



REVIEW ARTICLE

## From Borderlands to the Sea: Recent Studies of Indigenous Atlantic Travellers

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Matthew R. Bahar, *Storm of the Sea: Indians and Empires in the Atlantic's Age of Sail* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2019), 304 pp. ISBN: 9780190874247, \$36.95.

Nancy E. van Deusen, *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2015), 352 pp. ISBN: 9780822358589, \$28.95.

José Carlos de la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans: Seeking Justice and Reward at the Spanish Royal Court* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2018), 360 pp. ISBN: 9781477314869, \$29.95.

Coll Thrush, *Indigenous London: Native Travelers at the Heart of Empire* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2016), 328 pp. ISBN: 9780300206302, \$38.00.

### Abstract

The dominions, political strategies, and diverse lifeways of Indigenous peoples in the early modern Atlantic world have been treated generally as rural and terrestrial—ending at the shore—while European supremacy over the high seas has been taken for granted. These conceptual assumptions have extended into methodological approaches to encounters between Indigenous polities and European empires that emphasize borderlands, frontiers, and middle (or native) grounds. Four recent monographs depart from such framings by focusing on Indigenous actions in cities such as Lima, Madrid, and London, travel across the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and exertions of naval supremacy on the sea. In doing so, they provide new vantage points for reconsidering the meanings of freedom and slavery, diplomacy, trans-oceanic legal networks, and piracy.

**Keywords:** Atlantic world; age of sail; Indians of South America; Indians of North America

### Introduction

In 2009, Amy Turner Bushnell argued that Atlantic history “focused on European and African Atlantic-crossers and their creole descendants” while “American Indians . . . enter that world laterally.”<sup>1</sup> A decade later, Caroline Dodds Pennock echoed this ambivalent relationship between historians of the Indigenous Americas and the Atlantic world, noting that in the latter, Indigenous communities are frequently treated as “static recipi-

<sup>1</sup> Amy Turner Bushnell, “Indigenous America and the Limits of the Atlantic World, 1493–1825,” in Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 212, 191.

ents of transatlantic encounter.”<sup>2</sup> In the decade between these critiques, several historians have answered the challenge and written monographs that convert the Atlantic and its littoral regions from places dominated by European ways of knowing and maritime power to places crossed frequently and at times dominated by Indigenous peoples.

In their own way, four recent monographs counteract the tendency to treat Indigenous peoples as terrestrially-bound and alien to urban spaces. Instead, they highlight Indigenous peoples from the Atlantic and Pacific worlds as frequent oceanic travellers, urban residents, and visitors—as captives, slaves, diplomats, ship captains, exiled nobles, favour seekers, and raiders—from the fifteenth to the twentieth century. Additionally, in varying degrees and to different ends, they all explore the search for justice and recognition as a common motivating factor for trans- and cis-Atlantic travel. Three emphasise cities in the Atlantic and Pacific worlds as the locus for Indigenous-imperial interactions, while a third centres on the struggle for sovereignty and power on the sea itself, specifically the northwest Atlantic.

Nancy van Deusen’s *Global Indios* and José Carlos de la Puente Luna’s *Andean Cosmopolitans* look at Spanish cities and *pueblos de indios* across Spain’s Atlantic and Pacific possessions to highlight spaces in which recently conquered Indigenous subjects and slaves developed sophisticated understandings of Spanish legal institutions to petition for freedom, justice, and royal favour. Matthew Bahar’s *Storm of the Sea* overturns assumptions of European naval supremacy across the early modern western Atlantic by recounting the naval supremacy asserted by successive groups of the eastern Algonquin peoples of Wabanakia, or Dawnland, from the sixteenth through the mid-eighteenth century. He shows the cultural, economic, and political importance of the Atlantic for precontact Dawnlanders, and how their incorporation of European sail technology allowed them to fiercely assert dominance over and negotiate between French and British colonists and their Indigenous neighbours and rivals. Finally, Coll Thrush’s *Indigenous London* explores four centuries of Indigenous visitors to London from the edges and interiors of England’s Pacific and Atlantic possessions. By exploring the reactions of Londoners and Indigenous visitors to each other, he reveals the growth and convulsions of an imperial capital through its entanglement with Indigenous knowledge and diplomacy. He thus demonstrates the undeniable presence of an Indigenous city whose visitors capably, despite their revulsion at times, navigated its customs and urban landscapes.

