

Luisa Elena Alcalá y Benito Navarrete Prieto (eds.), *América en Madrid: Cultura material, arte e imágenes*, Madrid y Frankfurt: Iberoamericana – Vervuert, 2023. 357pp, ISBN 978-84-9192-395-4 (Iberoamericana). ISBN 978-3-96869-511-2 (Vervuert). ISBN 978-3-96869-512-9 (e-book). 54,00 €.

In 2008 the renowned historian James S. Amelang published a landmark article, “The New World in the Old? The Absence of Empire in Early Modern Madrid.”¹ He underscored that the city lacked “American” architectural and symbolic elements and suggested that the New World was largely invisible in the court city’s public spaces. If one were to seek Americana, one had to do so within select elite, closed-off contexts. Amelang nonetheless conceded that this invisibility hypothesis would have to be tested by future scholarship.

América en Madrid constitutes an important step in this direction. This edited volume explores both the visibilities and invisibilities of the New World in Madrid and its environs. Editors Luisa Elena Alcalá and Benito Navarrete Prieto sketch out a roadmap for rediscovering these stories in their penetrating and big-thinking introduction. They justly chide the historiography’s tendency to trace the unidirectional impact of Europe on the New World without considering the “opposite current, of the return voyages (*tornaviajes*)” (12). They also stress the need to understand the social, material, and textual conditions of these return voyages, and to explore how various historical circumstances have contributed to making this past difficult to perceive in the present.

The book’s studies reveal the fundamentally cosmopolitan character of the Spanish imperial capital. They break with stereotypical visions of the city as a conservative, remote, and narrowly Castilian backwater, instead revealing a metropolis which both transformed the world and was transformed by it in turn. A prologue by Amelang and the introduction are followed by the first section of the book, “*Madrid urbs regia: Reception and Dissemination.*” This begins with Amelang’s 2008 essay. Next is Jorge Fernández-Santos Ortiz-Iribas’ rigorous historical study on the circulation of exotic luxury objects among ambassadors in Madrid, especially during the reign of Philip IV (r.1621-1665). Pablo Francisco Amador Marrero and Ramón Pérez de Castro describe certain Christs and crucifixes of New World make, many crafted with light materials such as corn paste and paper, which decorated religious spaces in the greater Madrid area. Marta Ortiz Canseco offers a rather light study of books on Andean idolatry printed in Madrid. Marta Cacho Casal identifies and explores “things of the Indies” which she has identified in the inventories of two

1 James S. Amelang, “The New World in the Old? The Absence of Empire in Early Modern Madrid,” in *Cuadernos de historia de España* 82 (2008): 147–164.

famous seventeenth-century artists, Diego Velázquez and Vicente Carducho. Concepción Lopezosa Aparicio studies the artistic, urban, and social worlds revealed in a series of eighteenth-century paintings depicting Mexico City's great park, the Alameda, which reached Madrid sometime before the 1950s. The section concludes with the remarkable essay by Jaime Cuadriello, which I further discuss below.

The second section is entitled "American Works in the Metropolis: Families, Social Networks, and Devotion." The first contribution, by Juan Luis Blanco Mozo, offers a detailed analysis of a majestic eighteenth-century portrait of an important official made in Mexico. Ronda Kasl presents readers with various stunning *maques* (Mexican lacquerwares) created by a workshop of indigenous lords in Michoacán, and explores how their works – especially those of the Indian master don José Manuel de la Cerda – won renown in the court. In an interesting but rather non-linear contribution, Berenice Pardo Hernández and Luis Javier Cuesta Hernández mine the little-used archive of the Museo de Cerralbo in search of Americana, highlighting various treasures and the papers of the third Marquis of Cerralbo and the Moctezuma dynasty. Rosario Inés Granados Salinas studies eighteenth-century paintings and sculptures of Lima's sixteenth-century archbishop Saint Toribio de Mogrovejo in Madrid, in which the prelate is flanked by stereotyped indigenous children in "barbarous" garb. In a colorful contribution, Ángel Aterido tells of a dissected caiman or crocodile from Panama, the "lagarto de San Ginés," which a Spaniard had killed and incorporated into a Madrid chapel already in 1522. The saurian subsequently became the stuff of urban lore and theater.

