

REVIEWS

AFRO-LATIN AMERICA

Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro-Latin American Biography. Edited by Franklin W. Knight and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 6 vols. Pp. 3000. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$1195.00 cloth.

In no uncertain terms, this remarkable feat of scholarship assembles, over the span of six volumes, perhaps the greatest compilation of important black historical figures. The project is a landmark in the scholarship on the African Diaspora; its scholarly gaze penetrates deeply into Latin America, bringing to life scores of individuals who developed the region, often in historical silence and outside the mainstream rendering of history. Directed by a phalanx of 43 area editors and guest editors, an army of scholars (no fewer than 800 in all) toiled assiduously to bring these figures to life.

In the credits, historians will immediately recognize many of the best-known scholars of Afro-Latin America working in the world today, as well as a host of newcomers who will build the future of the historical record. Scholars affiliated with the project are drawn from the United States, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Arranged in alphabetical order, the entries are concise and variously and collectively highlight the significance of the individuals' lives, their major contributions, the facts and circumstances of their existence, and contextual material to illuminate the historical era during which they lived. For deeper reading, each entry is accompanied by a bibliography that guides readers to sources.

Great effort was expended to provide coverage for all of Latin America. Hence, the reader will find entries on Bolivia, Uruguay, Mexico, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Honduras, in addition to coverage of more familiar regions of the African Diaspora. The English-, Dutch-, and French-speaking zones of the Caribbean are here in force, and even its smaller zones such as Dominica, Anguilla and the Cayman Islands are not neglected. It should not surprise anyone that Cuba, Brazil, Haiti and Jamaica are represented bountifully in the text, but Puerto Rico, Colombia, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, and others also receive careful attention.

The chronological coverage begins in 1492 and continues with ample treatment of the colonial period and nineteenth century. However, its strength is in its twentieth-century representations, which comprise over half of the text. Throughout, the *Dictionary*

offers accounts of historical figures that the vast majority of professional historians have probably never heard of. This is due to the fact that some of the biographical glosses are drawn directly from the archives. Thus the *Dictionary* represents more than a learned synthesis; it is a work of detailed and active historical scholarship. Even the most advanced scholars in the field will undoubtedly learn something new.

Great attention is paid to the performing arts and literature, sports, social and political activism, and contributions to government, art, and architecture. To a lesser extent, there are entries related to themes of religion, spirituality, education, science, slavery and abolition, and business and industry. Even though the vast majority of the individuals found in the book are known Afro-descendants, a few (such as Mexico's Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán) were not black but contributed in some major way to the study of black life and its dissemination in the Western hemisphere. The breadth, accessibility, and the professionalism of its entries makes the dictionary useful to a wide variety of audiences, including laypersons as well as students and scholars.

For anyone trying to gain a firm handle on the contributions of blacks to the development of the Americas, this is an essential tool. It is without doubts the most authoritative and complete resource of its kind and often provides gateways to further research as well. In some cases, the entries represent the entirety of what can possibly be known about a person. The editors are to be congratulated on completing a project that will unquestionably stand as one of the most singular and significant windows into black life that we have.

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COLONIAL PERIOD

Steven E. Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524–1599: Conflict Beneath the Sycamore Tree (Luke 19:1–10)*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2014. Pp. xi, 202. Acknowledgments, Abbreviations, Bibliography, Index. \$149.95 cloth. doi:[10.1017/tam.2016.85](https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2016.85)

In considering the early Franciscan missions to New Spain, most scholars have focused on the externalities of the missionaries' calling: how they adapted to the new environment, how they learned the native languages; how they confronted seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Yet very few scholars have focused on the internal and spiritual aspects of the mission. In this work Steven E. Turley gives us an unflinching look at the early Franciscan missionaries and how their training and their sense of vocation was, in reality, inimical to the missionary endeavor in which they found themselves.

Turley begins his closely reasoned and thoroughly researched study by considering what Pierre Bordieu designates as *habitus*, "the embodied history, internalized as second