

extraction of hydrocarbons and the untrammelled growth of the city, all of which reconfigured the frontier and the place of Llanos within it. This latter aspect, and its relationship to the definition of a collective Villavicencian identity, provides the two central themes of the final chapters.

Although some of these aspects are beyond the scope of the book and require regional research, I want to draw attention to themes of frontier and identity. Although, for Rausch, it is clear that the frontier as an empty space is being questioned, there is a need for a perspective that looks beyond the state or ecclesiastical arena to analyse the multiple territorialities to be found in the region – for instance, the indigenous populations so clearly absent from this study. By the same token, the whole picture of regions as being clearly defined, self-contained and homogeneous needs to be questioned. The case of Villavicencio shows the need to historicise local and regional interconnections beyond the straightforward picture of the central Andes looming over the Llanos, and to problematise the ways in which these two regions have been defined. This concentration on the search for a Villavicencian identity by Rausch and the majority of regional specialists becomes related to a naturalised image of the frontier. It is complicated for them to define a collective identity encompassing the *llanero*, the *andino* and the *bogotano* in Villavicencio. Rather than focusing on this notional difficulty, it is necessary to analyse and study the ways in which diverse collective identities associated with the city have been constructed and articulated in the context of specific political and economic projects.

It is certainly true that for the general reader this book is a very good introduction to Rausch's oeuvre, to the history of Colombia and to the Llanos. Nevertheless, for students of the region, it is above all a reminder of the need to broaden perspectives and engage in dialogue with disciplines other than history, such as sociology and anthropology, which are even more noticeably absent from the Llanos. This can only lead to a fuller understanding and, above all, a deeper perception of the complexity of the problem underlying the marginal condition of the region with respect to the Colombian nation.

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Matthew D. O'Hara, *A Flock Divided: Race, Religion, and Politics in Mexico, 1749–1857* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. xi + 316, £62.00, £15.99 pb.

Matthew O'Hara's *A Flock Divided* is about politics and religion and the colonial heritage of being Indian. It is an erudite history that simultaneously reiterates what we think we already know about change and continuity in New Spain, yet confounds those same assumptions. The historical devil here, then, is in the details.

O'Hara's focus is on the relationship between Indians and the Church from the mid-eighteenth century to the reform era of Benito Juárez. During this span of over a hundred years there were monumental transformations such as the Bourbon Reforms, Mexico's independence from Spain and the Mexican–American War, although the last is not mentioned. At the same time, ethnic Indians, here predominantly but not exclusively Nahuas, officially went from being legitimate corporate enclaves to being subjects of assimilation, and then to being political nonentities. In view of native resilience, how might this have happened?

The book comprises three sections, beginning with a generous study of post-contact Nahuas as the spiritual charges of the mendicants, who gathered tens of thousands of tentative neophytes into *doctrinas* made up of one or more complex *altepetls* (ethnic states). The altepetl had been the basis for indigenous ethnic and social identity since the Nahuas' time immemorial, and although the political structure of the institution was modified during the colonial period, its cultural precedents manifested in myriad forms, serving to maintain the integrity of the indigenous communities. Most Nahuas eventually became Christians while practising their own form of Catholicism. Some of their religious beliefs were adaptations from the past that fostered local solidarity, and their friars often did not object as long as the Indians dedicated themselves to the sacraments and church duties. Early on, the friars enjoyed great influence among their native congregations. The Spanish crown, though, worried about the undue authority of the mendicants, and by the end of the sixteenth century it had initiated a process of secularisation that was to be carried out over the course of the next two centuries. Yet many mendicants continued to minister to Nahua towns, largely because only they spoke the necessary languages and were willing to live in the countryside.

The book opens with a sermon given in 1757 by a Dominican, Fray Antonio Claudio de Villegas, who was celebrating the tearing down of a wall dividing separate chapels utilised by Indians and Spaniards. The uniting of the two groups anticipated mandates from the Bourbon crown that sought to realise its secularisation project and thereby bring the native population into the mainstream of colonial society. The speaking of native languages was to end, religious festivals were to be tempered, and there would be economic advantages for all. Significantly, and tellingly in light of traditional indigenous perception and representation, the Indians responded to the reform initiatives by proposing the construction of seminaries for native boys who would replace the mendicants. Essentially, they would manage their own religious affairs. Plans for seminaries came to naught, although native women were finally allowed to have their own convents by 1724.

