

MAPS AND MAPMAKING TECHNIQUES

Mapping an Atlantic World, Circa 1500. By Alida C. Metcalf. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2020. Pp. 256. \$54.95 cloth.
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In recent decades, historians of Latin America have discovered the seductive power of maps both as unique documents for reconstructing the spatial and sociocultural histories of the region and as important historical tools of empire and nation building in their own right. The present volume goes further than most in embracing not just maps as a source or subject to enliven Latin American history, but also the larger international field known as the history of cartography, which itself has grown in organization and stature in the past 30-odd years. Anyone who has made the intellectual journey from the history of Latin America to the history of cartography and back again will instantly recognize the convert zeal, erudite methods, and even the specific maps discussed in this book. For those Latin Americanists still awaiting or contemplating their initiation into the guild of cartographic scholarship, it is hard to imagine a better introduction. Best known for her writings on Brazilian colonial frontiers and intercultural contact, Alida Metcalf has produced an absorbing and meticulously researched study reframing some of the most well-known and celebrated early European maps of the Americas as pioneering statements of “the possibility of an integrated Atlantic World” (5). She argues that mapmakers at the start of the sixteenth century, still only loosely bound to state imperatives, were among the first to envision and promote a future of “transatlantic connections, interactions, and exchanges” (142).

Ironically, this argument is neither easily provable on the evidence provided—which, as is often the case for the period, is limited to the maps themselves and a handful of contemporary travel accounts and geographic texts—nor very central to the fine analysis of cartographic production, circulation, and representation of individual works that animates each chapter. So consistently high is the quality of this detailed textual exegesis and contextual explication of such landmark maps as Juan de la Cosa’s *Carta Universal* (1500), the Cantino (1502), King-Hamy (c. 1502), Kunstman II (c. 1502–06), and Caverio (1506) planispheres, and Martin Waldseemüller’s *Universalis Cosmographia* (1507) that the book will long serve as an indispensable reference for any historian interested in using these sources to write about early Latin America. The same can be said of the superb descriptions of traditional manuscript mapmaking techniques that around 1500 almost simultaneously confronted the invention of print technology and the discovery of a “fourth part of the world,” as Waldseemüller called the Americas. Metcalf is correct that the adaptations this dual challenge provoked brought not just the continental New World but the larger Atlantic World into greater prominence in European cartography, and in that sense her approach is an advance on the usual Americentric analysis of the same charts. But it is well to remember that the cartographic masterpieces under study are almost all maps of the entire world, made by men who considered themselves, as cosmographers, responsible for portraying the

whole of geographic knowledge. Literally speaking, their maps do not center the Americas or the Atlantic, but Europe and (strikingly) Africa, which in turn are flanked by not one but two transoceanic worlds.

Historians of Latin America will take a special interest in the final pair of chapters, which examine the incipient iconography of the region that maps helped cement in European minds. Metcalf focuses on three images commonly found on early cartographic representations of Brazil: parrots, trees, and cannibals. She notes, insightfully, that the first two were not so much typical of the New World environment as objects of fascination circulating across the Atlantic and thus symbols of the interconnectedness and commercial potential of this maritime space. Their gradual replacement by the cannibal scene that became ubiquitous on early charts of Brazil (but, intriguingly, not of the Caribbean, where the term originated) offered Europeans a dubious but influential cultural justification for transatlantic colonization and even enslavement. By expertly reconstructing the origins and impact of this savage mythology on maps, Metcalf shows the power of cartographic study to recast well-worn subjects in the field. In a book of many merits, the cannibal chapter is both an excellent demonstration of her methods and an instant classic, deserving of a place in undergraduate and graduate classrooms alike.

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MEDICINE, RELIGION, AND WOMEN'S HISTORY

Baptism Through Incision: The Postmortem Cesarean Operation in the Spanish Empire. By Martha Few, Zeb Tortorici, and Adam Warren. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2020. Pp. 152. \$15.99. E-book.
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This book deals with a unique topic that forms part of medicine, religion, and women's history. It is divided into three sections: the introduction, written by the authors; the main document, Pedro José de Arrese's *Rudimentos Físico-Canónico-Morales 1786*, translated into English; and a final section in which the authors include translated excerpts of contemporary writings (1799–1830) for the purpose of comparison.

The introduction offers a short, insightful, and readable analysis of contemporary medical, religious, and legal beliefs surrounding baptism, salvation, and death as factors that create the moral responsibility of clergymen, surgeons, and midwives to perform postmortem cesarean operations. The description of the religious and medical sources that influenced the *Rudimentos* places the document into context, and the detailed footnotes and explanations will be most helpful to those unfamiliar with the topic.