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LOVEJOY Henry B. — *Prieto: Yorùbá Kingship in Colonial Cuba during the Age of Revolutions*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, Envisioning Cuba, 2018, 234 p., bibl., index, ill.

This book contextualizes the biography of a West African forced migrant in Havana, Cuba from the 1770s to 1835. Following Prieto's life chronologically, the eight chapters start with "Badagry", the lucrative port controlled first by the Ọ̀yọ́ empire, then by Fon-speaking Dahomey, and once "Old Ọ̀yọ́" collapsed its subjects became victims of the Atlantic trade. Imaginably, Prieto was carried from Badagry to Jamaica in 1784 before reaching Havana in 1785. On arrival Prieto was labeled as a "Lucumí," one of several vague ethnic trademarks coined by slaveholders for their human merchandise. Although Lovejoy relates "Lucumí" roughly to "Yorùbá-speaking people," the term was also applied to speakers of other African languages including Hausa, Fon, Igala and in rare cases Carabalí, especially if those individuals spoke even rudimentary Yorùbá. (pp. 10, 170, n. 34).

Prieto literally means "black" in Spanish. His Lucumí name is unknown, and he was baptized in Cuba as Juan Nepomuceno after the patron saint of Spain's marine infantries (p. 55). Eventually liberated in Havana, Prieto became a soldier with "a set of privileges and rights" (p. 61) in the Black Battalions created by Spain to defend the empire, and in that role helped suppress the rebellion led by black creole José A. Aponte in 1812. Prieto's documentary trail then leads to West Florida, where he defended the Spanish Fort San Carlos, then earned a promotion to second sergeant. Retired with "a small pension" around 1818 (p. 77), Prieto became prominent in a Lucumí *cabildo*—one of the so-called "nation groups" that self-organized in Cuban cities and were eventually authorized by the colonial regime. Despite loose ethnic labels like "Lucumí," "Carabalí" and "Congo," *cabildos* often splintered along regional, linguistic or ritual lines. Each *cabildo* had a patron saint, and Prieto's was Santa Bárbara, associated with Ṣàngó, the Òrìṣà of lightning and justice, tutelary deity of the palace of Ọ̀yó. Each *cabildo* appointed a *capataz,* loosely interpreted as a "king," as well as a "queen," and Lovejoy equates this status with African kingship, providing the book's subtitle. But was Prieto a "Yorùbá king" in the sense of continuing a royal lineage from West Africa, or a colonial subject of Spain heading an authorized client body named after a Catholic saint (pp. 11, 60, 91)?

With the collapse of Old Ọ̀yọ́, shiploads of "New Lucumí from Ọ̀yọ́" (the title of chapter 6) entered Havana and fought the "Lucumí War" of 1833 in Banes, west of the city. After executing the rebels, authorities beefed up security, and Prieto was prosecuted following an 1835 episode of "Lucumí unrest" in Havana itself. His documents and records entered the archive, then when he escaped conviction, the written story ends with "Prieto's disappearance" (the title of chapter 8).

Through arduous analysis of "government correspondences, military records, ecclesiastical sources […] and large databases of primary sources" (p. 4), Lovejoy explores how events in West Africa influenced Caribbean society and vice versa. "The influence of Ọ̀yọ́'s collapse on the history of the Atlantic world is most apparent due to the outward migration of Ọ̀yọ́ warriors who came to lead the Cuban Lucumí War of 1833" (p. 140). This idea is supported with demographic analysis: "During Ọ̀yọ́'s collapse between 1817 and 1836 […] an estimated 47,000 people [from the Bight of Benin] landed on the island" (p. 95).

From the 1840s, freed Africans who could pay the passage returned to West Africa, escaping the military state: "In 1830, Ferdinand VII, at the request of [Captain General] Vives, deployed 30,000 troops from Spain to police the island, control the slave population, and fortify the coast from foreign invasion" (p. 112). The returnees brought back Cuban adaptations of Lucumí identity and Òrìṣà "religion" that influenced the creation of "a global pan-Yorùbá" identity (pp. 96, 137). In this way, Lovejoy links Prieto's role as "king" of a Lucumí *cabildo* to the recreation of Ọ̀yọ́ royalty and ritual objects like an *"Opachangó"* (in Yorùbá, *ọ̀pá* Ṣàngó) after a "Ṣàngó staff" in Prieto's possession. The same process may have led to the sacred bàtá drum sets which seem to have emerged in the 1830s and have now grown into a global phenomenon.

