

Itinerario

volume xxix (2005) number 3



LEIDEN
GRAFARIA
2005

humanity. His explanation of resistance to slavery (and thus to colonialism) and the plain-written style he used to integrate it into the explanation of proslavery ideologies should serve as a model of fine scholarship. Lewis has also encouraged a new type of Caribbean history that includes intellectuals like Eugenio Maria de Hostos, Emeterio Betances, Gregorio Luperon, among others, to describe the complexities behind the period of nationalism. In sum, even after considering its various weaknesses (some of which are clearly spelled out in Maingot's introduction), this book continues to warrant a key place in the discussion of the Caribbean.

Dennis R. Hidalgo, *Adelphi University*

Osvaldo F. Pardo, *The Origins of Mexican Catholicism: Nahua Rituals and Christian Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century Mexico*. History, Languages, and Cultures of the Spanish and Portuguese Worlds. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004. xii + 250 pp. ISBN: 0-472-11361-5 (hbk.).

In the introduction and conclusion to this densely erudite book, Pardo introduces and rephrases what may be regarded as the *cri de coeur* of his analysis: a call to investigate the 'intellectual infrastructure' that framed and mediated the everyday interactions and moral conversations between Christian missionaries and indigenous people in colonial Spanish America. Given the vast parameters for such exchanges, Pardo has strategically limited his discussion in this volume to a specific time and place – the decades between the 1530s and the early seventeenth century in New Spain –, a circumscribed set of topics – the attempts to administer baptism, confirmation, confession, and communion to natives –, and a strategically recurring linguistic focus – Nahuatl-language doctrinal translations.

Rather than making a sweeping theoretical gesture that encompasses a tempting but nebulously defined 'intellectual infrastructure', Pardo labours hard in this book to capture the drift and stakes of a series of crucial debates and disquisitions pertaining to the administration of sacraments to native peoples in sixteenth-century New Spain. The centre of gravity of Pardo's coverage is his exploration of common questions and topics shared between a veritable bookshelf of *auctoritates* in ecclesiastical procedure and canonical law and the works of leading doctrinal authors – such as Jean Focher, Alonso de Molina, Diego Valadés, and Juan Bautista Viseo – and missionary chroniclers – such as Toribio de Benavente 'Motolinia', Jerónimo de Mendieta, Bartolomé de las Casas, Diego Durán, José de Acosta, and Juan de Torquemada. This bookshelf, in and of itself, is not exceedingly broad or surprising, as it features a number of authors whose works were kept at the School of Santa Cruz Tlatelolco and the Franciscan convent's library in Mexico City in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, if not earlier – Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Jean Gerson, Peter Lombard, Thomas à Kempis, among others –, but Pardo's patient exposition highlights a constellation of subtly dissimilar uses of a shared intellectual framework by different missionaries.

Pardo's discussion of four fundamental sacraments – baptism, confirmation, confession and communion – tracks the progressive path followed by a model individual neophyte, and captures a complex range of attitudes by missionaries and ecclesiastical authorities, which oscillate between regarding neophyte agency as a source of salvation, and recurring suspicions about the limitations of the inherent intellectual and moral capacities of natives. The early and, to some, objectionable early successes of the Franciscans in central Mexico introduced a number of questions regarding the baptism of neophytes: was it wise to accommodate baptismal practices to suit

large gatherings of adults and to streamline the ceremony itself? Pardo outlines a number of defenses of what may be termed Franciscan pragmatism before a call for more substantial and solemn forms of baptism espoused by Dominicans and Augustinians, which range from Motolinia's emphasis on Franciscan intellectual training to Jean de Focher's depiction of mass baptism on Pentecost and Easter as a less ceremonial, but not less solemn form of baptism. On the other hand, following Francisco de Vitoria's opinion, should baptism without instruction be regarded as coercive? The First Mexican Church Council (1555) agreed with Vitoria on the need for instruction, and, in a sense, instruction and supervision emerged as an argument for the continued administration of sacraments to natives exclusively by missionaries. As Mendieta argued, the secular clergy lacked the intimate knowledge of new converts Franciscans now possessed, and these neophytes could be regarded as minors in legal terms, due to their need for continuous oversight.

On the other hand, confirmation allowed neophytes to assume a more active role, at least on the rhetorical plane. Pardo notes Alonso de Molina's use of specialized vocabulary relating to Nahua weapons and military ranks to depict confirmation as a virile, quasi-military sacrament in his 1569 *Confesionario Mayor* (69), which turns a Christian into God's *itlaçopillo yueytiacauh* – literally, 'the knighthood, the great brave soldier of God'. Although some minor philological inaccuracies are introduced here – regarding the possessive form *i-tlaçopillo* and its use as a translation for the Spanish term *caballero*, 'knight' –, Pardo astutely conveys the rhetorical continuity between pre-Christian and Christian Nahuatl discourse that Molina bestows on this particular sacrament.

