

tabular and qualitative, is provided concerning production, livestock holdings, prices, tribute figures, and other accounts. It is not always clear how this tabular information relates to the text, and the overriding developmental perspective is employed as a kind of umbrella under which all sorts of information may be gathered. This at times seems beneficial, at times a disadvantage; the treatment of accounts, like the lengthy citation of sources, appears to be an end in itself. Nevertheless, the two chapters on demography are an important contribution, especially the calculations of levels of nutrition and standards of living. There is much, too, on commercialisation and transport, not all of it dependent on Jesuit enterprise, for the Guaraní from the beginning appear to have had real mercantile instincts; they were, the author concludes, protagonists in their own development. Yet our knowledge of these aspects stems, of course, from meticulous Jesuit book-keeping practices, while the order's renowned organisational prowess made possible much of the Guaraní economic development. It was this that was missed most when the end to Jesuit rule came swiftly: expulsion from Portugal and possessions in 1759, from France in 1764, from the Spanish empire in 1767 and—the final indignity—suppression by the Papacy in 1773. Fr Carbonell fleshes out our knowledge of the post-expulsion decline of the *reducciones* in an important chapter, which among other novelties indicates that an excessive preference for individual over corporative rights by the new administrators sowed havoc in the settlements. *Plus ça change*. However, the 'lessons' the author draws from his prodigious research on the Jesuit 'State' as a whole read somewhat prosaically. Finally, the appendices convey important data, especially that on weights, measures and monetary equivalences (pp. 369–381), a useful point of reference for all historians of Spanish America.

This book, in spite of the wealth of research on which it rests, is something of a mixed blessing. It would have been better sited within an expanded comparative framework, but it also suffers from a lack of attention to ethohistorical and culture-contact aspects. There is, for example, some tantalising yet brief material on the important rôle of caciques, Guaraní social organisation and land tenure that might have been further developed. Moreover, in spite of the close relationship between material and spiritual dimensions posited by the author, there is no discussion of properly religious themes: the Guaraní had an integrated view of the cosmos in which the material and the spiritual were inseparable, surely crucial in understanding their subsequent evangelisation and socio-economic development. Withal, a wider vision and tighter editing would have improved this volume, which conveys a great deal of new information and some new perspectives. As it stands, it is likely to be sampled rather than devoured entirely.

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Aguilar Camín, Héctor and Meyer, Lorenzo (1993), **In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution: Contemporary Mexican History 1910–1989**, University of Texas Press (Austin). viii + 287 pp. \$35.00 hbk, \$14.95 pbk.

This broad synthesis of economic, social and political developments in twentieth-century Mexico is without question to be recommended as required reading for all students of modern Mexico. Two of Mexico's most prominent and high-profile intellectuals, Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer, who have managed the difficult task of combining academic respectability with successful media careers, are the ideal

guides to the general trends as well as the nuances in contemporary Mexican political culture. At its best, and this is most often the case, the text is unsurpassed as a rich and subtle blend of fluent synthesis, precise detail, and cogent analysis, full of insight, wit, and a refreshing detachment and lack of bias. At the same time, the text is far from flawless. There are examples of unnecessary repetition, and the weakest aspect of this version of the book is the translation from the original Spanish (published originally in Mexico by Cal y Arena in 1989). The authors have not been well-served by their translator, whose frequent recourse to the literal translation does scant justice to the fluency of the original, and, occasionally, renders the text almost unintelligible.

As the authors openly and honestly confess in the Preface, the book is a sequel to a multi-volume illustrated history of Mexico on sale to the general public at newstands and in supermarkets. It is therefore consciously written to bridge a perceived gap in the market for a scholarly yet accessible volume which might enjoy both an academic and a popular readership. This very difficult task is achieved with considerable success. A good example of the effective blend of brevity and lucidity which characterises the text is the explanation of the Cristero uprising in 1926:

The Cristeros revolted because they believed that the government was making the life of their church impossible: they could not receive Holy Communion, hear mass, or confess. The historical origin of the conflict was, however, more remote, as it went back to the old conflicts with monarchism, the issue of secular power in conflict with ecclesiastic power, the separation of church and state that the majority of the [*sic*] European countries were able to settle during the Enlightenment and their political revolutions of the eighteenth century, while in Mexico it had its last throes in the second decade of the twentieth century, after a war in the 1860s and a popular revolution fifty years later. The deep roots of the City of God in Mexican society were profound and entangled (p. 87).

