

method of interpreting political discourse in terms of what was at stake in the moment, which is associated with Quentin Skinner. He makes clear his admiration for Skinner, John Pocock, and E. H. Kossmann, while also arguing against others, such as N. C. F. van Sas, whose characterization of the Patriot era (after 1780) as the cradle of modern Dutch political culture is anachronistic, according to Velema (162). At the same time, however, such professional disputes seldom get in the way of a presentation based on the careful reading and interpretation of printed books and pamphlets. A good example of his method is the chapter “Republican Readings of Montesquieu.” Velema quickly recounts the reception of the *Esprit des Lois* (which circulated not only in French but in two separate Dutch translations), many of the interpretations of it, and its uses in the debates for and against the Patriot movement of the 1780s, concluding with comments on how it was taken up in support of conservative political views after the French occupation of 1795. His is a clear and elegant example of a genre centered mainly on writings rather than writers and political arguments rather than political movements.

In his history of political thought, Velema certainly points out places where republicans argued on moral grounds for it being the best kind of government, but the greatest strengths of the argument had to do with how it created opportunities for making people’s lives easier or for improving them. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why it sometimes failed the test in crises: if at moments of great public trauma people seemed to be better off under another government that placed power in the hands of a single leader (as in 1650, or 1672, or 1806), public sentiment could swing around quickly. In other words, basing arguments for a political system on public benefit avoids the philosophical question of which kind of government is best since any government that delivers public benefits would be good. By 1865, the noted historian Robert Fruin was arguing that the Republic had been an unfortunate anomaly wedged between proper monarchies. For his part, Velema thinks that the very rapid and positive adoption of monarchical arguments after 1806 was because after the country had suffered through two and a half decades of political excitement about republicanism, it was “conceptually exhausted” (213). It is hard to see how such an abstraction can explain such a change, unless of course political ideas and arguments are secondary to more fundamental underlying historical processes. In any case, a tradition of over two centuries of vociferous and apparently convincing arguments for republicanism did not stop grand alterations in the institutions of power. It was a change of political culture, and a reversal of political opinion, that deserves attention.

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### **Enlightenment, Governance, and Reform in Spain and Its Empire, 1759–1808.**

By *Gabriel B. Paquette*. Cambridge Imperial and Postcolonial Studies Series.

Edited by *Megan Vaughan* and *Richard Drayton*.

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Pp. xii+244. £50.00.

Beginning in June 1762, toward the end of the Seven Years’ War, the British siege and occupation of Havana, Cuba, underscored Spain’s weaknesses and presented a clear message that far-reaching strategic political reform was essential to modernize and to rebuild Spanish power in the Old and the New Worlds. In this important new study, Gabriel Paquette reopened ongoing debates among scholars concerning political reform in Spain and Spanish America during the epochs of the Bourbon Kings Charles III (1759–88) and Charles IV up to the French invasion of Spain in 1808. The author

argues persuasively that advanced political and economic thinking influenced major policy makers in Spanish governing circles—rejuvenating ideas and stimulating a form of regalism that was to have a great impact in the metropolis and in the overseas American Atlantic empire. Spanish thinkers learned from foreign models—even from Britain—and the result stimulated emulation, experimentation, and modernization. Spanish regalist, including the minister of the Indies, José de Gálvez, and other eminent leaders such as Antonio Porlier, labored to modernize society and to restore Spain as a major power. They sought to enhance state or temporal power over the church, to use its wealth in order to eliminate special privilege, and to deal with the disloyalty of the Jesuits whose oath demanded loyalty to Rome. In 1767, this led to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain and the Spanish empire. However, efforts by the imperial government to centralize and modernize and to codify the laws throughout the provinces of the American empire failed to achieve legal uniformity.

Dedicated to generating increased revenues from metropolitan Spain, Charles III and his ministers sought to extract additional income from “the two jewels in Spain’s imperial crown,” Peru and New Spain. Also, the crown focused on the development of the “imperial periphery” (94)—the Caribbean, Río de la Plata, Chile, Nueva Granada, and Central America—appointing governors and officials who would stimulate economic development. Paquette points out that the dispatch of scientific expeditions, including the famous voyage of Alejandro Malaspina to explore the Pacific Ocean (1789–94), in fact represented a renewed desire to protect Spanish sovereignty and to search for new resources. When Malaspina’s explorers and the commanders of other maritime expeditions dispatched from New Spain viewed the great forests and ports of the Northwest Coast of North America, they imagined the construction of great fleets that in the future would advance Spanish power and commerce. In addition to sending silver directly to support the mother country, New Spain dispatched annual ships from Veracruz and Acapulco conveying the *situados* (subsidies paid in minted pesos) to prop up the less wealthy regimes of the Spanish Caribbean islands, Florida, Louisiana, and the Philippines.

