six-year-old *subteniente* Juan Butler. The latter’s untimely promotion was an attempt to secure hereditary succession in the regiment on the basis of what Recio Morales dubs ‘paternal meritocracy’. He sets this common practice in context by a nuanced and insightful discussion of the favoured criteria for promotion such as ‘merit’, nobility (*calidad*), length of service, aptitude and disciplinary record: being a ‘wine lover’ (p. 226) was the most commonly cited disciplinary problem.

The ministry of Ricardo Wall y Devereux, Secretary of State and Secretary of War (1754–63), marks the culmination and the beginning of the end to the Irish as a distinct and privileged group, as they increasingly emphasised their Spanishness in response to widespread noble attacks on supranational Bourbon identity.

To conclude, Recio Morales overreaches himself less than one might expect in a work of such ambitious scope. He has made an important contribution to the study of war and society and to the history of migration.

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doi:10.1093/ehr/ces295

The stated purpose of the Oxford Handbook series is to offer authoritative and up-to-date surveys of original research. Aimed primarily at scholars wanting an overview of a defined subject area, or graduate students looking to read their way into a new field, the Handbooks are supposed to offer critical examinations of the progress and direction of debates, as well as a foundation for future research. For the most part, the *Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World* succeeds admirably in achieving these aims. Edited by the internationally renowned scholars Nicholas Canny and Philip Morgan, the volume consists of no fewer than thirty-seven commissioned essays by leading scholars from across Europe and the Americas (though, admittedly, the bulk of these contributors are based in the United States). Morgan and Canny have also done a great job of bringing senior scholars into conversation with emerging and recently established experts in their respective fields.

In their introductory essay, and through a four-part chronologically organised schema, the editors have also managed to maintain some coherence in the volume—no mean feat, given the period covered and the range of topics canvassed. Indeed, as they note, creating a narrative framework for this diverse field was one of their key goals. Briefly put, this framework begins with the emergence and consolidation of several Atlantic worlds in the course of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, followed by their integration as an interdependent whole by the eighteenth century. Such interconnectedness was made manifest from the late eighteenth century, when challenges and collapse in one area often led to significant disruption in others, if not in the whole system.

While the broad outlines of this narrative arc reflect a standard story-line in the field of Atlantic history thus far, the editors were also keen that the volume

*EHR*, cxxvii. 529 (Dec. 2012)
be ‘mould-breaking’ (p. 2). To achieve this, the editors eschew a Eurocentric approach and note the need to acknowledge the persistent influence of Native Americans and Africans especially in at least shaping their own place in this developing new world, if not in shaping the broader outlines of that world. They are also keen to distinguish the Atlantic world as a place in which human agency, rather than just environmental conditions, drove events. Given the many interests at play, this has also meant emphasising the diversity of experiences, settlements, and outcomes in the Atlantic at least as much as, if not more than, the similarities. Still, over time, winds and tides prevailed to help bring a level of integration to this world that ranged from the social, to the economic, and the legal and political. So too, did the Atlantic Ocean’s extensive riverine systems: remarkably, the editors note, the continental areas drained by rivers emptying into the Atlantic are about twice as great as those entering into the Pacific and Indian oceans combined—allowing a deep, and perhaps unique, penetration of the hinterlands. Finally, Canny and Morgan stress the primacy of warfare in both dividing and integrating the Atlantic world in the eighteenth century. Imperial rivalries, frontier conflicts, and revolutionary wars combined to create crises of both integration and disintegration.

Having set an ambitious agenda, with lofty aims, the editors have not been disappointed by their many contributors. Parts I and II deal with the emergence and early consolidation of the different Atlantic worlds. Opening essays introduce us to now familiar starting-places—the Mediterranean, North Africa, the Atlantic islands, and the lure of seaborne trade to West Africa and beyond. They also provide an introduction to the peoples involved in the opening of the early Atlantic, including, refreshingly, the diverse inhabitants of West Africa and the Americas, not just the usual cast of European characters. Still, the focus in most of these early essays is on European voyaging and movements and the creation of new maritime networks and knowledge among Europeans. Africans and Native Americans influence these developments, but they are not usually the primary subjects, or actors. This is, perhaps—and unfortunately—a fair reflection of the field at the moment.

Essays in these opening sections range widely, from more traditional accounts of European voyaging to conceptually innovative essays on violence and the Atlantic world, the senses and the arts. There is also a wonderful comparative essay by Kevin Terraciano on native responses to changes wrought after 1492 in New Spain, Peru and North America. Perhaps inevitably, though, summations of ‘The Iberian Atlantic to 1650’ and ‘The Northern European Atlantic World’ (although, strangely, nothing specifically on the early Spanish Atlantic), while useful, tend to repeat much of what is covered in thematic essays on ‘Atlantic Seafaring’ and ‘Knowledge and Cartography’. They also reach forward far into the period of ‘integration’ which is the theme of Part III. Yet those who dip in and out of the collection will appreciate these potted summaries (indeed, one suspects that few readers will work cover to cover through these chapters). Moreover, there are many rewarding insights to be found among them—such as A.J.R Russell-Wood’s illuminating focus on the importance of Atlantic archipelagos in the Portuguese Atlantic World.