On the negative side, the text is peppered with frequent repetitions which reflect the original serialisation and segmentation of the material into easily digested chunks. The appeal to a popular audience has also determined the absence of footnotes, no doubt welcome to any non-academic readers, but perverse in a scholarly text, above all in one which liberally cites from the work of others.

The most unsatisfactory aspect of the book remains, however, the poor quality of the translation. As an example, consider the discussion of the construction of a post-Cárdenas revolutionary tradition during the administration of Avila Camacho. Here the authors show skilfully and convincingly how the official party (PNR, PRM, and, ultimately the PRI) sought to promote national unity and integration by projecting itself not only as the guardian and protector of an uninterrupted historical legacy dating back to independence, but also as a vanguard movement presiding over a future of continuous and ceaseless renovation. The translation, however, turns the original metaphor:

La noción política de unidad nacional fue el odre que empezó a añejar la idea de la historia y los valores espirituales de México como un tesoro acumulado con las luchas del pasado.

into the inferior:

The political idea of national unity was the wineskin in which the idea of history and spiritual values of Mexico as a treasure to be joined to the struggles of the past, would age and ripen (p. 161).

And again, commenting on the precipitate decision by the López Portillo administration to nationalise the private banks in 1982, the authors explain that:

Las decisiones del 10 de septiembre de 1982 fueron el clímax inesperado de un largo deterioro estructural, el término de un esquema económico y político que solo necesitó una oleada de abundancia para demostrar su estrechez.

The translation not only lacks the fluency of the original but also fails to make sense:

The decisions adopted on September 10, 1982 were the unforeseen climax of a long process of structural deterioration, the end of an economic and political scheme that only needed a surge of abundance in order to demonstrate its shallowness (p. 216).

Despite these flaws, the core of the book—the analysis of the evolution of Mexican political culture from pre-Revolutionary Porfirismo to the neo-Porfirismo of the Salinas administration—is expertly accomplished. The central thesis is that Mexico is undergoing a painful transition from a political and economic culture with roots which are both colonial (authoritarian and corporatist) and post-Revolutionary (populist and bureaucratic), to one which is liberal, democratic, industrial, urban and increasingly, North American. The transition is painful because of a fundamental historical paradox: the only institutions which can deliver the necessary changes are part of the problem: the excessive power of the institution of the presidency, the centralisation and inertia of the bureaucracy, and the pervasive presence of the PRI in Mexican political life. As good historians, the authors refuse to predict the outcome of the process, although they adopt a cautiously optimistic stance and suggest that the process will be a slow one. The results of the presidential elections of 1994 appear to have proved them right. I shall certainly be recommending this book to my students, but I shall direct them to the original rather than to the translation.

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McFarlane, Anthony (1993), **Colombia before Independence Economy, Society, and Politics under Colonial Rule**, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge). 399 pp. £40.00 hbk.

Once a lagger by continental standards, the Colombian historiography is now moving ahead by leaps and bounds. The historian visiting Colombia over a quarter of a century or more can only be astonished at the proliferation and speed of professionalisation of historical studies, especially of the colonial period. Today there are active nuclei of historians not only in Bogotá, Medellín and Cali, but in Bucaramanga, Barranquilla, Popayán and elsewhere. An annual congress of history usually conducted in a departmental capital has done much to stimulate an interest in regional and local history especially among schoolteachers. Whereas 30 years ago amateur enthusiasts wrote celebratory municipal monographs containing some historical material, folklore and reflections on current socio-economic and political conditions, a new generation studies history at a master's degree level and writes theses in history and the social sciences that indicate an awareness of scholarly values and methods. While the international media in the 1980s have been focusing their attention on violence and narco-traffic, there have been numerous unsung achievements, among them the construction and opening of a national archive in Bogotá. The brainchild of the colonial historian and archivist, Jorge Palacios, the new and highly professional national archive (executed at a much faster pace than the British Library and superior