CrossMark



With a broader appeal to the social sciences, López echoes the call for a redefinition of 'urban', one that considers a qualitative and not only quantitative benchmark. For those of us who work on early modern sites outside of ports and capitals, this is one that is greatly to be welcomed. Iglesias Rodriguez's piece posits important, although probably unanswerable, questions: when does 'otherness' fade away? And, how can we 'see' this in the historical record? As scholars of this anthology demonstrate, gaining access to certain social sectors and establishing generations of Spanish residency did not necessarily translate into full and incontrovertible integration, evidenced by temporary restrictions or bans after years of 'acceptance'. Importantly, a path of incorporation was not always desirable for some groups. De Salvo notes that the Greek Orthodox community wanted, above all, autonomy, not homogeneous integration into the Spanish world.

This compilation serves as an important resource for Europeanists, especially those interested in migration patterns and labour history. While there are fewer works on the Spanish colonies, the focus on fringe territories and inter-ethnic coalitions will appeal to a wide audience of colonial historians. Importantly, the collection calls upon greater specificity of experience, even for a place as diverse and transient as eighteenth-century Spain. Many of the authors acknowledge the limitations of their sources, especially those theorising population estimates and other quantitative analyses from scant sample sizes. While this data may be less reliable to extrapolate for demographic profiles, all of the essays further discussions on the state's notions of incorporation and the experience of multi-levelled checkpoints of acceptance in the Spanish Empire.

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Caitlin Fitz, *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 2016), pp. 368, $29.95, hb.

*Our Sister Republics*, Caitlin Fitz explains, 'is less a history of early U.S. relations with Latin America than it is a U.S. history that uses Latin America to cast new light on the United States' (pp. 12–13). This is an interesting slant on well-travelled terrain. Fitz offers a history from below, focusing on the response of 'ordinary people' (p. 14) to the Latin American struggle for independence in the decade following the end of the US–British war in 1815, rather than on the response of the Madison, Monroe and John Quincy Adams administrations (p. 14). Fitz writes well and marshals her evidence from impressively thorough research in US newspapers – by far more comprehensive than that of any previous scholar.

Fitz's research leads her to conclude that Latin American independence became 'one of the most popular causes of its time' in the United States (p. 115) – more popular with the US public than the other war of independence that raged in those years, in Greece. Fitz draws this conclusion from two key pieces of evidence. First, she analyses reports of the toasts Americans made on the Fourth of July. 'Between 1816 and 1825', she writes, 'well over half of July Fourth celebrations included toasts to the rebel movements' (p. 5). Second, she cites what she calls the 'Bolivar baby boom' (p. 128): many babies born in the United States in those years were named Bolivar. 'While Greek insurgents generated enormous excitement', Fitz explains, 'July Fourth revelers seldom referred to them as family – something they

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had done when talking about Spanish Americans ever since 1810 … Fighting for American freedom and against European colonialism, Latin Americans – not Greeks or any other denizens of the Old World – seemed like the closest, blood heirs to the United States' own revolutionary tradition' (pp. 124–5).

There were many reasons 'ordinary people' in the United States would sympathise with the Spanish-American rebels: the rebels were fighting Spain, long an object of hatred and contempt. This alone justified goodwill, as did the hope for increased trade and the prospect of a significant loss of European influence in the hemisphere. But there was more, Fitz eloquently argues. 'Ordinary people' in the United States 'took republicanism's southward spread as a compliment to themselves, seeing it as proof that their own ideals really were universal. The cause of Latin America became the cause of the United States' (p. 4). She adds, however, that the 'U.S. response to Latin American independence recalls the ancient Greek story of Narcissus, who … fell in love with his own reflection'. When celebrating Spanish-American rebels, US citizens 'were celebrating themselves, and like Narcissus, they were so riveted they could barely look away. They were blithely unaware that the object of their affection was an image, an illusion' (p. 11).

Sentimental attachment to the rebels, however, seems not to have led the people of the United States to open their wallets: the US Narcissus was tight-fisted. Years ago I examined several US newspapers of the early 1820s, a much more modest sample than Fitz's massive research. I found frequent references to collections of funds for the Greek fighters ('liberal donations', *Niles' Weekly Register* called them), but none for the Spanish-American rebels. In Fitz's very lengthy discussion of rhetorical expressions of support for the Spanish-Americans she never mentions any collections of funds for them. Were there such collections, but Fitz deemed them unimportant – less significant than, say, naming one's child Bolivar? Or did she uncover no evidence of any collections for the Latin American rebels? If this is the case, it suggests that the enthusiasm of the 'ordinary people' of the United States, about which Fitz waxes lyrical for so many pages, was very shallow. Either way, Fitz's silence on the issue is surprising.