The final section, "America in Madrid in the Twentieth Century: Collecting, Investigation, and Public Outreach," consists of two chapters. Rocío Bruquetas Galán and Andrés Sánchez Ledesma study a series of paintings by eighteenth century Mexican master Miguel Cabrera, revealing through biochemical analysis his technique and materials. Olga Isabel Acosta Luna offers the only decolonial-critical essay, in which she explores how the famous painting of the Gentlemen of Esmeraldas (popularly *Three Mulattos of Esmeraldas*, 1599, by the indigenous master Andrés Sánchez Gallque) has been understood over time in Madrid in various racialized and nationalist frameworks, especially since the 1850s.

The book's contributions demonstrate clearly both the fruitfulness of Amelang's hypothesis and the promising itinerary proposed by the editors. In general, most do not explicitly engage the important historiographical questions those provocative essays raise, which would have further strengthened this work's cohesion and impact on the scholarship. Many offer vivid, well-researched, and interesting glimpses of Madrid's Americana

nonetheless. Fitting with its overarching art-historical emphasis, one might conceive of the collection as a dozen rich sketches.

And Jaime Cuadriello's sketch is perhaps the richest of all. It tells the story of the art student "don Josef Mariano del Águila, Indian cacique (elite), native of México." (187). Josef not only appreciated masculine beauty, attested by his homoerotic drafts of nude men. He also apparently acted upon his desires while living in the city. In 1802 Madrid watchmen arrested him for indecent acts with another man (the outcome is unclear).

In Cuadriello's narrative Madrid appears anew, and not merely as a storehouse of Americana, but as a city inhabited by New Worlders. Josef's story breaks stereotypes in several directions; of Madrid the Castilian, Madrid the conservative, but also of the rural, conservative native elite. This shows us that revisioning Madrid's inhabitants might also help us rethink the New World too. Something of a shame, then, that despite the editors' and Cuadriello's demonstration of the existence of New Worlders in Madrid, this collection engages less with the growing scholarship on indigenous travelers (free and enslaved) to this city and other European courts.²

América en Madrid covers a vast territory, perhaps more so than most edited volumes. It spans from the mid-sixteenth to the twenty-first century and is above all methodologically eclectic. It features art-historical and historical perspectives, but also weaves in the backgrounds of its contributors: from art conservation and restoration to philosophy, from literature to biochemistry, from critical theory to architecture. And its authors explore a trove of archives and artworks, some of which have very rarely analyzed.

The volume itself is handsome. Its images are generally high-quality; some are stunning. The only apparent lapse is that the biography of Marta Cacho Casal is missing at the end.

2 For a partial list of these works, see Karoline Cook, "Claiming Nobility in the Monarquía Hispánica: The Search for Status by Inca, Aztec, and Nasrid Descendants at the Habsburg Court," in *Renaissance and Reformation* 43, no. 4 (2020): 171–198; Caroline Dodds, "Aztecs Abroad? Uncovering the Early Indigenous Atlantic," in *The American Historical Review* 125, no. 3 (2020): 787–814; also *On Savage Shores: How Indigenous Americans Discovered Europe* (London: Orion, 2023); José Carlos de la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans: Seeking Justice and Reward at the Spanish Royal Court* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018): 123–154; "A costa de Su Magestad: indios viajeros y dilemas imperiales en la corte de los Habsburgo," in *Allpanchis* 72 (2008): 11–60; Esteban Mira Caballos, *El descubrimiento de Europa: Indígenas y mestizos en el Viejo Mundo* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2023); "Indios nobles y caciques en la Corte real española, siglo XVI," in *Temas Americanistas* 16 (2003): 1–6; Lauri Uusitalo, "An indigenous lord in the Spanish royal court: the transatlantic voyage of Don Pedro de Henao,

Defining the market for this book is rather challenging given its methodological and thematic eclecticism. Different chapters will appeal to different constituencies. Universities students will likely find the texts by Amelang, the editors, and Kasl, Cuadriello, Aterido, and Acosta Luna very exciting and accessible. For scholars interested in Madrid, in viceregal art and society, and early modern Spanish imperial history, this text is a must. In conclusion, this heterogenous, inter-disciplinary work will surely be recognized as a milestone in rethinking a city and its empire. It will unveil to many readers what long seemed improbable, if not impossible: an artistically and socially cosmopolitan Madrid, shaped throughout the centuries by New World actors and objects.

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Cacique of Ipiiales” in *Travel, Pilgrimage and Social Interaction from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Kuuliala and J. Rantala (New York: Routledge, 2019), 295–312; Nancy van Deusen, “Seeing Indios in Sixteenth-century Castile,” in *William & Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (2012): 205–234; *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in 16th-century Spain* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).