### **Indios in the Spanish Atlantic**

In *Global Indios*, Nancy van Deusen explores the struggles for justice of Indigenous peoples captured, enslaved, and transported throughout the Iberian world during the long sixteenth century, before and alongside the massive expansion of the African slave trade. She sheds new light on how colonialism and conquest changed Spanish legal culture, how Spanish subjects tenaciously dodged royal and papal prohibitions on the enslavement of *indios*, and how enslaved Indigenous peoples risked their lives and livelihood to litigate for freedom. Rather than a cis-Atlantic dissection of “the other slavery” and its resilience following its prohibition in the New Laws,<sup>3</sup> van Deusen wrestles with the vastness and peculiarity of the Spanish identity of “indio” (11). This slippery category initially included all peoples of the East and West Indies, but Spanish Atlantic and Pacific expansion generated a feverish contest between slave owners, jurists, and Indigenous peoples over the meaning of servitude and freedom in the empire. She calculates that of the roughly 650,000 Indigenous

<sup>2</sup> Caroline Dodds Pennock, “Aztecs Abroad? Uncovering the Early Indigenous Atlantic,” *American Historical Review* 125:3 (June 2020), 789, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhaa237>.

<sup>3</sup> Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America*, reprint edition (Boston: Mariner Books, 2017).

peoples enslaved in the Americas from 1492 until the end of the sixteenth century, some two thousand ended up in the Kingdom of Castile (2). From these two thousand enslaved Atlantic *indios*, she uncovered some one hundred lawsuits seeking freedom. These lawsuits, which in several cases included testimonies on the plaintiffs' behalf from none other than Bartolomé de las Casas, serve as a basis to reconstruct "fragmented tales about loss and cultural relocation" through which "enslaved individuals made sense of bondage" (14).

Deracination and displacement, or "serial dislocation," were integral to the experience of Indigenous bondage as masters and merchants used ambiguous status categories and loopholes around royal prohibitions on slavery to erase the origins of *indios* taken into servitude (85). Most *indios* who arrived as slaves in Castile had already been held in bondage in Spanish America, often since childhood. War, disease, and crushing labour regimes in the aftermath of conquest created many orphans who became part of the lucrative inter-American trade in unfree labour. Masters and their families, which included their slaves and servants, moved frequently in the early sixteenth century, and at times ended up in Castile. Castile, while never reaching the status of "slave society," undoubtedly represented a "society with slaves."<sup>4</sup> Also, *indio* slaves moved as Spanish families retrieved the American property of their deceased relatives. This mobility and dislocation, combined with the early age at which servitude began, created difficulties in Castilian courts for *indios* to prove their place and language of origin, so necessary to determining if they had been legally or illegally enslaved.

Slave owners further muddied these waters by using dubious exceptions to the royal prohibitions of 1501 and 1542, which decoupled *indio* from the status of natural slave, and creating ambiguous categories of servitude to justify their possession of *indios*. Clues for these strategies flow largely from the paper trails produced by masters' testimony in Castilian courts against their servants and slaves as well as the royal licences they had to produce to prove rightful ownership of a slave or servant and explain how they had come into their possession. Just war, real or invented, and the practice of *rescate* (literally ransom, but in this case the purchase of Indigenous captives from caciques in the name of redeeming them) were common justifications for keeping Indigenous peoples in servitude. For instance, in the case of Juan, an Indigenous slave who escaped in Castile, his owner testified in 1525 that as a boy Juan had been part of a Taino uprising in Hispaniola and thus was a legitimate "just war" slave (67). The Crown too was complicit in these practices as slaves were branded with G for "*guerra*" and R for "*rescate*" to guarantee the payment of the royal fifth (7). Finally, van Deusen uncovers the frequent use of the term *naboría*—a liminal status between free and enslaved whereby an *indio* was a lifelong servant in exchange for a family's guardianship—that owners used to defend their rightful ownership of *indios* (6).

