

*Tropical Renaissance: North American Artists Exploring Latin America, 1839–1879.* By KATHERINE EMMA MANTHORNE. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989. Reproductions. Photographs. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. x, 235 pp. Cloth. \$50.00.

This handsome book documents the travels to Latin America in the midnineteenth century of a number of North American painters who interpreted its visual reality in the light of intellectual and aesthetic aims. Their sketches and a few of their paintings are important for their documentary value, especially those focusing on the possible sites of a transisthmian canal and Frederick Catherwood's first trustworthy drawings of pre-Columbian ruins. But Frederic Church manipulated observable reality to paint breathtaking panoramas, reflecting first his initial romantic search for an earthly paradise, then his scientific interest in geological evolution. Martin Heade focused on the microcosm: obsessive depictions of tropical flowers and hummingbirds combined images he observed in both Brazil and Jamaica. Several North American naturalists literally followed in the footsteps of Humboldt and Darwin to South America. Both Louis Mignot, Church's companion in Ecuador, and James Whistler, the famous advocate of art for art's sake, manipulated Latin American landscapes more obviously for abstract aesthetic goals; Whistler's first nocturnes were inspired by the Spanish bombardment of Valparaíso in 1866.

Complete as this book is on North American artistic activity in Latin America during the period, it lacks awareness of local developments there. Only Rugendas, of the several European romantic artists similarly documenting the region, is mentioned. The few ventures into pre-Columbian areas seem naive. The author neither knows of Del Río's Spanish expedition of 1787 to the Maya ruins of Palenque nor recognizes that the source of the image on the pseudo-stela in Church's *Cayambe* is Catherwood's drawings of Palenque stucco reliefs. But no one can be an expert in all fields; Manthorne is to be commended for her versatility and for illuminating this Latin American component of U. S. nineteenth-century cultural history.

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*El mundo que creó el azúcar: Las haciendas en Vega Baja, 1800–1873.* By PEDRO SAN MIGUEL. Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1989. Graphs. Tables. Appendixes. 224 pp. Paper.

During the nineteenth century Vega Baja, a municipio on the north coast of Puerto Rico, was of only modest significance as a producer of sugar compared to some other municipios on the island. It contained ten cane-growing haciendas of which only three might be classified as large on the basis of revenues, work force, and capital invested. Labor statistics give another measure of the scope of activity in the municipio. Between 1838 and 1867, the total number of laborers on the haciendas increased from 537 to 741 while slaves as a percentage of the total declined