

and she finds that female colonists were most affected by the journey in terms of the labor they were expected to perform.

In part 3, "Law and Letters," María M. Portuondo gives a virtuosic tour of where the Spanish Empire stands vis-à-vis our understanding of scientific inquiry in the early modern period. She emphasizes the need for scholarly questions that go beyond intellectual history, illustrates the range of Spanish responses to the crisis of knowledge brought on by conflicts between the readings of ancient authorities and actual experiences, and notes that the only way to appreciate such variety is to discard teleology. Kimberly Lynn offers a subtle examination of Spanish inquisitors' relationships with manuscripts and print. Inquisitors knew they were writers with political messages, but their written products illustrate contingency and debate rather than a single outlook. A. K. Harris's essay on sacred history—one of the very strongest contributions—is a tour de force about the excavation, veneration, and intellectual deployment of holy relics in Sardinia in the seventeenth century. And Xavier Gil matches some, but not all, of the concerns of the Italian Giovanni Botero to Spanish *arbitristas* who were writing between 1590 and 1650.

In part 4, "Performance and Place," Fernando Marías contributes a close reading of a woodcut described by an Inquisition suspect in the late 1550s. Elizabeth R. Wright delivers an exemplary investigation of Lope de Vega's odd and hitherto disregarded play on the Battle of Lepanto: she traces Lope's relationship with epic poetry, discovers his borrowings, and convincingly portrays him as a consummate master of humanist *imitatio*. Wright corrects previous scholarly depictions of the work by highlighting the social setting in which it was performed and Lope's experimentation with the medium's potential to communicate. Finally, Marta V. Vicente addresses theater in the eighteenth century, paying particular attention to successful female actresses and emphasizing their special, controversial role in the genre of structural interstices in plays called the *tonadilla*.

As intended by its editors, *The Early Modern Hispanic World* covers a lot of ground, geographically, chronologically, and topically. Such breadth and variety make it a fitting tribute for its dedicatee, who is an intellectual polymath. While Sir John Elliott gently chides the authors for their lack of attention to politics and the state, the contributors direct us to a number of overarching findings. Cities mattered greatly in the Spanish Empire. Populations that often are still presumed to be monolithic—*conversos*, *alumbrados*, Moriscos, inquisitors—were fractious and diverse. The inhabitants of the Spanish Empire thought simultaneously (and differently) about their local identities and their ties to the wider Hispanic world. They liked contractual relationships and preferred practical results. The only substantive critique I would offer is that the English translations of the Spanish contributions are not as deft as they should be, and occasionally result in incomprehensible prose (e.g., 296). Nevertheless, this provocative volume deserves a wide circulation.

LU ANN HOMZA

*William & Mary*

**Amsterdam's Atlantic: Print Culture and the Making of Dutch Brazil.** By *Michiel van Groesen*. The Early Modern Americas. Edited by *Peter C. Mancall*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. Pp. vi+266. \$45.00.

The short-lived colony of Dutch Brazil, a stretch of Brazil's northeastern coast occupied by Dutch forces between 1630 and 1654, is one of the least studied cases in the historiog-

raphy of early modern empire. Michiel van Groesen, professor of maritime history at Leiden University, now brings the disregarded colony into the limelight with a well-crafted analysis that reveals the importance of Dutch Brazil from a variety of perspectives. With a highly original approach that combines colonial, Atlantic, and urban history with the burgeoning field of the history of news and information management, van Groesen succeeds in showing how Dutch Brazil mattered, in the seventeenth century as well as today. His study does not merely narrate the rise, decline, and fall of Dutch Brazil in an engaging way, but it takes the case of Dutch Brazil to tell a larger story of the interaction of news and public opinion in shaping geopolitics. As the title of the book reveals, *Amsterdam's Atlantic* focuses on the extraordinary print culture of seventeenth-century Amsterdam, weaving together the local and the global in a narrative that, as van Groesen himself acknowledges, can serve as a model for writing Atlantic history at large.

Van Groesen's approach seizes the recent trend in the history of news to apply the existing scholarship on early modern Dutch public opinion and urban print and discussion culture more generally (van Groesen is clearly inspired by Filippo de Vivo's work on Venice) to the study of communication flows and strategies in early modern Atlantic empires (specific mention is made of the work of Ian K. Steele and Kenneth J. Banks). The result is a rich exploration of a variety of media, from cheap pamphlets and newspapers to large maps, paintings, and even *alba amicorum*, which together shaped the process by which Brazil was being interpreted, appropriated, and eventually remembered among the people and the elite of Amsterdam and the Dutch Republic. Van Groesen, well aware that his story has some striking parallels to offer with modern media cultures, cannot resist the temptation to refer to Dutch Brazil as a "trending topic" (74) and "multimedia event" (100), with Amsterdam as "information hub" (189) where "social media" (83) thrived. But he escapes the trap of anachronism by carefully dissecting the various strategies with which authors, printers, booksellers, policy makers, and brokers created and catered for the public's appetite for news in the specific context of seventeenth-century Amsterdam. With an especially sharp eye for the material dimensions of early modern print culture, he aims to show how different media steered the making (and unmaking) of Dutch Brazil in the public sphere.

