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as natural ornaments, and in the representation of plants. So, the shimmering gold of Gustav Klimt's *Der Kuss* , the bright orange of Vincent van Gogh's *Zonnebloemen*, and the blocks of colour in Paul Gauguin's *Vairumati tei Oa* are all reproduced as variations of grey. In Figure 8.5 in volume 4, a still life of a vase of flowers, most of the flowers are invisible, and Figure 8.9 sees Carl Linnaeus lost in gloom. I anticipate that full colour illustrations would have made the price of these volumes ruinously expensive, but limited use of colour, balanced by omitting those black and white pictures are which just not viable, should have been considered. Another fault in our view is cost. As they stand, at £440 the set this publication is by no means cheap. Is this retail price dictated by production costs? Certainly not by the cost of reimbursing the contributors who each received a nominal fee for their chapters, eaten away by inflation from the date of their contracts to eventual publication. I suspect the price includes a large profit margin on each sale, and a relatively small print run is aimed at academic libraries as target purchasers, not undergraduates. This is a pity: one wonders if a sparsely illustrated edition in paperback for say £90 the set, (£15 each volume) might have been much more useful to young scholars. The bibliographies in each volume are large and are a help in pursuing a topic further.

Jane Card and Malcolm Thick

Rebecca Earle: *The Body of the Conquistador. Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492–1700*: Cambridge University Press, 2013: 278 pp., paperback, £21.99.

The idea of nurture over nature is no surprise to readers in the early twenty-first century, but few historians have studied its workings in a distant culture destined to have a long-lasting impact on modern European food and social history. Rebecca Earle delivers such a study impeccably in her remarkable book *The Body of the Conquistador*, first published as a hardback in 2012 and also available as an affordable paperback. In six accessibly structured thematic chapters the author examines links between dietary beliefs and everyday food in the first two centuries of Spanish-American colonial history. She argues that a spiritual mandate absorbing the European chain of world order and humoral medicine governed colonial beliefs and eating, but that it went further in the New World, creating a division between the edible and inedible. Earle charts how this classification worked and, along the way, how it impacted on the New World food exchange.

While the book is designed for an academic audience, who already recognize it as a seminal work – the 34-page bibliography condenses years of awe-inspiring research – it can be wholeheartedly recommended as a general read thanks to its rich source material and the author's vivid writing style. An opening overview of European dietary theories precedes a closer look at colonial food anxieties,

especially the effect of unknown foods on 'the mutable humoral body'. Nurture was everything: if the body was fluid and porous, constantly in reaction with environment and intake, would settlers survive when they were eating unknown foods? Maize, for example, was initially rejected since it was such a widely consumed Amerindian staple and hence, ran the logic of the mandate, pagan. Roast or stewed guinea pig was rejected. Foods taken to the New World, like wheat and livestock, were edible wherever they were grown. How, then, did New World foods cross the divide and so make their huge impact on European diet? Potatoes provide a good example. They were first chronicled as the food of the poor in the *altiplana* of the Virreinato del Perú, but, it was quickly discovered that they could be used to make leaven bread, symbolically Christian. Hence, ran the mandate, they must be good for Christians. As Earle sums it up, 'caste difference, although ostensibly concerned with ancestry and genealogy, was profoundly performative,' and that performance included cooking. By logical extension, the cultural performance was of special significance when it began externally but was then physically internalized.

Earle brings perspectives to success stories among migrant New World foods: chocolate, the tomato, sweet potato, pineapple conserve and chilli. 'Chroniclers and settlers alike insisted that these foods were healthy only when they were eaten in limited amounts,' explains the author, 'and therefore did not constitute the core of an individual diet.' Theorists permitted them for long-term residents accustomed to colonial diet, but not for visitors. Hence returned settlers, or *indianos* and missionaries, were usually those who carried American foodstuffs to Spain, and led their consumption and commerce on home ground.

Touching on gastronomy, Earle emphasizes the role of indigenous 'and in some regions enslaved' women in teaching Europeans how to prepare these ingredients. In the 1550s Spanish women represented seventeen per cent of all settlers and even later, when greater in number, they rarely did domestic work. As suggested by the celebrated *casta* paintings of the eighteenth century, Amerindian and mixed-race cooks played the crucial role in European adoption of new foods. Significantly, Earle comments, recipe collections written by and for settler readers mentioned these culinary techniques but gave them scant importance.

Towards the end of the book the author swims into deeper historical waters. Her fifth chapter reinterprets the effects of evangelical Spanish agriculture, diet and kitchens on colonized indigenous people, and her sixth chapter looks at food within emerging early modern definitions of racial difference. Earle resumes and assesses arguments by pioneering theorists, like Edward Said, in the context of her own evidence, emphasizing the importance of food in a proposed first generation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century racial thinking. The 'focussed assault' on those of non-Christian faith, it is argued, first shifted then to ethnic groups with greater physical differences encountered in the

colonial experience. In one of her pithy gems in this section, Earle describes colonialism as 'a dream of unity combined with an insistence on distance.' Taken as a whole, this book adds up to something more than its direct subject matter. It offers vital evidence for the potential of painstakingly researched food history. Earle chooses to end her book with a closing sentence reminding us of her underlying premise: we need to remember 'the immense importance of such ordinary human activities in our attempts to understand the past.'

Vicky Hayward

Emma Kay: *A Dark History of Chocolate*: Pen and Sword History, 2021: 224 pp., hardback, £19.99.

A clever title this, prompting expectations of stories of servitude and hard labour, an examination of a murky past and of poor chocolate's twisted journey into a shifty world of mass production and mass consumerism. When I received this book for review, one title of what appears to be a 'Dark History' series, I thought, 'Oh dear, not another one – surely enough has already been written on the subject of chocolate?' I was, however, pleasantly surprised, not least by the breadth of Kay's research: like a truffle hunter, she has covered the ground, unearthed some interesting nuggets and brought them all together in a novel way. Clearly, with something like chocolate, as with other products such as sugar, tea, or coffee, there is a reasonably straightforward progression through time from its first discovery in the wild to its eventual elevation to worldwide commodity. However, on the way, that journey can take us down any number of side routes, some connected and some not. So it is with chocolate. It has a hugely chequered history and it could not have been easy to turn into one simple, coherent, narrative. Certainly, Emma Kay has uncovered a goodly amount of information but, as one would expect, it is an eclectic mix, and therefore, difficult to not just end up with a ragbag of assorted facts and fictions. This she has avoided by a tight and coherent framework to her account. I have only one criticism – though for a certain type of reader, myself included, it is a major oversight: throughout the book, Kay has illustrated much of what she has written with pertinent recipes. One assumes, therefore, that she wanted her readers to try them. Certainly, I noted a number I thought I might attempt at some later date. Unfortunately, there is no separate recipe index, which makes finding any particular one a matter of either noting the page reference or thumbing through the whole book to find it. Otherwise, I enjoyed following all the strands of chocolate history. Although she doesn't shirk from writing about the shocking corruption that has underwritten the production of chocolate in the past, she does manage to lift the mood of the book with amusing anecdotes and lighthearted facts.

Di Murrell