

# Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies

Journal of the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies

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Volume 44  
Issue 1 *Iberia in Entangled and Transnational  
Contexts*

Article 12

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2019

## Review of David Ringrose, *Europeans Abroad, 1450–1750*

Carla Rahn Phillips

University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, [phill002@umn.edu](mailto:phill002@umn.edu)

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### Recommended Citation

Phillips, Carla Rahn (2019) "Review of David Ringrose, *Europeans Abroad, 1450–1750*," *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*: Vol. 44 : Iss. 1 , Article 12.

<https://doi.org/10.26431/0739-182X.1335>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.asphs.net/bsphs/vol44/iss1/12>

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These complaints aside, *Kingdoms of Faith* is a masterful work, an invaluable reference source, and a welcome addition to both scholarship and popular literature on Muslim Iberia.

**Maya Soifer Irish**  
**Rice University**

**Ringrose, David. *Europeans Abroad, 1450–1750*. Lanham, Maryland; Boulder, Colorado; New York; London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019. xi + 286 pp. + 13 ill. + 20 maps + 5 tables.**

Readers who know the author's previous work will expect far more than the title suggests; they will not be disappointed. Based on his own research and teaching experience, as well as broad reading, Ringrose challenges prevailing interpretations of the role of early modern Europeans in the broader sweep of world history. He lays the groundwork with a brief overview of factors that led them to venture beyond the world they knew in search of new opportunities for trade with known partners in Asia, unknown islands and lands to claim, and peoples to convert to Christianity. By the middle of the fifteenth century, Europe had emerged from the economic depression following the Black Death, and the Mongol Empire had been replaced by a number of successor states, one of which—the Ottoman Empire—was in an expansive phase that restricted European trade with Asia.

The cultural baggage that Europeans carried with them, their reception in other parts of the world, their response to the realities they faced, and how those elements combined shape the central arguments of the book. Chapter Two explores the standard categories of nation, society, and religion as sources of European identity. Based on numerous studies in the past several decades, the author argues that these categories were much more fluid than earlier definitions assumed. The modern concept of nation did not exist in the early modern centuries; loyalty was given to a particular monarch or other leader. Moreover, loyalties often shifted, depending on the circumstances, and when Europeans traveled abroad, they were often lumped together in the perceptions of their host societies, regardless of their points of origin. At home or abroad, family, kinship, and business networks formed the core of personal identity and loyalty. Similar networks in other societies around the globe made it easier for Europeans to understand and relate to those societies, sometimes merging with local networks so thoroughly that they ceased to identify with Europe in any meaningful sense.

The author then surveys the most important empires in the early modern world, focusing on those that included large land areas and populations, stable governments, and the capacity to raise large armies and to regulate and encourage

trade. In Eurasia, that meant the Habsburg/Spanish Empire in the west, the Chinese Empire in the east, and the Muslim empires that succeeded the Mongols in west, central, and south Asia: Mamluks, Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals. In the Americas that meant the Aztecs, the Incas, and their successor, the Spanish Empire. Both the Aztecs in the Valley of Mexico and the Incas in South America ruled over numerous conquered peoples by the time the Spaniards arrived in the first third of the sixteenth century. By then, internal tensions and resentments, along with Old World diseases to which local peoples had no prior exposure, aided the Spanish conquests. The effects of disease and conquest resulted in catastrophic declines of the Native American populations, although the numbers involved are in greater dispute than Ringrose acknowledges, and formal and informal 'marriages' among Native Americans, Europeans, Africans, and other peoples in the Americas make it difficult to generalize about individual groups. Over time, the population recovered, and the colonial economies developed their own internal dynamics and needs, apart from their bureaucratic ties to Spain. Foreshadowing the central argument of later chapters, Ringrose notes that from the mid-sixteenth century, American silver from mines in Peru and New Spain flowed not only to Europe, but more importantly to the silver-hungry markets of China and India.

The last pieces of the interconnected world are considered in Chapters Five and Six: Africa, Brazil, and Atlantic North America. In the fifteenth century, the Portuguese established trading enclaves in the various islands off the coast of West Africa and dealt with the well-established African kingdoms on the mainland for gold and slaves. Although they conducted raids into the interior, their numbers and forces could never aspire to the control of large territories. Similarly in Brazil, the Portuguese remained largely on the coast. The dyestuff known as brazil-wood was a valuable early export, but over time plantations worked by Indian and then African slaves produced sugar and tobacco—products with an elastic demand in Europe and the Americas.

In North America, French migration also involved small numbers of males who established liaisons with local women and did not attempt to control large territories. Farther south, English immigrants were often family groups fleeing religious persecution and looking for lands to settle. Inevitably, that brought them into conflict with local Indian tribes already under stress from Old World epidemic diseases. Over time, English colonies in the southeast and the Caribbean islands developed plantation agriculture producing sugar, tobacco, and cotton with slave labor, while colonies in New England eventually produced abundant food crops to trade with plantation societies elsewhere in the Americas. By the late seventeenth century, the various parts of the world were linked in a complex network of interchanges involving peoples, goods, technology, legal and cultural norms, systems of beliefs, and many sub-headings thereof.

Readers who have followed the trends and arguments of world history in recent decades will recognize the book's central arguments: Europeans who ventured abroad in the early modern centuries, far from leading an inexorable march toward world domination, were outnumbered and vulnerable. Though Spaniards were able to defeat the existing empires in the Americas, elsewhere the picture was far different. In Africa and the various parts of Asia, Europeans survived and prospered by working with local rulers and elites and by tapping into pre-existing commercial and social networks. Similar patterns characterized North America. Linking the emerging world economy together was the silver mined in New Spain and Peru, spread widely over complex networks of trade by land and sea. One could argue that maritime technology was Europe's greatest contribution to the growth of world trade, though Ringrose does not emphasize that point.

In synthesizing a topic as vast as world history, an author cannot read everything or deal with every controversy marking its various sub-fields. Specialists will inevitably disagree with some of the author's emphases and conclusions and will find fault with specific bits of information. Nonetheless, this is an important book that deserves a wide readership.

**Carla Rahn Phillips**

**Union Pacific Professor (*Emerita*) in Comparative Early Modern History  
University of Minnesota – Twin Cities**

**Torremocha Hernández, Margarita, and Alberto Corada Alonso, coords. *El estupro. Delito, mujer y sociedad en el Antiguo Régimen*. Valladolid: Ediciones Universidad de Valladolid, 2018. 311 pp.**

*El estupro* is comprised of nine pieces, representative of different historical approaches to the subject. It encompasses the Iberian world, including a *coda* on a contemporary Italian case, which prompted legal changes that, not surprisingly, had already been in place during the twelfth century. Given its multidisciplinary subject, contributions have struck a balance between the quantitative, legal, economic, medical, social and emotional issues involving *stuprum*, whose definition is amply discussed on the first chapter, pointing to its late codification due to its perception as a moral or behavioral matter. This *interregno* between clerical and civil law fell mostly on the latter since the beginning of our era and was based on Roman law until the Germanic code introduced a vindictive aspect to it. The development of universities in Spain brought about the implication of religious, nobiliary, and economic aspects to an already complicated scope. The *Partidas* (ca. 1265) as the monumental work it still is for Western civilization, will weigh in the subject until the nineteenth-century reconsiderations, as laid out by Félix Javier Martínez