

# Journal of Latin American Studies

<http://journals.cambridge.org/LAS>

Additional services for *Journal of Latin American Studies*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



---

**Matthew Brown and Gabriel Paquette (eds.),**  
***Connections after Colonialism: Europe and Latin America in the 1820s*** (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2012), pp. xiii+330, \ \$54.95, hb and e-book.

PAMELA S. MURRAY

Journal of Latin American Studies / Volume 46 / Issue 02 / May 2014, pp 427 - 428  
DOI: 10.1017/S0022216X14000601, Published online: 29 April 2014

**Link to this article:** [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S0022216X14000601](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0022216X14000601)

**How to cite this article:**

PAMELA S. MURRAY (2014). Journal of Latin American Studies, 46, pp 427-428  
doi:10.1017/S0022216X14000601

**Request Permissions :** [Click here](#)

Mexico's political situation' (p. 439). Notwithstanding Rodríguez's numbing arrogance, there is no denying that this represents a particularly significant contribution to the historiography.

*University of St Andrews*

WILL FOWLER

*J. Lat. Amer. Stud.* 46 (2014). doi:10.1017/S0022216X14000601

Matthew Brown and Gabriel Paquette (eds.), *Connections after Colonialism: Europe and Latin America in the 1820s* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2012), pp. xiii + 330, \$54.95, hb and e-book.

In this unique collection, editors Matthew Brown and Gabriel Paquette argue for closer attention to the 1820s, a pivotal decade in the history of modern Latin America and the broader Atlantic world, including Western Europe and the United States, to which it belonged. They stress that, despite the effects of war and revolution, the collapse of Iberian colonial empires, and Latin American political independence, the decade saw much continuity with the colonial period and, above all, persistent connections between Old and New Worlds. Too often, as they explain, these connections have been overlooked by historians seeking to highlight broad patterns of rupture or change; indeed, they, and the 1820s generally, have been subsumed into sweeping narratives of an 'Age of Revolution', a later 'Age of [Neocolonial] Empire' or, among Latin Americanists in particular, postcolonial 'nation-making'. Here, by contrast, these continuities are the main focus of attention.

Showcasing the work of both senior and younger scholars, mostly based in the United States or the United Kingdom, who participated in a 2009 conference at Cambridge, this volume excavates the Europe–Latin America relationship that emerged in the 1820s. Thirteen essays examine diverse aspects of that relationship as it evolved between, on the one hand, the new Latin American nation-states, such as Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, and, on the other, the former colonial powers of Spain and Portugal as well as the era's rising power, Great Britain. Two essays focus on ties between Latin America and, respectively, pre-Risorgimento Italy and the United States. They share a transnational perspective, exploring trends and ideas affecting nations and peoples on both sides of the Atlantic. This approach highlights the richness and complexity of the connections made or reconfigured in the years after Latin American independence; it also shows how change and continuity ran together within the Atlantic World.

Despite the diversity of topics addressed – including, for example, the impact of Rafael Riego's 1820 *pronunciamiento* in Spain and Mexico, the Brazilian origins of Portugal's 1826 Constitution, the political/sectional and ideological conflicts behind the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, and the impact of European advice literature for women – a few common themes lend further unity to the volume. One is the rise of new political cultures. Nowhere is this theme more evident than in the essays analysing the rise and influence of transatlantic liberalism. The ascendant ideology of the era, liberalism united people and politics in both hemispheres. In 'Rafael del Riego and the Spanish Origins of the Nineteenth Century *Pronunciamiento*', for example, Will Fowler offers a lively, detailed account of how the *pronunciamiento* became a feature of both Spanish and Mexican political life and, more specifically, part of the repertoire of politicians seeking to replicate Riego's success in prying reforms from an absolutist monarch.

In 'Entangled Patriotisms: Italian Liberals and Spanish America, 1820s', Maurizio Isabella further deepens our knowledge of transatlantic liberalism through his detailed, original discussion of the bonds forged in these years between Italian liberals and their Spanish American counterparts, men who 'felt themselves to be part of a single intellectual community' (p. 95). An example of such bonds was the epistolary relationship that, as Isabella relates, arose between José del Valle, a leading Guatemalan statesman and the progenitor of the country's political independence, and Giuseppe Pecchio, a former Napoleonic civil servant, writer and economist of Milan. Beyond the concrete advice given by Pecchio and Del Valle's efforts to apply it, the men's correspondence with each other illustrated 'the importance and impact of the new transatlantic exchanges in the definition of the new national communities' (p. 93).

As we learn, moreover, these exchanges arose in good part from the keen interest that Europeans – early Italian patriots, in particular – took in Latin America's political experiences, particularly the Spanish American independence struggles led by Bolívar and subsequent state-building debates between federalists and centralists (in Mexico, especially). Indeed, a major strength of Isabella's essay is its revealing discussion of another key theme running through the collection: that of the mutual interests of and influences between Europe and postcolonial Latin America. In his conclusion, Isabella notes that 'the permanent independence of the former Spanish American colonies was perceived [by European liberals] as an event that was bound to change irremediably the balance of the world and inaugurate a new era for humankind'. He then encapsulates its special, twofold importance for the Italian Risorgimento: first, that it 'seemed to confirm that regime change and the defeat of reaction were both possible and achievable at the global level', and second, that it 'demonstrated that political transformations could be achieved and freedom could be attained without the radicalism and the violence of the French Revolution' (p. 103). For people across the Atlantic world, then, the tortured birth of new Latin American states was a phenomenon of true world-historical significance, on a par with that of the older US republic.

One minor weakness lies in the volume's organisation, which, given the diversity of topics addressed by its essays, could have been tighter; greater coherence might have been achieved by grouping the essays into several parts or sections, each devoted to one of the major themes identified by the editors at the beginning. Matthew Brown's final thoughtful reflections on the ways in which Bolívar and his followers defined the decade (and beyond) could have stood on their own, leaving the rest of 'The 1820s in Perspective' (pp. 250–4) to serve as a brief, summary-style conclusion.

Overall, though, this collection makes an important contribution to our understanding of a decade that, perhaps because of the rapid changes, confusion and turmoil it witnessed, remains relatively neglected by historians. It confirms the fruitfulness of the 'Atlantic World' framework and of transnational approaches for an understanding of the nineteenth century, including social, political, economic and cultural developments in postcolonial Latin America. Until the late 1860s, the region continued to be an arena of great power rivalry and ideological contestation, of both liberal republican and imperial projects that engaged the passions and interests of peoples on both sides of the ocean; the French intervention in Mexico (1862–7) comes to mind as a case in point. This volume, then, may spur further studies into such projects and will serve as a valuable resource.

*University of Alabama at Birmingham*

PAMELA S. MURRAY