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The Rise of Constitutional Government in the Iberian Atlantic World: The Impact of the Cádiz Constitution of 1812 (Atlantic Crossings)

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In March 1812, while Napoleon's brother Joseph sat on the throne of Spain and the armies of France occupied much of the country, legislators elected from Spain and its overseas territories met in the Andalusian city of Cádiz. There, as the cornerstone of a government in exile, they drafted and adopted the first liberal constitution in the Hispanic world, a document that became known as the Cádiz Constitution of 1812.

The 1812 Constitution was extremely influential in and beyond Europe, and this collection of essays explores how its enduring legacy not only shaped the history of state-building, elections, and municipal governance in Iberian America, but also affected national identities and citizenship as well as the development of race and gender in the region.

A bold blueprint for governing a global, heterogeneous monarchy, the Constitution represented a rupture with Spain's *Antiguo Régimen* (Old Regime) in numerous ways—in the limits it placed on the previously autocratic Bourbon monarchs, in the admission to its governing bodies of deputies from Spain's American viceroyalties as equals, and in its framers' vociferous debate over the status of *castas* (those of mixed ancestry) and slaves. *The Rise of Constitutional Government in the Iberian Atlantic World* covers these issues and adopts a transatlantic perspective that recovers the voices of those who created a vibrant political culture accessible to commoners and elite alike.

The bicentenary of the Constitution of 1812 offered scholars an excellent moment to reexamine the form and role of constitutions across the Spanish-speaking world. Constitutionalism remains a topic of intense debate in Latin America, while contemporary Spain itself continues to seek ways to balance a strong central government with centripetal forces in its regions, notably the Basque and Catalan provinces. The multifaceted essays compiled here by Scott Eastman and Natalia Sobrevilla Perea both shed new light on the early, liberal Hispanic societies and show how the legacies of those societies shape modern Spain and Latin America.

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