

hinterland. When the character and purpose of these accounts are thus appreciated, they serve scholars well as depictions of the interests and perspectives of Veracruz's overseas traders in an era marked initially by expansion and optimism and then by turmoil and confusion.

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Petty Capitalism in Spanish America: The Pulperos of Puebla, Mexico City, Caracas, and Buenos Aires. By JAY KINSBRUNER. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987. Maps. Tables. Figures. Appendixes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xxii, 159. Paper. \$17.95.

In this ambitious work, Jay Kinsbruner examines and compares the grocery stores of Puebla and Mexico City, Caracas, and Buenos Aires during the period from 1750 to 1850. His study focuses specifically on the entrepreneurship of grocers, the capitalization and profitability of their stores, and the problems attendant on their occupation. He consistently supports his conclusions with a wealth of archival material from all four cities as well as San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Those findings are quite startling, because they tend to contradict some hoary myths about capitalism in Latin America in the colonial and independent periods. For example, Kinsbruner shows that the storeowners were quite entrepreneurial, and, in fact, demonstrated more willingness to take risks than did their counterparts in New York City. Further, they depended on credit to a substantial degree and were required by law to accept personal possessions in pawn in exchange for goods. He contends that the grocers, however, lacked "class consciousness" and were not yet "bourgeois," although they formed part of a "broad middle group" (p. 100). It will surprise no one who has lived in Latin America to learn that Kinsbruner's storeowners consistently ran short of small change.

In one of his most interesting but all too brief sections, Kinsbruner compares Spanish American and New York grocers and discovers that they suffered from similar problems because of state intrusion. While the Manhattan merchants could sell the alcohol illegal in Spanish America, they were forbidden to purvey meat, which was the special domain of butchers. However, the New York grocer could invest his profits in a vast panoply of financial instruments whereas the Spanish American could only buy another store or put his gains into land. Therefore, Kinsbruner's findings indicate that scholars should look more closely into banking and credit in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to find better explanations for regional underdevelopment.

Like all monographs featuring archival material, this study is dependent on the availability of its sources. As a result, Kinsbruner sometimes frustrates the reader with comparisons between grocers decades apart, unwittingly joining the argument in favor of the continuity of the period from 1750 to the 1850s and

beyond. Nevertheless, his work contributes greatly to our knowledge of urban life in Latin America, and provides a wealth of detail to students of Puebla, Mexico City, Caracas, and Buenos Aires in those fascinating years.

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Copanaguastla en un espejo. Un pueblo tzeltal en el virreinato. By MARIO HUMBERTO RUZ. San Cristóbal de las Casas: Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, 1985. Maps. Photographs. Figures. Notes. Table. Glossary. Appendix. Pp. 310. Paper.

In March 1545, Fray Domingo de Ara arrived in the province of San Vicente de Chiapa to serve the new bishop, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. One of 43, he came to build Dominican parishes among Maya and Zoque peoples. Ara was assigned the Tzeltal town of Copanaguastla, a prosperous center of cotton production and textile manufacturing, located in the southern end of the Grijalva River valley. Among his duties was the study of the Tzeltal language, and some 15 years later, though he had moved on to higher offices, Ara compiled a Tzeltal vocabulary and grammar based on his experience in the parish. A transcription of this manuscript, written in 1616, is today found in the Bancroft Library.

Mario Humberto Ruz's book is a historical ethnography of sixteenth-century Copanaguastla. Built around an extended commentary on the Ara vocabulary, the work is supplemented by selective archival research and excellent use of a wide variety of secondary sources. The text is descriptive rather than analytical, and recalls the best work of Ralph L. Roys on the Yucatec Maya. Ruz writes knowledgeably and with sophistication on a remarkably wide range of topics, and his study ought to be of enormous interest to anthropologists, linguists, and historians alike.

The early chapters review the bibliographic history of Ara's manuscript, provide an overview of his career, and survey the history of Copanaguastla from the conquest through the late seventeenth century. In the heart of the book, Ruz uses the vocabulary to describe the economy, material culture, social organization, and religious life of the pueblo. Included are sections on sexuality, illness, hunting and gathering, cotton production and textiles, marriage and kinship, social and political hierarchies, cosmology, and the role of native priests, curers, and witches. A glossary lists archaic Spanish terms and localisms, and an appendix offers a table comparing several hundred Tzeltal words for various flora and fauna with equivalent Spanish and scientific nomenclature.

Anyone who studies native peoples from Spanish-language sources alone will feel sadly impoverished after reading this book. The remarkable detail, subtlety, and complexity suggested by the vocabulary are impossible to find in the kinds of documents that historians more commonly study. Along with this volume, Ruz has