

with Juan Santos' supporters in 1750. Although their revolt failed, it fueled the Spaniards' belief that their world was in peril. A few years later an indigenous rebellion in Huarochiri province east of Lima strengthened those fears.

One danger of selecting an event such as the earthquake or Darnton's "Great Cat Massacre" as an historical prism is that it may give the event greater importance than it merits. Darnton used the cat massacre as a window on Parisian social tensions but the incident itself was trivial enough that it could never be thought to have caused or increased those tensions. The earthquake and tsunami, on the other hand, were catastrophic for Lima. It is difficult to see the catastrophe, however, as a cause of much more than heightened religious hysteria.

*Shaky Colonialism* offers a fascinating and accessible view of the tensions that beset Lima in the mid-1700s and that bedeviled Bourbon reformers who came after the Count of Superunda. As Walker shows, in contrast to the crown's control over Mexico, certain aspects of Spanish colonialism in Lima were surprisingly lax. Yet his focus on Lima should not obscure the fact that colonialism was more than building height and control of clergy and *tapadas*. In the Andean provinces the colonial system retained and even strengthened its ability to exploit the indigenous population to the benefit of the state and the colonial elite.

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**PATRICIA H. MARKS: *Deconstructing Legitimacy: Viceroy, Merchants, and the Military in Late Colonial Peru*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007.**

This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the independence of Peru. By focusing on the economic and political repercussions of Bourbon reform policies in the late colonial period, particularly on their effects on Lima's commerce and merchants, it provides a fresh perspective on the decline of Spanish power in Peru and throws new light on the final, crisis-torn years of Spanish rule in the early 1820s.

It is, in one sense, a book of two parts. The first examines the effects of government reform on Peruvian commerce and the mercantile interests of Lima during the late and early nineteenth century. The second deals with the crisis of Peruvian trade following the loss of Chile in 1817 and its relationship to the crisis of the Spanish viceregal regime in Peru that led to, and persisted after, the overthrow of Viceroy Pezuela. Each of these two parts might stand alone and can be read separately, one for its economic history of late colonial trade and the other for its analysis of politics in the closing years of the viceroyalty. However, to do so would be to miss the author's essential point and central thesis: namely,

that Spain was ultimately unable to sustain royalist rule in Peru because of a persistent failure to recognize fully the needs of Lima's elite and a concomitant tendency to overvalue peninsular mercantile interests, even when the latter had become incapable of underwriting the finances vital for war.

Although Marks' principal purpose is to enhance our understanding of the decisive years that followed the restoration of Spain's constitutional government in 1820, the opening chapters of her book take us back to the conflicts among Lima merchants and between merchants and government during the late eighteenth century. Here we get a meticulous reconstruction, based on considerable research into many primary sources, of the impact of Bourbon reform on the organization and patterns of trade conducted through networks that converged on Lima. The author presents a picture of Peru's commerce with Spain that is in some ways a familiar one, showing Lima's commercial decline after Upper Peru was incorporated into the new viceroyalty of Río de la Plata and Buenos Aires became a major entrepot for exchanges of European goods for precious metals produced at Potosí. However, much is added to this picture, particularly in the detailed accounts of changes and continuities in the various lines of Lima's trade not only with Spain but also with Asia and, equally importantly, the coasting trades of the Pacific, especially the vital trade in wheat from Chile. While this account is rich in details for historians of Peru and Spanish American trade, the most striking finding that emerges from the mass of detail is the determination of Bourbon ministers to transform Peruvian trade and the damage that they consequently inflicted on a creole mercantile elite that had once, as the famous *peruleros*, been a major force in transatlantic trade.

The second part of the book focuses on events during the viceregency of Pezuela, the successful commander of the Army of Peru who succeeded Viceroy Abascal in 1816. Although Marks does not explain Abascal's success in holding the viceroyalty together – something which no historian has yet done – her account of Pezuela's failure is closely-argued, strongly backed by evidence, and very persuasive. The emphasis is on Pezuela's dilemma following his failure to recover Chile in 1818, which left Peru's main trading partner in enemy hands and, combined with the failures of Spanish naval and military expeditions into the Pacific and against Buenos Aires, deprived Lima of vital maritime power in the Pacific. Pezuela consequently had to open trade to foreigners in order to sustain essential supplies and revenues, and he sought to use divisions within the mercantile community to win allies for his policy. Spanish merchants tied to trade with Spain were, however, vehemently opposed to Pezuela, fearing that foreign trade would ruin them, and their persistent challenges did much to undermine both his authority and respect for the law. Indeed, it led ultimately

to their surreptitious alliance with high-ranking peninsular army officers to depose the viceroy.

