looks at a particular temple of *candomblé*, the Afro-Brazilian syncretic religion, to emphasise the ongoing connections between Africa and Brazil in the eras of both slavery and emancipation. Similar ground is trod in Mariana P. Candido's study of commercial links between Bahia and the west central African port of Benguela in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while Wendy Wilson-Fall discovers a fascinating subculture of sharp female slave traders in eighteenth-century Senegal and Madasgascar.

The final section, 'Paths of Representation', is devoted to the ways in which images of enslaved men and women have allowed the retention and reinterpretation of memories of slavery throughout the Atlantic world. Peter H. Wood discovers a hidden history of slavery in Winslow Homer's iconic 1899 painting *The Gulf Stream*, while Jeffrey Kerr-Ritchie's contribution contrasts the ubiquitous abolitionist image of a kneeling slave with bound wrists, looking imploringly heavenwards, with post-emancipation depictions of 'an alternative dialectic of *slaves supplicant* and *slaves triumphant*' (p. 328, emphasis in original). Finally, Awam Amkpa and Gunja SenGupta focus on several filmic depictions of the black Atlantic in light of the way they respond to issues of race, identity and particularly concepts of home.

Although the scholarly quality of the dozen essays included here is uniformly high, *Paths of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, like so many edited volumes produced from conference proceedings, is likely to appeal in its entirety to a fairly limited audience, as it is difficult to imagine that many readers, or their students, will be equally interested in, for example, Brazilian candomblé practitioners, the art of Winslow Homer and the fate of the Jamaican Maroons. Nonetheless, the quality and variety of the contributions make this book a desirable purchase for research libraries, and scholars of the history and culture of slavery and the black Atlantic are well advised to direct their attention to the essays which best match their interests and to consult the extensive and up-to-date bibliography of primary and secondary sources with which *Paths of the Atlantic Slave Trade* closes. Araujo and her contributors deserve praise for putting together this exciting collection, as does Cambria Press for producing it as an attractively designed and well-laid-out volume.

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Kris Lane, *Colour of Paradise: The Emerald in the Age of Gunpowder Empires* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. xiv + 280, £25.00, hb.

There was a time in Colombian history, during the couple of decades before the start of the cocaine boom in the 1980s, when the illegal mining and peddling of emeralds from the Muzo fields provided the high profits and criminal liaisons that *narcotráfico* was later to bring far more abundantly and brutally. The contraband in emeralds was, however, so completely overshadowed by the cocaine boom that the traffic in illicit gems now seems something of an innocent pastime, a veritable vicar's tea party compared to the fabulous fortunes, insidious corruption and ferocious violence that sprang from Colombia's emergence as the centre of the international cocaine trade. Nonetheless, the extraction and exchange of Colombian emeralds has a long and intriguing history that, as Kris Lane shows in this book, is well worth telling. In his hands, this story is not simply an interesting theme in Colombian economic and social

history, reaching from the sixteenth to the present century, but also a history that reveals much about the extraordinary webs of exchange which the gunpowder and commercial empires of the Atlantic world forged with their rich and powerful equivalents in the Middle East and Indian subcontinent. Indeed, as he argues, the history of emeralds in the age of gunpowder provides an instructive case study for the 'reorienting' of early modern history away from Europe and towards a fuller appreciation of the part played by Asian economic growth in driving the global interconnections made possible by European maritime exploration and colonial expansion.

The key thesis of the 'reorientation' approach is that Asian rather than European markets were the dynamo of international trade, since it was the insatiable Eastern demand for silver, principally from China, that drove the growth of Spanish American silver mining and thus fuelled the expansion of the Atlantic and Eastern trades that energised European commercial capitalism. Lane shows how emeralds contributed to the construction of this new, 'global' world. Emeralds were similar to silver in the sense that they were an essential medium of exchange for the Asian commodities that Europeans wanted. But they differed from silver in having more complex meanings, infused by the courtly cultures of Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman princes. Here, perhaps, is the most interesting part of the book: the explanation of the growth of the Colombian emerald trade in terms of Eastern potentates rather than bejewelled European aristocrats or encrusted Christian altars. Mughal kings incorporated emeralds into a princely economy of power that pivoted on lavish gift-giving and aimed at winning awed respect and devoted allegiance by a 'profligate philanthropy' (p. 151); Safavid and Ottoman kings also prized emeralds as props in a theatre of power and, because their intense green evoked the pastures and palms of Paradise, as emblems of Islamic piety. China was much less interested in emeralds, preferring the jade which it sourced and worked within its own territories, but the demand from the Muslim world was sufficiently rich to finance the complicated routes which took emeralds from Muzo, via northern Europe and the Mediterranean, to the East. Ironically, Europeans enriched themselves from emeralds because Eastern princes valued them for rituals and sacred dramas comparable to those of the Amerindians whose conquest had given Spaniards access to the sources of the gem.

