American independence revolutions are best understood not as the expression of anticolonial sentiment, or as part of the cycle of Atlantic revolutions, but as the story of the disintegration of the Spanish empire. Simon's creoles in the North and the South are anti-imperialist revolutionaries who set out to rebuild their republics as imperial states. The paradox is intended.

There is much to commend in this new work. It offers a persuasive corrective to the Eurocentric accounts of republican thought in the Americas. It shows that when we fail to take note of locale and local conditions, we blind ourselves to the fact that it was hierarchies of race and color that shaped republicanism in the Americas. As Simon says in his conclusion, reading Hamilton along with Bolívar should give pause to those "who would canonize the ideologists of Creole Revolution," keep us "enchained by the institutions they created," and prevent us from "dismantling the persistent inequalities of our American societies" (196).

It should not come as a surprise that a relatively short book with such enormous scope has blind spots. Some of them have to do with disciplinary practices; others are there by design. Simon notes, with regret, that the Haitian Revolution and popular movements like the Hidalgo uprising in Mexico in 1810 could not be taken into consideration, as neither was driven by descendants of European settlers (8). I wonder whether our understanding of republicanism and revolution in the Americas would not be a bit different if we accounted for subaltern and non-white agents, and whether the convergences between North and South might not run into their limit when we consider the place of Afro-descendants and native people after independence. One can only hope that Simon will continue to fill out the tantalizing picture he has started to draw.

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Who Should Rule? Men of Arms, the Republic of Letters, and the Fall of the Spanish Empire. By Mónica Ricketts. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 328. Notes. Index. $74.00 cloth.

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In this deeply researched study, Mónica Ricketts chronicles the rise of men of letters and military officers in Spain and Peru from 1760 to 1830. This rise undermined the old Habsburg order, while wars destroyed what was left of civilian and traditional institutions. Confronted with constant opposition from deep-rooted elites and the lack of strong institutions, men of letters failed to create a new institutional order with a military subject to civilian rule. By the 1820s, the military had acquired a definite role

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in society and constituted a challenge to the formation of a constitutional monarchy in Spain and a republican state in Peru.

Ricketts takes issue with the framework that considers Peru an odd and failed case in the transition from the colonial to the republican era. Instead, she pays attention to Peru's entrenched peninsular institutions, writing a "parallel history of Peru and Spain so that scholars of the Spanish Peninsula can connect their history with America" (5). Throughout, she rides between both shores of the Atlantic, for example tracing the implementation of military and education reforms in the colonies and the influence of peninsular authors in the works of Spanish American men of letters to establish the universalism of the Enlightenment. Ricketts deftly connects the ideas and plans of the court with the viewpoints, expressions, and ambitions of Spanish and Peruvian actors on the ground, stressing the importance of the press as a forum for political revolution.

Ricketts contends that the transatlantic character and concern for the growth of military power are two understudied themes of early Spanish liberalism. She focuses on connections between the Iberian peninsula and Spanish America rather than on the seeds of separation and nationalism. News of war in America and the repression of Spanish American efforts at autonomy pushed Spanish liberals to be more specific about their critique of oppression and see viceroys and captain generals as heirs of absolutism and the source of Spanish American discontent. Ricketts states that "Spanish liberalism cannot be reduced to constitutionalism; it was a far more complex and contradictory ideology" (186) that fought against absolutist rule and militarism.

The book requires attentive reading. Due to the rich analysis of the primary sources, the reader can lose sight of the main argument. In Chapter 1, the author presents the Bourbon reforms not as anti-American, but as a regalist and absolutist program. The Bourbons created a new elite of well-trained provincial nobility, members of the secular Church, military officers, and lawyers. In the process, elites from Spain and Spanish America were brought closer together. For example, Ricketts sees economic and patriotic societies not as venues that fostered a creole desire for affirmation but as sites where members conceived of a universal republic of letters.

In Chapter 2, Ricketts explains that a new idea of honor based on merit guided reforms of education to weaken old Habsburg corporate privileges. Although the crown ultimately failed to wrest control of the main universities from traditional authorities, military schools led the formation of imperial administrators. Ricketts posits in Chapter 3 that military reform was the most successful Bourbon attempt at creating loyal subjects and the foundation for the overwhelming power of the Peruvian military during the republic. The expansion of the *fuero militar*, or military legal exemption, and the advance of merit as a condition for success attracted recruits of different social and ethnic backgrounds. Between 1780 and 1808, men of letters became new political

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actors: orators, pamphleteers, newspaper editors, lawyers, gossipers, and even seditious conspirators (Chapter 4).

Chapter 5 focuses on the years from 1808 to 1814, a time when Spanish liberals considered the cause of Spanish Americans and peninsular Spaniards as one and the same. They called for a new liberal order in which Spanish Americans would be free of political and ecclesiastical despotism. Chapter 6 dwells on the tenure of Viceroy José Fernando de Abascal (1806–16), under which the military's right to rule was consolidated. Faced with insurgent movements in Peru's neighboring territories, Abascal expanded a standing army that integrated creoles, *castas*, and Indians through an effective system of patronage and rewards. In the last chapter, the 1820 restoration of the 1812 constitution brought more struggles for power between men of letters and military officers. Eventually, factionalism among Spanish liberals prevented a peaceful solution between Spain and Spanish America. In 1829, Peruvian military officer Agustín Gamarra took power, ushering in the time of national caudillos. In the epilogue, the continuation of military rule in Peru until the late 1800s confirms that military *caudillismo* was an important legacy.

How might Ricketts's theory play out in other scenarios? By 1830, military rule had become a fact in many of the new Spanish American republics. The book is suitable for upper-level undergraduate courses and graduate colloquia. It offers a rich addition to the fields of Atlantic, Latin American, and Spanish history, as well as the history of the Spanish empire, modern politics, and the Atlantic revolutions.

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MESOAMERICAN STUDIES

The Manuscript Hunter: Brasseur de Bourbourg's Travels Through Central America and Mexico, 1854–1859. By Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg. Translated and edited by Katia Sainson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. Pp. 288. $39.95 cloth.
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Brasseur de Bourbourg is universally known in the field of Mesoamerican studies for his discoveries of major written sources, especially those left by the Maya. Among them are the K'iche' epic of the *Popol Vuh*, the dance drama *Rabinal Achí*, the Yucatec pictographic manuscript today referred to as *Codex Madrid*, and Diego de Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*. However, as Katia Sainson, translator and editor of the volume, notes, the legacy of Brasseur de Bourbourg as a scholar is tainted by his later speculations on the ancient Maya script as an encrypted code and on the origins of

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