

somewhere in the United States thousands of kilometres away. The advent of “Total War” in the late nineteenth century changed the face of warfare. World War I is illustrative. As Bruno Cabanes notes, from the start the number of casualties was immense: “As for the German army, September 1914 was one of the three deadliest months of the war: 71,481 were killed or declared missing, only a few less than in July and September 1916” (p. 287).

Although not that common in the Great War, sexual violence was endemic in many conflicts of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Millions of German women were raped by soldiers of the Red Army during their advance to and fight for Berlin in April–May 1945. Belligerents deliberately target women, as Joanna Burke shows: “Compared to peacetime, wartime rape becomes an intensely *public* [italic in original, ML] display of brutality” (p. 159). Violence against civilians was an essential part of Nazi Germany’s war, especially on the Eastern Front. The main victims were, of course, the Jews, but the Wehrmacht was equally ruthless in its treatment of Soviet POWs. As Jochen Hellbeck states: “With almost the same exterminatory zeal that they showed towards Jews, Germans proceeded to kill Soviet POWs. Their systematic destruction was an integral component of Nazi policy towards the Soviet Union” (p. 309). In the last months of World War II, the Nazi regime also turned its violence against its own people, further blurring the lines between soldiers and civilians.⁷ Remarkably, Volume Four includes no separate chapter on World War II. Of course, various chapters touch on it, but given that World War II was, arguably, the most destructive conflict in human history, it would have been justified to include a chapter on it.

The editors of the fourth volume observe that “light-weight, rapid fire, semi-automatic guns designed for military conflict are brought into American schools to settle petty, personal scores in fits of youthful rage – warzone equipment has become a violent ‘personal accessory’” (p. 2). As recent events have shown, that is a harrowing observation indeed.

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GARCÍA-MONTÓN, ALEJANDRO. *Genoese Entrepreneurship and the Asiento Slave Trade, 1650–1700*. [Early Modern Iberian History in Global Contexts: Connexions.] Routledge, New York [etc.] 2022. xvi, 294 pp. £120.00. (E-book: £33.29.)

Since George Scelle’s ground-breaking work *La traite négrière aux Indes de Castille. Contrats traités d’assiento* from 1906, few historians have dared to take on the complex subject of the Spanish *asiento de negros*.⁸ The incredibly detailed work of

⁷See, for example, Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (London, 2010); Ian Kershaw, *The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler’s Germany, 1944–1945* (London, 2011); Bastiaan Willems, *Violence in Defeat: The Wehrmacht on German Soil, 1944–1945* (Cambridge, 2021); Martijn Lak and Bastiaan Willems, “Introduction: Halting Operation Barbarossa: Transnational Aspects of the First Six Months of the Eastern Front”, *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 34:4 (2021), pp. 487–492.

⁸Georges Scelle, *La traite négrière aux Indes de Castille. Contrats et traités d’assiento* (Paris, 1906).

Alejandro García-Montón provides historians with a new handbook that offers fresh perspectives on the hazardous trade.

García-Montón opposes the view that, following the Age of the Genoese, the period between 1557 and 1627 during which Genoese merchants made fortunes serving the Spanish Crown, the Genoese were pushed out of international circuits by the Dutch and the English. Instead, García-Montón shows how the Genoese “sought new markets and commercial partners, diversified their investment portfolios, and found creative solutions to deal with a new phase in the mercantile world” (p. 6). They were, as García-Montón argues, “agents of change”.

One of these agents of global change was Domenico Grillo (1617–1686), born in Genoa. Grillo is an interesting case in point. His family had profited from the Age of the Genoese but was not as politically influential and wealthy as other Genoese families. In 1647, Grillo and his associate Ambrosio Lomellino (†1667) were expelled from Genoa. They were apparently involved in “a reactionary plot against venality in the promotion of new patricians” (pp. 87–88). They fled to Madrid. While in Spain, they created new networks but also maintained close relations with Genoa. García-Montón points out that they were constantly balancing their “dual allegiance” to the Spanish Empire on the one hand and the Republic of Genoa on the other hand (p. 67). With the case of Grillo, García-Montón shows how Genoese merchants sought entrepreneurial opportunities after the Age of the Genoese and how they successfully adapted to the changed mercantile world.

Just by looking at the abbreviations, one sees the vast number of archives García-Montón has explored, in Italy, Spain, Peru, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. This is one of the many strengths of García-Montón’s work. Instead of letting the historiographical traditions lead him, he lets the sources speak. Juxtaposing sources from these archives – sources that are, one should not forget, often incredibly hard to locate and complex to comprehend – allows for a new perspective, one in which the multitude of actors and their motives come to light. This attests to the fact that Grillo’s business activities, most importantly among them the acquirement of the *asiento*, were based on and executed using trans-imperial and intra-imperial networks.

Apart from the introduction and epilogue, García-Montón’s book consists of seven chapters. In the first chapter, García-Montón provides us with an overview of the Grillo family, which is contextualized in the second chapter about Genoese entrepreneurs in the seventeenth century. While the Age of the Genoese had ended, Grillo’s trade would flourish more than ever. In the chapters that follow we move to the Grillo and Lomellino *asiento*. In the third chapter, García-Montón explains in detail how the Spanish slave trade developed during the seventeenth century and how Grillo changed the system, a point I return to later. In the early modern time, and especially in an empire as vast as that of Spain, one of the main problems of merchants was how to control their agents (principal-agent problem). García-Montón’s fourth chapter deals with this, focusing on the factors, ships’ captains, and judges (*jueces conservadores*) that were employed by Grillo. What we learn is that those who were employed by Grillo represented a “cross-section of the amalgam of invisible actors that populated the Spanish Empire” (p. 160). It is, perhaps, the most important chapter as it presents one of García-Montón’s main arguments, namely, that Grillo was a network

maker and a network *taker*, a point that he returns to throughout the book. In Chapter Five, for example, García-Montón shows that the international wool trade provided him with services and capital for the *asiento*. It further demonstrates Grillo's strategy to access the Dutch and English Atlantic. In the sixth chapter, García-Montón convincingly argues how the *asiento* opened the door to (contra-band) trans-imperial and intra-Spanish American trade. In the last chapter, we return to Genoa. It is shown how Genoa was a Mediterranean hub: Spanish American produce, mainly silver, was transported from Genoa across the Levant and beyond.

