

pretations of Huron ethnography and ethnohistory may be disappointed. The book has, I think, two major contributions. The first is its demonstration of the degree to which the institutions and dynamics of Huron society shaped the events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Canada. Second, Trigger's history represents a major step toward a sympathetic understanding of the Hurons. The reader can hardly fail to come away from this book with a more vivid picture of those early Canadians as believable people with virtues and faults, and with a realization that their behavior is no more and no less comprehensible than that of their European contemporaries who unwittingly and unthinkingly fashioned posterity's image of the Huron. As an attempt to focus that image, Trigger's latest work must qualify both as good anthropology and good history.

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LATIN AMERICA

DANIEL COSÍO VILLEGAS, general editor. *Historia general de México*. In four volumes. (Centro de Estudios Históricos.) Mexico City: El Colegio de México. 1976. Pp. viii, 288; viii, 446; viii, 331; viii, 505.

This four-volume general history of Mexico produced by El Colegio de México suggests two important facets of the life of the late Daniel Cosío Villegas, distinguished Mexican historian. Cosío was, in the words of Enrique Krause, a "cultural entrepreneur." The present set of books is one more example of his tendency to initiate, promote, and coordinate worthwhile endeavors of cultural or intellectual importance. Further, the volumes also represent his strong commitment to define his nation's past and to inform his fellow Mexicans so that they could better understand their present and work toward a better future.

The Center for Historical Studies at El Colegio de México has had a distinguished record of intellectual achievement through the training of historians, the carrying out of research, the publication of monographs, and the initiation and publication for more than a quarter of a century of a respected journal, *Historia Mexicana*. However, it was Cosío's and El Colegio's hope to reach a wider audience than had been achieved through scholarly publications. The initial step was the publication of a 164-page *Historia mínima de México* as a kind of introduction to Mexican history. Based on that text, a "television" of Mexico was prepared and telecast on three channels, reaching an even wider audience.

It was with the same goal of a wider dissemination of knowledge of Mexican history that the current volumes were prepared—a general history for the general reader. Each segment or chapter was written by an individual with specialist knowledge of the theme. Each undertook the assignment with the understanding that the text should be easy to read and to understand. Inevitably, as in any multi-authored work, there is a fairly wide variation in the quality and character of the presentations, ranging from those simply detailing factual information to others of a broadly interpretive nature. The coordinator recognized that there was, at times, a tendency for the essays to overlap when authors discussed the roots or consequences of their assigned periods. It was decided, however, to leave the texts as they had been prepared, both in the interest of time and in an effort to avoid adversely affecting the originality of the essays.

The initial volume consists of four sections on geography, prehistory, and preconquest Mexican society. Against the background of Bernardo García Martínez's description of Mexico's geographical reality, José Luis Lorenzo describes the gradual extension of our knowledge of the origins of man in the area. Ignacio Bernal details the formation and development of Mesoamerican civilizations, and Pedro Carrasco examines Mexican society before the conquest. That conquest is imaginatively told in a dialogue between Spanish and native sources by Alejandra Moreno Toscano in the initial essay of the second volume. That is followed by a discussion of the establishment of the economic bases of New Spain in the seventeenth century written by Andrés Lira and Luis Muro. The Bourbon reforms of the latter half of the eighteenth century receive attention from Enrique Florescano and Isabel Gil Sánchez in an essay that concludes with the growing evidence of social and political instability early in the nineteenth century leading directly to the independence movement described by Luis Villoro. His essay is based in part on his earlier publication in which he examined the ideological process of the independence movement.

Four essays in volumes two through four are devoted to cultural and artistic manifestations. Jorge Alberto Manrique contributes two of the sections. His narration of the cultural evolution from the baroque to the Enlightenment, including architecture, painting, sculpture, and philosophy is a *tour de force*. There follows a review of religion, education, and urban life in the period of the Enlightenment. The same author treats the development of the plastic arts in the first seven decades of the twentieth century in the fourth and final volume. In the third volume, José Luis Martínez, seeking to delineate and synthesize nineteenth-