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## RESEÑAS DE LIBROS / BOOK REVIEWS

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HENDRIK KRAAY, CELSO THOMAS CASTILHO & TERESA CRIBELLI (eds.), *Press, Power, and Culture in Imperial Brazil*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2021.

In a changing media environment, it is useful to reflect upon earlier forms of communication and their place in emerging nation-states. In an oligarchical slave society in which the printing press had only recently arrived, newspapers played multiple roles, as the chapters in this edited volume demonstrate. Newspapers here are both the sources of information and the subject of analysis. Nineteenth-century newspaper editors often had rather grand ideas of their mission, even excessively so; in the twenty-first century, one notes similarly overblown expectations regarding the democratizing impact of the Internet. In imperial Brazil, the elite believed that their society, in which the pen was considered mightier than the sword, was superior to its Spanish-speaking neighbors, understood to be prone to political violence.

Many of the chapters in this book were first presented at an American Historical Association meeting in Denver. (For the record, I played a marginal role on one of the panels.) It is rare that I am convinced that these kinds of collections merit publication. In this case, the editors' introduction alone, which provides an overview of the historical development of the press, merits its acquisition by any serious library with an interest in Latin America. Kraay and others have also provided translations of work by five Brazilian scholars based in Brazil. This is also a valuable service, since the days are long past when even fairly knowledgeable Brazilianists in the United States and elsewhere could keep up with much of the new scholarship in Brazil which will never be translated. Despite their reputation, "Brazilianists," of course, have no trouble reading in Portuguese, but I think that this book should be consulted more broadly by people who study nineteenth-century Latin American cultural and political developments in general.

Several of the authors focus on the public debate of important social issues in the press during the imperial era. Alain El Youssef makes a provocative argument regarding the rapid decline of opposition to slavery and the (illegal) slave trade from the early to the mid-1830s. Juan José Pérez Meléndez contends that an examination of the newspapers during that era is crucial to understand-

ing the debates over the early and historically neglected stages of sponsored migration because the newspapers themselves were also actively engaged in the business. Rodrigo Camargo de Godoi provides suggestive (and necessarily fragmentary) evidence regarding the presence of enslaved people in print shops. Celso Castilho examines the attempt of one man of color to address issues of race; his political enemies claimed he was promoting race war. Castilho helpfully reminds us that we need to read for silences as well as that which was expressed directly. Roberto Saba shows how Brazilian men, particularly those from São Paulo families, living and/or studying abroad, sometimes at land-grant colleges in the United States, founded newspapers and promoted a vision of a Brazil in which agriculture would be modernized after slavery was abolished.

These chapters point to some unexplored, almost hidden debates. It would have been helpful to have made the authors aware of them so that they could address them forthrightly. One is the question of how literate the Brazilian population in the imperial era was. Many of the authors here take the standard numbers in the 1872 census at face value even when they acknowledge that many illiterate people would still have had direct or indirect access to what was printed in newspapers.

This relates to what I consider another somewhat hidden debate about the role of newspapers and their “publics.” Certainly, they played a role in the maintenance of elite political networks. These were the people, as Kraay notes, for whom “life revolved around the press” (p. 191). On the other hand, Marcello Basile provides important reflections on how these men viewed “public opinion,” as a source of political legitimacy and as something that should be guided. (I think it would have been useful for this chapter to have been made available to other contributors so that they could respond to it.) Certainly some of the newspapers under discussion addressed audiences unable to participate in the empire’s political life through electoral means. Women clearly played a role, hardly insignificant, as consumers of newspapers rather than as producers during this era, Nisia Floresta, so long absent in Europe, notwithstanding. Readers’ letters, Teresa Cribelli argues, “published by request,” provide a more direct access to “public sentiment” (p. 197). Other than the case of a letter drawn up jointly by the residents of a poor neighborhood which she analyzes, however, one wonders if cost was generally prohibitive for members of the popular classes to use this option frequently. (Her chapter, it should be noted, is deeply grounded in a larger understanding of similar developments in the Atlantic World.)

As often happens in these collections, not all of the chapters are as tightly focused on the subject as one would have liked. Yet, even these provide hard-

won information, often presented in valuable tables, as well as examples of unusually rare data on the circulation and finances of some publications.

Newspapers aided in the development of more expressive literary forms like the *crônica*; Ludmila de Sousa Maia provides many examples from the career of Machado de Assis. Arnaldo Lucas Pires Junior examines the development of illustrated satirical magazine in the late imperial period. These help explain how Brazilian periodical writing became both more personal and more ideologically challenging, and not just partisan as it had long been, and how these changes attracted audiences for what the authors agree was generally a precarious business.

