

In sum, this book makes a valuable contribution to literature on nation-state formation in nineteenth-century Chile. Herr's analyses of *parlamentos* and the Pincheira *montonera* challenge traditional boundaries of where and how nation-state formation happened, and shift our gaze from the capital city to the rural expanses southward. Despite some missed opportunities that may well lie outside the scope of the author's intentions, this is a useful and admirable volume that will interest scholars of nineteenth-century Latin America, and it will appeal to upper-level undergraduate and graduate students as a unique and often exciting examination of a fledgling nation-state trying to find its footing.

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BELIZE DURING YUCATÁN'S CASTE WAR

Empire on Edge: The British Struggle for Order in Belize during Yucatán's Caste War, 1847–1901. By Rajeshwari Dutt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. 185. \$99.99 cloth.
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This book is a concise but detail-rich contribution that relates the complexities of Yucatán's Caste War from the perspective of the British Empire in Belize (British Honduras). The author's stated goal is to understand how empires operate in frontier and borderlands during times of conflict. With this framing, it offers fresh insight into a period (and the related peoples and events) that is too often glossed over in standard Latin American history textbooks that regularly leave Belize out of studies of "Latin" American nations. More personally, as an archaeologist with over 20 years' experience in Belize, the content of this book generally lies outside my research expertise and far from my conscious thought. Yet, the events described represent the relatively recent and relevant history of several of the descendent communities that I have had the fortune to live in and work with. It was gratifying to have my eyes opened to this history.

The introduction provides a good refresher of the decades-long Caste War. The remainder of the book is organized by dates and topics, and it begins with a brief review of the concept of frontiers and borderlands as fluid, nebulous, and liminal spaces that are home to unique cultures. A discussion of the role of Belizean merchants in supplying Maya 'rebels' with arms and other supplies—despite the British crown claiming a 'neutral' position—and the key issue of material (for example, timber) and other economic interests along the then-undefined border runs alongside this.

Subsequent chapters focus on the arrival of refugees—both Maya and Hispanic/mestizo; the development of "Hispanophobia" (72) and other racial stereotyping; experimentation with policing and the arrival of "energetic Americans" (81); official and unofficial

alliances with various Maya groups; the key role of Hispanic refugees in the expansion of agriculture and their postulated roles in Icaiché Maya raids; official attempts to map people of the region to better control them; and the government's use of the notion of loyalty to create order in a multiracial and multiethnic society, which serves the foundation of much of the origin myth of Belizean identity. Finally, the book concludes with a discussion of the 1893 treaty that ended British involvement in the Caste War and led to the legal definition of the northern border. Ultimately, this final chapter highlights (as does the book as a whole) the discord between the various levels of colonial bureaucracy: the top-down concerns of London/Jamaica versus the bottom-up understandings of local officials.

I was impressed by the author's ability to link events from elsewhere in the British Empire (for example, India) to those of the Caste War, and I was amazed to learn the degree to which various parties at the time were aware of such events occurring across the globe. I loved exploring how beliefs of the period, such as the attribution of illness to vapors of swamps and marshes, were instrumental in excuses to not send soldiers to defend the northern border, and I was shocked to discover that the idea of bringing in Texas Rangers was even contemplated. At times I felt this recounting was worthy of a TV miniseries akin to HBO's *Deadwood*—vendettas, raids, merchant spies, and scandal—though related in as respectful a manner as is possible when working solely with settler historic sources.

Through no fault of the author, the voices of the various Maya groups are mostly missing, due to limitations of the sources themselves (government documents), but this work will pair nicely with recent archaeological research in Belize that focuses on understanding many of the Maya refugee communities mentioned in the book. The weakness of this book is that I was left wanting more, and at the same time asking "So what?" The conclusion does not revisit the promises of the introduction, and would have benefitted greatly by the addition of another ten pages in order to draw connections to the world today. I could not help but draw my own links to the refugee crises we are experiencing globally and associated discussions of cultural 'values' and 'loyalties,' the endurance of racial and ethnic stereotypes in Belize, and the realities of the northern Belize border area today.

This book is an important contribution to Belizean studies and beyond, and it is best suited for scholars (senior undergraduate and up) with a background in Latin American, Mexican, Central American, and/or Caribbean history.

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