

new ground in their analyses of Masonic orders in Chile and Brazil, the latter arguing that Masons found common cause, with Protestants and liberal Catholic nationalists, in advancing conceptions of “progress.” While Vieira’s conclusions are simplistic, his documentation of the trajectory of Masonic orders is valuable.

The volume provides a useful, if not fully focused, set of papers on religion in nineteenth-century Latin America that will be a welcome addition to the specialist’s bookshelf.

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Life in Mexico Under Santa Anna, 1822–1855. By RUTH R. OLIVERA and LILIANE CRETE. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. Maps. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. xiii, 264 pp. Cloth. \$24.95.

This is a lively and well-written survey of Mexican society with an occasional glance backward at the colonial period. Liliane Crete has written other books on daily life in societies of the past; her co-author, Ruth R. Olivera, is manuscript cataloguer of the Latin American Library of Tulane University.

The book ranges over Mexican life in ten chapters covering such topics as work, war, transportation and communication, and education and culture. While the authors devote a chapter to Mexico City, they make a commendable effort to describe other cities and regions as well as to discuss Mexico’s various ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Despite the period they have chosen, they find much continuity between the colonial and early republican periods and conclude that “life in Mexico was hardly disturbed” by the upheavals of the age of Santa Anna (p. 241).

The book is based mainly on contemporary travelers’ accounts, supplemented by modern secondary sources and the papers of the wealthy Gordoia family, which are housed at Tulane. The book’s principal failings stem from the nature and quality of these sources. First, the text reflects the biases of nineteenth-century travelers, as can be seen in discussions of religion and the Catholic church. Thus we are told that the church was one of the two plagues of Mexico, the other being the army (p. 30), and that “superstition was at the core of religion” (p. 213). Second, although the authors cite several recent dissertations and monographs, they have ignored important works. For example, Silvia Arrom’s book on the women of Mexico City, 1790–1857, does not appear among the references. Indeed, the authors slight the whole topic of women. They also derive material from secondary sources of questionable value in dealing with the 1822–1855 period, such as Ernest Gruening’s *Mexico and Its Heritage* (1928).

Because of these flaws, the book has little to offer the specialist. It can be recommended, however, with reservations, to students and general readers seeking an introduction to this turbulent period in Mexican history.

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