

colony. As the plantation economy grew on both those islands and others nearby, more and more settlers arrived in the region. When warfare spilled over from the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions and erupted in the region, the islands were repeatedly occupied and conquered.

In response to *the tightening of* European colonial control and the rapid decline in the region's autonomy, Murphy provides an excellent analysis of two rebellions in the 1790s. The author explains that although they were undoubtedly part of the movements that crisscrossed the Atlantic, they do not fold so neatly into the broader Age of Revolution that rocked the Caribbean. Fedon's Rebellion in Grenada and the Second Carib War in St. Vincent were part of a much longer struggle that dated back to the seventeenth century, one in which imperial powers attempted to assert colonial rule against a local population that wanted to exercising customary rights.

In summary, Tessa Murphy's book is an excellent addition to a growing Caribbean historiography that crosses imperial, geographic, and national boundaries with an insightful approach that places the indigenous Kalinago population of the Lesser Antilles at the center of this drama.

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BLACK CHRISTIANITY IN THE AMERICAS

Afro-Atlantic Catholics: America's First Black Christians. By Jeroen Dewulf. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2022. Pp. 368. \$65.00 cloth; \$51.99 e-book.
 doi:10.1017/tam.2023.37

Jeroen Dewulf is meticulous and convincing in this comprehensive treatment of the Catholic roots of African American Christianity—a history frequently obscured by Protestant-centric accounts of Black religious formation in North America. He argues persuasively that Black Catholics were not passive bystanders in the evolution of African American Christianity as is frequently presumed, but instead were active pioneers in its early development, especially during the initial stages of the transatlantic slave trade. This original study offers readers a valuable reminder that the cultural history of Black Atlantic religion is still far from being written and that many of the tropes that continue to dominate historical narratives about the region are often incomplete, if not outright misleading.

Crucially, *Afro-Atlantic Catholics* challenges conventional binaries that see “African” and “Christian” as mutually exclusive categories and invites scholars to continue to drill down into the complex and ever fascinating relationships between race and religion in the

American past. In this respect, and others, Dewulf's is a necessary and welcome contribution to the historiography of African American religious culture. Too often, contemporary scholarship leads us to believe that Christian identity is antithetical to African authenticity, that resistance to slavery and colonialism went hand in hand with opposition to Christianity, and that Black culture in the Americas took root in spite of Christianization rather than in lockstep with it. Perspectives like these ignore the lived experiences of a significant minority of enslaved Africans and minimize the historical impact of Black people, free and enslaved alike, who embraced an Iberian variant of Catholicism long before the Middle Passage. Dewulf argues that it was this group, Afro-Atlantic Catholics, whose religious culture first formed in Central Africa and the African Atlantic islands of São Tomé and Cape Verde, who played a pivotal though largely overlooked role in laying the groundwork for African American Christianity to flourish.

Provocatively, Dewulf submits that to appreciate this neglected history, scholars need to start not in West or Central Africa as is typical, but instead in late-medieval Portugal where the story of Afro-Atlantic Catholicism, he tells us, begins. The first two chapters of the book chart the development of Catholic identity among Black communities in Portugal and West Central Africa in the fifteenth century and highlight the remarkable popularity of confraternities and Portuguese festive traditions with Black Christians of the era. The unique brand of medieval Catholicism they embraced focused on music, dance, community-building, solidarity, and mutual aid that meshed well with local customs and became the primary mode of Christianity that enslaved Africans would transmit to the New World.

In the final two chapters (there are four total), Dewulf analyzes how the beliefs and practices of Afro-Atlantic Catholics further developed in the Americas and shows how they influenced Christian identity and expression in the centuries that followed. Especially striking is the prominent role Black Catholics played in American maroon communities and the diffuse institutionalization of Black confraternities that Dewulf suggests, quite compellingly, underwrote the birth of African American evangelicalism and the new forms of community-building that arose along with it.

By marshalling a wealth of historical data and a good amount of anthropological and linguistic material, *Afro-Atlantic Catholics* delivers on its promise to outline the origin, character, and influence of America's first Black Christians. By putting North America into a broader Atlantic context and considering sources from that region alongside others from Africa, Latin America, Europe, and the Caribbean, Dewulf has made this text both effective and rewarding. Scholars interested in Black Atlantic religious cultures and the historical roots of Black Catholicism will find this book illuminating and more than worth their while.

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