

Napoleon's Atlantic: The Impact of Napoleonic Empire in the Atlantic World. Christophe Belaubre, Jordana Dym & John Savage (eds.). Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2010. xvi + 332 pp. (Cloth € 99.00)

Napoleon's Atlantic is the English translation of the proceedings of a symposium entitled "*l'Atlantique napoléonien*" organized at the University of Toulouse-Le Mirail in 2007, which were first published in French in 2009. As the French title—*Napoléon et les Amériques: Histoire atlantique et empire napoléonien*—more accurately conveys, the book's scope is not fully Atlantic: apart from a mention of the Egyptian campaign in the introduction, Africa is nowhere, and Europe does not occupy center stage. Instead, the collected essays focus on the impact of the Napoleonic Empire on the Americas, already a fully legitimate and very ambitious project.

Napoleonic studies in France have been largely limited to the impact of the Napoleonic Empire in Europe. In the same way, historians of Latin American independence movements who are increasingly exploring the connections between the various revolutions in the Atlantic world have paid little attention in recent times to the specific influence exercised by the Napoleonic regime. Thus, the book aims at changing both the spatial and the chronological framework of Napoleonic studies and of Atlantic history in the era of revolutions. It is also an attempt at connecting the two fields.

The book's title is also misleading in another way, since the collection of fourteen essays does not cover the whole Napoleonic period, but focuses on the decades following 1804, after Napoleon's imperial coronation and the quasi-disappearance of the French Atlantic empire with the failure of the Leclerc expedition, the Louisiana purchase, and Haitian independence. The extension of the chronological framework beyond 1815, intended to demonstrate that the impact of the Napoleonic regime endured after his fall, has been made to the detriment of the Consulate. The book's Napoleonic Empire thus has no colonial or postcolonial dimension: no chapter is devoted to Saint-Domingue/Haiti, and the French Lesser Antilles are only briefly taken into account in John Savage's contribution.

Rather than "the direct and indirect consequences of France's substantial retreat from an Atlantic presence after 1804/1805" (p. 7), the book is concerned above all with the direct and indirect consequences outside Europe of the French invasion of the Iberian peninsula, and with the influence of the Napoleonic regime on Latin American independence movements

and subsequent republics. The whole would have been more coherent if the editors had not included the two chapters which have nothing to do with these questions: Luca Codignola's contribution on the reactions of the "North Atlantic Catholic community" to Napoleon's policy toward the Church and the pope, and Jean-Marc Olivier's essay on Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, who refused his appointment as governor of Louisiana before the colony was sold to Thomas Jefferson.

Most of the other essays deal with Brazil and Spanish America or its (former) borderlands. There is a strong emphasis on the greater Caribbean, with half the contributions focusing on Central America, Gran Colombia, Cuba, Louisiana, and Texas. Topics addressed by this collection of essays include the motivations of sugar planters in Cuba or of *Indiano* bureaucrats in Spain to join or not to join Napoleon's side (Dominique Goncalvès and Víctor Peralta Ruiz); the reporting of Latin American events in the French press (Felipe Angulo Jaramillo); the fear of French emissaries in Central America (Timothy Hawkins); the political activism and cultural influence of French expatriates after Napoleon's fall (Christophe Beleaubre, Rafe Blaufarb, Lilia Moritz Schwartz, and Roderick Barman); the intrusion of the militaries, following Napoleon's model, in the political field (Mónica Ricketts); and the impact of the Napoleonic Code (John Savage). Their insistence on the circulation of people, information, and ideas complies with Atlantic history's methodology. Apart from contributions by Matt Childs and Nathalie Dessens on the Saint-Domingue refugees' expulsion from Cuba and their relocation on Louisiana, however, they all focus on white elites.

In fact, Childs's essay on the little-known riots of free people of color against French émigrés in Cuba in 1809 is one of the two best chapters of the book. It deconstructs the narratives by the State and the Church to explain why the rioters who returned stolen goods were not prosecuted. The two institutions interpreted the event differently, but "both accounts deemphasized the role played by people of color in the riots and attempted to criminalize what might have developed into broader political activity" (p. 134). If the rioters' motivations are impossible to recover with certainty, the fact that one of their leaders later participated in the Aponte rebellion in 1812 could be a sign of a real political and revolutionary agenda.

Another fascinating chapter is the one by John Savage on the impact of Napoleonic laws in the nineteenth-century Atlantic world. Drawing mostly on the two cases of Gran Colombia and Louisiana, but alluding to Chile,

Argentina, Haiti, and Canada, Savage explores the various domestic and international motivations in the recourse to the Napoleonic legal model, emphasizing rupture with the colonial past and state consolidation. He also demonstrates that the adoption of Napoleon's Civil Code implied a process of accommodation initially and over time to fit the local political agendas and social and economic situations, especially regarding property, including property in humans. Thus, far from being only the vehicle of liberal ideas, the Napoleonic Code in its Atlantic expansion was also an instrument of imperial designs.

Globally, the book is an interesting attempt to draw attention to some neglected transatlantic dynamics in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It should be recommended to graduate students and scholars interested in Napoleonic Empire, Atlantic Revolutions, Latin American independence movements, and Caribbean Studies.

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