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TARDIEU, Jean Pierre, 2017, *Resistencia de los negros en el virreinato de México (siglos XVI-XVII)*, Madrid and Frankfurt, Iberoamericana and Velvuert. 297 pp.

Jean Pierre Tardieu is a researcher who is renowned for his meticulous studies on slavery in Cuba, Panama, Ecuador, Venezuela, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Peru, which have made him an expert on the history of slavery in the Americas. Most of these works have common characteristics that could be called the personal seal of Tardieu; for example, he deals with the lives of slaves in places where most people think they did not exist or had disappeared, such as Cusco, Uruguay, Paraguay and, now, Mexico. Another feature is his meticulous and patient work in archives and libraries: Tardieu has already accustomed us to a rollout of respectable sources. In addition, those of us already very familiar with his work know that he employs a conceptual framework which may lack excessive epistemological complexity, but is nonetheless efficient in dealing with a historical issue.

That said, this book is a new twist on the author's earlier work since it employs the concept of resistance as the starting point to rewrite various biographies of Africans and Afro-Descendants in Mexico. For the author, resistance is the act of opposition to a situation; he notes that this can be active (violent) or passive, understood as adhesion to social schemes (p. 16). However, it is noteworthy that although there is an intense and ample historiographical debate on everyday resistance, pragmatism, and "passive resistance," the author does not make use of it, nor does he cite the most emblematic works in the field, despite the fact that the debate is evident in the book's approach.

In accordance with the central theme of resistance, the book is divided into three parts. The first, entitled "Alienations" (*Alienaciones*), reconstructs the biographies of Juan Garrido and Estebanico, perhaps the best-known Africans during the conquest. The second part, titled "Refusals" (*Rechazos*) analyzes African uprisings in Rinconada (Veracruz), *cimaronaje*, the foundation of the Kingdom of Yanga, a caudillo who was proclaimed a national hero in 1860, and the establishment of the town of San Lorenzo. Finally, the third part, titled Conspiracies (*Conjuraciones*), analyzes a number of events that generated panic, such as the riots of 1574, the coronation of a Black king in 1608, and the rebellion of Blacks in 1612.

Without exhausting the epistemological framework, the author shows us these three types of resistance by Africans and Afro-descendants. In this way, Tardieu provides an "eventful" and narrative history that is rich in facts

and anecdotes but poor in reflections that would allow us to understand the individual and collective experiences of Africans and Afro-descendants in Mexico and the Americas.

Less explicitly, the book also suggests a method and a perspective to reconstruct the biographies of people who are enslaved, condemned sometimes to anonymity not only by their legal status, but also in the eyes of chroniclers, officials, authorities, and other subjects who had a command of writing and created the sources that we work with today. Not only has Tardieu pulled out the information from the oldest sources, but he has also interrogated the photographers, painters, and historians of the 19th and 20th centuries.

As far as the biographies of well-known individuals are concerned, it is sometimes rash to suggest a new interpretation, to find something new. This could be said of Juan Garrido, well-known for having enslaved Cortés and for planting the first wheat in Mexico, about whom two historians have already written biographies using the existing documentation. Nevertheless, Tardieu goes ahead and reconstructs the biography of this figure, starting with the origin of his name; he tracks down the meaning of **garrido** to ask if perhaps his nickname was refashioned as a family name, reflecting his status as a slave in the context of the conquest. Drawing on to a variety of sources, especially the evidence that Garrido provided in 1538, our author does a turnabout and reinterprets him as an man of ambition, preoccupied with carving out a future, a “black rogue of the Indies”⁵ (p. 33). Nevertheless, when Diego Rivera, who immortalized Garrido in his mural *La conquista de México* displayed in the National Palace of Mexico, depicted him as semi-naked, stooped near-simian, with enormous lips and rough features, he is sowing wheat, as described in López de Gómar’s chronicle. But, as Tardieu certainly knows, this is a descontextualization, having studied other sources which reveal that Garrido obtained privileges, was a companion-in-arms of the conquistadores, and obtained agricultural land. He certainly was not a wretch, nor someone who can provide a starting point for a discussion of practices of resistance, alienation, or pragmatism. Unfortunately, the author does not reach this point: he patiently reconstructs biographies, almost like an artisan, and organizes them according to the concept of resistance and its diverse levels (alienation, rejection, and rebellion); however, he does not explicitly establish a link between the concept and biography. He leaves this to the imagination of the reader.

5 All translations in this book review are by *Apuntes*. Original: “buscón negro de Indias.”

The last pages of Tardieu's book leave a sour taste. For the author, survival depended on "submission to colonial schemes, the dominant society counting on having the time to assimilate the reluctant, by hook or by crook" (p. 278). Tardieu bases this on the fact that the authorities did not take into account Garrido's demands; Estabanico was sent on a mission from which he did not return, and Yanga does not appear in official correspondence between the viceroy and the Consejo de Indias, as if there was a clear intention to invisibilize them. The terrifying book cover reinforces this bitter view: a fragment of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis shows an African hanging from a wooden pole with a cross in his hands. Ostensibly, the book is about the defeat of Africans and Afro-descendants. However, it in fact provides us with biographies of individuals who stood up to and/or lived within the framework of colonial society, with their first and last names, their struggles, demands, and small victories. In this sense, the book is valuable, because these biographies are linked to the resistance of Africans and Afro-descendants, from the violence that broke out in the rebellion of La Rinconada to the demand for honor and privileges in the evidence presented by Juan Garrido.

Maribel Arrelucea Barrantes
Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima
marrelucea@gmail.com