Several cases of petitions for freedom in the Castilian village of Carmona near Seville shed light on the mechanics of the global "other slavery," the challenges of litigating against one's master, and, the "unstoried lives" erased by colonial archives and oceanic crossings. Unlike notarial documents and wills that demonstrate the treatment of Indigenous peoples as property, van Deusen demonstrates that lawsuits provide a unique vantage point for considering the "palpable aspects of the intimacies between masters and slaves" (80). For instance, they give insights into everyday life for slaves and servants in Castilian homes: food, dress, labour, punishment, and the affective or hostile ties with masters. They also give glimpses into a litigant's relationship with the cosmopolitan world of other *indios* from as far and wide as New Spain, China, Malacca, and Río de la Plata living in a single home (84). The decision to sue a master was extreme. It opened the door to

<sup>4</sup> Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

punishment and could end the façade of kin-like relations as it compelled owners to go on the record and confront publicly the “violent underpinnings of their power” (97). The owner of a slave from Tierra Firme named Pedro, when he learned of Pedro’s petition for freedom, called him a “thief, a drunk, and a fugitive” and invoked his right under the Siete Partidas to whip him publicly (98).

While Indigenous litigants and advocates such as las Casas and the Council of the Indies jurist Gregorio López Tovar, who freed over one hundred slaves around Seville in 1543 (98–99), made significant headway in their crusade against the enslavement of Indigenous peoples, they were unable to stamp out the practice. Nevertheless, van Deusen’s findings make clear that unfree Indigenous oceanic travellers in Castile made an indelible impact on the “gradual psychological and legal dismantling” of the other slavery and the evolution of meanings and practices of justice across the Spanish empire. Despite the diverse origins of *indios* and the disequilibrium in power between them and their masters, urban settings and courtrooms were not foreign to them. These places became an arena in which they contributed to the changing meaning of *indios* from slaves to legal minors (*miserables*) worthy of the Crown’s protection.

As José Carlos de la Puente Luna demonstrates in *Andean Cosmopolitans*, unfree Indigenous peoples were but one facet of Indigenous engagement with the legal networks and institutions of the Spanish Empire. For decades, historians have documented the famed litigiousness of Andean nobles and commoners in Spanish courts after the fall of the Inca Empire.<sup>5</sup> However, de la Puente vividly illustrates how this litigiousness was transatlantic in scope. Andean claimants across social ranks quickly seized on the Habsburg Royal Court (which moved to Madrid in 1651 and consisted of the royal residence, the Council of the Indies, and their respective secretarial offices and audience chambers) as a tangible place to receive justice and royal favour. He reconstructs the transatlantic webs connecting Indigenous claimants to courtrooms in Peru and the royal court and how Indigenous nobles, commoners, *mestizos* from the Andes, and their legal representatives—*procuradores de causas*, *solicitadores*, and *poderes* (procurators, solicitors, and powers of attorney)—accessed them. Through this process, he argues, these Andean cosmopolitans “inscribed” themselves as modern imperial subjects and the Andes as a critical region in Atlantic Indigenous studies (6).

For de la Puente, the decades-long conquest of the Inca Empire and the building of Spanish rule in its aftermath literally and figuratively set Andean claimants in motion within the new viceroyalty and across the Atlantic. He documents how the conquistadors were not the only ones to establish transatlantic legal networks to author *probanzas de mérito* and lobby for royal favour on their behalf. The son of Huayna Capac, Paullu Tupac Inca, set up a parallel network of legal ecclesiastical experts and advocates, procurators, and powers of attorney to lobby on his behalf in Lima and Castille (20–21). Non-Inca nobles, caciques and *kurakas*, quickly followed suit to confirm their titles as lords, to defend their common assets and pastures, and to challenge the *mita* labour draft. In 1562, the first cacique took their case to the Habsburg court. The primary case study of this early litigiousness focuses on Quechua-speaking communities in Jauja in the central highlands, and reveals that the primary reason to go to court centred on the defence and expansion of the *sapci*, or communal assets.