Lovejoy's masterful study of paper archives yields demographic statistics in two graphs, sixteen tables and four excellent maps, tallying enslaved West Africans entering the Caribbean and particularly Cuba. However, the nature of colonial documents entails that they reveal more about the actions of Europeans than about the enslaved. To fill the gap, Lovejoy turns to creative analysis of oral history, anthropology and linguistics, and this is problematic for a historian lacking sufficient technical skills in these different, specialized methodologies. For example, "Santa Bárbara" may have been the colonial name for an African *cabildo* in Havana, but the Africans used a different name, "Ṣàngó Tẹ̀ Dùn" (the title of chapter 5), which they hid from authorities. Of several Santa Bárbara Lucumí *cabildos* recorded in Havana in the 1800s, Cuban scholars Lydia Cabrera and Fernando Ortiz independently identified "Changó Terddún"[10] or "Changó Tedún,"[11] and Ortiz identified it as the source of batá drums circa 1830s. Professor Abímbọ́lá, a specialist in Ọ̀yọ́ oral tradition parses Ṣàngótẹdùn as "Ṣàngó piled up *ẹdùn,*" where *ẹdùn* refers to the "sacred thunder stones" of the deity's shrine.[12] Similar accuracy eludes Lovejoy, who relies on Crowther's nineteenth century Yorùbá vocabulary and on the views of two Yorùbá historians with no linguistic training. Admittedly the current standard dictionaries of the language[13] are difficult to use, but they are indispensable. After adopting the best guesses of two linguistic amateurs, Lovejoy adds his own fanciful interpretation: "I would like to add that in Catholic terms, the *cabildo* title might relate to a Christian hymn with the opening Latin line 'Te Deum laudamus, 'meaning 'Thee, O God, we praise'—that

10. L. CABRERA, *El Monte,* Miami, Colección del Chicherekú, 1954-1992, p. 24.
11. F. ORTIZ, *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana,* vol. 4, Havana, Cárdenas y Cía, 1954, p. 217.
12. W. ABÍMBỌ́LÁ & I. MILLER, *Ifá Will Mend Our Broken World: Thoughts on Yorùbá Culture in West Africa and the Diaspora,* Roxbury, MA, AIM Books, 1997, pp. 79-80, 132.
13. R. C. ABRAHAM, *Dictionary of Modern Yorùbá,* London, University of London Press, 1958; Y. AWOYALE, *Global Yorùbá Lexical Database,* V 1.0LDC2008L03, Web Download, Philadelphia, Linguistic Data Consortium, 2008, <https://catalog.ldc.upenn.edu/LDC2008L03>.

is, 'Ṣàngó te Deum [thee, O God]'. In the spirit of creolization theory, I consider all versions correct" (p. 7). This is not the only such linguistic embarrassment in the book, and it cannot be seriously absolved by invoking postmodern "creolization theory" which functions in Caribbean studies as an excuse for the absence of evidence and the consequent field day for ungrounded speculation. "Diverse languages, ethnicities and culture effectively 'creolized' within Africa long before anyone traveled to the Americas. […] Peel argued that the religion and culture of Yorùbá-speaking people […] 'was overwhelmingly and conspicuously of the 'mixing' kind'" (p. 9). Missing from this idea are the unequal power relations in slave societies where "mixing" (a.k.a. multiple processes of adaptation, resistance, conservation, recreation, innovation, camouflage and so on) went on. In another example, "the timeless process conveyed in creolization theory is, as John Thornton describes it, 'as unbounded, non-dogmatic, and continuously revealed'" (p. 94). These examples reveal that "creolization theory" is a euphemism for "phenomena we cannot (yet) understand."

