

Bernard Bailyn: *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*.
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

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Professor Bailyn, a distinguished historian of colonial America at Harvard University, has written an eloquent and succinct overview of his vision of the Atlantic world. After organizing and directing a series of seminars on Atlantic history, Professor Bailyn pauses to look back, first, at the general concept of Atlantic history (what that phrase has meant to various people over time), and second, at the Atlantic's contours, or, how the Atlantic world has changed over the centuries. The work is a stimulating essay and the product of many years of reflection. It is also a work that will interest undergraduates as well as scholars working in this field.

The Atlantic history seminars directed by Professor Bailyn were, in their first years, limited in scope to those regions that would later become part of the United States. Professor Bailyn's Atlantic is thus profoundly British, and very northern. In a nutshell, this is the work's major problem. While expressly stating that Atlantic history is greater than the sum of its parts, "as much Spanish as British, as much Dutch as Portuguese, as much African as American", (p. 60) Professor Bailyn really focuses on one, British or Anglo-American dimension, over the course of the eighteenth century. Whenever he gives examples, he turns to British North America, occasionally mentioning Spain and its empire.

Unfortunately, the work does not have a bibliography, just a very unsatisfactory listing of sources in its endnotes. Looking through these, the reader can clearly see Professor Bailyn's preference for the eighteenth century in general, and British North America in particular. The sources listed are overwhelmingly in English, with a couple of French and Spanish works cited as well. Notably absent in a work of this scope are any Portuguese-language sources. It should not come as a surprise to the reader that the Portuguese presence in Professor Bailyn's Atlantic World is minimal, if not altogether absent. The Dutch (and for that matter the Luso-Dutch struggles of the 1600s) are equally neglected. The French presence is only marginally greater in this very British World.

If Professor Bailyn were more familiar with the literature of Portuguese expansion and interactions in the Atlantic, his would have been a very different work. Even if we limit the reading

list to works in English and French, there exists a sufficient enough number of studies on the Portuguese in the Atlantic to help fill the huge gaps in Professor Bailyn's Atlantic overview. Let me begin by asking a fundamental question not addressed in this work: who created this Atlantic World and when? I suggest that part of the answer to this question can be found in works by Zurara, Pereira, and Cadamosto, entitled, respectively, *Chronicle of the Discovery of Guinea, Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, 1506-1508*, and *The Voyages of Cadamosto and other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century*, and all usefully translated into English by the London-based Haklyut Society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These individuals, working for the Portuguese crown in the fifteenth century, began the process of creating an Atlantic World. The Azores, the Canaries, the Cape Verde Islands, São Tomé, Guiné and Angola, the territories that made up this Portuguese Atlantic, are not mentioned in Professor Bailyn's work. And because Professor Bailyn has overlooked Brazil as an important component of the Atlantic, he has also missed links between the Atlantic and central and southern Africa. Each time he mentions Africa, it is West Africa. Angola, the famous black mother of Brazil, is totally absent.

These criticisms mean only that the work does not live up to its title. Regardless, *Atlantic History: Concepts and Contours* is an engaging and sweeping view of much of the available literature in English about a mostly British North America. It would have been more accurate to label the book *The British Atlantic in the Eighteenth Century*.