Fitz demonstrates that there was a rhetorical 'love affair' (p. 119) on the part of the 'ordinary people' of the United States with the Spanish-American rebels. But what was its impact? Did public opinion influence the policy of the U.S. government? Did 'ordinary people' provide direct assistance to the rebels? Fitz points to the 1822 recognition by the Monroe administration of the independence of five Spanish-American countries, but – as she herself acknowledges – by 1822 there were many reasons beyond popular pressure that led Monroe to this step. Indeed by 1822 it would have been difficult for Monroe to have found a reason *not* to extend recognition. Fitz also argues that 'popular hemispheric ardor helped inspire thousands of U.S. adventurers to take up arms for Latin American independence, while U.S. merchants became one of the rebels' main suppliers of arms and ammunition' (p. 160). This, however, is not convincing. More men volunteered from Great Britain to join the rebel armies than from the United States. Does this mean that sympathy for the rebel cause was stronger among the British? Unemployment in Britain after the Napoleonic wars and in the United States after the war of 1812 provided a more compelling motive to volunteer. As for the US merchants, Fitz concedes that 'sellers pursued profit as well as principle' (p. 166) but argues that 'When republican principles [i.e., helping the rebels] underlay the financial principle, it was a pleasing alignment' (p. 169). More relevant, however, would have been an exploration of what

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happened when the rebels could not pay: did the merchants extend credit? Why did Bolívar write about the 'arithmetic' neutrality of the United States? This is a question Fitz never poses.

Fitz's focus is US public opinion. When she ventures beyond those confines her footing is uncertain. Thus she writes that President Monroe and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams feared that if the United States angered Spain by recognising Spanish-American independence Madrid might respond 'by declaring war' (p. 184). This makes no sense. Spain was weak, bankrupt, desperate to defeat the Spanish-American rebels and yet unable to send more than a few thousand troops. Her colonies bordering the United States (Florida and Texas) were virtually undefended. When General Andrew Jackson invaded Spanish Florida in 1818 in a punitive expedition against the Seminoles and occupied Pensacola, the seat of Spanish power in the territory, he met no resistance. There is no indication that Monroe or Adams feared that Spain might declare war.

Fitz's discussion of the widespread sympathy for Spanish-American independence in the United States includes valuable insights. However, she is unable to show that this sympathy translated into anything concrete. *Our Sister Republics* is well written, but as I read it I kept wondering whether its story could not have been told in 50 pages.

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Julia Gaffield, *Haitian Connections in the Atlantic World: Recognition after Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), pp. xiii + 270, $29.95, pb.

Julia Gaffield first came to my attention in April 2010, when the *New York Times* reported that she, then a graduate student at Duke University, had found the first original printed version of the Haitian Declaration of Independence in the National Archives, Kew (London). Librarians, archivists and historians whose work had been dedicated to the fascinating history of the Haitian revolution appreciated the relevance of this document and shared the excitement of her discovery.

On reading Gaffield's *Haitian Connections in the Atlantic World: Recognition after Revolution* it became clear to me that her 2010 discovery was not fortuitous. It was the result of extensive and thorough research that took her to seven countries and a dozen different archives. *Haitian Connections in the Atlantic World* is grounded in Gaffield's firm conviction that Haiti's past is much larger and complex than we have imagined. Haiti's history is not to be found only in Haiti and its rich archives – which Gaffield visited as well – but in other regions, such as Jamaica, Great Britain, France, the United States, the Netherlands and Denmark. In all these places, Gaffield found relevant sources that allowed her to unravel the vibrant history of Haiti's incipient political, diplomatic and commercial connections with the Atlantic world and the different strategies that its leaders implemented to help the nascent republic find a place of its own.

The introduction, the conclusion and the five elegantly written chapters of *Haitian Connections* constitute a relevant and impressive contribution to the history of nineteenth-century Haiti and its fragile yet significant presence in the Atlantic world. Gaffield provides ample evidence that contradicts the long-held scholarly consensus that the empires and nations of the Atlantic world collectively isolated the island

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