Paquette is perceptive in his understanding of Bourbon regalism that entailed strengthening the royal prerogative and the supremacy needed to increase revenues from the American empire. Notwithstanding the support of Charles III and his ministers to modernize and to seek additional controls, the empire continued to be governed through appointed councils that in some respects mirrored the Hapsburg past. The introduction of more manageable administrative territorial units during the 1770s, including the new viceroyalty of Río de la Plata, the Commandancy General of the Provincias Internas (internal provinces) in northern New Spain, and the implementation in some viceroyalties of provincial intendancies in the 1780s, served to centralize the administrative system. The Bourbon reforms tightened fiscal controls, sought to introduce higher efficiency, and provoked controversies when European Spanish administrators replaced Spanish American-born criollos (whites). Many of the bureaucratic changes resulted from the recommendations of José de Gálvez, *visitador general* to New Spain (1765–72), who sought to reduce corruption and inefficiencies but awakened resistance when he tampered with existing privileges. In the view of many Spanish Americans, centralized reforms to raise revenues for the metropolis and to ensure the supremacy of the Bourbon regalist represented a power grab that threatened tyranny. Nevertheless, some provinces of the imperial periphery such as Cuba became Bourbon success stories, while others such as Florida and Louisiana for many reasons were close to abject failures.

Throughout this study, Paquette argues that from 1760 to 1780 the real intent of the

peninsular Bourbon reformers was to eliminate hard-won privileges gained by the American criollo elites and to govern the overseas Spanish provinces as “subservient colonies” (128). The plan entailed the removal of legal privileges enjoyed by the merchant guilds (the *consulados*), the elimination of powers exercised by the creole-dominated *ayuntamientos* (municipal councils), and the loss of the *fuero militar* (special judicial privileges) held by regular soldiers and provincial militiamen. Revolts in the Americas during the 1780s and international wars in the 1790s stemming from the French Revolution slowed but did not immediately halt Bourbon centralization. Nevertheless, the creation of new *consulados* and economic societies reflected a willingness on the part of the crown to be more flexible and showed that the Spanish American Enlightenment was not directly responsible for training future insurgents.

In his conclusions, Paquette states that he intended his monograph to be a supplement to existing works on the Bourbon reforms. He was successful in achieving this objective and in developing an interpretation that will stimulate other historians of Bourbon Spanish America to reexamine ideas that date from studies published in the 1960s or earlier up to the present. Paquette devotes significant attention to the implementation of the Bourbon reforms in Spain before the process shifted to the New World. His explanations contribute significantly to the historiography of the epoch and underscore how in the face of complex challenges the Spanish crown struggled to revise imperial policy. Although the level of success and failure differed from one American province to another, in the old *provincias de ultramar*—New Spain and Peru—the arrival of dispatches in 1808 reporting the failures of the Spanish army to halt the French invasion did not weaken old loyalties for many in the Americas. Beginning in 1810, the royalist side in the Spanish American Wars of Independence fought for years against the chaos released by insurrection and revolution—underscoring the widespread and enduring ties with Spain.

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**Civic Culture and Everyday Life in Early Modern Germany.** By *Bernd Roeck*.

Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, volume 115. Edited by

*Andrew Colin Gow*.

Leiden: Brill, 2006. Pp. xiv+286. \$148.00.

Citizens and civic culture have engaged the European and particularly the German sociohistorically oriented historiography since its inception in the second half of the twentieth century. Bernd Roeck’s book, which is based in large part on an earlier published German version, follows in a historiographical tradition that depicts the period between the end of the Middle Ages and the decline of feudal society as an epoch of civic, urban cultures.

In this book, Bernd Roeck covers the major aspects of civic, that is, urban early modern life, primarily in the German lands of the Holy Roman Empire. On the basis of the first chapter, which reflects on the terminological significance of the “German Citizen” and bourgeois culture (1), chapter 2 introduces the historical place of action, namely, the early modern city, in its idealistic and realistic manifestations. Chapters 3 and 4 portray the bourgeois house with its concrete furnishings and everyday life. Adapted to the conventions of the *Enzyklopädie Deutscher Geschichte*, in which Roeck’s work first appeared in 1991 as volume 9, his concise discussions in these passages make use of some classic examples. In the chapter on the ideal early modern

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