

private deposits, borrowed heavily from well-capitalized religious corporations, and encouraged credit management via varieties of commercial paper, *libranzas*.

Pérez Herrero has written a carefully articulated thesis illustrated with much relevant detail. A model monograph, it raises of course many questions, not the least of which concerns the degree of antagonism between Madrid's policies and Mexico City's commercial establishment. Gálvez handled that interest group tenderly: New Spain was not fully incorporated into *comercio libre* until after his death, and its merchants supplied loans and gifts to the Spanish metropole and members of the royal family in the 1780s and later. Nor do we know beyond reasonable doubt how much of New Spain's Asian and European imports were lost to Mexico City's merchants after 1789. These matters aside, *Plata y libranzas* has placed the Mexico City merchant community dominated by Spanish immigrants at the center of New Spain's economy and politics in the critical closing decades of the colonial era.

STANLEY J. STEIN, Princeton University

Relación de la provincia de Antioquia. By FRANCISCO SILVESTRE. Transcription, introduction, and notes by DAVID J. ROBINSON. Medellín: Secretaría de Educación y Cultura de Antioquia, 1988. Maps. Appendix. Indexes. 632 pp. Paper.

Geographer David J. Robinson has performed a valuable service in making available a late eighteenth-century source previously unused by colonial historians, including specialists in the unique history of that much-studied Colombian province, Antioquia. This *Relación*, begun in 1786 when Francisco Silvestre ended his second term as governor and completed in Spain in 1792, goes far beyond his *Relación* of 1776 and his well-known *Descripción del Nuevo Reino de Granada* of 1789. While Silvestre describes the fundamental economic and administrative issues and provides unusual insight into the nature and functioning of Antioquia at the end of the eighteenth century, his experiences also enabled him both to analyze the problems and to recommend measures to improve the well-being of the population and the treasury. The evolution of his thought is of particular interest, as it reflects the nature of changes taking place in the colony.

Silvestre brings to his study a wealth of expertise in fiscal matters that results in a remarkable assessment of the workings of the royal treasury, which he regarded as the touchstone of growth. Having begun his bureaucratic career as an accountant, he held several positions in the treasury and even married a treasurer's daughter. He also served as superintendent of mines, governor (twice), and viceregal secretary. Silvestre's explanation of how the treasury actually worked is astute, and his assessment of how and why particular taxes and sources of revenue were circumvented is enlightening. One gains a comprehension not only of the mechanics but also of the sociology of authority through his emphasis on the com-

petence of individual administrators. His analysis of the mentality of late colonial people may be as useful as his explanation of the details of mining, agriculture, and commerce.

While his recommendations are of interest because they provided a guide for the program of the Visitador Juan Antonio Mon y Velarde, they are even more valuable for their vision into the mind of a Bourbon reformer. Silvestre's fundamental assumption was that the state must take an active role in educating and stimulating the population because fiscal problems could be solved by the creation of a large and prosperous revenue-paying population. In order to achieve this, he argued that taxes on production should be eliminated in favor of consumption and luxury taxes.

The *Relación* is not simply a regional study. Antioquia is placed in its macro-regional and imperial context. According to Silvestre, for example, contraband could be ended if production were stimulated in Spain. Beyond its obvious contribution to geographers and historians specializing in Antioquia, Silvestre's *Relación* is of value to all economic and administrative historians studying the Bourbon era.

Robinson's 95-page introduction based on archival research provides a useful biography of Silvestre and his age, making it possible for the reader to assess the values of a man whose major enemy referred to him as "este gobernador comerciante" (p. 60).

DAVID C. JOHNSON, University of Alberta

INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL PERIODS

Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798–1852. By RODERICK J. BARMAN. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988. Maps. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. vi, 334 pp. Cloth. \$39.50.

"The purpose of this work," Roderick J. Barman writes, "is to elucidate three principal themes: 1) the growth of an autonomous identity [in Portuguese America] from the late eighteenth century onwards, 2) the process of state formation from 1808 to 1852, and 3) the exercise of politics and the formulation of policy at the national level . . . during the three decades after 1822" (p. 7). To this end, the author constructs a detailed political narrative based on extensive research in published sources and archival material from the British Public Record Office that conforms to the nationality theory developed by Carlton J. H. Hayes and others in the 1950s and 1960s. Given his sources and theoretical orientation, the author necessarily concentrates on the "privileged few" (p. 26). (His last chapter surveys some of the broad social and economic transformations underway during the seemingly unrelated political debate that is chronicled and laboriously analyzed in the preceding seven chapters.)

In adapting Hayes's nationality theory, Barman translates *la patrie* as *a pátria*