

The introductory chapter and a midpoint discussion convey the book's contributions most succinctly, but, unfortunately, the study lacks a conclusion. In the end, Carballo could have connected some of his insights more explicitly, such as his comparison of Iberian and Mesoamerican caste and class systems, the absolutist and incorporative orientations to religion, and different forms of ritual violence. One connecting thread throughout the book is the active role that Mesoamericans played in defeating the Triple Alliance of Mexico's central valley and in creating a colonial society. Although scholars have been emphasizing that role for decades, Carballo brings it into sharper focus by analyzing various aspects of it, from the regional politics that set Tlaxcala apart from its neighbors to the syncretism that influenced religious architecture and iconography.

This well-written and thought-provoking study will be of interest to a wide range of scholars, especially scholars of early modern Latin America and Spain.

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*Mapping an Atlantic World, circa 1500.* Alida C. Metcalf.

Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020. xviii + 224 pp. \$54.95.

*Nature and Culture in the Early Modern Atlantic.* Peter C. Mancall.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. 164 pp. \$29.95.

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In *Mapping an Atlantic World*, Alida Metcalf, a scholar known for her work in Brazilian history, takes a close look the earliest maps and charts depicting the Americas in the years immediately following Columbus's voyages; however, her main focus is not so much on the new lands as on the Ocean Sea that separated them from Europe and Africa. Suddenly, she writes, around 1500, "the Atlantic Ocean moved from the periphery to the center of European world maps" (1). This new view of the world appears in the splendidly decorated *Carta del Cantino*, prepared in Lisbon for the Duke of Ferrara in 1502, as well as in the *Universalis Cosmographia*, a large-scale woodcut world map published in 1507 by the atelier of the cartographer and humanist Martin Waldseemüller. Under the influence of Amerigo Vespucci's writings, Waldseemüller was the first to attach the label *America* to the lands across the sea, but that is only one of many reasons that his work attracts Metcalf's sustained attention. *Mapping an Atlantic World* takes the reader deep into the technical aspects of reproducing cartographic images, through engraving and wood-block techniques, during this era of the print revolution. Whereas maps were mostly prestige items meant to be displayed on walls or bound in atlases, charts were working documents to guide navigators. The author provides an excellent account of the time-honored practices of Iberian chart

makers, who created and copied hand-drawn sheets covered with radiating rhumb lines designed to orient captains as they headed into open waters.

Though something of an outsider to the scholarly world of the history of cartography, Metcalf makes excellent use of the extensive literature emanating from that field. Indeed, her monograph is a triumph of erudition, synthesizing a large body of specialized scholarship to better understand how Europeans came to terms with the vast maritime space that was opening up to them. The author's original research is also impressive, consisting, among other things, of a close reading of the decorative features of several early maps and charts. Metcalf draws attention to the parrots placed on the coasts of Brazil and West Africa, where they served as emblems of exotic tropical beauty. Trees are everywhere and the color green is spread profusely across the Americas to suggest the fertility of nature. Surprisingly, the island of Newfoundland appeared to Portuguese cartographers of the time as a place of verdant tall timber, rather than as a source of fish. These images of beauty and rich resources, the author argues, were meant to encourage transatlantic commercial ventures. True to her maritime calling, Metcalf even devotes several illuminating pages to the way engravers covered the ocean with wavy shading lines to evoke the moving surface of the water. More menacingly, maps placed scenes of cannibalism on the western shores of the Atlantic, a cartographic version of the myth of the cannibal that would justify colonization and enslavement.

*Mapping an Atlantic World* evokes a moment, pregnant with consequences, when a major shift occurred in the way Europeans represented the world to themselves. This was not simply the "discovery of America," but a reconceptualization of "vast oceanic spaces that presented the first inklings of an Atlantic World" (8). The author drops hints about the implications of this altered sense of the ocean and the wider world, but never fully spells them out. The book's conclusion, mostly devoted to the question of whether maps are ephemera—an interesting issue, but not really a culmination of the earlier substantive chapters—may disappoint readers looking for a summation of the book's argument.

While Alida Metcalf's book demonstrates the value of close examination of a brief moment in time, Peter Mancall's *Nature and Culture in the Early Modern Atlantic* ranges widely over the sixteenth century in an effort to discern how European voyages of exploration and colonization shaped views of the natural environment. This richly illustrated book emerged from a series of lectures the author gave at the University of Pennsylvania. Expansive and evocative rather than closely argued, it presents a series of source studies, favoring visual materials (maps, paintings, engravings) over texts. Mancall makes particularly good use of the Vallard Atlas, one of the great works produced by the Dieppe school of mapmakers. He also discusses the *Histoire naturelle des Indes*, a collection of drawings of the plants, animals, and humans of the late sixteenth-century Caribbean. Like the Vallard Atlas, this collection has not received the scholarly attention it deserves. I found particularly illuminating Mancall's comparative examination of John White's

watercolors from the ill-fated English colony of Virginia in the 1580s and Theodor de Bry's engravings that allowed White's images to be published and widely disseminated across Europe. He shows the various embellishments the engraver added to the artist's elegant pictures to make America seem more bountiful and thus to encourage colonization.

Though he overlooks Africa and Africans almost entirely, Mancall insists that *Nature and Culture in the Early Modern Atlantic* is not simply a study of European attitudes and perceptions. He is at pains to include the perspective of Indigenous American societies, either inferred from European documents of the time or extracted from modern ethnographic accounts of oral traditions. Next to the English naturalist Thomas Moffet's *Theatre of Insects*, he places the entomological knowledge inserted into the *Florentine Codex* by Nahua scribes working under the superintendence of Bernardino de Sahagún. Both the Englishman and the Indigenous Mexicans dwelt on the usefulness of some insects and on the moral lessons humans could derive from the behavior of others—though, it should be added, Moffet alone called bees “profitable” and enthused over the “great return or revenue by keeping of them” (131).

Generally, Mancall tends to overemphasize convergence and similarity in European and Indigenous responses to nature in this early colonial period. Europeans, he notes, inhabited a world where the natural and the supernatural interpenetrated and where monsters lurked in distant locations, hence the images of sea monsters and humanlike figures with the heads of dogs or faces placed in the middle of their chests that illustrate early modern maps of Africa, Asia, and America. Indigenous Americans also had stories of oversized animals and more-than-human culture heroes, like Gluskap, the protagonist of Mi'kmaq stories, who chased a giant beaver, creating lakes and islands as he swung his club to bring down his prey. But were these quasi-animal and quasi-human figures gods? Were they monsters comparable to *cynocephali* or *blemmyes*? Anthropologists tend to be wary of such vocabulary when it comes to peoples they classify as animist, precisely because the latter's view of the world refuses to draw a rigid divide separating human and nonhuman life or the mundane and the spiritual realms. Europeans, in spite of some blurring of boundaries, had a definite sense of what was and was not “natural”; it sustained their sense of righteousness as they killed and enslaved peoples deemed guilty of the “unnatural” practice of anthropophagy. Moreover, the Christian god stood outside and above both the human and the natural spheres, whereas most Indigenous peoples of the Americas had no such concept of the supernatural (the urban civilizations of Mesoamerica and the Andes may have been a partial exception to this rule). All this to say that nature is a tricky analytic category that, in the wake of Peter Mancall's stimulating work, still deserves further examination.

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