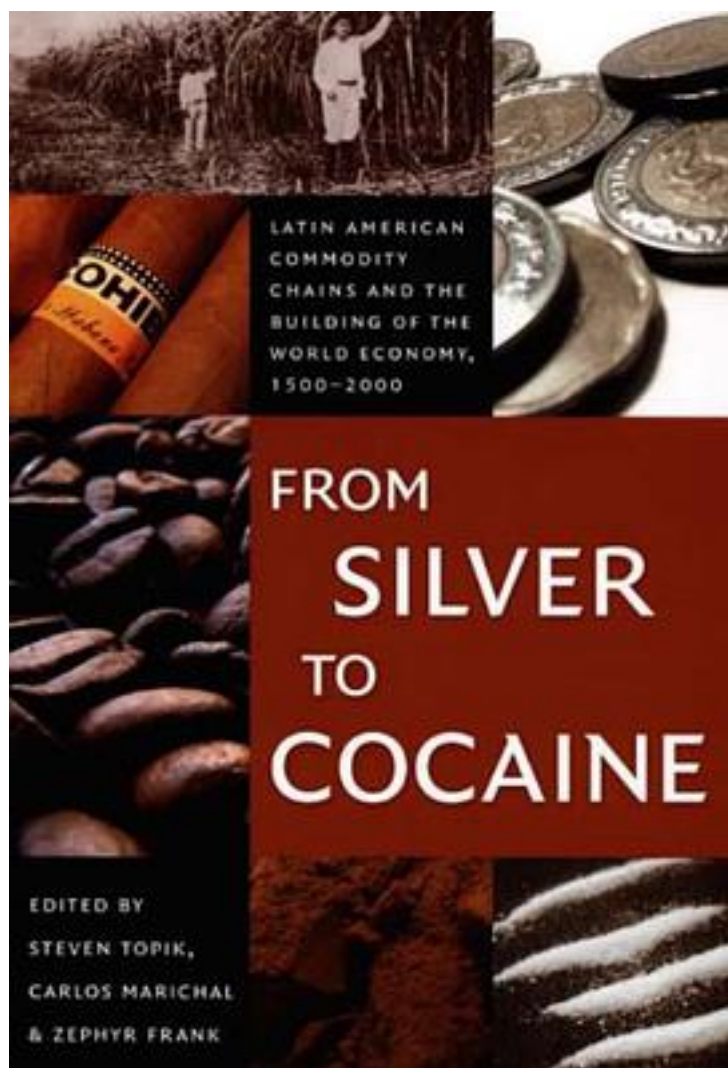


From Silver to Cocaine



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Demonstrating that globalization is a centuries-old phenomenon, "From Silver to Cocaine" examines the commodity chains that have connected producers in Latin America with consumers around the world for five hundred years. In clear, accessible essays, historians from Latin America, England, and the United States trace the paths of many of Latin America's most important exports: coffee, bananas, rubber, sugar, tobacco, silver, henequen (fiber), fertilizers, cacao, cocaine, indigo, and cochineal (insects used to make dye). Each contributor follows a specific commodity from its inception, through its development and transport, to its final destination in the hands of consumers. The essays are arranged in chronological order, according to when the production of the particular commodities became significant to Latin America's economy. Some - such as silver, sugar, and tobacco - were actively produced and traded in the sixteenth century; others - such as bananas and rubber - only at the end of the nineteenth century; and cocaine only in the twentieth. By focusing on changing patterns of production and consumption over time, the contributors reconstruct complex webs of relationships and economic processes, highlighting Latin America's central and interactive place in the world economy. They show how changes in coffee consumption habits, clothing fashions, drug usage, or tire technologies in Europe, Asia, and the Americas reverberate into Latin American commodity chains in profound ways. The social and economic outcomes of the continent's export experience have been mixed. By focusing on the dynamics of a wide range of commodities over a five-hundred-year period, "From Silver to Cocaine" highlights this diversity at the same time that it provides a basis for comparison and points to new ways of doing global history.

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目录:

[From Silver to Cocaine_ 下载链接1](#)

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