

tries to turn his study into a critique of Venezuelan democracy in general. Acción Democrática is used as a replacement for all parties, and the behavior of AD presidents substitutes for a presidential system. Yet claims about the negative aspects of partyarchy (strong, all-encompassing parties) and presidentialism would be better justified by an analysis of the entire party system and its connection to constituents, along with a more careful look at presidential powers that derive from the constitution and the executive's support in the legislature.

While presidentialism and partyarchy relate to Venezuela's current problems, furthermore, they fail as primary explanations for its recent crises because they are static. They have characterized Venezuelan democracy since its inception; and to say that the troubles they cause have finally accumulated to the point of crisis is not entirely sufficient. To explain fully such dramatic events, one must include causal variables that have also changed dramatically, such as the political economy and the nature of the society that parties, including AD, once claimed to represent. Thus, the book is at its best when it sticks to AD but is less convincing when the data are stretched to other issues.

In sum, this is the best book on Acción Democrática's internal workings since John D. Martz's classic *Acción Democrática: Evolution of a Modern Political Party in Venezuela* (1966). And despite the author's efforts to draw conclusions about larger conceptual themes that his data only partially reflect, this book should be read both by scholars who wish to understand intraparty politics in Venezuela and by those who are concerned with political parties and their more general impact.

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Pueblos y jornadas boyacenses. By GABRIEL CAMARGO PÉREZ. Tunja: Academia Boyacense de Historia y Gobernación de Boyacá, 1994. Photographs. Illustrations. Maps. Tables. 276 pp. Paper.

A lawyer by training, a historian by avocation, Gabriel Camargo Pérez has dedicated more than 50 years to explicating his home region, the Department of Boyacá, Colombia. This work collects nearly 150 short essays written over several decades. The essays, in turn, are roughly organized into 20 chapters, treating Boyacá's geographic setting, pre-Columbian population, the conquest, early settlements, religious conversion, the Comuneros Revolt, the Patria Boba (1810–16), Spanish reconquest, independence (1819), the historical evolution of municipal structures, Paz de Río, Belencito, Sugamuxi (Sogamoso), and Boyacá's development from 1886 to 1992.

Under the Chibcha-Muiscas, what became Boyacá was the locus of various religious centers, of which Sugamuxi, which the author dubs the Rome of the Chibchas, was the most important. Native son Camargo Pérez peppers his essays with references to his hometown and its historical role.

Some of the items included here were originally journal articles; others, news-

paper stories; and still others, orations and speeches. Their subject matter varies widely. These factors make for too much repetition and for an uneven quality to the work as a whole. Camargo Pérez celebrates Boyacá's natural beauty and deplors its partial ecological destruction. His view of the indigenous past is limited by a lack of sources. His treatment of the colonial centuries is superficial, but he is not blind to Spanish, creole, and mestizo land grabbing from the Indian population. Camargo rescues some Sogamoso comuneros from oblivion, but his handling of the independence struggle adds little information that is new. In one of the last essays, he sketches the nine chief executives with Boyacá roots who ruled Colombia between 1837 and 1962; he also lists dozens of Boyacá personalities who, since 1810, have contributed to Colombia's cultural and political life.

Perhaps the most significant of all the essays are those that treat the profound social and economic changes brought, since 1950, to part of Boyacá's heartland by the development of heavy industry at Belencito and Paz de Río. Camargo Pérez served as legal counselor at the Paz de Río steelworks at its inception and for many years thereafter. It would be a valuable addition to his country's history of that period if he would flesh out this piece into a full book.

Despite its limitations and occasional subjectivity, this book contains a number of essays that Colombianists may find useful introductions to a major region, Boyacá.

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Our Guerrillas, Our Sidewalks: A Journey into the Violence of Colombia. By HERBERT BRAUN. Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1994. ix, 239 pp. Cloth, \$29.95. Paper, \$17.50.

Three narratives coexist uneasily in this book. The central narrative concerns the kidnapping of Jake Gambini, a U.S. oilman and the author's brother-in-law, by Colombian guerrillas. This story is based on the author's memories of the kidnapping, negotiation, and final release, along with retrospective interviews with those involved, including Gambini himself. The tale is chilling and well told.

The second narrative addresses Colombian society and politics in an effort to explain the country's history of violence and the guerrillas' role in it. This story is told in postmodern fashion, combining bits and pieces of newspaper accounts, commentaries, and personal reflections with general history. The third narrative hinges on the author's effort to square his own progressive beliefs and his image of the guerrillas as "good guys" fighting for a more just society with the reality that it is they who have kidnapped Gambini. They are therefore the source of the present problem, the origin (in this sense at least) of pain and suffering.

Braun is at his best with the first narrative, a story often experienced but rarely told in such intimate detail. The second story, about guerrilla movements, their relation to the historical *Violencia*, and Colombian society and politics in general, is less