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Historia de la vida cotidiana en Mexico: tomo III: El siglo  
XVIII: Entre tradicion y cambio (review)

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privileges and support of the things of the earth—beware!—is not the true church of Jesus Christ” (p. 125). With humility and hope, Romero called for persecutors to repent of their crucifixion of the poor and join in their struggle.

Pelton’s book of testimonies clearly does not attempt a critical assessment of Romero. Such encomia have their place but only if they lead to the reader’s own serious confrontation with Romero’s practical example and our willingness to denounce unjust power and care for its victims.

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### RURAL SOCIAL HISTORY

*Historia de la vida cotidiana en México: tomo III: El siglo XVIII: entre tradición y cambio.* Edited by Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru. México: El Colegio de México, 2005. Pp. 592. Illustrations. Notes. References. Index.

Inspired by a research seminar held at the Colegio de México in 1998, this splendidly presented volume gathers the work of nineteen social historians of colonial Mexico, many of them well known veterans, others newer to the profession. About half of the authors are based in Mexico, but scholars from Argentina, the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Great Britain, and France are also represented. The range of specific subjects is comprehensive. Food and drink, clothing, domestic architecture, the use of urban space, famine, disease, funeral customs, festivals, religious practice, bullfights, insults, and domestic violence—these are just some of the topics addressed. Mexico City receives ample coverage, but provincial towns, from Chihuahua and Saltillo in the north to Mérida in the south, and rural communities appear as well. A number of the essays showcase the glittering lifestyles of colonial elites, but vaqueros, street vendors, beggars, Indians, criminals on the scaffold and children at play all take their places alongside the well-dressed viceroys, counts, and mining magnates. A lavish array of expertly reproduced color and black-and-white illustrations, including eighteenth-century paintings and engravings, photographs, and archival documents, further enhances the volume’s visual appeal and scholarly value.

The balance of the articles tips more toward the descriptive rather than the analytical. The tension between tradition and change mentioned in the book’s subtitle receives explicit attention in just a few of the essays (for example, Thomas Calvo’s work on crime and punishment and América Molina del Villar’s piece on responses to epidemics and famines). Readers will find few major methodological breakthroughs here, but they will see in each essay the rewards to be gained from close and thoughtful examination of the wealth of primary sources available to the social historian. The book is divided into two sections, the first dealing primarily with material culture, the second focusing on the social dimensions of everyday life. This distinction is rather arbitrary, however; all of the authors show how these two elements were closely intertwined. Analyzing account books of a hacienda in the Bajío,

for example, Mabel Rodríguez Centeno shows that workers spent their wages not only on basic necessities such as meat, maize, and clothing, but also on articles important to the intricate web of social relationships they maintained. They bought wax for the candles they lit on the Day of the Dead and the occasional bull for a *corrida* to enliven a wedding feast.

Space limitations preclude a description of each essay here, but a few examples will convey a sense of the rich detail and fresh insights on familiar subjects to be found in this collection. Rosalva Loreto López and Edith Couturier respectively offer beautifully illustrated guided tours of the Jesuit Colegio del Espíritu Santo in Puebla and the sumptuous Mexico City home of the Conde de Regla. Dorothy Tanck de Estrada offers an insightful discussion of infant and child mortality that departs from customary, emotionally detached statistical treatments of the topic. She pays attention not only to the catastrophic epidemics that ravaged each new generation but also the day-to-day hazards that took so many young lives, what colonial observers called the deadly “Cs”: “*calles, caballos, coches, carruajes, cometas, y caídas*” (streets, horses, coaches, carriages, kites, and falls). Children were often interred with a favorite toy—a kite, a pea-shooter, a doll or a swing. Laura Náter’s essay takes readers aboard the frigate that carried Teodoro de Croix from Acapulco to Peru, where he was to assume the post of viceroy in the troubled aftermath of Tupac Amaru II’s rebellion. We see the frustrations of Peruvian merchants forced to delay their return trip for several months while the ship was outfitted and provisioned to suit the comfort and official dignity of its distinguished passenger.

This volume has enormous potential for classroom use. Instructors whose students read Spanish can confidently assign any or all of these essays. Each chapter includes three brief excerpts from primary sources that can provide a basis for class discussion. For anyone wishing to enliven his or her lectures with vivid examples of the sights, sounds, and spectacle of colonial Mexico, there is a wealth of wonderful material here as well. Perhaps an enterprising historian will give this work the wide audience it deserves by persuading a university press to translate and publish selected pieces (from this book and its two companion volumes) in an anthology suitable for adoption in English-speaking classrooms.

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#### SLAVERY/DIASPORA STUDIES

*Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution.*  
By Sibylle Fischer. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. Pp. xvii, 364. Illustrations. Maps. Appendices. Notes. Index. \$89.95 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

This learned and adventurous work by a literary scholar reassesses nineteenth-century reactions to the violent creation of Haiti. Divided into three sections concerning Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti, *Modernity Disavowed* focuses