narrative but also put a very human face on these events. Walker highlights two additional figures and their fascinating times in this narrative, Durán Martel and Loayza, both of whom merit biographies of their own. Hopefully, a student inspired by this engaging book will follow this call for further research.

Baruch College
New York, New York
mark.rice@baruch.cuny.edu
MARK RICE

CUBAN SLAVERY

The Power of Their Will: Slaveholding Women in Nineteenth-Century Cuba. By Teresa Prados-Torreira. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2021. Pp. 144. $49.95 cloth; $49.95 e-book.
doi:10.1017/tam.2022.19

In this slim volume, Prados-Torreira focuses on the neglected experiences of female slaveholders (mistresses) and particularly their interactions with enslaved persons in nineteenth-century Cuba. The timing matters. African enslavement in Cuba boomed following the Haitian Revolution: nearly 300,000 of the 778,000 enslaved Africans imported to Cuba arrived between 1790 and 1830. She seeks to understand how women shaped, or did not, the institution of slavery in a corrective for the Cuban historiography that presents a "masculinized" story focused on men. Slave-owning women were common, and she argues that they tended to be defenders of the status quo.

Each chapter serves as a vignette on the experiences of mistresses. The first chapter argues that for urban slave-owning women mastery was largely tied to the domestic sphere. Focusing on information in newspaper sale ads, she argues that domestic skills, childbearing, and childcare were of particular value to mistresses. She suggests that for elite women slaveholding was largely a status symbol, but for middle-class and poor women owning slaves was a path to economic security.

The next two chapters rely largely on literary descriptions of mistresses' experiences on sugar and coffee plantations, respectively. For sugar, owners tended to live in urban centers and visited their estates twice per year, at Easter and Christmas. Prados-Torreira analyzes some compelling descriptions of these visits that echo patterns portrayed in the iconic Cuban film *La última cena* (The Last Supper; Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1976). She traces how these visits cemented master-slave power relations and identifies a literary trope that presented an idealized but unattainable "good mistress," who was only merciful and caring toward the enslaved. The following chapter focuses on the experiences of women on coffee plantations, where masters were more likely to be resident and which were often portrayed as idyllic rural estates. She suggests that coffee

https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2022.19 Published online by Cambridge University Press

slavery was less harsh than sugar, allowing planters to imagine themselves as benevolent rulers of a utopian community.

The final two chapters shift focus from location to sources—women's last wills and testaments and their petitions for the return of property confiscated during the Ten Years' War (1868–78). She notes that women's final wishes could have significant impacts on the lives of the enslaved, and she argues that domestic and "loyal" slaves were the most likely to be rewarded with freedom or other bequests in women's wills. The petitions for the return of confiscated slave property provide evidence of the real economic value of slavery to small- and medium-scale female slaveholders. In both cases, comparisons with the experiences of men would have helped illuminate the distinctive experiences and perspectives of slaveholding women.

Part of the paradox that Prados-Torreira presents, and struggles with throughout, is one of women as disempowered in a highly patriarchal society and the extreme power that slave ownership represented. She acknowledges the challenge of reconciling her desire to hold mistresses "accountable" as masters while admitting the limits of their power in a highly patriarchal society. At times, a broader source base or deeper engagement with the historiographies of other Spanish (and Portuguese) American contexts might have helped to reconcile these two positions and allowed for an even deeper consideration of the complex and paradoxical realties that defined patriarchy and mastery. For example, Prados-Torreira raises compelling questions about the relations of mistresses and enslaved women—whether they developed real affective relationships, or, contrarily, sexual rivalries—that she admits that her sources do not speak to. In a standard turn, she looks to the historiography of US and British Atlantic slavery, rather than to the historiography on Latin America that speaks to these issues, to suggest that both could have existed.

Prados-Torreira has presented some interesting stories and insights here. One example is her exploration of descriptions of sugar planters treating boiling-house slave labor as some form of macabre dinner theatre to entertain themselves and their guests during their holiday visits to the plantations.

Denison University
Granville, Ohio
proctorf@denison.edu

FRANK PROCTOR

MEXICO'S REVOLUTIONARY STATE

Soldiers, Saints, and Shamans: Indigenous Communities and the Revolutionary State in Mexico's Gran Nayar, 1910–1940. By Nathaniel Morris. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2020. Pp. ix, 371. Abbreviations. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $55.00 cloth; $55.00 e-book.
doi:10.1017/tam.2022.20

https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2022.19 Published online by Cambridge University Press