Marks provides a sharp, detailed analysis of the context and causes of the coup in 1821. First, she offers a very convincing picture of Pezuela's dilemmas as he struggled to find the practical means to sustain the war when difficulties mounted on all sides. If his problems were acute before the restoration of the Cádiz constitution in 1820, they were all but insoluble afterwards, when mercantile elites stymied his efforts to finance the war and the officer class denigrated his political and military strategies. At the same time, metropolitan governments pursued policies that generally did more harm than good. Indeed, here we find confirmation of the case made by Timothy Anna and Michael Costeloe about the ways in which Spanish politics and governments contributed to the loss of the American colonies. But we also get much more than this, especially in Marks' analysis of La Serna and his officers. This reveals much about how their experience of war and politics in peninsular Spain shaped their political and military differences with Pezuela, fuelled their contempt for civilian authority, and underpinned intractable demands for a military solution.

Marks' efforts to show connections between the merchants and the military are somewhat speculative, as she admits. Nonetheless, her analysis of their social links, political sympathies and common antagonism to Pezuela allows her to make a powerful case for revising the received view that the coup was a mere military putsch, driven by discontent officers. Indeed, her account conveys much about the sheer complexity of Spanish and Peruvian elite politics in the crucial years when, after defeating the *porteño* advance through Upper Peru, Pezuela confronted San Martín's invasion of Peru from Chile. She shows how divisions between 'liberals' and 'absolutists' were compounded by divisions among liberals; how war affected political culture; how differences over military strategy were rooted in different experiences of war; and how all was hugely complicated by uncertainties about the legitimacy of Pezuela's government after the return of constitutionalism to Spain. She also provides a keenly-observed account of how the coup against Pezuela was organised, carried out, and subsequently legitimised.

Marks does not pursue the history of the struggle for Peru after 1821, when the loyalists concentrated at Cuzco and San Martín dithered on the coast. However, her ability to convey the complexity of loyalist politics, backed by an admirable effort of research, does a great deal to help us understand why Spain's defence of Peru did not recover after 1820, despite the fact that its challengers also succumbed to political division. In this key book, she shows that the legitimacy of Peru's royalist government disintegrated amidst internal conflicts and contradic-

tions, and had lost most of its moral and political capital long before the final blows fell at Junín and Ayacucho.

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DAVID CARRASCO (ed.): *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Díaz del Castillo*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008.

In one of the six essays accompanying this re-edition of Bernal Díaz del Castillo's famous "diary" of the Spanish Conquest of New Spain, which is devoted to the theme of human sacrifice, David Carrasco concludes:

The purpose of this essay is not to justify Aztec ritual killing or condemn the Spaniards for their violence or lack of understanding. Rather, by beginning with Díaz del Castillo's point of view as an outsider and harsh critic of Aztec rituals, we move to indigenous words, practices, and perspectives to see through the Spanish account into some dimensions of what the Aztecs and Maya believed they were doing. (465)

However, the seventeenth-century reader of this diary, like the present day reader, may search in vain for these indigenous words, and perspectives. What this diary of a Spanish Conquistador may well tell us about is rather the mental/cognitive constructs of the Spanish during their ventures and tribulations in the conquest of these native peoples of the New World.

As to Carrasco's most welcome second aim – to unveil some major or minor ethno-historic data out of this highly disputable source – this aim, unfortunately, has proved to be quite unfulfilled; however, his essays do try to illuminate this particular facet of this diary. This Conquistador's diary is indeed full of bits and pieces of what one may call "ethnography," but the misconstrued interpretations provided by Díaz of what his eyes saw and his ears heard, all those overshadow this goal of salvaging ethnography out of this diary. This book is, rather, a living monument to the unbridgeable gap between the two distinct mental worlds of Spanish and Aztec societies and culture during the first decades of the sixteenth century.

What the reader may also be alerted to is Bernal Díaz's sophisticated practice of veiling nearly everything that he would not want us to know. And David Carrasco promptly cautions us against this practice in his introductory essay: