

COLONIAL AND INDEPENDENCE PERIODS

A Changing Perspective: Attitudes toward Creole Society in New Spain (1521–1610). By MARVYN HELEN BACIGALUPO. London: Tamesis Books Ltd., 1981. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 159. Cloth.

This informative, well-written volume focuses on “popular notions” (p. 14) about New Spain’s creoles, held by the various groups that composed the Republic of Spaniards (i.e., the white community) during the first century of colonization. It is basically a study of what different groups of peninsular Spaniards thought about “American born individuals of European descent” (p. 13) and how these perceptions influenced the self-image of the creole, and especially one key dimension of his personality: his inferiority complex. Bacigalupo traces the genesis of the creole conception of self to two major sources: the self-image of the conquistador-encomendero, and the attitudes of peninsular residents in New Spain toward the creoles.

The conquistador-encomendero image of self was the product of conflicting influences. The group perceived itself as an incipient aristocracy, “the counterpart of the Peninsular noble estate” (p. 99). Others, however, judged them as either “bad” or “good” examples for the Indians. The ambivalent conquistador-encomendero image that emerged was passed to New Spain’s creoles, who adopted both the aristocratic aspirations and the sense of “collective sin and guilt” (p. 131) of their colonial ancestors. The creole self-image also derived from comparison with peninsular newcomers. The author points to the 1570s as the period during which colonial administrators and clergymen began to contrast the two. Set off against the peninsular newcomer, the creoles were mostly perceived, and perceived themselves, as inferior.

The bulk of this short study consists of descriptive passages of the attitudes of colonial whites (administrators, ecclesiastics, peninsular newcomers) toward creoles and those of the creoles toward themselves. Bacigalupo draws from a variety of printed historical and literary sources (up to 1975), weaving the history of the period among profuse positive and negative quotations about creoles. She succeeds in broadening our understanding of the social dynamics of the early colonial white community in New Spain.

The work is disappointing in one respect. Bacigalupo focuses on the Spanish dimension of creole self-identity and overlooks the syncretic process of the Indian and Spanish cultures, already under way by mid-century, which is fundamental to the understanding of attitudes toward

creoles and creole self-perception. The creole-peninsular contrast, so thoroughly described by the author, points precisely to the emergence of a creole society with a dual heritage at variance with that of Castile. Since Peggy K. Liss (*Mexico under Spain, 1521–1556*) has conclusively documented this dual Spanish-Indian nature of New Spain's creole society, Bacigalupo's approach is surprising. As a consequence, her depiction of creole society appears monochromatic; that of creoles, unidimensional.

This should not detract from the study's value as a serious contribution to the literature on early creole society in New Spain. *A Changing Perspective* is a readable volume that can be assigned in Latin American history graduate and undergraduate courses.

Duke University

JOSEFINA CINTRÓN TIRYAKIAN

Las cofradías en el Perú: Región central. By OLINDA CELESTINO and ALBERT MEYERS. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Klaus Dieter Vervuert, 1981. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Appendix. Maps. Pp. 351. Paper.

This is a useful and interesting book on an important topic. The cofradías, or voluntary religious confraternities associated with the worship of saints, which often served also as mutual aid societies, played a major role in the social and economic life of colonial Latin America, but have received relatively little attention from scholars. The authors, anthropologists who have done fieldwork and archival research on the Peruvian central highlands, modestly describe this work as a "first approximation," which they are following up with the empirical investigation that will ultimately allow them to describe in more detail how the cofradías functioned. The first two chapters provide a theoretical framework and review the history of European cofradías from the beginnings of Christianity. The rest of the book traces the rise and decline of Indian cofradías in Peru, concentrating on the region of Jauja and Tarma, with which the authors are most familiar.

The authors conclude that cofradías were established soon after the conquest in the Spanish towns, spreading to the Indian communities at the end of the sixteenth century with the encouragement of the missionaries, who saw them as a means to uproot idolatry and attach the Indians more firmly to Christianity. They came to own considerable amounts of land and livestock, which were donated to them and provided revenue to cover the costs of the cults. More important, the authors see these