

Land and Politics in the Valley of Mexico: A Two Thousand Year Perspective. Edited by H. R. HARVEY. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. Illustrations. 325 pp. Cloth. \$35.00.

A multidisciplinary group of scholars has been working for some time, and with considerable success, to elucidate the ethnohistory of central Mexico in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries beyond what could be done with Spanish chronicles and archaeological investigation as the sole information base. Cultural anthropologists (primarily documentary scholars) and historians, with some geographers and demographers, have been the main contributors, using varied source materials including not only mundane records in Spanish but pictorial and alphabetic documents made by indigenous people in indigenous traditions. A far more subtle, realistic, and reliable picture has been emerging, and the late preconquest and early postconquest fields have become to a certain extent a single area of endeavor. Until very recently, the results have been made known primarily in a series of anthologies of original articles, of which the present volume is the latest.

The interrelated themes announced in the title—land and politics—are solidly in the center of the work that has been done in this tradition, at least partly because they are (equating politics with sociopolitical organization) the most profusely documented. The items included do indeed largely stick to the announced themes; some are the result of intense, small-scale monographic research, some are summaries of wider projects, and one or two are occasional pieces. Nearly all are valuable in their way, and a few are outstanding. The same audience that profited from Pedro Carrasco and Johanna Broda's *Estratificación social en la Mesoamérica prehispánica* (1976) and Harvey and Hanns Prem's *Explorations in Ethnohistory* (1984) will need this book as well.

Compared to its predecessors, the volume's main innovation is the inclusion of archaeology (and hence a longer preconquest perspective) in the interdisciplinary ethnohistorical framework. It becomes apparent, however, that archaeology and ethnohistory still inhabit different worlds. To mention only the largest gap, the archaeologists tend to account for the phenomena they find by the conscious policies of shadowy "elites," virtually ignoring the ethnically based small state structures that dominate Nahua ethnohistory, and about which by now a great deal is known. One of the favorite categories in the archaeological part is "urban," notable for its virtual absence from Nahua sociopolitical thinking.

The cultural anthropologists, geographers, and historians are far better attuned to each other, but here too, one could wish for more. Already by 1976 a substantial convergence had taken place; one can hardly say that visible progress has been made in this respect since then. Indeed, the team of Hanns Prem and Ursula Dyckerhoff, who have been a prominent feature of the previous anthologies, ranging more widely across fields and epochs than most of their colleagues, are absent and missed this time. Although the volume editor has brought about

some useful cross-referencing, it does not appear that most of the authors ever seriously read or pondered upon the other contributions in the volume. The time seems to have come for scholars in this field, as individuals or in smaller teams, to broaden out and produce more unified publications in the same general range as the anthologies, which have brought us perhaps as far as they can.

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Love Customs in Eighteenth-Century Spain. By CARMEN MARTÍN GAITE. Translated by MARIA G. TOMSICH. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. Notes. Bibliography. xv, 204 pp. Cloth. \$34.95.

Carmen Martín Gaité is a distinguished Spanish writer, author of several novels, and a historian by avocation. Twenty years ago she published a study of social mores that proved to be a felicitous mixture of elegant writing, perceptive analysis, and adroit understanding of the concerns of social history. That book has now been translated into English. It dwells on the exquisite decadence of gender relations in the Spanish upper class in the late eighteenth century, as expressed in conversations; accepted forms of social behavior, including courtship and marriage; and the *cortejo*, or platonic male companion to married ladies. Gaité examines the concept of love and virtue within marriage, the Bourbons' concern with the morality of private life, and women's education, all refracted through the eyes of contemporaries, who saw much to comment about. Of particular interest are contemporary testimonies about the changing "codes of honor" in marriage among the aristocracy and the masses.

Gaité based her analysis on autobiographies, letters, newspapers, social essays, plays, travelers' comments, and pedagogical texts, to mention a few sources. Her main concern is to paint a broad and colorful scenario of Spanish society in which men and women played the games of love; to expose the fragility, ambiguities, and contradictions of gender relations among the upper classes. Love and its condemnation by preachers, the voluptuousness of sacrifice for love, the contradictions of virtue and passion, faithfulness and adultery seemed to express themselves through the *cortejo*, to whom she devotes a considerable amount of space.

Gaité seems interested in assessing the extent to which all these exchanges between men and women represent a transition to romanticism or simply a return to models of chivalry set up in earlier centuries. The *cortejo* is a metaphor for the changes that took place in the Spanish court under the influence of French customs. The contrasts between court refinement and popular culture—*majos* and *petimetres*—could not have been greater during the reign of Charles III. They also reflected the widening gap between rich and poor, and the rapid erosion of Spain's attempts to renovate itself under the growing weight of French political demands.