

Book Reviews

General

The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1492–1867. By D. A. BRADING. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xviii, 761 pp. Cloth. \$64.50.

David Brading is known for his herculean scholarship on the social, economic, and political history of early Latin America. Until now, intellectual history had seemed something of an undercurrent in his oeuvre, but he overturns that impression with this absolutely monumental study of the principal writers from and about Spanish America in the early modern period. His survey stretches from Columbus to the mid-nineteenth century and in some cases even further.

Brading has divided the work into three sections, each of them substantial enough to be an ordinary book. The first part, "Conquest and Empire," deals mainly with the well-known (if not well-understood) literature, most of it written in the course of the sixteenth century, in which people in both Spain and America first attempted to assess the newly discovered lands. The second part, "Strangers in Their Own Land," tells of the views of native-born Americans who, often influenced by or reacting to the authors of the earlier corpus, gradually built up their own image of the Indies, or of their particular portion of it, as a unique homeland. The material here centers on the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, although certain writers in this vein came both earlier and later. The third part, "Reconquest and Revolution," deals with the time of the Bourbon reforms, the independence movements, and the early republican era as a unit, relating the expressions of both Americans and Europeans of that time to what had gone before.

No doubt the greatest single contribution of the book is to trace lines of thought in detail across an immense sweep of time and space. Crucial to the com-

parative work are meaty summaries of the core message of each author. These reconstructions—Brading calls them *mimesis*—represent an incredible amount of synthesis and analysis on Brading's part and give the intellectual history of early Spanish America a backbone it has lacked. A generation of intellectual historians and graduate students will wander among these *précis*, orienting their research and enriching their teaching. The breadth of coverage is quite stunning. To his credit, Brading has no compunction about omitting trivia, but one will find here *resumés* not only of the important authors of the time in Mexico and Greater Peru, but in Guatemala, Chile, New Granada, Venezuela, and the Plata region, not to speak of relevant European writers. The newest material will be found in the second of the three sections; many readers will already be quite familiar with most of the authors in the other parts. In a deeper sense, Brading's contribution could be seen as primarily the result of exploring the corpus of the middle colonial period, tying it to the better-known literature of the conquest and independence eras, and thereby unifying the whole.

A major conclusion—perhaps not a total surprise to many but here lucidly demonstrated for the first time—is that the localizing or patriotic literature of Mexico is more integrated from conquest to independence to republic, and more peculiar to the region, than that of Peru or any other large area of Spanish America. Only in Mexico did local Hispanics begin, in the seventeenth century, to build patriotism solidly on the preconquest indigenous past, and only there did figures of the independence movements echo their words. All of the same tendencies existed in writings of Peru, but the same kind of coalescence did not take place.

One of the problems with the intellectual history of Spanish America (and other cultural areas) has been that too often it has been done in excessive isolation from the rest of the historical enterprise, often, indeed, by literati or specialized historians who fell well short of an adequate grasp of social and other realities forming the background of the writings they studied. Brading is eminently qualified to remedy the situation, and indeed he does, compared to his predecessors, but the simple momentum and size of the study puts the corpus in relative isolation after all; much of the discourse is in terms of socially unrealistic stereotypes toward which Brading's attitude is not always clear, especially for the conquest period.

In addition to being a history of the origin and evolution of local patriotic thought, the work is close to being a general intellectual history of early Spanish America; it also approximates a survey of early Spanish American historiography; furthermore, it leans in the direction of being a series of lectures in the English manner, designed for a general public. It is sometimes more one of these things, sometimes more the other, and the differing requirements go a long way toward explaining why the book is exactly what it is. Such a large achievement does not fail to imply new avenues of research that cannot be discussed here, where the

last words should be devoted to underlining once more the magnitude of *The First America*, in size, scope, and significance.

JAMES LOCKHART, University of California, Los Angeles

Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades. By PATRICK MANNING. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Plates. Maps. Figures. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xi, 236 pp. Cloth. \$49.50.

This bold and innovative short work seeks to demonstrate the impact of slavery on sub-Saharan Africa from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries. It discusses a large body of research concerning demography, economics, social structure, and ideology, but makes its most original contribution in using computer simulation to model the population changes wrought by the slave trade. The focus is not so much on total numbers enslaved—the author uses others' estimates of the volume of the external slave trade—but on how these losses affected the growth and structure of African societies.

Distinguishing three export trades—the West Coast, the East Coast, and the Savanna and Horn—Patrick Manning explores, with the aid of numerous graphs, how these trades interacted with the indigenous demand for slaves in 13 different slave-trading regions. The transatlantic trade that peaked in the late eighteenth century primarily involved males, but the main victims of the other trades, which peaked later, were female. Manning combines existing data on slave exports with backward projections from modern censuses, estimated natural growth rates, and guesses regarding the incidence and demographic composition of enslavement. He concludes that the population of tropical Africa stagnated from 1700 to 1850, while that of West Africa fell by a substantial amount. He rejects the functionalist argument that African growth rates compensated for population lost to the slave trade. Fertility rates had little margin for adjustment, and, in his view, the impact of new food crops from the Americas was limited. Enslavement did siphon off potential famine victims, but it also caused famine and epidemics.

Manning additionally investigates price structure, as well as the institutional framework and ideologies evolved by African societies to sustain slave trading and slavery. He concludes with meditations on African slavery's place in world history and its links with European racism and with contemporary African values. Throughout, this is a book that asks big questions and frames answers with exemplary clarity. Arguments are introduced, elaborated, and summarized in a way that makes them accessible to undergraduates. The book will be helpful for Latin Americanists seeking a global perspective on the region's involvement with African slavery.

DAVID GEGGUS, University of Florida