

RECENSIONS REVIEWS

Carlos Aguirre and Charles Walker (eds.), *Bandoleros, abigeos y montoneros : Criminalidad y violencia en el Peru, siglos XVIII-XX*. Lima, Instituto de Apoyo Agrario, 1990, 393 pp.

This collection of essays on criminality in Peru in the late-colonial to contemporary period is a welcome addition to a growing specialist literature on Latin America. All but one of the eleven essays are regional case studies, ranging in focus from Lima and the coastal area to the Andean highlands. The standard of research and level of interest of all the pieces is uniformly high. In some respects this book follows Richard Slatta's, *Bandidos. The Varieties of Latin American Banditry* (from which the article by Erick Langer is reproduced) in the search for that elusive figure, the social bandit. One important result of these detailed case studies is to confirm the degree to which the term « bandit » is open to interpretation and, in reality, a label that has been applied to whole varieties of outlaw behaviour with varying origins and significance. This is illustrated by the actors examined, who range from highway robbers (*salteadores*) and cattle rustlers (*abigeos*) to bandit-guerrillas (*montoneros*). The regional approach works well here, producing a series of sensitive and nuanced analyses that place criminality in the social contexts of urban and rural environments, and class, community, gender and racial relationships.

Inevitably, changes and continuities in criminality over time are more difficult to follow. The editors themselves do not attempt to elaborate any overarching conclusions in their short introduction. Even so, dialogue and development between the essays is evident, and they can be grouped roughly together by chronology and subject matter. For instance, it is interesting to compare the contributions of Carmen Vivianco (a typology of coastal colonial banditry) and Flores Galindo (banditry in the Lima region 1760-1830) with those of Charles Walker (criminality and politics in the early Republic) and Carlos Aguirre (slave flight and banditry in Lima, 1821-1854). There emerges a strong suggestion that outlawry ceased to serve as a social safety valve and became politicised during the Wars of Independence against colonialism and the unrest of the early Republic, though not in any consistent or class-conscious direction. The fragmentation of slavery as an institution is also highlighted in these

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essays, showing how runaway slaves (cimarrones) often became launched into lives of crime. Indian communities emerge as the frequent victims of robber bands composed of blacks, mestizos and whites. In contrast, Ward Stavig (criminality in colonial Cusco) and Erick Langer (a comparison between banditry in mixed-race and indigenous communities in the Bolivian Andes, 1882-1930) offer a fascinating interior view on criminality within the Indian population. The interaction between peasant rebellion and banditry is explored by Eric Mayer (an ecological and quantitative study of Ayacucho, 1852-1929) and Lewis Taylor (banditry in Hualgayoc, 1870-1900) to different conclusions. The first suggests that criminal activity tended to rise in the aftermath of social protest, while the second presents changes in banditry as a prelude to a period of vendettas and open confrontations in the early twentieth century.

A striking contrast with all the other case studies is offered by the oral histories of Benjamin Orlove and Carmen Escalente and Ricardo Valderrama (cattle rustling in Cusco and Cotabambas respectively). Here the testimony of outlaws reveals just how complex the construction of criminality can be. Such sources are not available to the other contributors, reliant upon « official » records (particularly from courts) which skew evidence towards the captured and allow little reliable opportunity for criminals to speak on their own behalf. A clear theme in this book, much referred to but little explored, is the important part played by the state in shaping criminality and delineating the social space for it. As the editors recognise, a great deal of investigation remains to be done on the history of law, the legal profession, police forces and courts in order to fill this gap. In this regard, though rather anomalous next to the other contributions, the final essay by Deborah Poole on indigenist criminology points the way to further research.

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Alfred Soman, Sorcellerie et Justice Criminelle (16^e-18^e siecles). Variorum Publishers, Midsummer Norton, 1992.

Alfred Soman has long been recognized as one of the leading researchers on the French criminal archives of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but a full appreciation of his work has been impeded by his