



Jutta Wimpler. *The Sun King's Atlantic: Drugs, Demons and Dyestuffs in the Atlantic World, 1640-1730.* Leiden: Brill, 2017. xiv + 230 pp. Ill. \$93.00, cloth, ISBN 978-90-04-33607-0.

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While a lot has been written about the influence of Atlantic trade on African societies, little has been written about the impact of that trade on European countries themselves. This is changing, and Jutta Wimpler's *The Sun King's Atlantic* is a good example of this new historiographical trend. Wimpler sheds a light on aspects of this influence during the reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715). She investigates how Atlantic expansion affected fashion, cuisine and culinary practices, medicine, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics. Wimpler also raises questions about changes in the religious concepts and worldview of people during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Focusing on the circulation of commodities in the Atlantic world, Wimpler moves beyond the traditional historiographical focus on commodities, such as enslaved Africans and sugar, to analyze more marginal ones, like indigo and gum arabic.

Her work does not diminish the impact that trafficked Africans and sugar had upon European countries in general (and France in particular), but shows that indigo and gum arabic as well as dyestuff, leather, and hides facilitated a silent revolution in consumption. She highlights the fascination that the French had with Asia and that their high demand for Asian luxuries, such as *Indiennes* (also known as *calicoes* in English) and furniture, was satisfied with commodities from the Atlantic

world. She suggests that Atlantic materials were largely invisible because they did not have value in their own right but rather as materials for imitation Asian luxuries. The consumption revolution, which made some commodities like colored textiles, leather, and hides more accessible, facilitated the creation of the *nouveau riche* class, which earned large revenues from its involvement in Atlantic trade. At the same time, the old aristocracy sought new ways of distinguishing themselves.

Atlantic expansion had far-reaching implications for both cuisine and medicine in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The circulation of Atlantic commodities between France and French colonies resulted in the creation of *nouvelle cuisine*. It also facilitated the discovery of previously unknown plants and the emergence of an adaptable medical system. The iatrochemical approach from folk medicine provided a suitable scientific framework for its incorporation, but the orthodox Galenic system did not hold up to the challenges posed by Atlantic expansion. Exploration of the New World with other factors led to a scientific revolution which flourished in the eighteenth century.

Atlantic expansion even had an impact on religious practices. A widespread interest in martyrdom led many young people to participate in overseas missions, especially in the Caribbean. West

Africa was not a popular destination for those seeking the glory of martyrdom because of the lack of financing and infrastructure for missions, and the unsuccess of mission work in this region in general. Stressing martyrdom in such a case would not have helped the issue. Wimmmler also shows how religion and politics were intermingled in overseas expansion. Non-Christian populations of both Africa and the Americas were presented as victims of the devil and his demons, which justified both the need for a European presence and explained why some mission work was unsuccessful. It gave birth to the idea of collective beating, which was a characteristic aspect of French demonology in the Atlantic world.

In sum, Wimmmler's monograph shows how widespread and pervasive the impact of French expansion in the Atlantic world on French society was. Further investigation in this field would lead us to a better understanding of the two-way influence between the overseas expansion of European countries all over the world and European countries today.

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