

availability of discretionary patronage and the political energy coursing through the clientelist networks to which they were connected. As with demands for a reproductively-based citizenship, this deeply ‘Mexican’ strategy brought rewards, albeit at the cost of foreclosing democratic possibilities. It is in the context of such constraints and achievements – Olcott reminds us at the end of this excellent book – and not any criteria of universal rights and suffrage, that the achievements of the likes of Concha Michel should be judged.

*Queen's University Belfast*

MATTHEW BUTLER

*J. Lat. Amer. Stud.* 39 (2007). doi:10.1017/S0022216X0700243X

Nils Jacobsen and Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada (eds.), *Political Cultures in the Andes, 1750–1950* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. xii + 386, £67.00, £16.95 pb.

The last decade or so has seen a veritable explosion of ‘new’ political histories of Latin America or histories of ‘the political’, to use the *au courant* phrase. As the editors of this volume note in their introduction, two approaches have dominated such histories: ‘the ‘Gramscians’, foregrounding the issues of hegemony, subalternity and postcolonialism; and on the other hand the ‘Tocquevillians’, focusing on civil society, the public sphere, the ideological and institutional nature of political regimes and citizenship’ (p. 2). The avowed aim of *Political Cultures in the Andes* is to make a significant contribution to this growing literature by, among other things, suggesting ways of overcoming the lack of communication between these two approaches, by showcasing a series of case studies drawn from four Andean countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia – which, incidentally, raises the question: what about Venezuela, Chile, Argentina?), and finally, by ‘endeavouring to exemplify the rich potential of a pragmatic political culture perspective for deciphering the processes involved in the formation, reconstruction, or dissolution of historical polities’ (p. 3).

The ‘pragmatic political culture perspective’ is developed through various mechanisms. First, in the editors’ introduction, it traces the evolution of the concept of ‘political culture’ from its roots in Plato and Aristotle, through 1960s political science, to the more recent ‘cultural turn’. Second, in a short response to a chapter by Alan Knight that questions the validity of such an approach and, in a masterly overview of nineteenth-century Latin American history, makes a compelling case for the primacy of materialist and interest-based explanations of historical change. Third, in a series of short introductions to the three sections that compose the volume, and lastly in a chapter offering ‘concluding remarks’. There is little doubt that the editors, both of them noted Peruvianist historians, have made a conscious and welcome effort to address the lack of cogency and unity of purpose that often characterises edited collections. In so doing they present a convincing case for the utility of the concept of ‘political culture’ for the history of the Andes.

In the short response to Knight’s chapter, Jacobsen and Aljovín de Losada define political culture as ‘a perspective on processes of change and continuity in any human polity or its component parts which privileges symbols, discourses, rituals, customs, norms, values and attitudes of individuals or groups for understanding the construction, consolidation and dismantling of power constellations and

institutions' (p. 58). In other words, they define 'political culture' as a *perspective*, or as a method or approach to historical investigation. It is, we are led to conclude, an analytical device. This seems to me to be sensible. By this definition, 'political culture' refers not, as one may have feared, to an attempt to find an essence to 'the political' in Andes, but, simply and suggestively, to a way of organising and giving meaning to historical processes that may indeed, as the editors suggest, advance 'our understanding of the contested nature of politics and power relations in specific historical times and places' through an emphasis on 'the *meanings* which different social, ethnic, religious, sexual, ideological and regional groups attach to political processes, structures, and institutions' (p. 67).

The various case studies included in the volume are indeed, as the editors claim, illustrative of the best work in Latin American political history and most of them present new or ongoing research that confirms Hilda Sabato's recent contention that much of the best work in this field is coming out of the Andes. The extent to which each case study refers back to the concept of political culture as initially defined by the editors varies considerably, with some never actually mentioning 'political culture' and others doing so as an afterthought. But this is not a problem as long as political culture is defined as a *perspective* that privileges *meanings*, since such a definition can easily accommodate Carlos Contreras' analysis of national-local conflict over tax policy in nineteenth Peru, Derek Williams' exploration of the unexpectedly inclusionary 'Catholic nation-making' during García Moreno's rule in Ecuador, or Mary Roldan's study of the regional uses of Gaitanismo in Colombia. Moreover, the short introductions to the three sections serve to shoehorn each chapter into the general conceptual project of the book.

