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*The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History* by  
Julia J. S. Sarreal (review)

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petitions, Roller explores how such opportunities often hinged on travel along navigable routes from one site to another, even as the state worked to corral the local population.

Fulfilling their obligation to perform services for the state, many village Indians joined annual expeditions collecting cacao, sarsaparilla, aromatic bark, resins, oils, and other products, the famed *drogas do sertão* (literally, wilderness drugs). Reports from these expeditions provide testimony from native crewmen that Roller uses to great advantage in recounting with uncommon concreteness descriptions of daily life far upriver. Some Indians chose this type of labor over others because it promised more autonomy, potential earnings through a thriving contraband trade, and the chance to visit distant family and friends in other settlements. Other Indians voluntarily took active roles in state-sponsored *descimentos* (descents), another type of long-distance activity whereby officials sought to contact still-independent groups deep in the forest, persuading or pressuring them to resettle in Directorate villages. By Roller's account, even the temporary absenteeism of some village Indians and the determination of others to live permanently outside these population centers, which authorities complained about incessantly, no longer looks like the unambiguous resistance of earlier scholarly interpretations. The author shows how such conduct could signal attempts to shape rather than reject incorporation into the colonial world.

Roller skillfully avoids the twin pitfalls of underestimating and exaggeration, in regard to both the coerciveness of colonial rule and the autonomy of subaltern subjects who contended with its impositions. The indigenous protagonists of her story lived in ways that could be at once itinerant on the water and grounded in fixed communities. These Indians were "pragmatic," "strategic," "ideologically flexible," and able to "accept compromises" (p. 206). When the colonial system promised advantages for individuals or communities, they engaged it cautiously and adeptly. On such terms, the unfolding of regional processes in the Portuguese Amazon can be compared profitably with similar processes in much of the rest of colonial Latin America.

Roller draws frequent parallels with and insights from peasant and native histories of Spanish America. If the work is less attentive to commonalities with other regions of Brazil, it provides rich material for future scholars to explore these connections. As such, this probing study will help correct the exceptionalism that has long characterized historical writing on the region.

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*The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History.* By Julia J. S. Sarreal. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014. Pp. xii, 335. Acknowledgments. Abbreviations. Appendixes. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. \$65.00 cloth.  
doi:[10.1017/tam.2016.30](https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2016.30)

True to its title, Julia Sarreal's book provides a socioeconomic history of the rise and fall of the Guaraní missions of South America. The author seeks to provide an integrated analysis of this eighteenth-century phenomena, drawing from understudied account books, receipts, summaries, and audits as well as from the canons of the field: censuses, Jesuit and other ecclesiastical papers, and reports by crown and provincial officials. Sarreal notes that study of the mission economy is particularly fruitful from the vantage point of ethnohistory. Because the Guaraní were the principal laborers and beneficiaries of that system, Sarreal's method of close reading for indigenous perspectives and economic actions permits her to reflect on their experiences of the missions, their responses "to political changes under the late colonial period, and how they became increasingly integrated into the Spanish Empire and the broader Atlantic world" (p. 12).

This unique approach relates that Guaraní experience in nine chapters, organized by theme and a loose chronology. Chapters 1 through 4 take place mostly in the seventeenth century, when readers are situated in the frontier lands of the Río de la Plata. There they meet the Guaraní, the Jesuits, the 30 missions of this study, and colonial and provincial church and state officials and learn about the social and economic relations that shaped and were shaped by the urban design of the mission towns and the communal system of production. The author finds that the Guaraní applied pressure on the missionaries to create this economy of collective labor and ownership of mission property. Whereas scholars have understood Guaraní flight broadly as resistance to the constraints of mission life, Sarreal argues that the Indians used these tactics carefully to mitigate mission policies in their favor. The low agricultural yields that resulted from Guaraní absence and a lackluster work ethic jeopardized a mission's viability and the health of its inhabitants. However, the missionaries could do little to impose a demanding labor regime. And, as the main work force, mission residents could halt the economy by threatening work stoppage. Sarreal reveals the real bargaining power gained by the Guaraní tactics, which compelled the Jesuits to increase by six times the land dedicated to food for internal consumption and to redistribute goods from the communal warehouse. Thus, the flexible communal system of the mission economy was shaped by the Guaraní, who obtained supplies without meeting onerous labor requirements.

The second half of the book, Chapters 5 through 9, is its strength. Following the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish empire (1767–68), the missions came under the control of separate secular administrators. Secular priests looked to the religious affairs, and Spanish bureaucrats oversaw economic functions. Specialists have looked to the departure of the Jesuits, corruption, and poor administration as the principal causes for the missions' decline in the late eighteenth century, but Sarreal's analysis of accounting records revise scholarly explanations. The author explains that salaries emerged as a large expense when the missions fell under secular care. Whereas, previously, the Jesuits had shared and accepted as remuneration one collective crown donation, now each Spanish official received an individual salary. That the wages reflected market value dismisses corruption as a casual factor. Rather, the salaries became

costly expenditures that the missions' communal structure could not sustain while simultaneously providing for mission inhabitants and external trade. Sarreal argues that the market-based ideology introduced by Enlightenment-minded officials and other factors sent the missions' communal system into bankruptcy.

This work will be of interest for graduate students, general readers, and specialists alike. It is written accessibly and accompanied by tables of economic and statistical data that will be useful for the classroom. This important work and its innovative method joining ethnohistory and socioeconomic history promises to open up new avenues of research.

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### SCIENCE, MEDICINE AND TECHNOLOGY

*Medicine and Public Health in Latin America: A History.* By Marcos Cueto and Steven Palmer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. 306. \$29.99 paper.  
doi:[10.1017/tam.2016.31](https://doi.org/10.1017/tam.2016.31)

Marcos Cueto and Steven Palmer set out to write an exhaustive history of medicine and health in Latin America and the result is impressive. There is no other such work available. It is authoritative in its knowledge of primary and secondary English, Portuguese, and Spanish sources, broad in its temporal and geographical scope, comprehensive in its overview of different interacting medical systems, and critical in its assessment of national, international, and global health initiatives. The two organizing concepts of the book, "culture of survival" and "health in adversity," provide the framework to analyze the distinct exchanges, negotiations, and conflicts about health and disease that first emerged in the pre-Columbian era and continue to the present.

Starting with the premise that exchanges among indigenous, African, and European systems of healing in the colonial period laid the foundation for the medical pluralisms that have shaped postcolonial histories to the present, the first chapter demonstrates the ways Western and non-Western medicine were transformed from the early sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The result was a "hybrid medicine" that incorporated elements of different healing cultures and was practiced by the majority of the population. In the second chapter, the authors trace the central role of physicians as educators, politicians, researchers, sanitarians, and medical practitioners in the state-building efforts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Their work in directing professional organizations, founding medical schools, combating "national" epidemics, and sustaining significant research agendas was crucial in the consolidation of their status as modernizing agents. This was particularly important during a time of significant crisis, when migration, urbanization, industrialization, and the abolition of slavery raised questions about who was fit for citizenship, and when popular healing cultures continued to coexist, and even thrive, alongside official medical trends.