

translators' note to clarify the extent and nature of these revisions; if scholars are going to use these translations in their research, it is important that translators (Chambers and Chasteen foremost among them) are recognised and cited in the proper way.

This book should be the first item on the reading list of any course teaching Latin American history and the independence era. The editors have packed a lot of perspectives into the book which, used carefully by the teacher, will enable a unit to be designed around it so that students can engage critically with the latest research publications. The sources presented on the post-independence period should certainly prompt students to think about the way independence has passed into historical memory across the continent. The Mexican Independence Day speeches, and the extract from Arturo Uslar Pietri's *The Red Lances*, are brilliant choices in this respect. The scholarly introductions, to the book overall as well as to each section, are magnificent works of synthesis and will allow readers who are new to the subject – as well as those who are well versed in it – to get to grips with the primary sources. This is an excellent and very welcome anthology.

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Nancy Vogeley, *The Bookrunner: A History of Inter-American Relations – Print, Politics, and Commerce in the United States and Mexico, 1800–1830* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 2011), pp. viii + 341, \$35.00, pb.

The transformation of the political culture in Mexico in the wake of its achievement of independence has been an emerging focus of the historiography in recent years. Nancy Vogeley's book relates to the opening of Mexico to direct imports of foreign books immediately after independence. It is based on the account of Thomas W. Robeson, the agent of prominent Philadelphia bookseller and publisher Mathew Carey, who in 1822 brought a shipment of books to Mexico City and who left 20 letters detailing his trip. Vogeley insists that this first coming together of the United States and Mexico, rather than being a marriage of unequals, can best be described as romantic first love. For Mexico it was an early step toward decolonisation, disconnecting from a Spanish mindset in an environment of limitless possibilities and comparatively unfettered openness. There was an eager audience of literate elites thirsting for books, maps, knowledge and ideas that had previously been carefully if not always effectively restricted by the crown and Inquisition. On the US side there was quite remarkable openness to the culture of the nearest newly independent Spanish American country. 'The partners were equal in their Americanness' (p. 5) is how Vogeley phrases it. It is an intriguing theme for a book.

Vogeley dismisses any assumptions by the United States that it was (is?) automatically the voice of the Americas, and in a treatment that is highly aware of and respectful of Mexican thought and culture presents both countries as young, struggling, newly independent lands with a pervasive need to establish identity and foreign respect. This is, after all, a sensitive topic because of the modern Mexican resistance to the frequent Anglo-American assertion that change in Mexico occurred because of US influences. Instead Vogeley argues that the period from 1820 to 1830 was a moment of 'postcolonial Americanism' characterised by broad perspectives on both sides. By 1830, however, US thought would begin to presuppose US superiority.

It is important to get this perspective right, because in 1821 Mexico was twice as big and twice as populated as the United States. Philadelphia was the centre of thought and commerce in the United States, New York City was just emerging and Washington, DC was a small new town in a swamp, but Mexico City was still, as it had been for three centuries, the largest city in the Americas.

In a treatment that is both subtle and nuanced, Vogeley shows clearly that despite the romance inherent in the theme, this is fundamentally a story about business, trade and commerce. She discusses the sociology of the book, tracing its reception and circulation and focusing chiefly on its publication and distribution, as well as on the myriad of authors. There is a strong argument, which really is eye-opening, that in this early period the United States was multilingual, not just English-speaking, and that its publishers often produced books in other languages, not least in Spanish. Thus, all the books Robeson carried to Mexico were in Spanish; all were political essays and economic treatises; some were written originally in Spanish, while others were translated by Carey's firm. The authors came not just from Britain, France and the United States, but also from Spain and Mexico, sometimes exiles from those countries. The major limiting factor in this trade was that Mexican duties were high and books were very expensive. In addition, Vogeley emphasises that publishing in Mexico, now free from the constraints of prior – although not post-publication – censorship, was extraordinarily active and lively.