Before 1640, the Spanish slave trade was operated by multiple merchants simultaneously. García-Montón shows how Grillo and Lomellino used their negotiated privileges to transform the *asiento* into an *estanco* (monopoly) in 1662 (p. 109). By assessing Grillo and Lomellino's proposal to the Spanish King and the negotiations that followed, García-Montón shows how the former exploited the entrepreneurial opportunities that arose from Spain's fiscal and financial crisis. Firstly, Grillo and Lomellino offered to build the Spanish king ten vessels in Spanish shipyards, a welcome proposal considering the weak state the Spanish Armada was in. Secondly, by granting Grillo and Lomellino the proposed monopolistic charter, tax collection would be increased: taxes were raised over the fixed number of enslaved Africans introduced in the Spanish Americas. In essence, the *asiento* functioned as a tax-farming contract. Lastly, the *Junta de Negros* (naively) argued that granting the *asiento* to Grillo and Lomellino was a way to externalize the costs of monitoring contraband trade (pp. 113–114).

As expected, however, the interests of Grillo and Lomellino and the Spanish Crown ended up not aligning at all. In the years that followed, Grillo's and Lomellino's policy was, as García-Montón explains, to meet "as few of their obligations to the Crown" as possible to maximize "the political support that the Crown afforded them through the privileges granted in the *asiento*", which led to constant conflict (p. 119). For example, not all ten ships were built, and they failed to meet payments. Whereas Seville's *consulado* perceived the *asiento* and the *Carrera de Indias* as two separate trades, nothing was less true. The products that arrived with the Spanish galleons were sold at fairs in the Isthmus of Panama. In between these fairs, there were no transactions. This meant that the merchants in the Isthmus were dependent on the arrival of the galleons for the trade in products from Europe. Grillo's and Lomellino's ships, however, now arrived in between these fairs with products imported from Curaçao, thus competing directly with the merchants of the *consulado*. This contraband trade went untaxed, which meant the Spanish Crown missed out (pp. 208, 213–214).

The underlying question is why Grillo and Lomellino were interested in the *asiento*. As García-Montón explains, there were other ways to enter the Caribbean slave trade. Their connections to Cadiz and Amsterdam merchants would, according to García-Montón, have provided Grillo and Lomellino with access to "the flourishing trans-imperial markets in the Caribbean" (p. 105). While they probably invested some of their resources in these transactions, they ultimately chose to negotiate for the *asiento* instead.

Was it related to the "silver puzzle" that García-Montón identifies (p. 70)? Silver was widely available in seventeenth-century Genoa, yet it remains unclear just *how much* silver reached the city, *why* it arrived there, and *how* it was subsequently

used. García-Montón points out that “silver was the product highest in commercial priorities for Grillo and his partners” (p. 254). Further, he explains that silver was often shipped from Genoa to other places “to redeem loans contracted with the merchants who backed the financial machinery of the *asiento* in Europe” (p. 257). It seems likely that the *asiento* gave Grillo control over the distribution of Spanish American silver to Genoa and elsewhere, but, perhaps lacking the evidence to dissect this system, García-Montón does not fully substantiate this argument.

García-Montón’s research reaffirms the role private actors and foreigners played in the Spanish empire. The case study of Grillo is an excellent example of this. García-Montón’s work is based on the thorough investigation of complex, international archival collections. The outcome is an in-depth study of the Genoese Domenico Grillo and the *asiento*, an inspiring work that any historian researching the early modern Spanish empire must read.

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KURODA, AKINOBU. *A Global History of Money*. [Routledge Explorations in Economic History.] Routledge, London [etc.], 2020, xiv, 213 pp. £120.00. (Paper: £36.99; E-book: £33.29.)

The market for general histories of money appears inexhaustible. John Kenneth Galbraith’s *Money: Whence it Came, Where It Went* (first published in 1975) was re-issued in 2017 by Princeton University Press, barely a year after that same press published Will Goetzmann’s widely praised *Money Changes Everything*. Glyn Davies’s *A History of Money: From Ancient Times to the Present Day* (1994) is now in its fourth edition, while Niall Ferguson’s *The Ascent of Money* (2008) continues to do brisk sales. Across these volumes and many others, money’s history takes a familiar form: it starts with the cities of the ancient Mediterranean, lingers over the Roman Republic and Empire, touches briefly on the Middle Ages, hitting its stride with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century silver flows, the founding of the Bank of England, and the emergence of modern, industrialized, capitalist society. It is a unidirectional story, one that runs from simple to complex, from local to global, from material to abstract. Counter-narratives exist – Geoffrey Ingham’s *The Nature of Money* (2004) and Felix Martin’s *Money: The Unauthorised Biography* (2013) have hitherto been my personal favorites (though others prefer more polemical works by Mary Poovey and David Graeber) – but they, too, touch on many of the same episodes.

Akinobu Kuroda’s *A Global History of Money* poses an important challenge to all these books. Kuroda, Professor of East Asian history at the University of Tokyo, makes three important and innovative analytic moves: 1) he starts his story in East Asia; 2) he attends as much to peasants as he does to bankers; 3) he consistently