

One way was the author's prior research on and publication of significant works on Obregón, Calles, and the 1920s that served as a strong foundation for this book. Other ways were the author's persistent research in previously inaccessible personal archives of those leaders, as well as many other original sources, for example, from the Vatican on the Mexican state's conflict with the Catholic Church, which gave rise to the state's war with the faithful in the Cristero Rebellion, from 1926 to 1929. The book's careful reconstruction of these and other controversial events—including failed military rebellions from 1923 to 1924 and in 1929, and the massacre of military candidates opposed to the regime in 1927—made it more than a synthesis of the author's prior work.

Its close examinations of the leaders' origins and motives in the contexts of crises, including wars and successions, also contributed to the book's interconnected and expansive reach. Evidence of this includes insights from sound and growing scholarship on this time period in Mexican history; the integration of Sonora's pre-revolutionary and revolutionary history into a national narrative; multi-level analyses of regional, interregional, and national histories; and original research not only into Obregón or Calles but also their erstwhile Sonoran allies and short-term presidents Adolfo de la Huerta and Abelardo L. Rodríguez, among many others.

Specific insights, based on dedicated research into the leaders' business and other property records such as last wills and testaments, proved indispensable to the book's arguments. In the case of Obregón, the book convincingly argued that his mounting debts, and his refusal to pay, significantly influenced his decision to run for reelection in 1928, before his victory and assassination that summer. While no one can know how a second Obregón term would have turned out, the book's balanced appraisal of the different historical circumstances and challenges that he and Calles faced during their respective presidencies demonstrated more of an equilibrium between the two leaders and their political qualities than the scholarship usually allows.

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ARAB OTTOMAN MIGRATION TO BRAZIL

Transimperial Anxieties: The Making and Unmaking of Arab Ottomans in São Paulo, Brazil, 1850–1940. By José D. Najar. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2023. Pp. 356. \$65.00 cloth.

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José D. Najar's book is an important contribution to the English-language historiography on immigration to Latin America, a neglected topic—as if Latin

America did not receive significant numbers of immigrants beyond the Spanish and Portuguese colonizers and the forced migrants from Africa. Brazil is among the four main receivers of immigrants in the Americas, and the immigration of Arab Ottomans was quite a reality. As the author acknowledges in the introduction, by 2003 there were approximately 1 million Syrian Lebanese immigrants and their descendants living in the city of São Paulo—not counting the rest of the country.

The book covers the period between the end of the Brazilian slave trade in 1850 to the beginning of the Second World War, a time of transformation for the Arab world—with the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire—and for Brazil as well—after the deposition of the Constitutional Monarchical government of Pedro II in 1889.

One of the main contributions of this book is that Najjar challenges the notion of Arab Ottoman immigration to Brazil as something that happened almost by chance, with immigrants jumping on a ship that was going to the Americas, without previous knowledge of the destination. On the contrary, “the founders of the country’s Arab Ottoman community diligently researched, planned, and orchestrated every step of their immigration to Brazil” (4). As the author clearly shows, the initial migration was a direct consequence of the signing in 1858 of a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between the Ottoman and the Brazilian Empires, which facilitated the circulation of people and merchandise between the two empires, allowing their citizens to live temporarily and travel in both territories.

Despite the fact that, under this treaty, Ottoman subjects could never become Brazilian citizens (or permanent residents), it was the first push toward immigration. By the second half of the nineteenth century, when Ottoman citizens began to be displaced by wars and ethnic and religious conflicts, Brazil was already known as an option for relocation. Simultaneously, this country was also engaged in an aggressive immigration campaign, which involved setting up navigation companies specifically to take immigrants to Brazil. As Najjar points out, the limitations of the treaty in terms of permanent residence ended with the overthrow of the Brazilian monarchy, and naturalization laws from the First Republic granted Arab Ottoman immigrants’ Brazilian citizenship and the same rights as European immigrants.

This was so, regardless of the racist immigration policy of the early Brazilian republican government, which was focused on decreasing the proportion of Blacks in the country. Arab Ottomans benefitted as the “tools of anthropometric science used by the new state bureaucracies to make racial classifications” (111) considered them white. They took advantage of the given whiteness, tying “their identities to this white status, which allowed them to access economic resources and commercial powers, among other opportunities, and to succeed in Brazil” (169). Their financial success contributed to their acceptance—especially that of their descendants—as whites and as members of the elites, despite the earlier stereotypes and misconceptions of the general population.

Najar also makes a major contribution with his discussion of gender, showing how the historiography has silenced the voices of women in this diaspora. As the author states, “Arab Ottoman women immigrants significantly contributed to the community’s social, political, and economic success” (23).

José Najar reconstructed the lives of these immigrants through meticulous research. Not only did he analyze the most relevant secondary sources available on the topic and time period but he also conducted careful archival research in municipal and state archives at the diplomatic archives in São Paulo, Brazil, and at the National Archive in Rio de Janeiro. Notably his oral history research at the Memorial do Immigrant in São Paulo has provided his book with valuable personal stories that corroborate his overall analysis. The result is an excellent examination of Arab Ottoman migration to Brazil that highly contributes to the understanding of how this country has the largest population of Arab descendants outside of the Middle East.

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BOLIVIAN HISTORY AND THE STRUGGLES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The Lettered Indian: Race, Nation, and Indigenous Education in Twentieth-Century Bolivia.

By Brooke Larson. Durham: Duke University Press, 2024. Pp. 496. 38 illustrations.
 \$119.95 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

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Brooke Larson’s new book is a masterful piece of historical research and writing that uses the lens of Indigenous education to examine the country’s colonial racist legacy and the struggle of Indigenous people to eliminate it. Through multiple fascinating examples, Larson illustrates how literacy, and education more generally, were central to struggles to reclaim usurped lands, and to achieve full citizenship and self-determination for the nation’s Indian majority. She does this in a book of great chronological and intellectual sweep that begins with Immanuel Kant and finishes with the educational policies of “pluri-national” Bolivia after Evo Morales was elected president in 2005. This exceptional work is essential for understanding Bolivian history and the struggles of Indigenous people in the Americas.

While carefully examining pedagogical and racist ideologies of Bolivian and international twentieth-century intellectuals, the book is exciting because of its focus on Aymara leaders’ activism, in particular the life stories of individual leaders. Not only has Larson done impeccable archival and secondary research for the book, but she was also able to interview a number of the actors (or their relatives) who were involved in the struggle for education.