*Amsterdam's Atlantic* explores how Brazil penetrated Dutch perceptions parallel to the gradual penetration of Brazil by Dutch forces. Because of this focus on information and communication rather than on the factual history of the colony as such, van Groesen is able to stretch his story over a much longer period than the actual existence of Dutch Brazil itself, starting the narrative already around 1600 and ending with nineteenth-century nationalist notions of colonial nostalgia. His main argument is that the loss of Dutch Brazil in 1654 can be attributed at least partly to the rising friction in the public debate, continuously fueled by conflictive voices that eagerly sought to discredit each other. Public opinion, as lofty humanist scholars such as Hugo Grotius lamented, was a many-headed monster that turned out to be impossible to control—especially in Amsterdam. Contemporary Londoners complained that the English public debate "was being 'too much Amsterdammified by severall opinions'" (122), and van Groesen enthusiastically milks this metaphor of "Amsterdammification" to show how the original jubilation on the Dutch conquests in Brazil soon turned into discord that undermined the entire colonial enterprise. News and information are obviously elements of power, and van Groesen convincingly shows that Amsterdam's unruly discussion culture played a crucial role in the eventual downfall of Dutch Brazil, propelled by various instances of (fake) news circulated by specific interest groups.

In his analysis of this dynamics between news, debate, and geopolitics, van Groesen overall prioritizes the external aspects of his sources (the material dimensions of the me-

dia) over the internal elements (the contents of what was being discussed). However, this choice is not sufficiently theorized, and as a result it remains at times unclear to what extent the dynamics of the debate were driven by the logic inherent to specific media or by their contents. For example, one of the striking aspects of the Dutch perceptions of Brazil uncovered by van Groesen is the dominance of religious and even millenarian interpretations of Dutch success and failure across the Atlantic, but little attention is paid to how this religious attitude interacted in the public sphere with other (economic, political, legal) arguments for or against Dutch rule in Brazil. Van Groesen's point that the Amsterdam discussion culture impacted upon the fate of the colony could have been made more forcefully if the contents of what was being discussed had received more detailed analysis.

Another question *Amsterdam's Atlantic* leaves somewhat unanswered is whether the case of Dutch Brazil, and that of Amsterdam, is either exceptional or illustrative of a wider historical phenomenon. In a useful conclusion, van Groesen turns to this question by giving some interesting examples of comparable developments of information (mis)management in seventeenth-century Spain, Portugal, France, and Britain. One would have hoped to see more of this in the rest of the book, not least because van Groesen shows how the Dutch discussion culture was easily penetrated and manipulated by non-Dutch actors, such as the Portuguese ambassador in The Hague, the French author Pierre Moreau, or even the Amerindian leader Antônio Paraupaba. Cases such as these perhaps deserve a more transnational approach, but luckily van Groesen is well aware of this possible shortcoming of his study. As he concludes his inspiring book, the case of Dutch Brazil can provide a "template" that invites other scholars to engage in a similarly wide-ranging analysis of the relationship between empire and media in the early modern Atlantic.

ARTHUR WESTSTEIJN

*Universiteit Utrecht*

**The Executioner's Journal: Meister Frantz Schmidt of the Imperial City of Nuremberg.** Translated by *Joel F. Harrington*. Studies in Early Modern German History. Edited by *H. C. Erik Midelfort*.

Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016. Pp. lxiv+172. \$55.00 (cloth); \$24.50 (paper and e-book).

The journal of Meister Frantz Schmidt, executioner of Nuremberg, has long been known to scholars of German legal and criminal history as an exceptional source. Meister Frantz recorded every execution and corporal punishment undertaken for the city of Nuremberg under his authority as executioner in a career spanning forty years at the turn of the seventeenth century. The journal provides a rare glimpse into the life of the gallows, allowing us a broad perspective on the theater of early modern criminal justice. Joel Harrington's excellent translation makes available to students and nonspecialist scholars alike Meister Frantz's journal and the rich data it contains.

Harrington's sixty-page introduction is a treasure in itself. In it, he offers an overview of both early modern criminal justice and the basic problems of textual analysis that will benefit students and offer important context for nonspecialist scholars. Taken as a whole, the introduction provides a microhistorical view of Nuremberg from the perspective of the unusual Meister Frantz, framed by the executioner's own narrative of dishonor and redemption. The executioner's worldview was entirely one with the patrician masters of Nuremberg, and his concerns over recidivism, disrespect from the condemned, and particularly heinous crimes reflect this. The time spent bringing the reader to understand the execu-