This parallel Indigenous legal tradition created many paths to power and prestige for non-noble or elite Andeans. In an analogous way to how colonial archives hid scribal labour, so too did judicial archives obscure the empowerment of *khipu* chord-keepers,

<sup>5</sup> Karen Spalding, *Huarochiri: An Andean Society under Inca and Spanish Rule* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1984); Steve J. Stern, *Peru’s Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1640* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

Indian *cabildos*, accountants, and stewards of communal funds (25).<sup>6</sup> The reforms carried out by Viceroy Francisco de Toledo following his taking office in 1569 acted strongly to reduce this litigiousness. However, a critical tension at the heart of this project rendered it fictitious: to keep Indigenous peoples in their “natural” homelands, but also keep the king’s justice within reach. Instead of reducing the flood of claimants, the reach of Andean claimants grew. By the seventeenth century, they had activated their legal advocates and themselves set forth to seek royal favour in Lima and Castille. Their actions effectively created a three-tiered system of justice—local, regional, and imperial (53).

While many early lawsuits grew from conflicts in rural contexts, throughout the course of the seventeenth century the association between cities and the law produced a process of “native urban ethnogenesis” whereby lettered Andeans made their way to Lima and Castile (91). In doing so, they created a new class of native elites with access to and close connections with courts and royal appointments to office. Lima thus became “the gateway into the legal Atlantic” (92). Commercial and employment opportunities arose in the seat of vicerealty as artisans, traders, schoolteachers, militiamen, and colonial officials allowed urban Indians to gain a previously unknown level of prestige and prosperity, which in turn created a layer of go-betweens who claimed to speak on behalf of the *República de Indios*, and the nascent transatlantic *Nación Índica* (Indian Nation).

While wealthier Andeans could afford the exorbitant legal fees to pay what amounted to a legal team to bring their cases before the court in Madrid, others used connections with royal officials in Lima to receive licences and personal recommendations to travel overland through Panama and eventually take the nine to ten month journey to Spain. In fact, these relations between plebeian clients and their patrons and benefactors represented a common practice for facilitating the transatlantic voyage and financing extended stays at court. The student-disciple version of this dynamic carried out by priests in particular contributed a high volume of travellers and became an important conduit for legal and other literacies for many Indigenous peoples. In other words, in spite of the expansion of a new Limeño Indigenous elite, these transformations created new and spacious venues for commoners to cross the Atlantic. Middling sectors of urban Indians who donned Spanish dress and professions (earning them the title of *indios criollos*) still had access to the pricier legal networks. As early as 1607, five Limeños pooled their resources to pay a solicitor to secure “copies of royal orders, titles, and decrees” from Madrid (110). Thus, despite the stratification of Lima’s urban Indians in terms of rank and class, they gained access to the expanding transatlantic networks of litigation and favour seeking.

Ultimately, Andean Indigenous people rapidly integrated themselves into new post-conquest urban settings and by the end of the seventeenth century had become formidable transatlantic travellers and litigants. Their success in court and the length of their stays stands out in comparison to Indigenous peoples’ experiences with the British empire in London, which resulted in transient visits, and often ended in death, and generally failed to curry royal favour. In contrast, many Andean cosmopolitans of diverse social classes not only made their way to Madrid, but refused to leave while their cases were under review. Despite protestations of ministers and advisers, their stays were covered at “his Majesty’s expense” (123) while their cases were pending. Thus, the Spanish Atlantic was very much an Indigenous Atlantic for free and captive peoples who left indelible marks on the urban landscapes and legal culture of the fledgling global empire.

<sup>6</sup> Kathryn Burns, *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010).

