

the Guaraní multiplied for nearly a century, absorbing the negative effects of two wars and four epidemics” (p. 222). In short, the pattern of disruption of the indigenous demographic system differs for each major region—the Caribbean, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay. Demographic decline in each region must be explained within its unique space, time period, and historical context. Rather than applying a model to local situations, each model must be fashioned anew from our study of each local situation.

MAURICE P. BRUNGARDT, Loyola University New Orleans

DOI 10.1215/00182168-2009-098

*Enlightenment, Governance, and Reform in Spain and Its Empire, 1759–1808.*

By GABRIEL B. PAQUETTE. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Illustrations.

Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. xi, 244 pp. Cloth.

With this accomplished intellectual history of late eighteenth-century Spanish governance and political economy, Gabriel Paquette offers an innovative synthesis exploring the ideological motivations of the Bourbon reform agenda. Paquette rejects the older characterization of Bourbon politics as “enlightened absolutism,” preferring instead the more encompassing (and less loaded) label of “regalism.” He explores how regalism functioned in the empire through tracing the roles that state and quasi-state institutions played in supporting and promoting Spanish political economy initiatives. At the same time he pays special attention to how the Spanish Bourbons observed, admired, and at times critiqued foreign political economy programs. Ultimately, Paquette makes a convincing (and much-needed) corrective to the historiography of imperial rule in the late eighteenth-century Atlantic, demonstrating how Bourbon governance was not baroque and isolationist; rather, it was complex, sophisticated, and keenly attuned to contemporary political discussions.

The book describes regalism as an ideology of governance whereby the monarchy removes all obstacles to its power and subordinates all institutions, including the Catholic Church, to its own needs. This is contextualized with an intriguing discussion of how the political architects of Bourbon Spain drew on idealized periods from Iberian history to further their royalist agenda. The Bourbon intellectuals were especially interested in the Visigothic era (which saw a united peninsula prior to Roman or Muslim invasions) as well as the period of Roman rule in Spain. Paquette shows how the Bourbons drew on these historical precedents as ideological support for their campaign to secure “public happiness” through emphasizing public good over private rights. Such an agenda gave them a conveniently unbridled license to pursue the aims of the monarchy in the name of providing the greatest good for the greatest number. Paquette argues that in so doing, they cultivated a political discourse that was in fact more complex than has been perceived; although he admits that ultimately, the means used to enact this vision of rule, “military might and arbitrary government” (p. 9), lacked sophistication.

Paquette's discussion of the *consulados*, economic societies, and privileged trading companies that provided support for Bourbon aims shows how in much of Spanish America these local institutions stood in for busy and underfunded colonial officials. Basing his analysis mainly on Buenos Aires, Santiago, and Havana, Paquette shows how creoles in the local consulados "enthusiastically cooperated" (p. 130) with Bourbon agendas, promoting economic growth, handling mercantile disputes, and fighting contraband. They also collected taxes, using portions of this income to support public works projects that the crown was unable to manage on its own. Creoles participated in such an arrangement, Paquette argues, because the relationship allowed them to pursue personal financial gains. While the book's discussion of the economic societies is rather limited and therefore less successful, Paquette is to be commended for providing a much-needed discussion of the role of privileged trading companies in the late Bourbon economy. He cleverly demonstrates the ambiguity inherent in their status as quasi-state institutions: though limited by regalist ideologies that sought to subordinate outside interest to that of the crown, they were simultaneously protected and privileged, and therefore remained at least marginally profitable long enough to survive throughout the independence period.

Another main concern of the work is to illustrate the sophisticated, transatlantic nature of Bourbon political thought. This is perhaps most obvious in the discussion of the role of international rivalry, imitation, and critique in shaping policy. Building on the work of David Brading and Anthony McFarlane, Paquette rescues Spanish interest in foreign political economy from its traditionally dismissive label of slavish imitation. Instead, he characterizes it as a form of "critical emulation"; Spain admired the ruling measures of the French, British, and even the Austrian cameralists but at the same time was unafraid to criticize these policies. Implicit in this approach, he argues, was the idea that Spain was not irrevocably "behind" other European empires; Spain, too, could improve and modernize.

One of the most interesting and important contributions of the work is the author's focus on the "significant discrepancy" between policy coming from Madrid and the daily reality of the "men-on-the-spot" who were charged with implementing Spanish policy in America (p. 94). Particularly in peripheral areas, Paquette argues, local administrators were unable to execute peninsular strategies to the letter, most often because of small populations and geographical isolation. As a result, these local officials were more realistic about accepting the limits of Spain's regalism. In his conclusion, Paquette weighs in on the question of whether creole resentment toward the Bourbon reforms was in some ways a precondition for the wars for independence. He concludes that Spanish America's creole elite and peninsular policy makers operated largely in tandem, protecting their union in order to promote good government and shared profits.

EMILY BERQUIST, California State University at Long Beach

DOI 10.1215/00182168-2009-099