

REVIEWS

ENSLAVEMENT AND CONQUEST IN CHILE

This Incurable Evil: Mapuche Resistance to Spanish Enslavement, 1598–1687. By Eugene C. Berger. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2023. Pp. 216. \$39.95 paper.
doi:10.1017/tam.2023.98

The Spanish crown famously issued a general ban on the enslavement and slaveholding of the Indigenous peoples of its empire in 1542, but recent Latin American scholarship has started to uncover its continued existence. Chile provides a particularly fascinating case study for this because the successful military resistance of the Mapuche against colonial rule provided a justification for settlers to enslave Indigenous people and even to obtain an exemption from the ban in 1608. This is the context that Eugene Berger explores, highlighting the extent of the enslavement of the Mapuche in early colonial Chile.

The first part of this book is particularly accessible to nonspecialists. Here, Berger draws extensively on Chilean historiography to provide a fascinating account of Mapuche society and to analyze the diverse ways settlers and Indigenous people interacted as allies, enemies, and trading partners. He productively incorporates the methodologies of Borderland Studies and American Indian Studies to allow the Mapuche to emerge as powerful, heterogeneous actors in his narrative. Chapter 1 describes Mapuche society and the Spanish invasion, emphasizing the role of their *indios amigos* (indigenous allies) and exploring how Mapuche military strategy adapted to the Spanish. Berger argues that Mapuche resistance was part of a longer history of resistance against forced labor, particularly Inca imperial efforts to incorporate them into their *mit'a* labor drafts. Chapter 2 shows how the colonial economy quickly came to depend on and justify enslaved and forced labor. He argues this weakened the Spanish, because as they sought to improve their economic situation by intensified slave raiding, the armed resistance this provoked only damaged it further. Chapter 3 interrogates why the Spanish were unable to expand their control over the Mapuche in two ways: first by examining structural problems to Spanish efforts, predominantly related to corruption in the supply of the army; second by analyzing successful Mapuche military and diplomatic action, showing that they were powerful actors able to set the terms of engagement.

The second part of the book makes more extensive use of archival sources to draw us into the high politics of the late seventeenth century colonial administration. Chapter 4 argues

that Governor Antonio de Acuña (1650–1656) and his *maestre de campo* undid decades of expansion and negotiations by overburdening the indios amigos (on whom the Spanish army relied) and through ill-conceived military operations. Chapter 5 focuses on two particularly corrupt governors and their own involvement in the trafficking and enslavement of Mapuche people. He concludes that despite repeated royal legislation to close the loophole on enslaving the Mapuche, only the 1687 earthquake in Lima and subsequent wheat blight lead to a fundamental change that moved the economy away from slavery.

This book makes a valuable contribution to the long-overlooked reality of the enslavement of Indigenous peoples within the Spanish empire. It also powerfully explores the agency of the Mapuche in different capacities as they were forced to engage with the Spanish, from the enslaved and exploited individuals within the empire to the indios amigos negotiating special privileges on its fringes to the military and diplomatic victories of the people outside it. Indigenous slavery has been the subject of important recent studies in other parts of the empire, and Berger's analysis could have benefitted from engaging with this historiography, particularly the works of Tatiana Seijas and Nancy van Deusen. Similarly, a firmer grasp on the legal and administrative institutions of the empire would have nuanced his discussion of forced labor: *Encomendados* are characterized as servants instead of tribute-payers (145) and his claim that tribute was almost entirely demanded in labor requires further nuance, not least in light of evidence to the contrary in case studies Berger himself discusses (68). Engagement with scholarship on Iberian imperialism as an administrative system, such as the work of Arndt Brendecke, would also have helped articulate some of the points Berger makes in the final chapter about the ineffectiveness of legislation and of the power of colonial officials. Nevertheless, this book's meticulous documenting of the enslavement of the Mapuche and its methodological effort to center them despite the difficulty of surviving sources make it a valuable contribution to the study of colonial Latin America.

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ROYAL DECREES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SPANISH EMPIRE

We The King: Creating Royal Legislation in the Sixteenth-Century Spanish New World. By Adrian Masters. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023. Pp 319. \$110.00 cloth; \$110.00 e-book.
 doi:10.1017/tam.2023.99

Adrian Masters's book is a work that cannot be overlooked for several reasons. First, because it offers new approaches to central debates about the construction of the Spanish Empire. Second, because it is an attempt at methodological innovation. Third,