

archival and ethnological evidence that early generations came down from the highest elevations to be closer to markets and to be able to grow preferred food crops.

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The Unfinished Revolution: Haiti, Black Sovereignty and Power in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World. By Karen Salt: Liverpool University Press, 2019. pp 240. \$37.65 cloth.
 doi:10.1017/tam.2020.57

The expanding corpus of scholarly works on the Haitian revolution and the creation of the Haitian state in 1804 has produced a remarkable set of compelling arguments and evidence. Collectively, this work has brought Haiti from the margins to where it started out—at the center of metropolitan discussions on freedom, slavery, and democracy. The great benefit of the richness of the literature is that it has encouraged scholars in complementary disciplines to advance their own ways of conceptualizing Haitian independence, as Karen Salt has done in this book. A scholar of transnational studies, Salt founds her intervention on the question of sovereignty. She does not treat it as simply a time-bound historical definition of postcolonialism. For her, sovereignty is a process incorporating all internal and external relations that shape a country's place in the world. "Black sovereignty" is even more particular in the inescapable binding of racial prejudice of the past with present appraisals. It is, "a journey of being and performing in the world that has the potential to demand and open space" (207).

Black sovereignty means that the past is ever present in the future possibilities of black thought and life. Haiti of the twenty-first century, in this view, cannot be separated from Haiti of the nineteenth, as was made clear in the reporting of the 2010 earthquake whose quick assumptions of Haitian incapacity demonstrate how profoundly incomplete this "sovereign revolution" is. Black sovereignty emerged in the nineteenth century as oppositional to the racist praxis of the time. Haiti needed to appear to be failing for European and US imperialist thought to have some semblance of order. This set up a powerful machinery of denial, disavowal, and emphasis on disaster. This point, made in the thought-provoking introduction, is not especially new. What is new is Salt's argument that Haiti's "sovereign revolution and its sovereign practices" are "unfinished" (27). She supports this thesis with five chronologically arranged chapters that call on the rich secondary work and voluminous primary accounts.

The old lament that a lack of sources limits serious academic interrogation of Haiti is tested with the creative use of sources here, as it is with some of the other great new work that has

been published on Haiti over the past decade. Salt does well in incorporating a wide range of principally English-language sources on Haiti. The first chapter, which covers the years between the 1820s and 1840, makes judicious use of travel and diplomatic writing from a range of persons including British diplomats and the celebrated African American Prince Saunders, who worked in Haiti. The other chapters similarly incorporate an impressive mix of sources in framing the book's arguments.

What emerges from *The Unfinished Revolution* is a strong argument that the goals of black sovereignty have not only remained unfulfilled in Haiti, but constrained by a collective historical assault on it by those, in the author's words, "invested in controlling the region (56)." This pattern has carried on. The last of Salt's chapters engages with post-earthquake Haiti, an illuminating discussion on how the weight of the past is borne by its inheritors. The book makes good use of analysis of visual sources (including daguerreotypes from the 1850s, photographic material on Haiti at the 1893 World's Fair, and the 2014 work of Italian photographer Paolo Wood (in the *État* series), as well as historical texts, to build its arguments.

Sovereignty is a contested issue in political thought and Salt does not seek to redefine it or unravel its multiple complexities. Instead, she seeks to complicate notions of blackness *within* Atlantic sovereignty through Haiti's historical experience. She succeeds in doing this and at the same time adds to our larger understanding of what Haitian freedom continues to mean for the world.

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DISASTERS IN THE FRENCH CARIBBEAN

Paradise Destroyed: Catastrophe and Citizenship in the French Caribbean. By Christopher M. Church. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017. Pp. 308. \$65.00 cloth; \$35.00 paper.
doi:10.1017/tam.2020.58

The last decade of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth century were particularly devastating to the French Antilles. Far from being an isolated event (despite its extraordinary destructive force), the eruption of Martinique's Mount Pelée in May 1902 was, as Christopher Church shows, one among several natural disasters that wreaked havoc on the French Antilles during the middle decades of France's Third Republic. In addition to the volcanic eruption that completely wiped out Saint-Pierre's population, Martinique and Guadeloupe endured destructive natural fires (1890), at least two damaging hurricanes (1891 and 1899), and an earthquake (1897) that, put together, killed hundreds; incinerated, blew away, or smashed thousands of homes and