



R. Price

Caribbean pepper-pot

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REVIEW ARTICLES

CARIBBEAN PEPPER-POT

Amerindians of the Lesser Antilles: a bibliography. ROBERT A. MYERS. New Haven CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1981. x + 158 pp. (Paper US\$ 15.00)

Santo Domingo en los manuscritos de Juan Bautista Muñoz. ROBERTO MARTE (ed.). Serie Documental Vol. I. Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: Ediciones Fundación García Arévalo (P.O. Box 723, Santo Domingo), 1981. xxxix + 573 pp. (Cloth US\$ 15.00)

Crónicas francesas de los indios caribes. Edited and translated by MANUEL CÁRDENAS RUÍZ. Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico and Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 1981. xii + 624 pp. (Paper US\$ 20.00)

Race and ethnic relations in Latin America and the Caribbean: an historical dictionary and bibliography. ROBERT M. LEVINE. Metuchen NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1980. viii + 252 pp. (Cloth US\$ 14.50)

Dictionary of Afro-Latin American civilization. BENJAMIN NUÑEZ, with the assistance of the African Bibliographic Center. Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1980. xxxv + 525 pp. (Cloth US\$ 45.00)

The Jamaican national bibliography 1964-1974. INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA, KINGSTON. Millwood NY: Kraus International, 1981. viii + 439 pp. (Cloth US\$ 120.00)

Towards a bibliography of African-Caribbean studies 1970-1980. BEVERLEY HALL-ALLEYNE, GARTH WHITE, MICHAEL COOKE (eds.). Kingston, Jamaica: African-Caribbean Institute of Jamaica, 1982. ii + 37 pp. (Paper n.p.)

Les migrations antillaises: bibliographie sélective et annotée. MARIANNE KEMPEENERS & RAYMOND MASSÉ. Montreal: Centre de Recherches Caraïbes de l'Université de Montréal, 1981. 53 pp. (Paper n.p.)

Latin America: a guide to illustrations. A. CURTIS WILGUS. Metuchen NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1981. xxviii + 250 pp. (Cloth US\$ 16.00)

Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch West-Indië. H. D. BENJAMINS & JOH. F. SNELLEMAN (eds.) Unchanged reprint of the original edition, The Hague-Leiden, 1914-1917. Amsterdam, S. Emmering, 1981. xi + 782 pp. (Cloth Dfl. 65.00)

Dutch authors on West Indian history: a historiographical selection. M. A. P. MEILINK-ROELOFSZ (ed.), translated by MARIA J. L. VAN YPEREN. Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde Translation Series 21. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982. viii + 384 pp. (Paper Dfl. 95.00, US\$ 41.50)

The Jewish nation in Surinam: historical essays. ROBERT COHEN (ed.). Amsterdam: S. Emmering, 1982. 103 pp. (Paper Dfl. 65.00)

Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium of de Verandering der Suri-naamse insecten: metamorphosis of the insects of Surinam. MARIA SIBYLLA MERIAN. Edited by CHRIS SCHRIKS, with translations by P. A. VAN DER LAAN. Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1982. Unpaginated. (Cloth Dfl. 69.50)

De wisselende gedaante: facetten van Maria Sibylla Merian. J. E. v.d. LAAN. Zutphen: Uitgeverij Terra, 1980. 46 pp. (Paper n.p.)

Reis door Suriname: beschrijving van de Nederlandse bezittingen in Guyana.

P. J. BENOIT. Translated and edited by CHRIS SCHRIKS, with an English summary by SILVIA W. DE GROOT. Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1980. 99 pp. + 99 colored plates. (Cloth Dfl. 95.00)

Avonturen aan de Wilde Kust: de geschiedenis van Suriname met zijn buurlanden. ALBERT HELMAN. Alphen aan den Rijn: A. W. Sijthoff, 1982. 208 pp. (Cloth Dfl. 52.50)

The current sampling of reference tomes — intended to complement those in Price 1980 and 1982 — resembles that pinnacle of aboriginal Caribbean cuisine, the pepper-pot: for it, too, “is a compound of the most heterogeneous description” (Cassidy & Le Page 1967: 346), sometimes “palate-scorching,” sometimes “delicate,” “a kind of devil’s broth” (OED, s.v. Pepper-pot), something to dip into time and again, with a somewhat different flavor on each occasion, since new ingredients are added to the pot each day.