## On the Sea and in the City of the British Atlantic

In *Storm of the Sea*, Matthew Bahar erodes the assumption of European naval superiority in the early modern Atlantic. He uncovers the maritime supremacy asserted by the Eastern Algonquin Wabanaki peoples of Dawnland (the fishing grounds and littorals of Maine, the St. Lawrence, and Nova Scotia in the northwest Atlantic) in the face of French and British colonialism from the sixteenth century to the end of the Seven Years War (1763). The subcultures of the Wabanaki peoples included the “Abenaki, Penobscot (Penawapskewi), Maliseet (Wolastoqiyik), Passamaquoddy (Pestomuhkati), and Mi’kmaq” (3). In parallel fashion to how the Mapuche people of South America’s Southern Cone and the Comanche in North America adopted the horse to assert dominance over Europeans and their Indigenous rivals, so too did the Wabanaki enhance their existing maritime prowess by swiftly incorporating European ships and sail technology into their repertoire (4–5). Drawing on archives from both sides of the French and British Atlantic and extensive accounts of Europeans involved in Wabanakia, Bahar pieces together an evolving “blue-water” strategy of diplomatic and naval policies and economic extraction through which sagamores (Native leaders) enriched themselves, asserted their sovereignty, and subdued imperial encroachment into their lands and fishing grounds.

One of the book’s finest contributions is its emphasis on the importance of the sea and seafaring to Wabanaki beliefs, traditions, and political economy, which pushes against the treatment of Indigenous peoples and intercultural borderlands as fundamentally terrestrial. Dawnland’s inhabitants only opted for the interior over the ocean during winter. These woodlands, rather than the ocean, represented a place of scarcity and danger (37). The ocean infused every aspect of life as generations of Wabanaki passed down stories of the “cosmic struggle to rationalise an oftentimes unwieldy and unpredictable ocean” (19). Archaeological remains of boat-building tools, and bones and skins from whales, fish, and seals attested to the fact that at least five thousand years ago, the people who became the Wabanaki had developed durable watercraft capable of sailing far enough from shore to take advantage of deep sea marine life (18). In 1605, for instance, British onlookers witnessed this mastery as they described in awe how a party of Abenaki hunters leapt from their open-ocean-worthy vessels to kill a right whale and tow it to shore (32). While leadership within communities tended to be hereditary, prowess at hunting the sea’s bounty served as a pivotal way for sagamores to gain prestige as leaders. Bahar’s narrative of the archaeological and oral record unravels the trope of land-bound inhabitants of the Americas and sea-minded Europeans, especially the Iberians beginning in the fifteenth century.

A pair of Mi’kmaq petroglyphs which memorialised important events in their history and open the first two chapters foreshadow another critical contribution of *Storm of the Sea*: how the “technological revolution in sail” pioneered by the Mi’kmaq from 1500 to 1630 facilitated the dominance of the Wabanaki confederations for the ensuing century and a half. The first petroglyph, from around 1500, depicts mariners in a simple canoe and the second, which lacks a date, includes similar human figures in a vessel with sails. In the course of a century or less, Mi’kmaq artisans felt confident to immortalise their incorporation of European ships and sails. When the Mi’kmaq acquired British shallops, at times by boarding them and strong-arming possession from the captains (49), they quickly mastered European craftsmanship to the point that their ships were nearly indistinguishable from English vessels (56). This new mobility ushered in a change from harvesting the fruit of the sea to raiding English and sedentary Indigenous communities from Massachusetts to north of Nova Scotia. By 1621, the success and violence of Mi’kmaq raiding of agricultural harvests and captive-taking convinced nine Massachusetts sachems to seek King James’ protection (59). As the Mi’kmaq power receded in the face of the

emerging fur trade and the growing French and English colonial presence in the region, a pan-Wabanaki coalition headed by the chief-sagamore Madockawando emerged to exert a new naval supremacy.

