

4-1-2013

### Chad Thomas Black, *The Limits of Gender Domination: Women, the Law, and Political Crisis in Quito, 1765-1830*

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#### Recommended Citation

Yeager, Gertrude M. "Chad Thomas Black, *The Limits of Gender Domination: Women, the Law, and Political Crisis in Quito, 1765-1830*." *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 18, 2 (2013): 194. <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/clahr/vol18/iss2/6>

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of Braudel and Immanuel Wallerstein will be attracted to its theoretical underpinnings, and students of Atlantic history will find their subject placed in an even broader perspective. Tutino's massively detailed social analysis of how the Bajío shaped and was molded by the unfolding of global capitalism will reward colonial Mexican specialists. In true Braudelian style, Tutino promises a sequel to examine what happened during the independence period that undercut the Bajío's leading role on the capitalist stage.

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*The Limits of Gender Domination: Women, the Law, and Political Crisis in Quito, 1765-1830.* By Chad Thomas Black. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010, xii+ 355 pp. Maps, graphs, charts, tables, notes, appendices, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paper.)

This study of the *corregimiento* of Quito argues that women used the courts often and employed the same legal strategies based on *fuego* and customary law available to Spanish elites, indigenous communities, free people of color, and slaves of African descent. The women, as well as the Crown and local officials, understood the "cultural structures" and "unspoken rules that were shared across gender, ethnicity, jurisdiction, and caste" (p. ii). Some 1,600 cases from notarial records that date from 1765 to 1830 provide the documentary basis of the study. The greater purpose of the book is to contribute to the scholarship of patriarchy by demonstrating its historical nature, which the author dates to the creation of an independent and liberal Ecuador.

The book consists of two sections of three chapters each. The first section deals with the Bourbon era (1700s) and the second from 1809 through 1830. While the focus of the study is women, gender, and the law, it addresses the broader political context, the revolts associated with the introduction of the Bourbon reforms, and events leading to independence. The study represents continuity with the North American historiography on Latin American women and gender as it also deals with race and class. Lengthy court trials make up the narrative core, buttressed by statistical data presented in graphs and charts. While using court records to write women's history is not new, this research examines how the courts functioned, how women used them often, and how their ability to find legal solutions to their problems decreased as modernity approached.

The discussion of changing legal culture is useful. In a departure from modern studies of criminal law and punishment influenced by Foucault, this research includes many legal acts—notarial, civil, and criminal—to better

understand the variety and complexity of legal culture. Hispanic law rested on several notions that the Bourbons and later the liberals sought to change. A Spanish species of contractual law bound city residents, which included everyone from Peninsular to slave to the Crown, and gave them the right to consult the king who was obliged to listen. Numerous "nodes," of which gender was only one, determined a person's legal identity. The astute litigant could manipulate her identity depending on the nature of her case, while a woman's ability to enter into legal acts rested on customary law that provided wiggle room and gave them some economic and legal independence. The intent of Bourbon reformers and later liberal statesman was to undo customary law. Bourbon reformers largely failed because customary practices were too ingrained in the popular mind. However, liberals succeeded in defining a citizen as a property-owning male, thus reducing the complexity or confusion of the Habsburg system to simple binaries.

Black uses a rather narrow and specific four-part definition of patriarchy. His intention is to move away from understanding patriarchy as shorthand for male domination and from studies based on "elite prescriptions and legal abstractions," while moving towards a history of "socially constructed practices" (p. 10) found in the documents. A historiographical essay would have been a better vehicle for showcasing the originality of Black's argument and findings about patriarchy. To parcel out elements of a complex issue and the rosters of scholars engaged in the debate in lengthy discursive footnotes is not a satisfactory substitute. This work is recommended for specialists, being too detailed for classes below a graduate-level seminar, as a close reading, inclusive of the footnotes, is required.

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*Mercury, Mining, and Empire: The Human and Ecological Cost of Colonial Silver Mining in the Andes.* By Nicholas A. Robins. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. xiv + 298 pp. Maps, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.)

Nicholas Robins' well-crafted book correlates mining and ecological devastation in Potosí (Bolivia) and Huancavelica (Peru) during the period from 1544 to the first decade of the nineteenth century, when the Wars of Independence ended the Spanish empire in South America. By then, mining in both Potosí and Huancavelica had declined. For these mining centers, Robins shares recent research findings from underused archives, which assist him in constructing unexpected implications. He inventively juxtaposes data to offer actual measurements of toxicity and the effects of mercury poisoning on