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Revolution in the Andes: The Age of Túpac Amaru

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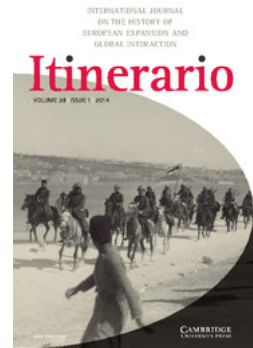
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Serulnikov Sergio. *Revolution in the Andes: The Age of Túpac Amaru*, translated by Frye David; foreword by Walker Charles F.. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. xvi + 159 pp., 3 maps. ISBN: 9780822354833 (hbk.). \ \$79.95; 9780822354987 (pbk). \ \$22.95.

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growing influence of Augustinian thought also pushed sixteenth-century clergy toward a dimmer view of their Indian charges (but also, significantly, all Christians). Similarly, Jackson's thesis that missionary attitudes, as reflected through *visual* evidence, experienced a distinct ebb and flow might have been more fully and profitably compared to recent historians' analyses of traditional *textual* evidence that favour the view that Spanish attitudes toward indigenous spirituality were more consistently pessimistic, informed as they were by the demonic tropes of the era. Finally, given the importance of the Last Judgment to his argument, it is regrettable that Jackson does not address literary scholar Michael Schuessler's recent book (originally published in Mexico in 2009) which links the murals of Actopan and Ixmiquilpan to Franciscan missionary theatre, another important evangelical medium that began decades earlier, at the apex of missionary optimism, with elaborate and harrowing re-enactments of Christ's ultimate judgment of sinners.

Such missed opportunities aside, specialists will certainly value this engagingly written and wide-ranging study and the author's decision to adopt a historical approach to a topic that, still in its infancy, has attracted mostly the attention of art historians. It also bears repeating that this is a beautifully illustrated monograph. Greater care, however, could have been paid to correcting the too frequent copyediting errors that mar the text, captions, and footnotes.

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Note

- 1 Stephanie Wood, (2003). *Transcending Conquest: Nahua View of Spanish Colonial Mexico*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Sergio Serulnikov. *Revolution in the Andes: The Age of Túpac Amaru*, translated by David Frye; foreword by Charles F. Walker. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. xvi + 159 pp., 3 maps. ISBN: 9780822354833 (hbk.). \$79.95; 9780822354987 (pbk). \$22.95.

The Tupac Amaru and Katari uprisings in 1780s Peru are seldom if ever mentioned in the recent flurry of books and articles dealing with the Atlantic Revolutions. But if we follow Sergio Serulnikov's arguments in his *Revolution in the Andes: The Age of Tupac Amaru*, they ought to be. For both the Katari and Tupac Amaru uprisings of the 1780s were true attempts at revolution; the fact that they failed makes them no less a part of the revolutionary process than the failed European revolutions of 1848.

Revolution in the Andes is a compelling narrative account of the Peruvian revolutions, one that leans heavily on Serulnikov's more extended arguments in his 2003 *Subverting Colonial Authority: Challenges to Spanish Rule in Eighteenth-Century Southern Andes*, an English translation of which was published, like the current study, by Duke University Press. *Revolution in the Andes* is no mere rehashing of an older account, however. In addition to his own work, Serulnikov makes good use of shelves-full of books and articles about Katari and Amaru that have appeared over the past quarter-century. Surveying these diverse sources, Serulnikov offers one of the best accounts of the revolutions that rocked the heart of the Spanish empire in the same years that England's North American colonists closed in on their independence and the French and Haitian revolutions were on the very near horizon.

Revolution in the Andes is aimed at a student and popular audience and Serulnikov takes pains to make his arguments and the often-tangled events he discusses absolutely clear. First-year students and the general public will have no trouble understanding the cast of players and the story's plot lines as they unfold. For historians of colonial Spain and the Atlantic world—those most likely to read this review—*Revolution in the Andes* tells a familiar tale. The disruptions of the mita—from which few people returned to their home villages—had long grated against family and local sensibilities, but it was the imposition of the *reparto de*

mercandcías—a hyper-exploitative strategy that forced indigenous people to purchase Spanish-made goods at exorbitant prices, the bulk of its profits filling the private accounts of local Spanish officials—that not only threatened to impoverish local peoples and families, but, like most of the Bourbon-era reforms, took little notice of the lives and well-being of indigenous people. After numerous attempts to reduce the concerted exploitation of his fellow Machas people through legal channels, Tomás Katari (a Machas commoner who gained fame by trekking nearly three thousand miles from the Andes to the Rio de la Plata and back to lay his people's claims before the courts and the new Viceroy in Buenos Aires) and José Gabriel Condorcanqui (soon to be Tupac Amaru II), a comfortably well-off cacique who occupied a liminal world between the Indian and Spanish communities, became convinced that Spanish officials in Peru were the problem and not any sort of solution. At this early stage, both Katari and Amaru were vocal in their allegiance to the king—as with the logic and rhetoric of most of the world's peasant uprisings, it was the king's ministers who were at fault; once made aware of the naked exploitation involved, the king would act to protect them.