The rise to prominence of Native leaders through naval prowess functioned as another, and until now largely unexplored, vector for Indigenous peoples' awareness of transatlantic events and imperial cultures, and the incorporation of that knowledge into their own geopolitical decision-making. In chapters three through six, Bahar provides examples of how sagamores understood and interpreted European kingship and royal favour, treaty making, and the shifting tides of inter-European warfare. For instance, by the 1770s, Madockawando's unrelenting amphibious attacks on Massachusetts had compelled the surviving colonists to pay him "a yearly Tribute of Corn" (68). The Wabanaki's success engendered their belief in the equivalence of the "stately headmen of Europe and the Dawnland," or of "sagamoreship with kingship" (82). However, in practice, this imagery was far from an exact replica. Like Indigenous peoples conquered by the Spanish Crown, many Algonquin leaders articulated an understanding of the paternal role of Europe's monarchs as protector of their "children" in order to challenge abuses by denouncing rivals, colonists, or administrators.<sup>7</sup> For instance, in the early seventeenth century, Abenakis threatened to report unruly New Englanders who had assaulted and robbed them to King James I by travelling to Europe to seek his audience. Around the same time, Mi'kmaq near Port Royal strategically "played the Atlantic game of love," by building ties with French King Henry IV and his followers, a fact displayed by their public mourning alongside French colonists upon hearing of his assassination (83). In addition to an awareness of the transatlantic functioning of monarchy and kingship, Dawnlanders evinced and acted upon a precise awareness of treaties made between European powers that affected their lands despite being prevented from sitting at the negotiating table. Time and again during the turbulent eighteenth century, Wabanaki leaders drew upon New World implications of treaties such as the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht to assert their dominance over their neighbours and colonists through piracy and naval superiority.

Despite the disintegration of Wabanakia's regional dominance between the Seven Years War and the American Revolution, as British colonists deluged Maine, Bahar underscores an important point: that the settlers and survivors of Wabanaki dominance had to actively forget and silence the memories of fear and inferiority Dawnlanders instilled in them in the previous century. In a parallel fashion to Michel-Rolph Trouillot's analysis of the silencing of the Haitian Revolution,<sup>8</sup> so too did New Englanders' erasure serve as a testament to "the monotonous cycle of vulnerability, hopelessness, and suffering they wished to put behind them" (217).

Moving away from Indigenous homelands on the edges of the British Empire, Coll Thrush follows free and captive Indigenous travellers to London from Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia, in order to counter "narratives of native estrangement" which treat urban and Indigenous histories as polar opposites (13). Thrush's *Indigenous London* was more than another facet of London's storied hidden history. From the first recorded arrival of Indigenous people (likely Inuit) in 1501 or 1502 through the twentieth century, Indigenous visitors were often the "most visible" people in the city (8). *Indigenous London* excavates the marks and impressions these travellers made during their visits to show the imbrication between the city and "Indigenous

<sup>7</sup> In addition to the monographs by de la Puente Luna and van Deusen reviewed here, see for instance Bianca Premo, *Children of the Father King: Youth, Authority, and Legal Minority in Colonial Lima* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015).

territories, resources, knowledges, and lives,” and to present London as a space for enacting and contesting settler colonialism (15–16). To further this goal, Thrush draws on a wide array of sources such as images (sketches, monuments, paintings, broadsheets, and material culture), Londoners’ commentary on and debates over these Indigenous visitors ranging from poets like Shakespeare and Sir Walter Raleigh, and the popular press. He also begins each chapter with poetic interludes which offer meditations on the journeys of Indigenous material culture that also found its way to London.

Unlike van Deusen’s focus on captive and enslaved *indios* crossing the early modern Atlantic who sought freedom and justice in Spanish cities, like de la Puente Luna’s Andean cosmopolitans, most of Thrush’s predominantly male travellers more often than not came of their own accord. Principally, they came on diplomatic missions related to defence of land (24). While early English colonists did capture members of the eastern Algonquin peoples, several of the earliest willing arrivals to London included a Mi’kmaq sagamore who travelled with his wife to secure an alliance against the French (42–43). Two of the more famous delegations the book details included the early seventeenth-century visit from the Powhatan delegation that included Pocahontas and, a century later, a visit from four delegates of the Iroquois Confederacy (Haudenosaunee), who came to be known as “the Four Kings.” These trips rarely “conferred long-term prestige and influence” upon those who hazarded the journey (95). Nor did many Indigenous emissaries win the Crown’s favour or gain the upper hand in their disputes over land and sovereignty. As the book shows, death from hardship and disease, which claimed Pocahontas, was a frequent outcome, and many who survived the crossing east did not survive the return (57). Nevertheless, the allure of a Royal Audience and the Crown’s intervention on their behalf continued to attract a steady stream of Indigenous travellers.

