

**Ivonne del Valle, Anna More, and Rachel Sarah O'Toole, eds.**

*Iberian Empires and the Roots of Globalization*. Hispanic Issues, 44. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2019. Pp. x + 356. Pb, \$34.95.

As of late, it has become a scholarly commonplace to insist that Spain's and Portugal's conquests, evangelizing projects, and newly established navigation routes played a fundamental role in spurring the first age of globalization. Iberian expansion both brought the world into closer contact—oftentimes in violent ways—and gave birth to some of the most important, if also deeply oppressive, economic enterprises of the early modern period, including Atlantic slavery, and the extraction and circulation of precious metals from the Americas to the rest of the world. Consequently, many scholars of the Iberian world are now convinced that these economic enterprises, along with Iberians' attempts to extirpate idolatry from the world, exponentially increased interactions among peoples from the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe. *Iberian Empires and the Roots of Globalization* builds on this well-rehearsed perspective, but it also moves beyond the extant scholarship by paying greater attention to “the local manifestations of global institutions such as Christianity or finance capital” (4).

In paying attention to “local manifestations,” this volume does not simply aim to fill a scholarly lacuna. Rather, the book aims to decenter Europe from the history of globalization, for, as the editors insist, “globalization did not emerge from Europe, but from the expansive early modern Iberian world” (5). Consequently, the editors are convinced that, to understand the roots of globalization in their full complexity, imperial projections from the center do not suffice, not least because people in far-flung territories rarely behaved according to imperial dictates. As the editors would have it, the Iberian world, and the collection of territories within its realm, consisted of a multiplicity of interests mediated by local conditions and beliefs. In putting forward this local perspective of the Iberian world, this book hopes to explain the roots of globalization in a new way. Committed to interdisciplinarity, the book makes its case in eleven chapters—ranging from economic history to art history—each of which focuses on local phenomena, broadly conceived, that came about as a result of Iberian expansion.

While most chapters take a rather granular look at a particular issue, chapters 1 and 3, written by Bernd Hausberger and the late María Elena Martínez respectively, offer broader, even global, perspectives. Arguing against the idea that Latin America was peripheral to the early modern global economy, Hausberger suggests that Latin American elites were key agents in ushering the first age of globalization. In fact, the key impetus behind the vast mining enterprises

that monetized and lubricated the global economy, Hausberger suggests, was not simply China's and Europe's demand for silver but rather Spanish American elites' demand for European and Chinese luxury goods. Deploying a similarly global perspective, Martínez, in contrast, shows that, while Spain and Portugal had a common impetus for establishing inquisitorial tribunals in Goa, Lima, Mexico City, and Cartagena—namely regulating the alleged deleterious influences of New Christians, Moriscos, and idolaters—local conditions had a decisive role in determining the notions of race, caste, and purity of blood that religious institutions deployed in different territories.

A couple of chapters focus on particular individuals or groups and the networks in which they operated. In chapter 2, Ivonne del Valle focuses on Vasco de Quiroga's plans to create hospitals for indigenous people in New Spain during the first half of the sixteenth century. In chapter 5, Anna More examines the writings of Alonso de Sandoval (1573–1651), a Jesuit who provided one of the earliest accounts of the Iberian slave trade. In chapter 8, Guillermo Wilde examines a set of ethnographic and political texts produced by Jesuits in the missions of Paraguay and the global culture of letters to which they belonged. In chapter 10, Elisabetta Corsi examines how Jesuits developed a policy of accommodation towards Chinese “idolatrous” images by building on a common Chinese and European notion of “the cultivation of the intellect.”

The rest of the chapters focus on institutions, practices, and ideas. In chapter 4, Bruno Feitler examines the relationship between the Inquisition and Portugal's colonial expansion. In chapter 6, Rachel Sarah O'Toole examines how people of African descent in colonial Peru—in the city of Trujillo specifically—harnessed imperial laws to obtain freedom and become respectable members of society. In chapter 7, María Eugenia Chaves conducts a diachronic study of some of the major critiques of the institution of slavery that arose during the colonial and early republican periods in Spanish America. In chapter 9, Charlene Villaseñor Black provides a rich discussion of the *Enconchado* paintings, which were artistic creations from New Spain, whose origins, though clearly a product of globalization, remain elusive and “untranslatable.” Finally, in chapter 11, Jody Blanco examines translations and reproductions of *Barlaam and Josaphat*, a medieval European romance centered on the life of a South Asian prince, to explain the intellectual mechanics of the “economy of grace” that was central to Catholic evangelization in the Philippines.

The individual chapters in this volume are insightful and refreshing. However, I am not convinced that the chapters as a whole deliver on the promises offered in the introduction. While most chapters demonstrate that the territories under Iberian hegemony were key sites where important interactions and clashes between people from different continents took place, it is not clear to

me how this offers a new explanation for the roots of globalization. With the exception of Hausberger's first chapter and María Elena Martínez's comparative study on notions of race and caste in the Iberian world, most authors fail to demonstrate a direct relationship between the specific cases they study and the emergence of globalization. In other words, one thing is to say that Iberian expansion generated new and unprecedented local cross-cultural interactions and quite another that these new local interactions drove the process of globalization. Most of the chapters in this volume prove the former and most certainly not the latter, as the introduction promises.

Moreover, the volume purports to show that indigenous peoples and people of African-descent played essential roles in the emergence of globalization. The claim rings true and interesting to me, but the authors do not pursue this perspective in a sustained manner. Most of the chapters actually focus on elite actors, whether they be religious leaders, imperial bureaucrats, or Latin American economic elites. The one exception is O'Toole's chapter, which focuses on the strategies that people of African-descent pursued to secure their freedom in colonial Peru. However, while O'Toole's chapter successfully explains afro-descendants' agency in securing freedom for themselves, it does not convincingly explain what this has to do with globalization. In sum, the book neither systematically pursues the theme of subaltern agency nor convincingly explains how subaltern actors influenced the process of globalization.

In spite of these quibbles, *Iberian Empires and the Roots of Globalization* amounts to a rich collection of chapters that explore the history of the Iberian world from an interdisciplinary vantage point. I will look forward to productive discussions using this book as a point of departure in advanced undergraduate courses and graduate seminars.

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### **Michiel van Groesen**

*Imagining the Americas in Print: Books, Maps and Encounters in the Atlantic World.*

Library of the Written Word – The Handpress World, 74. Leiden: Brill, 2019. Pp. xii + 272. Hb, €130.00 /\$157.00.

The book thematizes one of the central issues of transatlantic history—how news and knowledge were circulated and disseminated in a wide variety of print editions and, accordingly, how they formed the European imagination