The overlap with Part III is perhaps intentional, since the editors are at pains to stress both the development of diverse Atlantic Worlds and their eventual integration—noting that this happened at different times in different places, and unevenly. Here, most of the essays focus on comparative or integrative
themes. There are essays on the movement of goods and ideas, on plants and animals, on people and the places they created. There are also suggestive essays about emerging social, religious, legal and political institutions across the Atlantic. Yet often these essays reveal that while broad thematic comparisons might yield narratives that stress integration, the details reveal more differences than similarities. Provocative and illuminating essays, such as those by Kenneth Mills on religion and Tamar Herzog on identities, for example, show that the creation and re-creation of religious and other identities in the Atlantic was a complex process, highly contingent on local circumstances and the particular mix of people, culture and ideas in contact. They were also liable to fragment and divide as much as to unite and integrate. Here, the editors’ insistence on essays that take human agency seriously undermines the larger narrative that they suggest. While the Atlantic might have looked integrated as an economic system, it is less easy to tell a story of social, cultural, or even political integration across the whole. The struggle of some essayists to make broader comparisons across imperial and colonial borders only emphasises this problem.

Moreover, the overlap between Parts III and IV suggests a narrowing of the idea of integration to the point where it is difficult to discern where it existed at all. Essays here focus on the ‘disintegration’ of this system from about 1760 through the 1820s and beyond. New work on popular movements and rebellions sit alongside those of the ‘formal’ revolutions in the Hispanic, British, and French worlds. The end of the old Atlantic world also brought quite dramatic, and sometimes unexpected, results—as the essays on the fate of Native America and Africa testify. Although some of the essays in this section deal with the disintegrating connections between disparate parts of the Atlantic, the sudden reversion back to discrete essays on the many Atlantic worlds suggests that it is difficult to discern commonalities across the revolutionary waters. Moreover, the local and particular origins of so many of the rebellions and revolutions again give the lie to a previously integrated Atlantic world.

None of this is to criticise the individual and often rich essays that make up this collection. But it does suggest that it might be time to abandon the idea of a broader ‘Atlantic narrative’. Attempts to create one—even as admirably ‘mouldbreaking’ as this one—seem to constrain rather than inspire. So far, most of the larger-scale narratives which Atlantic historians have tried to construct still have the shape of the old story of European overseas expansion, or operate within the colony-to-nation framework. In that respect, they are in danger of obscuring at least as much as they illuminate, reinforcing rather than breaking down older historiographical boundaries.

We need not abandon Atlantic history altogether—many of the essays in this collection attest to the fruits of staying with it. But we should rethink the larger picture. In one of the most conceptually innovative essays of the Handbook, Elizabeth Mancke comes closest to articulating the liberating potential of the field when she notes that Atlantic political history can do much more than repackage the old colony-to-nation narratives. Rather, ‘it offers a way to reassess critical developments in modern history: the linkages between commerce and colonization; the resilience of non-European political systems; the role of international relations in supporting and mediating Atlantic expansion; and the deployment by Europeans
of Atlantic practices in other parts of the world’ (p. 398). We need more views of this Atlantic world from such different perspectives. We need to re-imagine what kind of macro-story we might hew from the myriad of new micro-histories. We need to look at this world inside-out, and from bottom-to-top. The essays in this Handbook, while successfully reflecting the current state of the field, also provide some illuminating suggestions as to how we might yet do that.

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doi:10.1093/ehr/ces290


Throughout her long career, Mary Beth Norton’s work has been foundational to the study of women’s experience in colonial America. In this book, which Norton describes as a ‘prequel’ to Liberty’s Daughters (her 1980 study of women in the era of the American Revolution), she enquires into how, in eighteenth-century Anglo-America, gender came to trump socio-economic status in terms of women’s access to political authority. Moving from Robert Filmer’s claim that ‘there is no virtue in men so different wh[i]ch woemen may not hope in some sort to attaine’ to a 1734 statement in a New York newspaper that ‘Poli[ti]cks … does not become’ women (p. 1), Norton focuses on how the public and political realms came to be gendered as exclusively male, and the ways in which women responded to this changing climate.

Norton begins her study by examining the career of Lady Frances Berkeley, wife of Sir William Berkeley, governor of Virginia during Bacon’s Rebellion. Privileged by both aristocratic birth and several prestigious marriages, Lady Berkeley became an ‘important state actor’ (p. 10), striving relentlessly to protect her, her husband’s and the colony’s interests, first from the challenge posed by her rebellious kinsman, Nathaniel Bacon, and, following the failure of the latter’s uprising, the aggressive enquiries of the commissioners despatched from London to investigate the insurrection’s causes. Following her husband’s return to England, she became the acknowledged leader of the ‘Green Spring Faction’, which dedicated itself to undermining his successor as the colony’s governor. Although she made numerous enemies, even they forebore to criticise her as an interloper into male affairs, instead deeming her an ‘appropriate state actor’ (p. 34).

Norton then moves back a generation and across the Atlantic to examine Parliament’s response to a series of women’s petitions. These English women, unsettled by the many disruptions they experienced throughout the era of the English Civil War, drew upon a non-gendered sense of religious duty in calling upon politicians to look to the nation’s peace and prosperity. While it was generally acceptable for women to request assistance from male protectors, Norton finds that any less overtly submissive postures from these petitioners aroused not only contempt, but pornographic satire, among their addressees. In her view, this complete dismissal of women’s political agency marked the