It is not so much the influence of the imported books that Vogeley traces, since that would be highly diffuse and difficult to sketch, but rather the import and sale of the books, together with a good deal of information about their authors, publishers and contents. Extensive discussion of the contents of many authors illustrates wide-ranging research and Vogeley's thorough mastery of the intellectual climate of the period. She traces the publication of Spanish-language books and periodicals in Philadelphia, New York and Mexico City, as well as in London and Paris. Mathew Carey, an Irish Catholic immigrant to the United States, particularly focused on Spanish and Catholic authors. The motivation, however, was business, not ideology; Carey published what he thought would be of interest to Mexican readers. It is particularly significant to note that of the books Robeson carried to Mexico, which included such obvious titles as Rousseau's *Social Contract* and Paine's *Rights of Man*, by far the best seller was the Venezuelan Juan German Roscio's *Triumph of Liberty over Despotism*. The explanation, Vogeley cogently proposes, is that Roscio, who had written Venezuela's 1811 declaration of independence, understood the uniqueness of Spanish America's independence movement and approached such issues as the role of the Church, the Inquisition and the Spanish crown from a Catholic perspective. The fact that Roscio's work was not an angry attack on Spain but, rather, an argument in favour of distinguishing between the spiritual role of the Catholic Church and its inappropriate meddling in politics, well suited the temper of the time in Spanish America. In general, Vogeley argues, the works of Protestant English-language authors, who tended to be dismissive of Spanish culture, and of radical French revolutionary authors, who were often viewed as irreligious, were of little interest to Spanish Americans. Again, this is a valuable corrective to the historiography.

Disappointingly, this insightful book is not as clearly laid out as it could be. The narrative at times seems disjointed and almost random, and the amount of detail is burdensome. This seriously detracts from what is otherwise an astute portrayal of a moment of parity between Mexico and the United States, a brief few years in which

each country was open to ideas and interaction with the other, and in which commerce rather than ideology was the operative principle.

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Karen D. Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens: Local Liberalism in Early National Oaxaca and Yucatán* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. xiii + 289, \$60.00, hb.

Caplan's welcome study on how nineteenth-century liberalism was understood, appropriated, translated and applied in provincial Mexico, with the onus being on how the indigenous communities of Oaxaca and Yucatán made national political projects work for them (or not, as the case may be), follows in the tradition of fine scholars such as Guy Thomson and Peter Guardino. It provides a groundbreaking interpretation of early national politics that eloquently demonstrates the extent to which *indígenas*, as the author likes to refer to them, actively engaged with the political ideas and practices that became prevalent after the consummation of independence. Belonging to that genealogy of scholarship that has shown how liberalism and/or federalism found a popular voice at a local or regional level, Caplan's research allows us to appreciate the extent to which the transition to liberalism, from its earliest manifestations as expressed in the 1812 Cádiz Constitution to its eventual triumph as the defining cornerstone of the Porfirian nation-state, was one characterised by ongoing negotiation. Breaking away from the idea that gentlemanly *criollos* imposed their liberal project on the nation from the enlightened and honourable institutions and salons of the capital, Caplan's rural portrait is beautifully crafted around the tensions that arose with regard to the negotiated assimilation and implementation of liberal policies and practices in the remote Indian-dominated villages of Oaxaca and Yucatán. Worthy of note is that this was a period in which there was as much change as there was continuity. Making use of documents found in the state and municipal archives of Oaxaca and Yucatán, as well as national archives like the Archivo General de la Nación (for example, council minutes, indigenous representations, penal proceedings, tax records, and correspondence between local political figures such as sub-prefects, mayors and judges), while bringing into play recent historiographical findings, Caplan succeeds in developing a particularly persuasive argument that combines the local with the national, ensuring her comparative regional history of Oaxaca and Yucatán never loses sight of the broader picture.

Perhaps unsurprisingly (just considering how the Roman Catholic faith acquired a very particular indigenous flavour as part of a similarly negotiated process of evangelisation), albeit noted for the first time in Caplan's study with regards to early republican politics, Oaxacan and Yucatecan local liberalism was dynamically syncretic: a continuously changing, fluid and hybrid variant of the kind of liberalism that creole intellectuals such as José María Luis Mora, Lorenzo de Zavala, Valentín Gómez Farías and Mariano Otero advocated in the corridors of the National Palace. It was a liberalism that incorporated local indigenous customs and colonial practices, and entered into dialogue with local circumstances and needs as the independent nation experimented with several different constitutions. If one may be allowed to recall Karl Marx's dialectical materialist view, the synthetic nature of Oaxacan and, to a lesser