interpretation of corporate networks at play in Chunchucmil. He suggests political and social units may have worked in cooperation with each other to create trade networks and utilise the central marketplace. Most Classic Maya sites have evidence for a distinct ruling class, which would place Chunchucmil into a category of its own. Hutson's discussion and interpretations raise important questions, however, about market exchange administration that can and are being asked at other ancient Maya sites.

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David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570–1640*

(Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), pp. xix + 332, $45.00, hb.

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In the historiography of the African Diaspora, the early Caribbean frequently appears as a proving ground for the development of sugar-exporting plantation societies. Yet David Wheat's *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean* cautions that this teleological view overlooks the important role played by Africans and their descendants during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when sugar was not the primary driving force of the region's economy. During this period, early attempts at sugar production had languished, as had the most lucrative periods of mining and pearl diving. Nevertheless, tens of thousands of African slaves entered the region to toil in urban ports and rural hinterlands. Wheat argues that these forced African migrants played a key role in the maturation and expansion of Spanish rule in the region, a role that evolved out of longstanding Luso-African connections that became reconfigured as they extended to Spain's New World shores.

Wheat's study relies on extensive archival research conducted in Spain, Portugal, Colombia and Cuba. Using these rich and varied stories, he challenges traditional assumptions about the connection between Atlantic Africa and developing Spanish colonies in the Americas. Specifically, he posits that the development of the Spanish Caribbean represented an extension of Portuguese engagement with Africa and Atlantic Africans. Cultural knowledge acquired by Iberians and Africans facilitated the development of a society in which forced African migrants represented a significant percentage of the Spanish Caribbean's settlers. Wheat has divided his study into two parts. The first three chapters examine how the Spanish Caribbean grew as an extension of the Luso-African world. The second part examines the social world of the Spanish Caribbean and the important roles played by Africans and their descendants in the region.

The first chapter focuses on Portuguese involvement in Upper Guinea and the impact of those relationships on Africans transported to the Caribbean during the late sixteenth century. Significantly, Wheat challenges the notion that Spaniards in the Caribbean viewed Africans only through the stereotypes forged around blackness. Rather he shows that for all parties involved – Spanish buyers, Portuguese traders and Africans themselves – African ethnic markers connoted specific, often mutually understood, meanings. Analysing such markers reveals that ethnonyms from Upper Guinea remained salient among Africans and Iberians long after their arrival in the Caribbean.

The second chapter shifts to West Central Africa and the expansion of Portuguese territorial control in Angola. Wheat notes that Portuguese territorial expansion in the region led directly to increases in slave exports to the Caribbean. Importantly, Wheat demonstrates that the early-seventeenth-century influx of Africans from West Central Africa to the Caribbean included far more children than earlier waves from Upper Guinea. This demographic shift reflected changes in royal trade policy and patterns of warfare and enslavement in Africa. In the Americas, the increased number of children may have led to quicker acculturation by these young migrants once in the Spanish Caribbean.

Luso-African intermediaries are the focus of the third chapter. From the fifteenth century onwards, Portuguese merchants established deep connections along the Atlantic coastline of Africa. Wheat argues that merchants and sailors – whether Iberian, Luso-African or African – played key roles in creating networks of trade linking Atlantic Africa to the Spanish Caribbean. As these individuals participated in the Atlantic slave trade they carried with them cultural knowledge of Africa and Africans that shaped the social world of the region. This chapter also examines royal attempts, often unsuccessful, at restricting Portuguese immigration to Spain's American kingdoms.

While the third chapter primarily examines Portuguese men, Chapter 4 turns to free women of colour in the Spanish Caribbean. Wheat contends that in the Americas free women of colour constituted an important social group that helped to forge ties across the many dividing lines of colonial society. This role appears to be analogous to that of *nharas* or *donas*, a class of African and Luso-African merchant women who played key roles in the commerce of Atlantic Africa. Although free women of colour in the Spanish Caribbean did not hold as prominent a position as African *nharas*, they did serve as intermediaries who shaped the social, economic and racial contours of the region.

In Chapters 5 and 6 Wheat lays out his most controversial claims. Chapter 5 argues that the African and African-descended population of the Spanish Caribbean represented a 'black peasantry' whose labour underpinned the local, regional and transoceanic economies. He notes that, while urban and plantation slavery have received a great deal of attention, the experience of slavery for the countless Africans who worked on the small rural *estancias* or livestock estates that fuelled the region's economy has yet to be studied. Chapter 6 posits a need to reconsider models of creolisation during this period. Wheat emphasises that few models account for the degree to which many forced African migrants had cross-cultural exposure prior to entering the Caribbean. Moreover, even as Africans acculturated to Spanish society, language acquisition and participation

of Catholic practice did not necessarily mean the erasure of prior beliefs, language or culture. Instead he argues that Catholic Castilian culture served as a lingua franca that could facilitate connections between Africans and other residents of the Spanish Caribbean including other Africans from varied places of origin.

Overall, Wheat's study represents a powerful and conceptually challenging examination of the deep connections between Atlantic Africa and Spanish Caribbean during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. At times the argument relies on telling, but somewhat singular, archival cases. Nevertheless, Wheat consistently supports his interpretation of such events with corroborating material drawn from an impressive diversity of secondary scholarship. Moreover, he frequently highlights when his evidence may suggest multiple interpretations. Scholars of the African Diaspora, the early Spanish Caribbean and the Atlantic world will find much to pore over in this work. Just as ethnohistorians have revealed the profound role of indigenous subjects in shaping the contours of Spanish colonial society on the mainland, Wheat's work draws our attention to how enslaved and free Africans both engaged in and transformed the colonial society of the Spanish Caribbean.

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Peter Guardino, *The Dead March: A History of the Mexican-American War*

(Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 512, $39.95; £28.95; €36.00, hb.

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The Mexican–American War of 1846–8 is, arguably, the forgotten war of North American history. As a glance at library or bookstore shelves in the United States shows, it is easily eclipsed by the Civil War (which it helped to bring about); while in Mexico it is understandably regarded as a national disaster, when, suffering defeat and divisions, the nation lost half of its territory to its expansionist northern neighbour. (That said, the sesquicentenary of 1998 did prompt some innovative research in Mexico, especially focused on the regional impact of the war.) Since the war made the United States a continental power with direct access to the Pacific, US neglect is rather harder to fathom (especially given the US taste for tub-thumping triumphalism: recall that the US Marines' anthem begins by invoking 'the Halls of Montezuma …'). But perhaps the lingering sense that it was a predatory war of choice – 'one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation', as Ulysses S. Grant called it – has somewhat inhibited serious inquiry north of the border.