

colonists to the east. With limited resources, Spanish governors based in New Orleans tried to extend Spanish laws and institutions to Louisiana's unruly Indian, French, and African inhabitants. Spanish authority, however, weakened with distance from the center, and most of the outlying post commandants continued to practice a less formal, personalistic rule that tended to reflect the interests of the French-speaking elite in their districts.

After describing the structure and function of the seven Spanish courts that replaced the French Superior Council, Derek Kerr analyzes the criminal records. He distinguishes three categories of crime: against persons, property, and public order. The last, which covered everything from slander to slave rebellion, kept prosecutors the busiest by far. Baron Carondelet's rule during the French and St. Domingue revolutions produced the greatest number of serious crimes or, perhaps better said, more serious repression of the lower classes, as evidenced by the number of cases handled by the governor's court itself. In the 1790s, two slave conspiracies were uncovered in the plantation district of Pointe Coupée. More frequently, the court records document individual acts of illegal slave behavior, such as murder, poisoning, theft, possession of firearms, desertion, and arson. New Orleans, as the only sizable North American port between Veracruz and Charleston, also attracted a rowdy transient population that mixed with people of color and with many of the miserable common soldiers who garrisoned the city. Indeed, recruits from Louisiana's regiments competed with slaves for space in the jailhouse.

Few of Kerr's conclusions relating Spanish Louisiana's crimes and criminals to its socioeconomic conditions will surprise specialists. Several tables and lengthy appendixes identifying criminal cases in select districts and naming Spanish Louisiana's *alcaldes*, *regidores*, *síndicos*, *comisarios*, and *comandantes* do make this volume a handy reference and heuristic tool. It complements two excellent recent books on colonial Louisiana, by Daniel Usner on the frontier economy [*Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783*, 1992] and Gwendolyn Midlo Hall on the development of African slavery [*Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, 1992].

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Two Hearts, One Soul: The Correspondence of the Condesa de Galve, 1688–96. Edited and translated by MEREDITH D. DODGE and RICK HENDRICKS. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. xv, 272 pp. Cloth. \$27.50.

Meredith Dodge and Rick Hendricks have brought together a fascinating and challenging collection of 27 late seventeenth-century letters of doña Gelvira de Toledo, condesa de Galve. These letters are housed in the Sección Osuna of the Archivo

Histórico Nacional de Madrid. The condesa wrote the earliest 13 of them while in Castile, to her brother-in-law, don Gregorio de Silva y Mendoza, the marqués de Cenete, duque de Pastrana and del Infantado. The rest, including eight more to don Gregorio, date from her years in Mexico City (1688–1696), when her husband, don Gaspar, conde de Galve (don Gregorio's younger brother), was viceroy of New Spain. A useful introduction precedes each letter, and the editors' notes provide the necessary identifications of people, objects, and illnesses. The appendixes include poems to doña Gelvira by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a list of members of the Galve household who made the trip to Mexico, and a list of those residing in the viceregal residence in 1695. The fourth appendix contains the transcriptions of the Castilian originals, which perhaps would have been better placed on pages facing the translations.

Introductions and notes inevitably frame the reading of documents, and the editors are impressed with the intimacy of doña Gelvira's letters to her brother-in-law, suggesting that their relationship may have been improper to some degree. The correspondence is labeled "illicit" and doña Gelvira herself as "lovesick." Too little is known about the condesa to challenge the interpretation.

It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that aristocratic women played a significant role in shaping a Castilian great nobility cohesive enough to sustain its disproportionate control of the kingdom's economic resources and the political direction of a global empire. When the ruling group resided in the same city, such cohesiveness was maintained principally by mutual visitations, the organization of which was usually in female hands. But when the ruling group was geographically dispersed, written correspondence had to serve as the major linking vehicle, and this collection perhaps reveals that the role of women may have been significant here as well.

Although the failure to translate kinship terms precisely undercuts the letters' prevailing tone, they are crowded with the stock phrases of intimacy, obligation, clientage, mutual exchange, and assistance one would expect in a rhetoric of social unification. A brief review is not the place to debate the validity of such a reading. To establish what was conventional in aristocratic correspondence would require the comparison of a variety of surviving personal letters. The editors hoped that these particular letters would reveal something about aristocratic women in the Spanish Empire; their publication may indeed open a door to the understanding of essential social and political processes in the dominant class.

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