So too for "syncretism." In Prieto's possession was a "small wooden doll with a mirror in its belly" (p. 92) that could have been an *nkisi* "power object" in the Kongo tradition. In contact situations, Africans from across the continent made insightful associations—between say, Kongo, Yorùbá, and Catholic lightening deities, known as Siete Rayos, Ṣàngó, and Santa Bárbara—as a method of creating diplomatic alliances while surviving inquisition-like behavior in a Catholic colony, explaining Lydia Cabrera's observation that "the powerful *nkisi* known as 'Siete Rayos is the same as Santa Bárbara: Chango'" (p. 93). However, this welter of influences may be less mysterious than advertised, if the demographic "founder principle" can explain why newcomers to a colony, in this case Yorùbá, would first learn the practices established by the earlier migrants, in this case Kongo.[14]

The alternative to creole fluidity is a more structured semantic space. It is undeniable that African descendants survived in a militarized slave society by camouflaging their thoughts and actions, so Lucumí lineages did not confuse a Ṣàngó shrine with a Santa Barbara statue. Rather, the two names were applied in different contexts, private and public. "What is called syncretism has mainly to do with the icons of the Òrìṣà, and this is sometimes just a way of saluting the *divinity* of a neighbor or of a master".[15] "[S]o-called 'syncretic' elements are presented, above all, in the external manifestations of the cult. As we penetrate more and more into the 'mysteries,' as in the initiation, divination, or funerary rites, the Yorùbá-derived components impose themselves with extraordinary force".[16]

Lovejoy identifies continuities in Lucumí identity and ritual practice from Prieto era onwards: "Arguably, the legendary *bàtá* drums sounded for 'the first time' in Prieto's *cabildo*" (p. 142). Or, perhaps not, because in the same period, an enslaved African-born *babaláwo* (oracle specialist) named Adéṣìná "the crown opens the way," "founded a new Lucumí cabildo on the other side of the bay in Regla. To etch out his own dynastic claims to kingship […]" (p. 142). In living "oral history" or collective memory, Adéṣìná (d. 1905) is recognized with other founders in "moyuba" ("reverential prayers") when commencing any ritual activity, for example one Havana bàtá lineage recites: "Ibaé Atandá, ibae Adéṣìná, ibaé Ifarolá, ibaé Adofó, ibaé Okilakua," naming five foundational *bàtá* leaders of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Prieto by contrast was memorialized only in colonial archives, and this discrepancy is not hard to understand: while Prieto accommodated power to live comfortably on a military pension, Adéṣìná and others built autonomous community networks of African descendants. This point reveals the limits of a history that relies on colonial interpretations.

In sum, the book confronts, but does not resolve, the conundrum of popular versus official ideology about Yorùbá culture in the Western Hemisphere. From 1817 and 1827, "the Yorùbá-speaking population in Cuba […] could not amount to what I estimate was 'much more than 5 percent of the island's total population'" (p. 170, n. 39), but despite this small demographic share, Cuban Santería (a.k.a. Lucumí tradition) has emerged as "a major branch of world religion generalized into 'òrìṣà worship'" (p. 6). By contrast, other African ritual lineages like Cuban Kongo and Cross-River Abakuá—demographically more numerous by all indications—have remained relatively hidden, even underground, while Lucumí "religion" became hegemonic on the island and now globally.

Perhaps the lesson of *Prieto* is that the tendency of Yorùbá leaders like Prieto to accommodate to the colonial power led to promotion of òrìṣà practice as a road to "salvation" for all. To deepen this study will require teamwork between documentary historians and specialists in oral tradition, restoring a more balanced view of the role of Africans in creating the American societies of today, alongside that of better documented groups like the Puritans and conquistadores.

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14. S. Mufwene, "The Founder Principle in Creole Genesis," *Diachronica,* 13 (1), 1996, pp. 83-134.
15. W. Abímbọ́lá & I. Miller, *Ifá Will Mend Our Broken World: Thoughts on Yorùbá Culture in West Africa and the Diaspora, op. cit.,* p. 105.
16. R. Martínez-Furé, *Briznas de la Memoria,* Havana, Instituto Cubano del Libro, 2004, pp. 90-91.

Pelizzari Elisa & Sylla Omar (dir.). — *Enfance et sacrifice au Sénégal, Mali, Gabon. Écoles coraniques, pratiques d'initiation, abus et crimes rituels.* Turin, L'Harmattan-Italia, 2014, 198 p.

Comme annoncé dans l'introduction d'Elisa Pelizzari, les différentes contributions à cet ouvrage focalisent sur le statut de l'enfant en Afrique — autour de trois pays — comme « catalyseur de la crise qui frappe son milieu socioculturel d'insertion » (Pelizzari, p. 7). C'est, en effet, à travers le prisme de la condition des mineurs dans un environnement bouleversé par les dynamiques de la modernité, les violences de l'économie libérale et la remise en question des schémas traditionnels, notamment éducatifs, que