

a new section. As we know, the image can complement and supplement the text, but it can also disrupt and subvert the production of meaning, in a relationship that is frequently in no way one of illustration, but rather of rupture and discontinuity—a fact in part explained by the conditions of the production and circulation of the images highlighted here, and perhaps rendering the appellation *livre à figures* preferable to *livre illustré*. Given the scope for further work in the area, outside the very vibrant area of emblem studies, of course, it could have usefully been developed here. But this quibble is in no way to detract from what is otherwise a handsome, most informed, and informative volume, which will be of great use to many.



Isla Atlántica: Puerto Rico, circuitos antillanos de contrabando y la formación del Mundo Atlántico, 1580–1636. Jennifer Wolff.

Doce Calles, 2022. 298 pp. €25.00. ISBN 978-849744430-9.

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Since the publication of Fray Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra's *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico* in 1788 and its 1866 reissue, historical narratives have perpetuated the notion that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Puerto Rico was an isolated outpost on the margins of the Spanish Empire and an abandoned military settlement that frequently fell victim to violent piratical incursions, attacks, and raids by the French, English, and Dutch. Jennifer Wolff's *Isla Atlántica* challenges this long-standing interpretation, arguing that Puerto Rico played a central role in the formation of the Atlantic world during the early modern period. Wolff particularly highlights how Puerto Rico served as a commercial hub for the Portuguese-led networks of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, its importance as a stopover for vessels that entered the Caribbean in need of repairs, as well as water and food supplies, and its centrality as a convergence point for contraband between Europe and the Caribbean Basin.

Isla Atlántica spans little over half a century (1580–1636) that saw serious transformations in Europe's relationship to the Antilles. Spain and Portugal were no longer the only European powers leading seafaring ventures across the Atlantic—England, France, and the Netherlands took an active role in the nascent commercial networks that connected the Caribbean Basin to Africa and Europe. During this time, at least 123 vessels made *arribada* or *descamino* in Puerto Rico. That is, they arrived without a legal permit or authorization from Seville's Casa de la Contratación. Ship captains and their crews justified their illegal landings by claiming illnesses, shortages of food and water, and adverse weather conditions. While some *arribadas* responded to real life-threatening incidents at sea, others, as Jennifer Wolff elucidates, were part of coordinated arrangements between Puerto Rico's inhabitants and colonial authorities and the seafaring merchants that illicitly transported commodities across the Atlantic world.

This book is organized into eight chapters. The first two chapters provide a comprehensive discussion about the evolution of Atlantic world history, emphasizing how Puerto Rico's relevance within this field has been overshadowed by narratives that portray the island as isolated from the economic and geopolitical forces that shaped Atlantic trade. Wolff questions this view and asserts that Puerto Rico functioned as a frontier of fluid borders and social heterogeneity that not only linked the Spanish and non-Spanish Caribbean but also the networks of illicit trade and European capitalism (chaps. 5 and 7). Chapter 3 posits that the *arribadas* and *descaminos* were ubiquitous. These operated within a sort of gray area purposely crafted by Puerto Rico's inhabitants. For instance, Spanish legal provisions allowed vessels to enter the port of San Juan, Puerto Rico's capital, in emergencies for repairs. Wolff reveals that this process nonetheless triggered a bureaucratic procedure in which colonial authorities determined whether the crewmembers were experiencing genuine unforeseen circumstances or intended to engage in contraband. In the former case, ship captains were later allowed to sell part of their cargo to cover repair costs. In the latter, all merchandise was seized and sold at public auction. As Wolff notes, in any case, the merchandise benefited the market of the local port of arrival. The frequency of the *arribadas* and *descaminos* enabled Puerto Rico's colonists to offset the fact that Spanish ships rarely arrived on the island, making them lack supplies and goods with which to replicate Iberian lifestyles. Thus, as Wolff argues, the *arribadas* and *descaminos* became a lifeline that legitimized the embrace of illicit goods.

