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Hector Duenes *
Brian P. Owensby **

A *residencia* for Indigenous Polities in North America

* University of Virginia, fab3uh@virginia.edu
** University of Virginia, bpo3a@virginia.edu

faiths« (47). Part One is an outstanding urban history of ethnic neighborhoods and connections in Seville and Lima. It is similarly important for the growing field of indigenous legal histories, mining the oft-studied 1613 census and the ample notarial record to expose both »imperial design and everyday uses of space« (56).

The strength of the book is its examination of communities and regions usually analyzed in isolation from each other. The source base is impressive. Imagining social history from these records was an exercise in »negative historical invention« (235). At times, the Seville chapters read much more top-down when compared with the bottom-up chapters on Lima. Indeed, it is when we get to the Andean republics that the reader gets a sense of the malleability of the *república*. Graubart's deep knowledge of the demographic context in the Cercado enables her to disaggregate the census and show how dense living arrangements engendered new identities in the political space of the republic of *indios*. »Contreras [the census taker] uncovered a web of developing beliefs about status, law, and identity« (81). Urban migration to a new »republic« enabled Andean people to reinvent their status, or simply to sever the ties that bound them to pay tribute to their erstwhile leaders. As Graubart concludes, mapping the city through the census is one way to »contemplate how its native residents utilized space to learn crafts, gather wealth, find solidarity, and produce new forms of status and hierarchy« (88).

In Chapter 7, »The Specters of Black Self-Governance«, Graubart claims that a Black republic functioned in Seville but failed to take root in Lima. One might quibble with this distinction. Although the chapter concludes that Black self-governance in the New World was limited, the book seriously engages with debates about sovereignty, *vecindad* or citizenship, and vassalage. Graubart's chapter regarding the African experience in the Americas and in Seville joins a growing field of studies of Black sovereignty and governance. The confraternities did not require freed and enslaved black people to flee, rather it situated them as *vecinos* with recognized political titles in their own right. This chapter provides us with a useful framework to look at political order. Orlando Patterson took a very dour view of Black self-governance in his work on manumission and the elevated status of freedom. Patterson pointed out that Jamaican maroon towns were primed for capitulation once their leaders entered into negotiations with Europeans, as the infrastructure of governance was already established, and, more damningly, that the goal of all who govern was to dominate others. While Graubart's chapter does not engage with this view, it could nonetheless be read alongside and in uneasy affiliation with social death / Afro-pessimism and yield much more productive and nuanced insights.

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Hector Duenes, Brian P. Owensby

A *residencia* for Indigenous Polities in North America*

In his book, *Republic of Indians*, Bradley J. Dixon focuses on European-Indigenous interactions in the early Anglo-American South. He describes how Indigenous caciques sought to leverage their status as vassals to kings to form »republics of Indians« within European polities governed by

* Bradley J. Dixon, Republic of Indians. Empires of Indigenous Law in the Early American South, Philadelphia (PA): University of Pennsylvania Press 2024, 320 p., ISBN 978-1-512-82642-5

English and Spanish officials. To do this, Dixon draws deeply on archival sources rarely explored in the Anglophone literature, as well as on a rich Ibero-American historiography, which has long argued that Indigenous people shaped colonial outcomes and institutions through law, rebellions, and cultural life. Through his juxtaposition of events in territory Spain claimed in Florida and colonies England claimed in Virginia and Carolina between 1608–1715, Dixon argues the republic of Indians existed in both the Hispanic and Anglo colonial worlds and concludes that »the patterns of politics in the early [Anglo-]American South were an extension of Latin America's«.

Dixon begins by noting that by 1600, Spain's empire in the Americas formally consisted of two republics, one made up of Spaniards, the other of *indios* (›Indians‹). The New Laws of 1542 decreed that the Indigenous people living within these republics were free vassals of the Crown. As such, they could not be enslaved and they could directly petition the king to ensure rights, claim privileges, and obtain justice. In principle, it was the duty of the king and his representatives to hear the grievances of their Indigenous vassals and to maintain a stable, just, and harmonious relationship between the two republics. Dixon shows that early English colonists, including Captain John Smith, sought to replicate this model. To make this point, Dixon compares Spanish St. Augustine in Florida to English settlements at Jamestown in Virginia and Charlestown in Carolina. At the time, the idea was to establish a web of self-governing Indigenous towns that would pay tribute to the English crown in Virginia and Carolina, as in Florida they did to the Spanish king. The trouble came when English governors discovered that Indigenous caciques took their right of access to royal law seriously, as they had in Spanish realms.

Indeed, Indigenous leaders developed distinctive understandings of their political relationship with Europeans. Dixon examines petitions filed by Indigenous claimants – typically caciques and town councils – to affirm their own vision of autonomy and self-rule within a shared colonial polity. Tensions ran especially high during moments of crisis or breakdown of the social order, as during Bacon's rebellion (1676–1677). Dixon characterizes that uprising as an attempt by English settlers to limit the political participation of Indigenous towns by curtailing the »power of native kings among Indians«, with the final objective of taking Indian lands. In response, Indigenous leaders petitioned Charles II, promising they would help the British Crown put down the rebels, in exchange for protecting their republic of Indians. Indigenous leaders thus became defenders of the »republic of Indians« model, Dixon argues, even as they shaped it to their own ends. It was through such negotiations that Indigenous actors embedded their principles and customs into colonial law, making the republic of Indians a »co-creation«, rather than a purely European one.

