

BOOK REVIEWS

Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World. By CARLA GARDINA PESTANA. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. 312 pp. Illustrations, suggestions for further reading, notes, index. \$39.95.)

This rewarding book is the product of a deep, comprehensive reading of the literature on the Atlantic world between Columbus's voyages and the American Revolution. Pestana centers her narrative on the British Empire and religion. Along the way, however, she shows how British religion and politics were forged in negotiation with Irish, African, and American peoples and in the context of disputes over faith in England, Wales, Scotland, and the colonies. *Protestant Empire* is a highly successful overview that will reveal new information and insights even to specialists in the field.

Pestana opens by comparing European, Native American, and African spirituality in the year 1500. She also gives a thorough, comparative treatment of the course of the Reformation in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, demonstrating that the Reformation created new religious cultures just at the beginning of European expansion into the Atlantic world.

The English exported their religious customs and conflicts to the New World, but churches based on local authority fared better there. The New England Puritans were the most successful. Pestana intriguingly argues that, across England and the colonies, a process of "puritanization" occurred in the mid-seventeenth century, with associated skepticism regarding hierarchy and increased emphasis on doctrinal purity (87). The English Civil War also permitted sectarianism and the politicization of religious difference to flourish, although the Restoration led to a temporary reassertion of the Church of England's dominance. But pluralism could not be effectively checked, especially in the colonies. Engagement with and conversion of Africans and Native Americans added to the variety and novelty of English Atlantic religion.

Tensions between the English colonists and Native Americans, and between Protestants and Catholics, bore bitter fruit in the late seventeenth century. Conflicts such as King Philip's War and Bacon's Rebellion had strong religious overtones. The Glorious Revolution expelled the Catholic King James II from the throne, with cascading consequences throughout the colonies. When the Glorious Revolution inaugurated centuries of war between England and Catholic France (and sometimes Spain), Protestantism became even more central to the cultural identity of the English everywhere.

The Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century led to a "perplexing

combination of division and unity" (212). Transatlantic connections between evangelicals became stronger, while the revivals stoked local divisions and undermined established churches. Ultimately, the evangelical movement helped achieve unprecedented national church-state separation in the United States. But even after the American Revolution, Britain and the United States featured similarly prominent roles for religion.

Specialists will no doubt find fault with parts of Pestana's account, or they will discover that she has not plumbed every possible text on this vast subject. But this is a remarkably learned survey of religion and empire in the British Atlantic world. It is a sign of the maturation of the field of Atlantic history that a synthesis such as this can now be written.

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Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism.

By MAURICE JACKSON. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. 400 pp. Illustrations, notes, primary sources, index. \$45.)

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of scholarly interest in Anthony Benezet, the mid-eighteenth-century Quaker champion of a host of humanitarian causes and social reforms, antislavery being foremost among them. Benezet figures prominently in Christopher Leslie Brown's prize-winning study of the origins of British abolitionism, *Moral Capital* (2006), and various facets of his thought and work have been the subject of numerous journal articles. Now Maurice Jackson has published the first book-length study of the man since George S. Brookes's *Friend Anthony Benezet* (1937).

Let This Voice Be Heard is not a full biography of its subject. Rather, as its subtitle indicates, it focuses on Benezet's abolitionism and its legacy throughout the Atlantic world. The book divides into two halves. After setting the stage in chapter 1, Jackson devotes each of the next three chapters to delineating the sources of Benezet's abolitionist ideology. Jackson portrays Benezet as having combined a Quaker tradition of antislavery with the natural rights philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment and research in the published narratives of travelers who had visited Africa. Benezet's overarching goal was to demonstrate slavery's violation of Africans' fundamental humanity and equality. In the second half of the book, chapters 5 through 8, Jackson traces Benezet's influence on his contemporaries in British North America, England, France, and among prominent black men on both sides of the North Atlantic. This half details how Benezet's correspondence and writings inspired such leading figures as Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush, Granville Sharp and John Wesley, the Abbé Raynal and Olaudah Equiano.