Wolff reveals that 82 of 123 documented *arribadas* to Puerto Rico involved Portuguese vessels, a majority of which were linked to the Atlantic slave trade. In chapter 4, Wolff argues that Puerto Rico was pivotal within Portuguese commercial networks. The Portuguese introduced approximately more than four thousand enslaved Africans to Puerto Rico between 1580 and 1636, a striking number when compared to the 1,172 who were sold through legal commercial channels. Puerto Rico, however, did not solely purchase enslaved labor but became a base of operations for Portuguese slave traders to expand their commercial networks to the Caribbean Basin. Wolff pieces together the lives of multiple Portuguese individuals who settled in Puerto Rico and married into elite families. These family unions enabled them to occupy roles that further facilitated Portuguese *arribadas*. Portuguese women who arrived in the *arribadas* and *descaminos* likewise occupied important positions, particularly in the formation of local networks and through their interventions in legal proceedings against their husbands, especially when their family's patrimony was at stake.

In chapter 6, *Isla Atlántica* transitions from discussing Puerto Rico's ties to the Portuguese Atlantic into its interactions with the English and the Dutch. Wolff focuses on two significant invasions: the English invasion of 1598 by George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, and the Dutch invasion of 1625 by Boudewijn Hendricksz. While both invasions have traditionally been analyzed through the lens of geopolitics and imperial conflict, Wolff's reinterpretation places them within the broader

context of Puerto Rico's role as an "Atlantic island." She argues that the key primary sources historians have used to examine these events fail to address the mercantile ambitions of Clifford and Hendricksz, as well as their connections to merchant entrepreneurs and companies in their respective countries. Wolff provides insightful evidence to suggest that they led raiding expeditions rather than formal attempts at imposing colonial rule.

Isla Atlántica joins a rich body of scholarship that, in recent years, has reconceptualized the role of contraband in the formation of the Spanish Caribbean. This book is an important addition to Jesse Cromwell's *The Smuggler's World: Illicit Trade and Atlantic Communities in Eighteenth-Century Venezuela* (2018) and Juan José Ponce Vázquez's *Islanders and Empire: Smuggling and Political Defiance in Hispaniola, 1580–1690* (2020), both of which have enhanced current understandings of contraband's essential function within the marginal territories of the Spanish Empire and its institutionalization as a "social ethos." Additionally, *Isla Atlántica* breathes new air over Arturo Morales Carrión's *Puerto Rico and the Non-Hispanic Caribbean: A Study in the Decline of Spanish Exclusivism* (1952), a groundbreaking and now classic study of contraband in Puerto Rico that sought to debunk narratives about Puerto Rico's isolation by examining islanders' contact with their French, English, Portuguese, Danish, and Dutch neighbors. Despite its relevance, *Puerto Rico and the Non-Hispanic Caribbean* was the only one of its kind. *Isla Atlántica* is, therefore, a long awaited scholarly contribution that undertakes and expands Morales Carrión's unfinished agenda and positions Puerto Rico at the core of the formation of the Atlantic world in the early modern period.

Jennifer Wolff passed away in February 2024, just over a year after publishing *Isla Atlántica*. Her work has bequeathed a cornerstone of Puerto Rican historiography, one that will hopefully inspire a new wave of Atlanticist scholarship about Puerto Rico.



Colonial Kinship: Guaraní, Spaniards, and Africans in Paraguay. Shawn Michael Austin.

University of New Mexico Press, 2020. 382 pp. \$34.95. ISBN 978-082636 440-1.

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In *Colonial Kinship: Guaraní, Spaniards, and Africans in Paraguay*, Shawn Michael Austin shows that kinship and politics looked different in the periphery. His study of Paraguay, a region outside the centers of power in colonial Spanish America—and mainstream focus in kinship studies—emphasizes the unique interdependence of Spanish and Guaraní social systems from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. To do so, Austin focuses on the force of Guaraní kinship to avoid a simple history of progressive acculturation to Spanish norms. Particularly at its