

actors: orators, pamphleteers, newspaper editors, lawyers, gossipers, and even seditious conspirators (Chapter 4).

Chapter 5 focuses on the years from 1808 to 1814, a time when Spanish liberals considered the cause of Spanish Americans and peninsular Spaniards as one and the same. They called for a new liberal order in which Spanish Americans would be free of political and ecclesiastical despotism. Chapter 6 dwells on the tenure of Viceroy José Fernando de Abascal (1806–16), under which the military's right to rule was consolidated. Faced with insurgent movements in Peru's neighboring territories, Abascal expanded a standing army that integrated creoles, *castas*, and Indians through an effective system of patronage and rewards. In the last chapter, the 1820 restoration of the 1812 constitution brought more struggles for power between men of letters and military officers. Eventually, factionalism among Spanish liberals prevented a peaceful solution between Spain and Spanish America. In 1829, Peruvian military officer Agustín Gamarra took power, ushering in the time of national caudillos. In the epilogue, the continuation of military rule in Peru until the late 1800s confirms that military *caudillismo* was an important legacy.

How might Ricketts's theory play out in other scenarios? By 1830, military rule had become a fact in many of the new Spanish American republics. The book is suitable for upper-level undergraduate courses and graduate colloquia. It offers a rich addition to the fields of Atlantic, Latin American, and Spanish history, as well as the history of the Spanish empire, modern politics, and the Atlantic revolutions.

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## MESOAMERICAN STUDIES

*The Manuscript Hunter: Brasseur de Bourbourg's Travels Through Central America and Mexico, 1854–1859.* By Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg. Translated and edited by Katia Sainson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. Pp. 288. \$39.95 cloth.  
 doi:10.1017/tam.2018.70

Brasseur de Bourbourg is universally known in the field of Mesoamerican studies for his discoveries of major written sources, especially those left by the Maya. Among them are the K'iche' epic of the *Popol Vuh*, the dance drama *Rabinal Achí*, the Yucatec pictographic manuscript today referred to as *Codex Madrid*, and Diego de Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*. However, as Katia Sainson, translator and editor of the volume, notes, the legacy of Brasseur de Bourbourg as a scholar is tainted by his later speculations on the ancient Maya script as an encrypted code and on the origins of

American indigenous civilizations, which he traced to the ancient Egyptians and even the fantastical island of Atlantis. As she read Brasseur's diaries and letters of his American travels in the original French, Sainson was surprised to discover an acute and original observer of the cultural and historical complexities of the countries that he visited.

The book provides not only the first English translation of three major travelogues by the French priest but also one of the few modern appraisals of his work. Awareness of Brasseur's outlook and experiences throughout Mexico and Central America is indeed necessary to understand his keen and widely recognized ability to retrieve important sources on Mesoamerican civilizations. How could he have found, transcribed, and translated such foundational pieces as the *Popol Vuh* and *Rabinal Achí* had he not been an intellectually sound scholar? Although his later interpretative works are more akin to the imaginative and fantastical drawings of Jean-Frédéric Waldeck, who illustrated Brasseur's *Monuments anciens du Mexique* (1866), his philological work should be read alongside John Lloyd Stephens's *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán* (1841) or Claude Joseph Le Désiré Charnay's and Alfred Percival Maudslay's early photographs of Maya archaeological sites, as Sainson notes in her introduction (4). There are, however, also some differences between Brasseur's approach and that of Stephens and other contemporaries. The French priest showed a much more vivid interest in living indigenous cultures and not just vestiges of the past. He learned K'iche' in order to work in the communities of the Guatemalan Highlands where he researched and labored. He considered recent and ancient history as present not only through language and oral lore, but also through the tangible heritage of ancient sacred sites, such as caves and mountain tops.

The book presents three distinct travelogues: 1) two letters written to Alfred Maury regarding Brasseur's wanderings in Central America (Nicaragua and El Salvador); 2) a journal of the travel from Guatemala City to Rabinal; and 3) Brasseur's lengthy account of his trip by boat and land from New Orleans to Tehuantepec, in the Isthmus of Oaxaca. As the author notes in extensive comments, Mexico and Central America were ravaged by civil wars whose violence brought not only death and misery to the human populace but also destruction to the patrimony. Brasseur also remarks on the mismanagement and failing of the Louisiana Tehuantepec Company, an enterprise that long before the opening of the Panama Canal offered a connection by sea between the two coasts of the United States.

Although some degree of humorous French chauvinism may be at play here, Brasseur offers a remarkable analysis of Mexico's War of Reform, which was unfolding in 1859 when he traveled through the region. He traces its roots to the historical consequences of the conquest and the racial domination, seeing the ideological juxtaposition of Church and liberalism as a mere masking of these issues (175–179). Another keen observation: Brasseur's genuine and surprisingly unprejudiced interest in nahuatlism, the ability given to humans to transform into all sorts of animals and travel through time and space. This is a central aspect of Mesoamerican religion (209–227).

In sum, the travel writings by Brasseur offer a necessary complement not only to his accomplishments as a scholar but also to a deeper understanding of the birth of modern Mesoamerican studies.

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## INEQUALITY AND CITIES

*Urban Latin America: Inequalities and Neoliberal Reforms*. Edited by Tom Angotti. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017. Pp. 299. \$89.00 cloth; \$35.00 paper. doi:10.1017/tam.2018.71

This text offers a valuable overview of development problems, neoliberal reforms, and struggles of social movements in Latin American cities. It is useful for researchers and for teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in Latin American urban politics, development, and planning. Through innovative case studies, the book explores the consequences of neoliberal urban reforms in a wide variety of Latin American cities with high levels of poverty and social inequality: Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Medellín, Bogotá, Rio de Janeiro, and Santiago de Chile, among others.

As with other books of the series *Latin American Perspectives in the Classroom*, most of the chapters are not original: of the 16 chapters that comprise this text, 12 were already published (the majority in the journal *Latin American Perspectives*), or based on other previous publications. The sections of the book are unequal with respect to their quality, as well as in their critical contribution to the understanding of the impacts of neoliberal reforms in the persistence of poverty and inequality.

In the first chapter, an introduction, Angotti suggests that in Latin America, the cause of poverty, inequality, informality, violence, and enclaves among other urban problems should be found in dependent capitalism development and the globalization of capital. He recommends looking beyond the cities to understand the complexity of urban problems and the social, economic, and political forces that cause them, so as to analyze “all urban neighborhoods as complex communities that are part of a larger capitalist political economy, both local and global” (4). The second chapter, written by Alan Gilbert, presents data on poverty, inequality, and other problems of Latin America. Gilbert offers statistical information about employment in the informal sector for the years 2014 and 2015, showing that Bolivia has the highest percentage of employment in the informal sector and that in the same respect Venezuela is above the median for Latin America. However, he does not explain why these countries have such a high percentage of people working in the informal sector. Given that they both applied anti-neoliberal urban policies, and that informality is generally supposed to be the