

**Aguirre, Carlos, and Charles, F. Walker, eds. *The Lima Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, p. 296, \$26.95.**

This opulent collection of primary and secondary sources transports readers on a journey across Lima, Peru from the pre-Hispanic period through to the present day. Vivid voices from residents, migrants, travelers, and observers want to tell us many things. They whisper, shout, laugh, lament, and marvel at the city and its milieu. Each document illuminates a precise quotidian experience. As one moves through these sources, they build on one another, leaving readers with more tiers, color, and flavor than Lima's famous anise and honey-laden cake *Turrón de Doña Pepa*.

Carlos Aguirre and Charles Walker curated a thoughtful collection that captures the city's social, ethnic, religious, political, scientific, intellectual, and culinary currents. This thematic complexity might feel stunning and overwhelming if it were not so carefully organized and framed. The reader progresses chronologically. It contains fifty-five documents categorized into six sections: 1) Pre-Hispanic, Conquest, and Early Colonial Lima 2) Bourbon Lima 3) From Independence to the War of the Pacific (1821–1884) 4) Modernizing Lima (1895–1940) 5) Interlude: Nostalgia and its Discontents and 6) The Many Lima (1940s–)

Aguirre and Walker's corpus captures what they identify in the introduction as a city of contrasts, of multiple coexisting "Limas." This through-line is evident from the first pages to the last. Sections one and two cover enormous chronological ground, but draw out the nuances of the Spanish invasion. Cesar Pacheco Vélez's essay on Prehispanic Lima asserts that while Francisco Pizarro and his crew would have preferred to settle in an area away from indigenous settlements, it was nearly impossible to do so. Furthermore, he highlights Lima's place within the local indigenous landscape, noting that Lima was one of many small settlements subject to Pachacamac, a "massive and densely populated sanctuary in the Lurín Valley" (9). In addition, the anonymous account "A Failed Indian Uprising" reveals a clear and deliberate moment when Lima's indigenous and mestizo population plotted against Spanish rule and conspired to join a larger anti-colonial revolt. Both episodes are brief but defuse problematic misconceptions about European colonization. Many colonial narratives cast Spanish conquistadors as god-like, military mavens, against which primitive, docile, and unassuming Andeans did not stand a chance. With just these two documents, and ten minutes of reading or less, an instructor can quickly complicate and challenge that narrative.

One surprising aspect is how much the reader packs into one place. I was surprised, but also pleased, to read about cultural tensions such as machismo, classism, and racism. Although not the focus of her piece on political radicalism, Maruja Martínez's recollection of normalized sexual harassment will resonate among any veteran of Lima's public transit

system (199). Laura Miller's piece on domestic servitude strikes a similar chord of untampered truth. She expertly depicts the vulnerability and exploitation of domestic servants (136).

The reader is quite accessible and owes this ease to the lyrical translations by Jorge Bayona. While it would be challenging to assign the entire text to undergraduates, there are ways to successfully partition it for a survey or methods course. One approach might be to take a section and weave it into a course module. For example, several pieces examine broader trends of migration and urbanization. From 1940–2019 Lima's population grew from 500,000 to over 10,000,000 people, a trend observed across the Global South. In Lima's Northern and Southern Cones, informal housing is on the rise, and many areas lack basic municipal services (water, sanitation, and electricity). Section 6 as a whole illuminates both the inequities and vibrant diversity associated with mass migration. One document, José María Salcedo's, "The March of Villa El Salvador," describes one neighborhood's political journey from slum to incorporated district (195–196). Another approach might be to ask students to take a theme, such as religion, health, or racism, and explore that theme across a series of documents. Or, students might take the Tarata Street Bombing essay and the testimony from an ex-Shining Path member as the launchpad for an in-depth research project. Those who weave this book into their syllabus will not be disappointed and their students will find many engaging ways to ponder historical topics.

**Kathleen Kole de Peralta**

Department of History  
Idaho State University