

Book Notes

Ambitious Rebels: Remaking Honor, Law, and Liberalism in Venezuela, 1780-1850. By Reuben Zahler. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013. xvii + 330 pp. Illustrations, graphs, maps, tables, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$26.95 paper.) Reuben Zahler's book speaks to the parallels of contemporary Venezuelan society and the years 1780-1850, the period under study, in which the "passionate desire to uproot the old system, the faith in the potential for new beginnings, and the corrosiveness of the public debate have echoed with the voices from the crumbling documents...in the archives" (p. 7). Zahler focuses on subalterns, or in this case, women and the popular classes, particularly when they concern the elites, that fill the pages of the court cases analyzed in the study. He examines the evolution of honor, law, and political culture as Venezuela transformed from colony to independent republic, in which factions fought over the nature of that republic, some advocating political and economic liberalism and its associated religious and social reforms over existing colonial structures. The book analyzes the connections between honor (an unwritten code) and the law (a written code), where the reforming state sought to establish the latter as the dominant code of conduct for determining legitimate authority and behavior. However, as the author points out, the distinction was not always clear, as established honor codes did not easily succumb to enlightened legal proclamations and some legal hallmarks, such as patriarchy and racial inequality, remained powerful (though contested) markers of status. The chapters progress from a discussion of how the rule of law was promulgated and promoted in the new republic by politicians and the press, to the establishment of legalism in the Venezuelan courts and legal system, formulations of everyday honor among the populace, honor codes for women, the destruction of a conservative opposition, and the violent rebellions of the 1840s. Ultimately, Zahler concludes that "Venezuelan liberals did not intend to cause a dramatic overhaul of all society, but rather focused on political, legal, and economic structures and hoped that social change would follow" (p. 245). This book is recommended for use in advanced undergraduate and graduate seminars in the history of Latin American independence, law, politics, and gender.

El cautiverio en la literatura del Nuevo Mundo. Editado por Miguel Donoso, Mariela Insúa y Carlos Mata. (Madrid: Universidad de Navarra, Editorial Iberoamericana, 2011. Notas, bibliografías. \$29.80 en rústica.) Como lo muestra la bibliografía del tema, el interés por el estudio de las múltiples facetas de la experiencia del cautiverio en el Nuevo Mundo se ha disparado en los últimos años, tanto en el ámbito de las Américas como en el europeo. Un evento en esta dirección, que dio origen a la presente antología, fue el "Congreso Internacional ¡Ay misero de mi! El cautiverio en la literatura del Nuevo Mundo: de las crónicas de Indias a la época moderna," el cual se llevó a

cabo en Santiago de Chile el 3 y 4 de junio de 2009, organizado por el Grupo de Investigación Siglo de Oro, Universidad de Navarra, y la Facultad de Letras de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. La excelente compilación que los editores nos entregan da cuenta no sólo de los principales textos y personajes del período colonial, como, por ejemplo, el *Cautiverio feliz* (ca. 1663), *La Florida del Inca* (1605) y crónicas chilenas de la conquista, sino también de la contraparte española y de los ecos de estas historias en la literatura del siglo XIX. Con su perspectiva diversa y analítica, *El cautiverio en la literatura del Nuevo Mundo* es sin duda una aportación indispensable para los especialistas interesados en el diálogo transatlántico sobre el cautiverio y la experiencia colonial de los sujetos y los textos.

The Chile Reader: History, Culture, Politics. Edited by Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, Thomas Miller Klubock, Nara B. Milanich, and Peter Winn. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. xvi + 629 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$99.95 cloth, \$29.95 paper.) Editors Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, Thomas Miller Klubock, Nara B. Milanich, and Peter Winn have produced the latest installment in the Latin American Reader Series, which in this case encompasses the sweep of Chilean history. While there is an ample section on the indigenous peoples and the colonial period, the volume privileges the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, covering the broad historical periods of nationhood, national consolidation, political development, socialism, dictatorship, and the recent transition to democracy. The editors are chiefly concerned with the meanings of national history and the connections with the past and present, for example, the notion that Chile and Chileans have a distinct national history and personality different from their neighbors in Latin America. The "persistent narrative" of Chilean exceptionalism and other myths are explored, illuminating "how particular ideas about Chile's exceptional character have been central to national identity and have both emerged from and helped shape Chile's historical development" (p. 2). Other national debates, such as the meaning of modernity, economic modernization, the nature of the political system, social inequality, sexuality, and race and ethnicity, among others, are also identified by the editors as relevant themes. These concerns are reflected in the editors' selection of primary sources, in which a variety of voices are featured, including those of women, workers, peasants, industrialists, artists, singers, poets, writers, scientists, feminists, gay activists, politicians, and church and military officials. Alongside the expected documents, photographs, political cartoons, interviews, speeches, and song lyrics help to keep the primary sources interesting and diverse. A selected readings section at the end of the book provides a useful resource for those readers interested in learning more about any one historical period. This book is recommended as a general, non-narrative introduction to Chilean history and for use in courses in Latin American history or, more specifically, the Southern Cone.