Recent works devoted to Caribbean Amerindians seem a fitting starting place. Myers’ workmanlike bibliography is easily the most comprehensive available guide to its subject, with some 1300 unannotated references by nearly 500 authors (vs. about 200 comparable references in Comitas’ *Complete Caribbeana*). The author, a social anthropologist whose own research has been with the Carib of Dominica, carried out archival and library visits in Jamaica and London as well as in major U.S. repositories, to produce six alphabetical listings, divided into Archaeology and Prehistory; Archives, History, Travel and Description, and Social Science Research; Languages; Biology, Nutrition and Medicine (very brief); and Literature (also very brief). There are both geographical and authors’ indexes, as well as a thoughtful Preface. Myers’ work provides a focused and selective counterpart to the more ambitious but far spottier pan-Caribbean Amerindian bibliography compiled by Sued Badillo (1977); that earlier work does, however, include a significant number of items on the Lesser Antilles not in Myers’, and the two might usefully be consulted together.

Marte’s impressive compilation of early manuscripts on Santo Domingo will be welcomed by a broad range of Caribbean his-

torians and anthropologists. Drawn from the magnificent Colección Muñoz in the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid — Muñoz was the eighteenth-century historian who founded the Archivo General de Indias and whom Carlos III designated Cosmógrafo Mayor de Indias — these varied documents (including maps and other illustrations) span the years from Columbus' second voyage to the mid-sixteenth century. Marte provides a helpful historiographical introduction, careful annotations, a glossary, and indexes. This first volume is a most auspicious beginning for the new documentary series from the Fundación García Arévalo, which has been so active in recent years in publishing archaeological, historical, and ethnographic works on the Dominican Republic.

Crónicas francesas, which has a comprehensive ninety-page Introduction by Ricardo Alegría, offers a judicious selection of seventeenth-century French witnesses to the Carib world, with readable Spanish translations and careful notes by Cárdenas Ruiz. Samplings from the well-known works of Rochefort, Du Tertre, de la Borde, and Labat are complemented by those of such lesser-known observers as Du Puis, Chevillard, and Coppier, and contemporary engravings are scattered through the text. Overall, this is an attractive book and another significant step in bridging insular and linguistic boundaries; it should be welcomed by students throughout the hispanophone Caribbean.

The two recent "dictionaries" — one on Afro-Latin American civilization, the other on race and ethnic relations — contrast dramatically in quality and potential usefulness. Levine's book is almost an affront to scholars, librarians, and the people whose lives it documents, and should never have been published. The effect of reading its individual definitions is cumulative; the combination of errors, misinformation, and idiosyncratic selectivity truly boggled this reader's mind. From its remarkable definition of "Negro": "One of the major races of mankind, characterized by slight body hair, small ears, woolly or frizzed head hair . . .," it goes straight downhill: the interested reader might try, at random, the entries s.v. "Jewish Maroons," "Talkie-Talkie," "FESTAF," "Compadrazgo," "Chichicastenango Drunkenness," or "Racial Endogamy," and decide whether the appropriate response is to

laugh or to cry. Nuñez' more substantial dictionary (4,500 entries) contains a good deal of mainly accurate, if necessarily selective, information. A side-by-side comparison with Levine's work (s.v., for example, Abeng, Beké, Bozal) quickly reveals the contrasting quality of their definitions. Nevertheless, such a dictionary — one volume, largely single-authored — must remain so selective that its usefulness seems limited largely to beginning students. Considering the genuine richness of more geographically focused dictionaries such as that by Cassidy & Le Page for Jamaica (1967) or Holm & Shilling on the Bahamas (1982), or of Herdeck's encyclopedic work on Caribbean writers (1979), one might question whether a book that very selectively sprinkles, for example, writers and root crops amidst Afro-Brazilian cults and Jamaican proverbs is ultimately worth the very serious efforts and expense that went into its production.