Reality, however, soon intervened. Even as he returned from his trek to Buenos Aires with the Audiencia's and Viceroy's orders that removed the local corregidor, Joaquín Alós, and ameliorated the most onerous aspects of the *reparto*, Alós had Katari arrested, confiscated the viceroy's orders, and continued to conduct business as usual. This self-serving and authoritarian response was typical of official responses in the age of Atlantic revolutions (including the Bourbon and Pombal reforms in Spanish and Portuguese America) and it set the stage for what would follow in southern and central Peru. Even as Katari languished in jail, José Gabriel Condorcanqui took on the Inca name Tupac Amaru II and, with his family's close support, brushed away all appeals through official channels as worthless, calling on the people of Canas y Canchis to divest their allegiance to everything Spanish and support a new kingdom populated and run by indigenous people with Tupac Amaru as its king. There had not been an Inca king on the throne for two and a half centuries, but popular memories of the ancient kingdom were a powerful force that Condorcanqui sought to enlist in a revolutionary campaign to return the Andean world to indigenous hands.

This shift from two and a half centuries of strategic and increasingly tenuous cooperation to exclusivist insurgency lies at the heart of *Revolution in the Andes* and makes it one of the many stories of Atlantic revolution that unfolded in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As Serulnikov argues throughout the book, while the Tupac Amaru uprising has been understood and used for many purposes, at its core it was essentially a political movement. Tupac Amaru sought to build a restored Incan monarchy on the ruins of Spanish and creole rule and to use the revived monarchy to provide relief and justice to those exploited by centuries of Spanish domination. These were laudable ideals. But as many other Atlantic revolutionists learned, moral righteousness might be a useful, even necessary, part of regime change, but it was military power that determined the difference between uprising and revolution.

So long as the Amaru insurrection faced local militias and small troops of hastily composed creole and elite volunteers, Tupac Amaru prevailed. Some militia units even came over to his side. But when the revolutionary army faced well-armed and disciplined imperial troops, Amaru's followers, most of who fought with slings and clubs, were sorely out-matched. In the end, Tupac Amaru was betrayed by one of his followers and he, his wife, their son, and other relatives were tortured and killed. The insurrection continued for a brief time without their "king" and his family, but the participants, some quickly and some more slowly, soon faded away. What remained was a powerful memory of insurrection and revolution that has been put to many different uses over the years. Even today, Tupac Amaru is a powerful figure in the popular culture and imagination of the Andes.

Revolution in the Andes is arguably the best short account of the Katari/Tupac Amaru revolution and it is certainly the clearest. The many indigenous reasons for participating or not participating in the insurrection, although mentioned, are not a major part of Serulnikov's

story. These local details can be followed in Stavig's well-known study of Canas y Canchis (Tupac Amaru's home district) and the many other works listed in the bibliography of *Revolution in the Andes*. Serulnikov's aim is broader: to show us that the Tupac Amaru uprising was a serious attempt at revolution, a political event above all else. As such it deserves to be considered as a part of the great cycle of Atlantic Revolutions that punctuated the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The fact that it failed makes it none the less a revolution.

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NORTH AMERICA/ATLANTIC WORLD

Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet, eds. *Biography and the Black Atlantic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. 384 pp., 1 map. ISBN: 9780812245462 (hbk), ISBN: 9780812208702 (e-book). \$55.00/£36.00.

The “quantitative turn” of the past fifty years has been transformational for the historiography of transatlantic slavery, uncovering the true scale of the largest example of forced migration in human history. Projects like the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (www.slavevoyages.org) now enable us to state with some confidence that around 12.5 million Africans were transported to the New World to be exploited for their labour. Historians are now, however, increasingly trying to disinter the smaller stories of slavery—particularly to understand how enslaved individuals made and remade their personal identities, formed and changed communities, and overcame boundaries and obstacles in their march towards freedom. The essays collected in this volume celebrate and contribute to this new ‘biographical turn’ in slavery studies, reconstructing the lives of enslaved individuals from the fragmentary evidence left behind in archives across the Atlantic world.

The first section of the book, “Parameters,” serves as an extended introduction to the detailed case studies which follow. Joseph Miller's contribution establishes the theoretical framework for an historical appreciation of the “biographical turn.” He calls for a recasting of our understanding of slavery, away from the “paradigmatic master-slave dyad” supposedly common to all societies (as expressed by sociologist Orlando Patterson in his seminal study *Slavery and Social Death*) to one viewed primarily “through the lens of a rigorously historical epistemology” (21, 26). Martin Klein next provides an insight into some of the methodological approaches employed by historians to reconstruct the experiences of slaves in West Africa, whose “tracks” are to be found “in missionary archives and occasionally in colonial state archives or sometimes in the memories of individuals, families and communities” (65). Finally, Sheryl Kroen introduces readers to the emergence of ‘Atlantic history’ as a discipline following the Second World War through a biography (of sorts) of Robinson Charley, an everyman free-market capitalist figure invented by the British Central Office for Information under the auspices of the Marshall Plan.

The second section, “Mobility,” again considers the methodological challenges facing biographers of figures from the black Atlantic. Jon Sensbach considers the specific difficulties of reconstructing the lives of black Atlantic women by recounting the process of writing his biography of Rebecca Protten, a former slave turned evangelist who lived in the Danish West Indian colony of St. Thomas, Germany, and the West African coast. In a stand-out contribution, Cassandra Pybus next undertakes the “extraordinarily difficult” task of “recovering the lives of enslaved individuals from the detritus of history” by reconstructing the remarkable journey of Jane Thompson and her family—all of whom were black loyalists who eventually became free landowners in Nova Scotia after the American Revolution—from British colonial records and plantation registers (109). Social mobility is the focus of Joao Jose Reis's contribution, rounding off the section. Specifically, he recounts the rise of Manoel