

*Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700–1850.* By CYNTHIA RADDING. Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. Illustrations. Map. Tables. Figures. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. xx, 404 pp. Cloth, \$59.95. Paper, \$19.95.

In the scheme of Mexican studies as a whole, and even within the context of Mexican regional histories, the northwest “frontier”—a vast area that now encompasses part of the southwest United States—has not received its due share of attention. This is especially true of the colonial and early Republican eras, precisely the period that Radding covers. With this superb work, this omission has been seriously addressed, and *Wandering Peoples* will stand as a definitive study for some time to come. Of course, Radding builds on a small but significant corpus of previously published historical and ethnographic studies of this region. But most of all, in setting herself apart from others, she incorporates into her analytical and methodological framework an impressive array of new theories in the social sciences and humanities of the last 10 to 15 years, giving the text a sophistication not evident in works a decade or more older. In the introduction, Radding carefully lays out the theories informing this cultural “history from below,” or in Eric Wolf’s words, of “people without history.” To name just a few: Following post-colonial studies, the “indigenous peasant nations” (not “tribes”) are “subalterns” whose voices have to be elicited from texts authored by state or other official authorities with power over them, or deduced from their actions. Following environmental studies, the competition for access to and control over resources that is a prerequisite for identity maintenance, political autonomy, and cultural regeneration (“ethnogenesis”) unfolds along “ecological frontiers” and within “ethnic spaces.” Adding cultural studies, encounters between European conquerors and settlers and the indigenous peoples produce “multiracial hybridity.” Meanwhile, tried and true older theories are not shunted aside, for the intersection among race, class, and gender continues to be relevant, gender analysis encompasses sexuality, and class formation is still Marxist, still tied to “social relations of production.” And no one studying peasants today leaves James Scott and “everyday forms of resistance” far behind. To the theoretically challenged, especially those who have not kept up with the latest developments, the introduction may be daunting. However, this should not deter any reader from forging ahead with the chapters that present substantive historical and ethnographic material. To her great credit, for the most part Radding dispenses with unnecessary jargon and dense language, while producing a clearly written and highly readable text.

Radding’s study focuses on three indigenous peasant peoples of the highlands of northern Sonora: the Opatas, Eudeves, and Pimas. Though basically sedentary by the time the Europeans arrived, their forced interactions with outsiders—missionaries, local elites, Bourbon and Mexican state authorities, and other ethnic groups in the region—led to considerable mobility as part of strategies of coping and surviving. Here, one might quibble that Radding does not sufficiently explain the distinction

between the mobility of a people with a land base and a territorial sense, and the mobility of those who led a nomadic existence. Indeed, Opatas and Pimas repeatedly acquiesced to being recruited into militias to fight nomadic Indians at the edges of the imperial frontier, but in doing so they created yet another form of mobility that simultaneously represented accommodation with colonial demands on their labor.

Others before Radding who have studied northwestern Mexico have called attention to conflicts and interdependence among indigenous communities, local elites, and the state, represented by the institutions of missions, mines, and frontier governments, both civilian and military. And others have more closely documented overt hostility between indigenous peoples and elites, as well as state powers. But while others have been mindful of the significance of labor and trade, Radding more than any other scholar has presented the most comprehensive and detailed analysis of native economies, before Spanish arrival and especially after the acceleration of Spanish enterprises under Bourbon rule. Herein lies Radding's most significant and original contribution; indeed, the bulk of the book deals with such relationships as labor and commodity exchange, land ownership and tenure, and subsistence and surplus production by individuals, households, and communities, both within and outside the dominating institution of missions. The research that underlies construction of knowledge around these issues is prodigious; the impressive organization of the massive data gathered (exemplified by the large number of well-presented tables and charts) is so useful that there is a reference quality to some chapters. In the end, whatever "subaltern discourse" Radding detected, whatever "ethnic space" she perceived, it is, frankly, this kind of old-fashioned, solid historical construction of the material basis of culture and social relationships that matters and will stand the test of time.

EVELYN HU-DEHART, University of Colorado at Boulder

*Learning to Heal: The Medical Profession in Colonial Mexico, 1767–1831.*

By LUZ MARÍA HERNÁNDEZ SÁENZ. American University Studies Series XXI: Regional Studies, vol. 17. New York: Peter Lang, 1997. Tables. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. x, 301 pp. Cloth, \$48.95.

Hernández Sáenz's study of medicine and medical practitioners in late colonial Mexico has much to offer specialists both in the history of medicine and in Latin American social history. It traces the improvement in medical knowledge and training from 1767, when the first College of Surgery was established in Mexico City, until 1831, when the Royal Protomedicato was abolished and medicine and surgery were merged. Although the outlines of this story are evident in John Tate Lanning's book on the Protomedicato in Spanish America, Hernández Sáenz adds new information culled from Mexican archives, presents technical advances clearly so that they can be understood by the layperson, and provides a useful discussion of developments in contemporary Europe. The most original contribution of *Learning to Heal* is the author's study of the lives of med-