Some of the authors make use of the Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, though fewer than I expected would be the case. This open-access digital newspaper archive has already expanded from five million to ten million pages. It has provided a valuable service and undoubtedly will continue to do so. I remember how grateful I was back in the 1990s, after I left Brazil on my third research trip for my doctoral dissertation, to be able to leave the country with microfilmed copies of nineteenth-century Brazilian newspapers. This was cutting-edge technology at the time! The archive evidently has its problems, not least of all, many indicate, an inadequate search engine. The newspaper *Castilho* examines, for that matter, is not in the digitized collection, and one wonders about other missing newspapers that could be added to the collection. I am sure that the archivists would welcome scholarly input on this subject.

The book also suggests that we need much more research on provincial newspapers, and we need to find ways to preserve them before they disintegrate and become inaccessible to future historians. Kraay himself examines the articles written for Rio de Janeiro newspapers by correspondents in Bahia, in part because so many newspapers printed in Salvador were destroyed, either in a rebellion in 1912 or in a fire in the following year. Much of the work here is still centered on Rio de Janeiro. Although the editors recognize that newspapers played a critical role in the economic life of Brazil, economics lamentably seems to attract few historians. Zephyr Frank and Matthew Nestler demonstrate ways to mine the resources available in newspapers. They show how newspapers help us understand the expansion of markets in real estate and human beings. Certainly, much more needs to be done on these kinds of topics. The earliest long-running Brazilian newspaper, *Jornal do Comércio*, is mentioned frequently, but certainly deserves more examination for its treatment of “commercial” topics.

As a global pandemic complicates the definition and implementation of our research agendas, it is worthwhile to focus on the sources we have available which we may have neglected hitherto, as well as contemplating better ways to make use of them. It is reassuring how much more remains to be done and can

be done using sometimes oversold advances in modern technology. Certainly, few of us wanted to see a day in which we could do our research without traveling to Brazil. Little did we know what lay ahead.

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MOLLY C. BALL, *Navigating Life and Work in Old Republic São Paulo*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2020.

Manoel, Maria, Domingos, Guiseppe, Antonio—são milhares os nomes de trabalhadores europeus que cruzaram o Atlântico nas primeiras décadas do século XX tendo como destino, final ou passageiro, a cidade de São Paulo, Brasil. Embora hoje possamos ter acesso às centenas de registros desses trabalhadores, as suas trajetórias ainda são pouco conhecidas. A única certeza dos homens, mulheres e crianças imigrantes que adentraram o largo portão de ferro da Hospedaria dos Imigrantes era de que suas vidas jamais seriam as mesmas. Quantos sonhos, planos, expectativas e necessidades carregavam em suas poucas bagagens? Molly C. Ball não responde diretamente a esta pergunta, mas é evidentemente impulsionada por ela ao buscar conhecer, ainda que de relance, as experiências dos trabalhadores migrantes na São Paulo da Primeira República (1889-1930). Em um livro que estabelece pontes entre a História Econômica e a História Social—diálogo ainda exíguo—Ball perscruta as relações de trabalho experienciadas pelos trabalhadores imigrantes e suas famílias sem perder de vista a presença e atuação dos trabalhadores nacionais, migrantes e nativos do estado de São Paulo. Dessa forma, a autora transita com desenvoltura entre a análise quantitativa e qualitativa. O título do livro—*Navigating Life and Work in Old Republic São Paulo*—é um indicador da proposta de análise realizada por Ball. Nele, observa-se a perspectiva do movimento, da fluidez e da agitação dos mares, das ondas que geram o movimento e ao mesmo tempo desafiam a travessia. Ideia semelhante se tem de São Paulo: a cidade que não pára, que cresceu (e ainda cresce) desordenadamente e sem contornos, aquela que acolhe e hostiliza ao mesmo tempo.

Mas o que significa então navegar na vibrante capital paulista das primeiras décadas do século XX? O ponto de partida da autora é a Hospedaria dos Imigrantes e este é um dos aspectos mais originais de seu livro. A autora sustenta o argumento de que a hospedaria foi muito além de um ponto de recepção e encaminhamento da mão de obra estrangeira para São Paulo e o restante do país. Em sua pesquisa, ela mostra como a instituição desempenhou um papel importante na configuração do mercado de trabalho, sobretudo, quando supria