While extant sources of Londoners’ reactions to Indigenous visitors far outweigh Indigenous perceptions of the city and its people, Thrush nevertheless demonstrates the depth to which the presence of Indigenous peoples shaped the changing cultural and colonial milieu and cityscape. For instance, he situates the early decades of Dawnland’s naval supremacy detailed by Bahar in the context of how London “learned” to be a colonial power and Dawnlanders learned about the new arrivals. As the eastern Algonquin incorporated European sailing technology, Londoners acquired knowledge of North America and its peoples as they debated how they might use colonisation as an exhaust valve for its booming population. “Urban similes” between the two sides of the Atlantic coloured seventeenth-century English observations of North America and its peoples. During the fateful 1603 English encounter with the Abenaki, Martin Pring favourably compared the size of their canoes to those that plied the Thames “in regard of the largesse and capacitie thereof” (39). These similes and London’s colonial fascinations exploded roughly a century later as the visit of the Haudenosaunee “Four Kings” coincided with the massive expansion of London’s printing houses who hunted for venues to feed a voracious reading public (83–85). In a century convulsed by unrest, Londoners enlisted exaggerated imagery of Indigenous lasciviousness and bloodlust into their culture war anxieties over crime, vice, and colonial rule wracking the metropolis (91).

Thrush’s most difficult task, which he accomplishes vividly, is to reconstruct the fragments of Indigenous visitors’ own reactions to the city and its peoples. Broadly speaking, he finds the visitors were regularly struck by the London’s ecology and pervasive inequality (24).

Such perceptions grew out of experiences and traditions built before the transatlantic voyage. Eastern Algonquian visitors had their own oral traditions and religious leaders who had spoken of great leaders coming from across the water from the east, and of an eagle that carried people away. These, Thrush suggests, served as analogues for the earliest encounters between the Abenaki, Mi’kmaq, and Wampanoag and the English and likely informed their perceptions of London as Algonquins made their way across



the Atlantic (52–53). While England’s polite society overwhelmingly believed they could learn nothing from “bloodthirsty savages,” the Indigenous nobility who travelled to and commented on London very much constituted their “intellectual contemporaries” (106–7).

The most famous example of Algonquins visiting London relates to Pocahontas’s Powhatan delegation that arrived in the early seventeenth century. Thrush contrasts the reactions of Pocahontas and the leader and shaman Uttamattomakin to the gruelling tour of the city, which included attending a Twelfth Night celebration in the court of King James. The absence of archival traces of Pocahontas’s reaction to *The Vision of Delight* play she attended—itself a justification for Christian conquest over Indigenous peoples—makes it difficult to establish her perceptions of London. However, Thrush suggests this may be precisely the point: her position as an elite woman and diplomat likely trained her to avoid visible reactions when under public scrutiny (55). However, Thrush shows Uttamattomakin, who sat alongside Pocahontas and the king and queen during the performance, had a much more vocal reaction. Uttamattomakin’s conversations with John Smith and his chronicler Samuel Purchas caused quite a stir when they revealed he was “decidedly unimpressed” by London and disappointed by the lack of evidence of a Christian god in the city, a fact that stood in stark contrast to his missionary zeal across the Atlantic (55).

Another well-documented Indigenous reading of London comes from the Mohegan minister Samson Occom. Occom’s profession gave his 1766 visit, which included giving sermons in poor and wealthy neighbourhoods instead of high society gatherings, particular insights into the city’s “religious landscape” and its yawning class divides (111). Following his visit with King George III where he took in the opulence of his diamond studded crown, he mused “How great and glorious must the Crown of the glorious Redeemer be.” Later on, however, he compared the wealth of the nobility to the “Rich Glutton” and the poor to Lazarus (112). Thus, when Indigenous Londoners spoke back to the city and its inhabitants, they held up a mirror to the divided heart of an empire. Though their reactions, when recoverable, ranged from revulsion to awe, many visitors proved perfectly capable of navigating its rituals and rulers.

