

pation with the Maya rebels who negotiated a separate peace in 1853, the so-called *pacíficos del sur*. Dumond's current book, *The Machete and the Cross*, is an expansion and broadening of this uniquely southern perspective on the Caste War and its aftermath. The many effective maps and illustrations reinforce Dumond's detailed examination of the geographical dimensions of the conflict. In other respects, however, the book is less successful.

While Dumond tries to establish his own place in the debate over the causes of the rebellion (pp. 134–39), emphasizing the social position of the Maya peasantry rather than their ethnicity, his discussion of the events and conditions leading up to the rebellion is heavily dependent on nineteenth-century narrative sources, particularly Serapio Baqueiro and Eligio Ancona. He even employs Alexis de Tocqueville's theory of rising expectations (unleashed by the liberal reforms of the early independence period) to put his own twist on the question of why the rebels acted when they did. Dumond's work, unfortunately, does not tell us anything new about this period, nor does it offer fuller portraits of well-known rebel leaders Jacinto Pat and Cecilio Chi than the classic works of Reed and Cline.

Perhaps because the bulk of his research is based on archives in Belize and on Colonial Office correspondence located in the British Public Record Office, Dumond's most significant contribution to the historiography of the Caste War is his painstaking recreation of the complex and often tortuous relations among the rebels of Chan Santa Cruz, the *pacíficos del sur*, Yucatecan exiles, and Belizean authorities and gunrunners. That said, it is not clear why Dumond chose to cover the entire history of the Caste War from its origins to its inconclusive ending in 1901. Nowhere, neither in the preface nor in the introduction, does the author explain *why* he wrote the book. The reader has to infer, then, that Dumond's primary goal is to narrate and not to offer a new interpretation of the events of 1847 and after. From a historiographical perspective, Dumond's work not only adds little to our understanding of how the Caste War relates to the rest of nineteenth-century Mexican history, it ignores recent publications on the social origins of the rebellion and the relationship between indigenous peasants and the state in other regions of Mexico. *The Machete and the Cross* is profoundly retrospective, rather than innovative.

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*Procesos rurales e historia regional (sierra y costa totonacas de Veracruz).*

Edited by VICTORIA CHENAUT. Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1996. Paper.

Comprising previously unpublished essays based upon original research by both historians and anthropologists, this collection explores the historical processes that shaped and transformed the Totonac region of Veracruz over the course of two hundred years. Although primarily defined linguistically, the region under scrutiny is not presented as a

reified entity. Rather, the various essays combine to produce a rich and shifting landscape in perpetual constitution and dissolution. Moreover, while edited collections can often struggle for coherence, this one does not, a success due in equal parts to the diverse topics and temporal span of the essays and to the editor's masterful conclusion, which delineates dominant themes with analytical precision. The result is a sweeping and complex analysis of the sociocultural transformation of northern Veracruz.

Rather than take each essay individually, it would be more useful to focus upon three prominent issues that bind all of the essays together. First, the authors emphasize the ways in which the popular classes have shaped the spaces in which they live. For example, José Luis Blanco analyzes Totonac notions of territoriality as expressed in the conception of *Quihuikolo*—the god of the forest who grants the campesinos permission to use the land and its resources. And Mercedes Guadarrama Olivera discusses the concepts of sacred space and time that structure Totonaca social life. Both authors make important observations to the effect that human beings create their world, bestowing names and meaning upon it. In doing so they order and divide; they naturalize and assign significance; and such ascription of meanings converts spaces into places. Moreover, these very divisions and orders of “things” are dynamic; challenged by pressures both from within and without, they are products of shifting and competing relationships of power.

Second, rather than offering up the standard fare of passive, reactive, and isolated communities, the essays reveal the myriad ways in which the popular classes generally, and Totonac indigenous communities specifically, played politics with the developing national and local governments, as well as amongst themselves. Michael Ducey, Antonio Escobar Ohmstede, and Victoria Chenaut all show that indigenous rebellions in northern Veracruz in the long nineteenth century were more than knee-jerk responses to loss of land. Rather, they locate regional rebellions in the larger arena of national politics, emphasizing how the confluence of nation-state formation and local politics spurred communities to action, with land representing only one of many contentious issues. Just as significant as the privatization of landed property were excessive taxation, state rationalization and bureaucratization, and local ethnic conflicts over power and resources.

Finally, all of the authors are concerned in some way with modernization and state formation. The essays show how the processes of modernization, of rationalization, and of state simplification transformed, over the *longue durée*, not only indigenous communities and identity but the region itself—reshaping the landscape topographically, socially, economically, culturally, and politically—transformations shaped as much from below as from above. Modernity and the nascent state appeared in many guises: in the militarization of the survey corps, in the increasing importance of documentary evidence in regional conflicts and territorial rights, in the individualizing and homogenizing tendencies of the Porfirian regime, and in the imposition of grids over land and people in order to control labor and space.

A number of the essays tend towards occasional mythologization of the native past

and deferrals to authenticity. At times one gets the impression that this is a story solely of loss, of the demise of the local in the face of homogenizing forces of the state, a troubling analytical framework that replicates old anthropological paradigms of tradition and modernity. However, other than the occasional slippage, the authors do a remarkably good job of complicating the picture, maintaining an awareness of the historical processes themselves rather than becoming mired in a doomed quest for authenticity and stasis. The victims are anything but passive and the processes themselves are anything but foregone conclusions. Moreover, the contributors to *Procesos rurales e historia regional* avoid overemphasizing cultural conceptions of space and time; while these certainly garner attention, a number of essays pay attention to the social component in spatial formations, to the ways in which space and time are structured in terms of class relations as well as ethnic ones, underlining the dynamic and reciprocal constitution of class, culture, and place. An essay by Alberto J. Olvera, for example, shows how the process of accelerated development in Poza Rica, spurred by the growth of the oil industry, created an isolated community where rural and urban workers came together and formed new modes of working-class organization to defend their interests. Similarly, Emilia Velázquez discerns the ways in which commercialization and marketing systems around Papantla functioned to constitute an integrated region.

The “region” is a social construction at base, a product of multiple and often conflicting processes. Too often, the region can end up as either a reification or the province of elites and their inscriptions. However, when done well, regional history can reveal geography and history in the making. Through empirical analysis and attention to a wide variety of rural processes, the authors in this collection provide a dynamic, complex, and rich regional history, painting a fluid portrait of the various ways people have made their own history and geography in northern Veracruz.

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*Las rasgaduras de la descolonización: españoles y mexicanos a mediados del siglo XIX.*

By ROMANA FALCÓN. Mexico City: Centro de Estudios Históricos, El Colegio de México, 1996. Plates. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 368 pp. Paper.

In this book Romana Falcón recounts the fascinating and little-known story of the responses of official Spain and of individual Spaniards toward independent Mexico from the late 1840s to the fall of Maximilian's monarchy in 1867, or roughly during the reign of Isabel II of Spain. Attitudes of lingering imperialism and racial superiority were dominant; Spaniards dismissed Mexicans as barbarians unfit for self-government and as wanting only the restoration of Spanish colonial domination and Hispanic civilization to enjoy the benefits of political and social stability. They were backed up by decades of denunciation of Mexican lawlessness and savagery by Spanish consular agents and Spanish merchants and hacendados alike. Bankrupt and devastated by civil war, Mexican governments could neither protect Spanish subjects living in Mexico nor enforce Mex-