The Jamaican National Bibliography, 1964-1974 is a somewhat problematical, if handsomely printed and bound, endeavor. For its core is the "Jamaican" portion of the West India Reference Library, Institute of Jamaica, covering items acquired and catalogued between 1964 and 1974. Yet its publisher, Kraus International, brought out in 1980 a six-volume comprehensive catalogue of that same library, explicitly including all items catalogued through 1975. It seems curious that this latest volume not only includes a significant number of items not in the larger set (explicable, in part, because the new one covers the relevant holdings of several additional local repositories) but also lacks many apparently relevant items from the former collection. In any case, the entries in the newer, more specialized publication have been carefully printed and proofread, in contrast to the photo-offset uncorrected card-catalogue approach of the larger work (see Mintz 1982, Price 1982). The idea of an ongoing national bibliography for Jamaica is certainly laudable; the apparent lack of coordination of bibliographical endeavors even within one Caribbean state must, however, be deplored.

At the opposite financial end of the reference book production continuum, the African-Caribbean Institute of Jamaica has issued a modest, mimeographed checklist covering the last decade of African-Caribbean studies. Divided into General Works, Art,

Family Structure, Religion, and so on, it is a necessarily preliminary compilation that is, nonetheless, guaranteed to add at least a few unknown items to the bibliographic knowledge of even the most knowledgeable Afro-Americanists. May this kind of specialized, labor-intensive bibliographic work continue!

Les migrations antillaises is an annotated, very selective bibliography that will prove useful to beginning researchers interested in the geographical movement of Caribbean peoples. Thirty-three references about migration to Canada are followed by twenty-seven on the U.S., thirty-three on Europe and fifty-six on internal and return migration. The academic subject matter, like the social facts it addresses, continues to experience runaway growth, and a fuller bibliographic survey would now be most welcome.

The *Guide* to Latin American (and Caribbean) illustrations, according to its author, “fills a gap in publications in English relating to Latin America by providing an aid for a better understanding of the rise and development of these countries” (v), and he considers it a supplement to the twenty-three historical dictionaries to which Levine’s work belongs. It is, unfortunately, a fitting supplement to that publishing venture. For Wilgus’ own disclaimers about incompleteness and limitations do not begin to signal the volume’s fatuousness. What reader — student, scholar, librarian, general reader — would benefit from consulting the pictorial references he chooses to cite? Consider these *complete* examples, from the Dutch, British, and French Caribbean: the full listing under “Bush Negroes” (surely one of the most photographed of all Caribbean populations) consists of a 1954 *Américas* article and a single plate from a general book on South America; under “Dominica” one also finds but two sources, the twenty-volume *Peoples of the earth* encyclopedia and a plate labelled “water fall”; and for the picturesque island of Martinique there are but the following five sources (fully representative of the kinds of sources throughout the volume) — *The tropics*, *Peoples of the earth*, *The West Indian islands*, *Christopher Columbus*, and the *National Geographic*. Compiling a successful guide to Latin American illustrations would be a massive enterprise, one that new technology could bring within the reach of the team of knowledgeable

specialists, from different countries, that would be necessary to accomplish it. The present volume, to which the author apparently devoted considerable labor, seems a thoroughly misguided effort.

The Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch West-Indië, written more than six decades ago, represents to my mind the pinnacle of Dutch colonial scholarship on the Caribbean. The publication by teams of modern experts of an *Encyclopedie van de Nederlandse Antillen* in 1969 and an *Encyclopedie van Suriname* in 1977 in no way detracts from the achievement or continued usefulness of many of the articles in the original volume; it remains a major storehouse of historical, geographical and biographical information. S. Emmering deserves our thanks for continuing to make available once again important historical sources on the history of the Netherlands West Indies and Suriname.