Dixon's argument is a novel one for Anglo-America. English and Spanish colonial worlds have seldom overlapped in the historiography. There has been some crossing over from the Ibero-American side (Jorge Cañizares Esguerra) and more recently some interest in comparative legal histories (Owensby and Ross). But it has been rare for historians of Anglo North America to consider the possibility that actors in English colonial settings, European or Indigenous, could have taken Spanish models of law and governance seriously on their own terms. For this reason alone, Dixon's argument that the Yamasee War (1715–1717) amounted to a culminating struggle over whether England's Indigenous subjects would form self-governing entities within a larger colonial polity is notable. It highlights the extent to which Indigenous peoples were attracted to the idea of a self-governing Indigenous commonwealth alongside European colonizers, sharing law and allegiance to the same Crown but on their own terms within the framework of colonial rule. The war shows that English colonists did not share such a vision. A republic of Indians was no more durable in Spanish Florida, says Dixon. There, inter-imperial anxieties – fears of English incursions – and the leverage they gave to Indigenous leaders, as well as abuses by missionaries, undermined tributary status as a common ground between colonial rulers and Indigenous towns, ultimately leading the Spanish to abandon St. Augustine.

Dixon is careful to say that he is borrowing the »republic of Indians« idea in applying it to Virginia and Carolina. That is, he uses it as conceptual category to frame a new way of thinking about relations between Indigenous people and settlers in early English colonial contexts. By emphasizing struggles over legal and political forms rooted in vassalage, tributary status, and royal justice, Dixon points beyond Richard White's »middle ground« and James Merrell's »Indians' new world«. He

shows that Indigenous leaders were also capable of confronting colonial rule by trying to create a »mutual order in which [Indigenous] lands and political authority would be respected«. Its failure on both sides of the imperial divide – though for different reasons and in different ways – is a reminder of just how complex inter-imperial zones are.

For all its creativity and archival rigor, Dixon's »borrowing« of the concept of »republic of Indians« raises a critical question. To what extent did Indigenous people in English America actually consider themselves as vassals or subjects of the English king? This question has been vigorously debated in the Spanish-American historiography over the last couple of decades. There is every reason to suppose they could have done so. As Dixon notes, vassalage and subjecthood, as extended forms of kinship, would have been no less intelligible to Indigenous people in Virginia and Carolina than it was in Spanish-American realms. And yet, the Iberian New World republic of Indians was premised on a specific political theory of society rooted in Catholic theology, one anchored in notions of substantive justice as the ordering principle of human collectivities. Indigenous petitioners in Spanish realms across space and time routinely referred to themselves as *vasallos* (vassals), embraced the idea of their tributary status in exchange for royal protection, and demanded »justice« from the king.

In English colonies, Indigenous understandings appear to have been more explicitly oriented to notions of sovereignty than to justice. Dixon recognizes as much in his epilogue when he asserts that Indigenous people in the colonial Anglo-American south asserted vassalage and subjecthood in order to become »authors of their sovereignty«. Given the centrality of *sovereignty* to contemporary Indigenous peoples in the Anglo-American context, this is an understandable move.

Yet it is perhaps too easy a conflation. In many ways, *vassalage* and *sovereignty* represent distinct political understandings. There are confluences but Dixon neither identifies nor explores them. Still, he has laid bare the question in a way that invites greater collaborations across a historiographical divide between Anglo and Iberian colonial worlds, a gulf that makes little sense from the perspective of Indigenous actors, as Dixon and historians of colonial Spanish America show.

Republic of Indians should be of interest to historians of empire and to historians of Indigenous people in the USA and in Latin America. Dixon convincingly demonstrates the existence of an alternate legal and political idea in which Indigenous actors aimed to live alongside Europeans while retaining their own autonomy and capacity for self-rule. That this experiment was finally rejected by colonists adds a new layer to the story of how Indigenous people have come to be so marginalized in the present-day US polity (differently than they have been in Latin America). Dixon movingly characterizes his book as a »*residencia* for the dead« (a *residencia* was the investigation that all Spanish officials had to face upon conclusion of their term in office). In doing so, he reminds us that it is never too late to hear from those affected and to account for what has happened.

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Marya Svetlana T. Camacho

Turning Colonization on Its Head*

Most Filipinos have been schooled in nationalist history in which the first century and a half of the Spanish colonial period is depicted as fraught with indigenous uprisings and rebellions against the colonial state and institutions and sustained resistance in the Muslim south. Quite uncritically these events are rendered as paving the way to the Philippine revolution a century and a half later.

* Stephanie Joy Mawson, Incomplete Conquests. The Limits of Spanish Empire in the Seventeenth-Century Philippines, Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press 2023, 294 p., ISBN 978-1-5017-7027-2