an important role in Spanish colonial history, apart from studies of their early foundations and, more recently, the changes they experienced in the Enlightenment period, the power they symbolised has attracted relatively little attention. In A los cuatro vientos, Manuel Lucena Giraldo starts by examining how archaeologists, historians, social scientists and others have defined the city, showing how over time definitions have shifted from the material to the non-material. The discussion then indicates how the focus of urban historians of Latin America has moved from a concern with the physical character or architectural history of the city, where the emphasis was on its layout and buildings, to one that considers the social dimensions raised by issues of preservation and cultural heritage. This is a useful review for those unfamiliar with the conceptual dimensions of urban history as related to Latin America.

Despite the broad conceptual and temporal sweep of the Introduction, the body of the book itself considers only the Spanish colonial period. Chapter One describes the role of the town in the initial colonisation of Spanish America, briefly outlining what the Spanish aimed to do in founding cities and how the hope of finding lost cities of gold, at Cibola or in the Amazon, stimulated further exploration. For the most part, the chapter constitutes a straightforward, yet comprehensive and detailed chronicle of the foundation of towns in the Caribbean and subsequently in all parts of the mainland. Chapter Two, entitled 'The City of the Conquistadors', covers the sixteenth century, exploring how the town was used as an instrument to establish royal government. It shows how crown attempts to recover the power it had ceded to the conquistadors were reflected in ordinances for the foundation of towns and for making new discoveries. Subsequently it discusses how the role of different members of the cabildo facilitated the extension of royal control. The latter is discussed in considerable detail and provides some insight into the social history of towns, making it more than a routine account.

Chapter Three, 'The Creole City', focuses primarily on the introduction of town planning and the imposition of the grid plan. Perhaps surprisingly, Lucena Giraldo gives only the briefest sketch of the nature of urbanism in Spain prior to 1492 and does not consider the influence of pre-Columbian towns or how the symbolism of the city changed with colonial rule. Brief mention is made of the role of Indians in the construction of towns and of the *república de españoles* and *república de índios*, but the city appears almost uninhabited for there is little on the role of different ethnic groups or how they were accommodated. Although he refers usefully (but only in passing) to differences between cities in different locations, between the major cities and smaller towns, these differences could have been explored more fully. In their functions, social and ethnic composition, capital cities were different from mining towns, from frontier towns, and from ports.

The final substantive chapter deals with the Bourbon Reforms and how Enlightenment experiments in Spain that sought to order space and discipline

citizens, when transferred to the Americas, required the subjugation of the cabildo dominated by creoles. This was attempted through the introduction of *intendentes*, whose *subdelegados* assumed responsibility for urban finance and a wide range of public works. At the same time, the power of cabildos over their cities' hinterlands was reduced. In attempting to provide order and symmetry to the towns, the authorities began to separate public from private space, constructing new public buildings, regulating markets and public spaces, cleaning the streets, and organising police forces (alcaldes de barrios) based on designated districts. While the major cities grew, Lucena Giraldo shows that growth was greatest in areas of substantial European and African slave immigration, such as Caracas, Buenos Aires and Havana, and in fortified frontier towns; while most major cities saw an increased military presence. Finally, in the Conclusion, he describes how conflicts with the British in Venezuela and Argentina, followed by the wars of independence were catastrophic for urban development in many parts of region.

This is well-conceived book. It is one of the few to consider the whole colonial period in some detail. Another of its strengths is its wide coverage of cities at different levels in the urban hierarchy and in different regions, whereas many texts concentrate on the major capital cities. Nevertheless, this is a book that approaches the topic very much from the perspective of how Spain's power was reflected in the physical plan and structure of the city. Those seeking an economic or social history of cities, and especially the role of non-Spanish groups, will have to look elsewhere. That said, the book is based on a very wide-range of published sources and constitutes a sound introduction to the nature of urbanism in colonial Spanish America. The topic lends itself to the use of illustrations and it is disappointing that none are included. Nevertheless, it is written in a lively manner and is a welcome addition to the literature on the Spanish colonial city in the Spanish language.

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Catherine Davies, *Claire Brewster and Hilary Owen, South American Independence: Gender, Politics, Text* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), pp. xi + 321, £50.00, hb.

This book offers an appealing blend of history and literary criticism, with the added benefit of an important focus on women and gender, a theme long neglected in studies of South American Independence. The authors, literary critics with a firm grounding in history and political theory, provide an excellent source for both specialists and non-specialists interested in the evolution, merging, and clash of ideas around independence, liberty, and citizenship in the first post-colonial decades in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries of South America.

The book is organised into two parts. Part One casts a fresh eye on the writings of the 'big men' of South American political letters in the era of independence: Bolivar, Bello and Echeverría. Part Two looks closely at women writers and women's literary culture in this period. The book's nine topically focused chapters put emphasis on Spanish-speaking South America, although one chapter concentrates exclusively on Brazil, a country also considered in the introductory and concluding chapters.