Two other volumes make traditional Dutch scholarship on the Caribbean available for the first time to an English-speaking audience. Meilink-Roelofs provides a forthright, informative guide to Dutch historiography on "the West" during the first half of the twentieth century. The authors — many of whom will be familiar to readers of this journal — include, in addition to the editor, Bijlsma, Unger, van Winter, van Hoboken, van Dillen, van Overeem, Knappert, de Gaay Fortman, Kesler, and van Grol. The historiographical record, as she describes it and as the translated articles clearly attest, is far from overwhelming — Dutch colonial historians gave relatively little attention to their Caribbean possessions until very recent decades, and the selections she had to choose from were in many respects disappointing. But this is an honest and representative sampling, made more useful by the introduction and biographical notes. Cohen's selection of historical essays on the Jews of Suriname combines more traditional with modern scholarship: four previously published pieces (by van Lier, Bijlsma [the same article that appears in Meilink-Roelofs], Rens, and Schiltkamp) and three new ones, all presented here in English. Together they constitute a brief, somewhat miscellaneous introduction to an important corner of Caribbean history. There is a faintly hagiographic tone to parts of the book, with more stress on the Enlightenment values and learning

than on the often brutalizing day-to-day activities of eighteenth-century Jewish planters, but the competent original essays by Van der Meiden, Loker & Cohen, and Cohen do cover new historical ground. Most notable, perhaps, is a lengthy late eighteenth-century prayer written by a local cantor, presented here in both the original Hebrew and in English, which pleads for the Almighty's assistance against "our enemies, the cruel and rebellious Blacks [maroons]," and prays that "terror and dread shall fall upon them."

Finally, some recent largely-pictorial perspectives on the history of Suriname. Two new editions of the stunning work of Maria Sibylla Merian bear witness to the continued interest in this pioneer naturalist, whose brief stay in Suriname ended in 1701. The Walburg Pers edition presents the complete Dutch version, reduced in page size from the original, with new English summaries facing each of the sixty plates, making a color version of the whole work available for the first time to a wide audience. *De wisselende gedaante*, in contrast, simply presents eleven of the plates with their original Dutch commentary, interspersed with biographical information about Merian. One curiosity is that the Terra and Walburg Pers editions claim to have used the same Suriname Museum illustrations for reproduction, yet the Terra plates show lightly colored backgrounds and, in most cases, handwritten engraver's signatures, while the Walburg Pers plates — which seem garishly tinted and are printed on a white background — have the signatures dropped out and are all printed reversed. The interests of social scientists, as opposed to natural historians, in Merian's work derives largely from her several references to the uses of local plants by African slaves and Amerindians (e.g., the slaves' use of the seeds of *Flos pavonis* as an abortifacient) and from her fortuitous residence, during part of her Suriname stay, at the illfated Labadist retreat, Providence Plantation, whence a large number of rebel slaves escaped to become one of the founding clans of the Saramaka Maroons (see Price 1983).

De Walburg Pers, with financial support from Suralco, has brought out yet another colored edition of Benoit's *Surinam*, originally published in French in 1839 and reprinted in a fine facsimile edition by S. Emmering in 1967 — this time in a

reduced-page-size Dutch translation with an introduction by Chris Schriks and a fairly extensive English summary/commentary (originally published to accompany the Emmering facsimile) by Silvia W. de Groot. This edition, the least expensive currently available, should serve to allow a wider audience, including many Surinamers, to enjoy for the first time this nineteenth-century classic.

Albert Helman's richly illustrated *adjosi* to Suriname expresses a panoramic yet deeply poetic vision of his native land. From the opening pages of this oversized book, which overwhelm the reader with the geographical vastness and mystery of the rivers and forests of the Wild Coast, to its leisurely meanderings through colonial history, text and illustrations consistently complement each other and delight both eye and mind. In a work of this sort, occasional infelicities can be excused — the uncredited illustration on p. 141 in fact depicts a scene in Dominica, not Suriname; the plantation on p. 91 is Palmeneribo, not Palmenizibo; and so on. This is primarily a work of synthesis, a popular and accessible book that is at once a fine introduction for the general reader, and a provocative vision for the specialist to ponder.

Taken together, this pepper-pot of fifteen books certainly constitutes a sufficiently "rare Soop," what one seventeenth-century observer (Cassidy and Le Page 1967, s.v. Pepper-pot) called "an excellent Breakfast for a Salamander, or a good preparative for a Mountebanks Agent, who Eats Fire one day, that he may get better Victuals the next."

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