own discomfiture with some of these images, he contends that they usually fit well with "the visual culture of religious life" in their locales (p. 233).

Another surprising aspect of these saints is their lack of obvious holiness. In life, these saints were usually not moral paragons; after death, their appeal has little to do with moral sanctity. In contrast to official saints, the folk versions attract devotees through the tragedy of their lives, especially the tragedy of their deaths. If there is any virtue commonly espoused, it is a sort of muted political resistance. Rape victim Sarita Colonia of Lima consequently is celebrated more as "the victim of a tragic life" than as "an exemplar of heroic virtue" (p. 150). Argentina's Gaucho Gil, an unfairly executed soldier, has become a symbol not merely of martyrdom but also of redeeming sacrifice.

The Roman Catholic clergy and hierarchy can play a decisive role in the survival and popularity of folk saints. The Niño Compadrito, for instance, was almost destroyed by a hostile bishop, while Gaucho Gil received a major boost when a priest who was inspired by the Vatican II accepted the validity of devotion to the cowboy saint. Often the local priest's role is ambiguous. Some will say mass at the celebration of a saint, yet denounce him in the homily. Even the sympathetic priest mentioned above hoped to channel devotion away from Gaucho Gil and into more orthodox practices and beliefs.

Graziano has done an excellent job describing the complexities, contradictions, and human dramas associated with devotion to folk saints in Latin America. This project clearly had an impact on the author, who describes himself as someone who has "little religious belief in anything" but who finds devotion to folk saints "of the highest cultural value" because it is "a unique entry into the logic and cosmovision" of Latin American life (p. ix). The warmth and respect with which he treats these religious devotions even as he outlines their obvious irrationality is the great strength of this book. Graziano, like the devotees he is studying, understands the desire to believe.

Todd Hartch *Eastern Kentucky University*

BETTINA NG'WENO: ***Turf Wars: Territory and Citizenship in the Contemporary State*.** Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Turf Wars is an elegantly written and richly ethnographic look at the intersection of state formation, race, and minority ethnic status in Colombia, focusing on Afrodescendant communities in the southwestern highlands of Cauca, a region better known in the academic literature for its indigenous activism than for its Black communities. Bettina Ng'weno provides a textured ethnography about

why territory and race matter to Afrocolombians in an era when they have been recognized as ethnic citizens with a claim to autonomous territories, at least on the Pacific coast, where they are in the majority. However, the municipality of Buenos Aires, Cauca, where Ng'weno conducted her research, lies well to the west and thus beyond the reaches of what the state might see as "authorized" Afrocolombians (to appropriate Charles Hale's term). In this sense, *Turf Wars* presents an ethnographic picture of a crucial struggle for identity in a country whose government is intent upon limiting the geographical scope of Afrocolombian processes of identification.

While Ng'weno's arguments are very much in sync with current theoretical discussions regarding the nature of the state in the postcolonial world, her real contribution to these debates is her ethnography, which problematizes and brings out the issues in sharp focus in a way that few studies of the same subject matter accomplish. In effect, her case studies of Afrocolombian communities in the highlands, their struggles with outsiders and with neighboring indigenous people, and their appeals to various layers of law and constitutional reform, all point to the centrality of rural property rights in the post-constitution reimagining of Colombia—despite the fact that the country is largely urban. Ng'weno, a Kenyan scholar based in the United States, with previous African research experience on the same issues, underlines the need for doing local ethnography in order to understand the state and emphasizing the implications that the interconnection of property rights and citizenship have for a whole host of actors, including not only minority communities and national legislators, but armed actors and non-minority peasants as well. What makes Ng'weno's fine-grained ethnography so persuasive is the way in which she demonstrates that new forms of exercising ethnic citizenship are closely bound into communal property rights as ethnic citizens, because minority groups can only assert their political and administrative identity if they have a territorial base. However, this association is encumbered by the multiple layers of institutions and pieces of legislation that privilege some groups over others (not only native over Afrodescendant, but also post-Constitution over pre-Constitution claimants). This kind of ethnography of Afrocolombians is particularly effective in the kind of location chosen by Ng'weno, where Blacks live side-by-side, not always peacefully, with other ethnic groups and with *mestizos*, and where they are not automatically assigned to the "ethnic slot" by virtue of their location outside the region designated as "core Afrocolombian" by the state. Thus, *Turf Wars* demonstrates that it is imperative that scholars of Afro-Latin America not confine their studies to the "heartlands"—the Pacific coast of Colombia, Bahia in Brazil, Cuba—but range further out in order to explore what it means to be Afrodescendant in peripheral locations where a great deal is at stake, not only for communities but for the state.

Turf Wars understates the centrality of rethinking race, although Ng'weno's arguments concerning racial identification in Buenos Aires provide a crucial handle on how we should be grappling with this issue in Latin America. In recent years, many Latin Americanist anthropologists (most prominent among them being Marisol de la Cadena and Mary Weismantel) have begun to reject the concept of ethnicity, privileging the notion of race, in an effort to comprehend the politics of diversity. Their argument is that ethnicity (read as closed and culturally homogeneous groups) was adopted by anthropologists as a substitute for flawed notions of race, but that it is now necessary to study how race is socially and historically constructed in Latin America, rejecting older notions of ethnicity as essentialist and ahistorical. What Ng'weno effectively demonstrates is that it is not an either/or proposition. On the one hand, she argues that ethnicity must be rethought as a political process of group identification in struggle with what was for centuries a state that imagined itself as ethnically homogeneous; ethnicity is thus not a simple classification of cultural groups or an interpersonal process of setting boundaries between individuals. Identification as an ethnic actor enables a particular kind of citizenship in the modern world, forcing groups that in the past did not claim ethnicity to embrace it. In Colombia, this means establishing communal property rights in order to be classified as Afrocolombian. On the other hand, Black Colombians have always been racial subjects, and continue to be categorized racially by the state, by the dominant society, and by neighboring indigenous people. Both of these are at stake in Buenos Aires. Thus, what *Turf Wars* shows is that we must study the interplay of race and ethnicity, rather than privileging one over the other, if we are to comprehend what it means to be Afrocolombian. I would suspect that this observation is equally valid in Brazil, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and a host of other locations, suggesting Ng'weno is making a significant contribution to the understanding of race in Latin America.

Joanne Rappaport *Georgetown University*

JENS ANDERMANN: ***The Optic of the State: Visuality and Power in Argentina and Brazil***. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007.

Não é de hoje que se questiona o que se convencionou chamar de "imperialismo das fontes escritas". Cunhada por Jacques Le Goff, a expressão anuncia a antiga proeminência das fontes literárias, fossem elas cartas, atas, livros, testamentos, leis ou decretos. Vinculado a uma historiografia positiva e *evenementielle*, esse modelo foi vitorioso durante muito tempo e, ademais, símbolo certo de objetividade e boa metodologia.