Less sensible or convincing is the fact that as the volume unfolds, political culture as a *perspective* becomes *actually existing* political cultures, so that by the time we get to the conclusion the editors have shifted their attention to highlighting 'a few of the similarities and distinct inflections of modern Andean political cultures' (p. 325). Whereas calling political culture the method by which historians study attitudes, rituals and discourses seems to be fairly sensible, it is less clear (as Knight amply demonstrates in his chapter) how one goes about deciding how to group attitudes, rituals and discourses into discrete actually existing political cultures. The sheer indeterminacy of actually existing political cultures is recognised by the editors: 'political cultures of nation-states, their subdivisions, and dimensions may last from as little as a decade to hundreds of years' (p. 63); 'indigenous communities and Andean ethnic groups for much of the century wavered between an intense localism and projecting their own ideas about nation and republic into broader public spaces' (p. 65). This problem is illustrated by the editors' attempt in their concluding remarks to uncover specifically Andean 'inflexions' to 'the region's emerging political cultures' (p. 332). The case made for these inflexions, regarding, on the one hand, the interconnectedness of the local and the national resulting in the nationalisation of localised conflicts, and, on the other, a susceptibility to a 'politics of stalemate' resulting in the irresolution of fundamental political problems, is hurried and sweeping in its assertions. But the real problem is the fact that given the sheer variety and complexity of the Andes and its history, examples to prove and disprove these 'inflexions' are certain to abound.

Despite this reservation, there is much that is innovative, insightful and useful in the conceptual sections and case studies of this book. *Political Cultures in the Andes* will be of interest and benefit to Andeanists, Latin Americanists and non-Latin

Americanists alike who are looking for new ways to research and think about ‘the political’.

University of Manchester

PAULO DRINOT

*J. Lat. Amer. Stud.* 39 (2007). doi:10.1017/S0022216X07002441

Sidney Chalhoub, Vera Regina Beltrão Marques, Gabriela dos Reis Sampaio and Carlos Roberto Galvão Sobrinho (eds.), *Artes e ofícios de curar no Brasil: Capítulos de História Social* (Campinas, São Paulo: Editora Unicamp; IFCH; Cectl, 2003), pp. 428, pb.

*Artes e ofícios de curar no Brasil* offers a good panorama of the growing field of social history of health and disease that emerged in Brazil in the 1990s. The twelve chapters are organised into five themes – science and ideology; medical theories; medicaments; religiosities; and healers – and has the virtue of expressing also the spatial and temporal diversity of the analysis. Another important point is that the book gathers historians from different institutions and in different stages of their careers, indicating a promising future for the field.

In the first part, Sidney Chalhoub, from the analyses of Machado de Assis’ books, relates the appropriations of scientific theories in Brazil, such as social Darwinism, to strategies of domination, such as paternalism, as a means to justify power and privilege in society and therefore the origin and the reproduction of social inequalities. Magali Engel uses Lima Barreto’s literature to analyse the process whereby psychiatry was consolidated in Brazil as an autonomous, specialised and ‘scientific’ field, stressing the arbitrary and violent manner adopted to deal with insanity and restrain the sick. In this sense, the author discusses the tensions and complicity between Lima Barreto’s concepts and the ‘truths’ built up by psychiatric medicine.

In the section named ‘medical theories’, Luiz Otávio Ferreira, analysing medical periodicals and texts from the nineteenth century, refutes the notion that there was no cultural resistance to the attempts of scientific medicine to monopolise the art of healing. As physicians could not simply denounce ‘charlatanism’ or ‘people’s ignorance’, they felt obliged to enter into dialogue with popular medical traditions, disputing authority over the art of healing in unfavourable conditions. Marta de Almeida examines debates on the consolidation of the field of microbiology in São Paulo. Analysing medical work in the fight against yellow fever and several publications in newspapers of the period, she presents a framework of uncertainties and disagreements that marked the conflictive process of building up specialised knowledge, as well as the tortuous path by which microbiology was institutionalised in Brazil.

In the section ‘medicaments’, Vera Marques indicates that practices of healing, such as magic, also laid the basis for the beginning of modern medicine, appearing side by side with physicians’ medicine. The ‘secret medicaments’ and their occult properties perfectly reveal how magic, religion and science walked hand in hand in Brazil in the eighteenth century, ignoring attempts to incorporate a new scientific rationality. Revealing the variety of non-scientific medicaments and practices considered as ‘charlatanism’ and ‘quackery’ which circulated throughout the country at the time of the epidemics of influenza in São Paulo in 1918, Liane Bertucci highlights conflicts between representatives of the official and non-official medicine,