The book is replete with intriguing details on several subjects related to the Colombian emerald – called 'Oriental' because it was confused with the inferior Egyptian gem – and its history as a globally traded commodity. Professor Lane gives a comprehensive picture of the source of emeralds in the Muzo mines and the character of their workforce (initially Indian tributaries and African slaves), the techniques and cycles of extraction, the conversion of gems into jewels and, not least, the economic and social organisation of the international emerald trade. Emeralds, like other gems and jewels, were largely traded by Sephardic Jews operating under the Luso-Hispanic umbrella until, by the mid-seventeenth century, the focal points moved towards London and other northern European centres, and other Jewish merchants were drawn in. Throughout, the Portuguese Carreira de India played a pivotal part in the trade, with Jewish merchants operating out of Lisbon turning Goa into the centre for gem trading in South Asia. Here, again, the historical traces left by the emerald trade reveal the huge importance of Eastern markets in the development of global trade, not in this case the markets of China but those found in the Muslim-dominated worlds of Persia, Turkey and, above all, India. Asian consumers, like Europeans, thus played their distant, unwitting part in the exploitation of Amerindian and African labourers

who were forced to mine emeralds; indeed, they continue to do so today, when impoverished miners dig emeralds to feed the fashion for Mughal-style jewellery among the new Indian bourgeoisie.

This is not a conventional book of Latin American history; it is, as the author says, more an 'experiment in global history by way of a luxury commodity' (p. 2). But that is its strength, for the author makes a strong case for 'reorienting' Latin American colonial history. Through the prism of the Colombian emerald, he tells us much about the dynamics of global commodity trades, the relation of European mercantile expansion to Asian societies, the imbrication of Luso-Hispanic mercantile networks, the interactions of Jewish traders and Muslim courtly cultures and, above all, the significance of Asia in driving early modern European commercial capitalism.

Well written, well illustrated, imaginative in its approach and deploying an impressive and eclectic range of sources, this book traces the history of an exotic Spanish American commodity to great effect. By paying as much attention to demand as to supply, the author shows how this very special commodity created new global commercial connections between communities and cultures of very different kinds, and thereby throws new light on the origins and consequences of Spanish colonisation in America, Portuguese expansion in the East, and the first globalisation that came in their wake.

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Sherry Johnson, *Climate and Catastrophe in Cuba and the Atlantic World in the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), pp. xiii + 305, $39.95, hb.

This book chronicles how bad weather, particularly dozens of hurricanes, marked Cuba in the long eighteenth century. It links the growing interest in environmental and climate history with the never-ending effort to rethink the political disturbances on both sides of the Atlantic in the late eighteenth century. *Climate Catastrophe* aims to show that hurricanes, floods and droughts not only moulded the Caribbean but also helped prompt and shape the Atlantic Revolutions. The author convincingly demonstrates the former idea; I remain sceptical about the latter.

Severe weather in the Caribbean in this period was more a norm than an exception as El Niño/La Niña struck almost annually. The appendix listing hurricanes, storms and droughts in the Caribbean from 1749 to 1800 runs for four pages. Core chapters focus on how these phenomena affected key moments in Cuba: the 1762 British victory in Havana, the brutal year of 1772 when multiple hurricanes struck the Caribbean, the transition from King Charles III to Charles IV in the late 1780s and early 1790s, and warfare with France in the 1790s. Each of these chapters reads well and tells an interesting and important story concerning the political and economic impact of floods, droughts and hurricanes.

By devastating food production and distribution, these catastrophes prompted merchants and consumers to circumvent the restrictions the crown maintained on goods produced outside of the Spanish realm and the onerous rules controlling trade within it. When Cuba could not produce enough food, as was frequently the case, it had to turn to Mexico (often confronting its own shortages) or English or French colonies (especially the Thirteen Colonies, Jamaica and Saint-Domingue) through