## Conclusion

These four monographs undermine the conceptual European monopoly on the courtroom, the city, and the sea in the early modern Atlantic (and, at times, Pacific) world. Moreover, they insist Indigenous peoples’ political activities from the 1500s to the present went well beyond terrestrial borderlands, middle grounds, and frontiers. Their influence on cities could be elusive, hidden, sensational, or in many cases decidedly common and mundane. As van Deusen advocates, as the Spanish empire globalised into the Atlantic and Pacific worlds, the legal spirit and on-the-ground application of the category *indio* became increasingly ambiguous. The freedoms won by Indigenous peoples in courtrooms and in mid-sixteenth-century legal reforms were likewise unstable and subject to variable interpretations and enforcement depending on one’s location in the empire. Ultimately, she underscores the need for scholars to follow the movement of categories and legal documents, as well as the cis- and trans-oceanic physical movement of people, to begin to capture the contours of the struggles for and meanings of justice for *indios* in this period. In a similar vein, *Andean Cosmopolitans* elucidates the dynamism of the imperial courtroom as a space frequently inhabited by Indigenous litigants and favour seekers. De la Puente moreover collapses both the physical and conceptual distance between the Habsburg Royal Court and the former Inca Empire by unearthing the rapidity by which Native Andeans mastered the formal and informal channels of Spanish justice. In doing so, he reveals the vitality of the *república de*

*indios* as a new form of governance and a semi-autonomous space “devoid of Spanish tutelage and intervention” whose formation and use had Atlantic implications (196).

Thrush, on the other hand, illustrates the experiences of Indigenous peoples in an imperial metropolis beyond the court and the courtroom. While litigation and diplomacy also motivated travellers to London, these visitors comingled with the rest of the city—its peoples, neighbourhoods, churches, theatres, and popular press. London’s memorials to and accounts of Indigenous peoples alongside their impressions of the city demonstrated a deeply entangled legacy that continued well after the end of formal colonial rule. Finally, Bahar abandons the city for the sea to centre the maritime prowess of Dawnlanders, who made the exertion of French and British dominance and extraction of goods anything but smooth. The two centuries of Wabanaki dominion over European colonists reframes our understanding of piracy and maritime supremacy. Importantly, it also adds sailing technology to studies of horses as critical fonts of Indigenous resistance and adaptation in the face of conquest.

Future studies might consider the political and legal strategies of enslaved and free Africans alongside those of Indigenous petitioners and favour seekers to explore if and how their discourses of freedom and servitude overlapped or cross-pollinated. These might be micro-studies in regions where African and the other slavery were both practised, or hemispheric and global comparisons within or across empires.<sup>9</sup> From different scales and points of emphasis, these monographs successfully break down the concerns raised by Turner Bushnell and Dodds Pennock to show how Indigenous peoples in cities and on the sea challenged and reshaped the meanings of travel, freedom and servitude, legal institutions, the exercise of power, and cities themselves.

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<sup>9</sup> For an instance of the former, see Marcela Echeverri’s study of Popoyán in present-day Colombia, *Indian and Slave Royalists in the Age of Revolution: Reform, Revolution, and Royalism in the Northern Andes, 1780–1825* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016). For the latter, a fruitful comparison might be found between autonomous Indigenous peoples in the Americas like the Mapuche and the West Central African Kingdom of the Kongo: see Jesse Zarley, “Between the Lof and the Liberators: Mapuche Authority in Chile’s *Guerra a Muerte* (1819–1825),” *Ethnohistory* 66:1 (2019), 117–39, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-7217365>; and Linda Heywood and John Thornton, “Central African Leadership and the Appropriation of European Culture,” in Peter C. Mancall, ed., *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550–1624* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 194–224.

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