The second section of the book discusses official policy toward the Indians at the end of the eighteenth century. The integration of society had not been realised. Fraught with contradictions from the beginning, the crown had tried to keep native peoples apart from Spaniards, largely for the benefit of both groups, even though they were mutually dependent. Nevertheless, Spanish reformers, while aware of the incongruity of advocating homogenisation in the face of their own racial and caste biases, legislated the end of religious parochialism in 1772. The mendicants naturally opposed secularisation, but their congregations were more realistic. To optimise the inevitable outcome, the Nahuas made the transition to secular parishes but kept the clerics at arm's length. Their churches, with their holy paraphernalia and their celebrations, were all part of the colonial legacy of the community; the new priests could make no such claim. Tried and true spiritual corporations, such as the *cofradías*, served as hybrid models of social virtue but were also bulwarks of ethnic exclusivity. Even in Mexico City and small towns where *casta* populations were increasing, the Indians used religion to leverage politics.

The last section of the book focuses on independent Mexico and 'Indianness' in the new republic. By this time caste distinctions had been abolished, even in the parishes, yet Church policy established by the 1585 Third Provincial Council remained in force until 1896, and change was therefore slow. At the local level, however, the native leaders were well aware of the entitlements of the republican

government and co-opted the new *ayuntamientos constitucionales* (constitutional town councils) for their own purposes. They championed tradition, when necessary, while capitalising on their irrefutable status as citizens to optimise their religious and political rights when challenged. Remarkably, they were often successful.

*A Flock Divided* is true to its title. It is a rich, revisionist history that confounds old notions of indigenous passivity and obsolescence by bringing to light a trove of new sources and interpretations that furnish great insight into what being Indian was about over the *longue durée*. It is a welcome contribution to the history of early Mexico.

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Edward Wright-Rios, *Revolutions in Mexican Catholicism: Reform and Revelation in Oaxaca, 1887–1934* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. xiii + 361, £59.00, £14.99 pb.

Standard histories of the nature of Catholic resistance to the construction of the Mexican state have placed it within a long process of intertwined Church–state relations, a question of high politics. Nevertheless, the rise of revisionist regional history between 1970 and 1990 gradually drew attention to the importance of the religious dimension to our understanding of post-revolutionary society.

In the case of the Archdiocese of Oaxaca between 1887 and 1934, this study by Edward Wright-Rios goes a step further than its predecessors in incorporating regional history. Moving beyond the dominant reductionist tendency in dealing with Church–state relations, the author aims to ‘remake the history of Mexican Catholicism itself (as a complex organization and as a way of life)’ (p. 6, quoting José André-Gallego). Treating the Church as a sort of state with its own internal power struggles, the work explores the changes and continuities within Mexican Catholicism and attempts to understand the efforts of indigenous peoples, lay leaders and clerical activists to reinvigorate Catholicism in the face of secularisation and the Mexican state. This is focused on three major movements which arose between 1880 and 1930: the implementation, in the Archdiocese of Oaxaca, of a reform instigated by the Vatican to ‘rechristianise’ Latin America (1887–1911), and two cases of indigenous devotional apparitionism.

Inspired by authors who sparked the new cultural history (especially James Scott and his insights relating to strategies of dominance and resistance, Eric Hobsbawm and his concepts of ‘invented tradition’, and Victor Turner and his typologies of apparitionism), Wright-Rios argues that the higher clergy inflicted dogmas and dictates on the community of believers in an attempt to impose its reforms, but adopted a flexible stance when dealing with clashes over specific issues relating to rural communities. The study considers the institutional role of the clergy as a body that aimed to define cultural meanings, identities and beliefs in the context of the sacred and the profane. But it also deals with the negotiations, interactions and confrontations between communities of believers and the Church that were part of the reinvention of a religious culture from below.

Between 1887 and 1911 the archbishop of Oaxaca, Eulogio Gillow, favoured a conservative and Hispanicist form of urban piety and institutional Catholic culture centred on the city. Gillow’s religious reformism culminated in the coronation of the