

Fifteenth–Seventeenth Centuries

Una sociedad de frontera: Lazos interpersonales y configuración de la vecindad en Ciudad Real de Chiapa (1524–1630). By MARTHA ATZIN BAHENA PÉREZ. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas; Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Midi, 2024. Maps. Figures. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 356 pp. Paper, Mex\$350.00.

In this meticulous study, Martha Atzin Bahena Pérez explores the mutual consolidation of power between local *vecinos* (city citizens), regional actors, immigrants, and royal authorities in Ciudad Real de Chiapas, Mexico, during the first century of Spanish colonialism. Following the decline of slaving and gold mining, she argues, conquistador and early settler families remained relevant by supporting later military campaigns in the region and elsewhere, pivoting to a mixed economy based on commerce and small-scale production of export and commercial goods, asserting control of the city's secular and ecclesiastical cabildos, creating institutions like convents and administrative offices to support their descendants in situ, and strategically pursuing links with outsiders and newcomers.

Bahena Pérez makes particularly good use of *probanzas de méritos y servicios*. Rather than tracing life stories or genealogies, she focuses on relationships between petitioners and their witnesses. Egocentric network visualizations of individuals do not reveal much more than traditional methods and are underexplained in the text (with the exception of the remarkably complex network of Diego de Alegría, a Basque immigrant sent from Santiago de Guatemala to Ciudad Real to collect royal taxes who made himself indispensable to Ciudad Real's *vecinos* as a creditor and wine seller). More usefully, Bahena Pérez uses network analysis to identify five independent networks of Ciudad Real *vecinos* at the end of the sixteenth century connected by a handful of “brokers,” all of whom traced their ancestry to first families in the region and held prominent positions in or were closely connected to members of the Ciudad Real cabildo (p. 208).

Bahena Pérez's careful, qualitative parsing of what lay behind these networks is her most important contribution. Widows, children, and neighbors quickly claimed encomiendas left vacant by *vecinos* who died or returned to Spain. Land was acquired for sugar mills and small-scale cotton and cacao production, and tribute in textiles increased. These items entered interregional, Atlantic, and Pacific commercial networks, attracting merchants and administrators who married into *vecino* families, loaned them money, asked for their social and political support, and advocated for them in turn. Far from withering away as a result of the late sixteenth-century decline in cacao production and the Indigenous population, the original conquistador and settler families remained not just relevant but essential actors.

There are limits to this argument. As Bahena Pérez points out, Ciudad Real's *vecinos* did not always get what they asked for. They claimed to defend a liminal area of empire but lived relatively untroubled by external attacks. They emphasized their poverty due to geographic isolation but in fact were well connected to and circulated between

Spanish cities and villas throughout Central America, not to mention Oaxaca, Mexico City, Puebla, Seville, Manila, Naples, and Geneva. This last point suggests a sorely needed next step: to examine the broader vecino networks that attempted to impose Spanish jurisdiction across the entirety of the region, from San Salvador and Honduras to the southeastern Gulf Coast and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

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The Mobile Image: Prints and the Shaping of Devotional Networks from Lima to the Andes and Beyond. By EMILY C. FLOYD. Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and Latino Art and Culture. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2025. Plates. Maps. Figures. Appendix. Notes. Index. xii, 222 pp. Cloth, \$55.00.

The Mobile Image: Prints and the Shaping of Devotional Networks from Lima to the Andes and Beyond presents a new body of materials for study, that of print devotional images, as well as fresh methodological approaches for the study of colonial print culture. Emily Floyd argues that printed imagery was used to spread religious and imperial culture and ideas, connecting the local to the regional and the global. Examining print imagery in the context and form of its preservation, be it within a book or as an independent image, shapes scholarly understanding of the colonial performativity of race, religion, society, and empire. Pairing an abundance of woodcuttings and engravings with detailed descriptions of their contents, messaging, production, movement, and use, Floyd masterfully demonstrates how belief and belonging can be conveyed, united, or contested over vast spaces through the materiality of images.

The book is four chapters, with a methodologically informative introduction and a conclusion concisely summarizing the key contributions. In addition to Floyd's skillful arguments and analysis, the inclusion of 126 images and an extensive appendix on the engravers active in colonial Lima will be particularly useful to new students and scholars who build on her interventions. Floyd begins by situating printed imagery in relation to book publishing. Images are portable and so easily spread ideas. Images convey Catholic saints to new converts and promote the local emergence of potential saints in multiple directions along trade routes. Scale and distance were important in determining how images were received and how their meanings were generated.

The first three chapters explore devotional images. Chapter 1 argues that a particular woodcut or engraving represents many narratives, not a singular moment. Studying the interregional movements of Candelaria Virgin prints allows Floyd to demonstrate that Marian devotion was repeatedly adapted to accommodate local beliefs. Most interestingly, Floyd argues that devotion and image use were repeatedly shaped by the many devastating earthquakes of the 1700s. This furthers her geographic argument by showing that not just distance but events shape the context of image production and use. Chapter 2 argues that writings about saintly images both confirmed their saintliness and reinforced Catholicism in the face of criticisms by Protestants. Images made the holy dead present to