Perhaps the most exhaustive exposition of sacramental theology in this book is Pardo's discussion of confession, which is structured into two chapters. The depth of the author's analysis is best conveyed by rehearsing the themes of the first chapter. Here, the author challenges derivative Foucauldian readings of confession as an overwhelming tool of social control, focusing instead on the debate as to what constitutes proper confession among neophytes. On the one hand, Pardo asserts, Aquinas argues for a clear distinction between the most profound state of repentance, contrition, and its imperfect and fear-inspired sibling, attrition, while Duns Scotus regards both sentiments as part of a continuum. While a consensus on the equivalence of pre-Christian Nahua forms of penance with these Christian categories did not exist – Mendieta describes vocal confessions reported as a form of contrition, while Durán argues against its equivalence to penitential practices during the feast of Toxcatl –, echoes of Aquinas' and Scotus' positions do influence the dispositions of the Council of Trent regarding confession. The Tridentine solution produces an intermediate solution of sorts, which bolsters the role of the confessor and attributes the pardoning of sins not to contrition, but to the sincere intentions of the confessant. This relatively tolerant solution is then distilled into a more pragmatic stance by one of the most knowledgeable Franciscan authors of its time, Juan Bautista Viseo, who ends up arguing that limited intellect and knowledge on the part of natives motivates a return to Scotus' pragmatic acceptance of 'imperfect' sorrow rendered legitimate by a divine agreement with God.

Furthermore, the debates on the proper administration of the Eucharist relates to the recurring concern with native limitations, and highlights a struggle between what Pardo characterizes as two mutually opposed goals (161): to either 'fully trust ritual' – and, by extension, to trust natives' understanding and attitudes towards the sacraments – or to 'fight ... routinization', – and, concomitantly, to continue to closely monitor native demand for and understanding of the sacraments. Should the church symbolically seat all comers to the Lord's table by administering the Eucharist to native

peoples only at special occasions and to a select group of neophytes – as argued by Mendieta and Torquemada – or by administering it frequently, in the spirit of the *devotio moderna*, as advocated by Gerson, Loyola, Osuna, and Carranza de Miranda? This struggle between trust and suspicion is illustrated by the varying reception of an influential passage from the New Testament. Pardo's book opens with a contrast between Erasmus' and Mendieta's reading of a passage from the gospel according to Luke (14:23), which compares a lord's call to attend his banquet to a general call for neophytes to share the words of the gospel. While Erasmus refuses to explore a potentially apocalyptic gloss of this passage, Mendieta reads it as a direct call to attract indigenous neophytes. This same passage recurs during a discussion on the Eucharist, where it stands as the scriptural core of the ambivalent attempts by José de Acosta to rectify the custom of placing restrictions on the administration of the Eucharist among indigenous peoples in the viceroyalty of Peru. In Acosta's ambivalent formulation, the Eucharist should be administered to natives not as a regular sacrament, but as a moral reward of sorts – which begs the question regarding the inclusiveness and integration of natives into Christianity through the systematic and egalitarian administration of sacraments.

Although the topical and regional foci of this work may seem narrow to specialists accustomed to sweeping works about colonial forms of Christianity, this book presents a serious and substantial coverage of intellectual exchanges across the Atlantic, and as such deserves a broad readership. In the end, Pardo proposes here an enthralling discussion of some of the fundamental questions that informed the administration of sacraments to natives in sixteenth-century Spanish America, which will attract advanced undergraduates and graduate students due to the clarity of its arguments, and engage specialists through its astute definition and reading of the stakes held by various theological solutions to a novel set of questions introduced by colonial modes of evangelization.

David Tavárez, *Vassar College*

Lila Moritz Schwarcz, *The Emperor's Beard: Dom Pedro II and the Tropical Monarchy of Brazil*. Transl. John Gledson. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2004. xxiv + 417 pp. ISBN: 0-809-04219-3 (hbk.).

A few of us are old enough to remember instructors in graduate school referring to Brazil's last emperor as Dom Pedro 'the Magnanimous'. At the time, this epitaph seemed to us young historians a fitting designation for Pedro de Alcântara, the monarch who rescued his country from the political chaos that had engulfed Brazil's neighbours during the 1800s, and who simultaneously eased his people into the modern age with thoughtfulness and good cheer. Who could not like Dom Pedro? After all, the bookish emperor was hard-working, modest, kind, morally above reproach, and occasionally displayed more than a simple measure of human warmth. He clearly loved Brazil. If one had to have a monarch, one could do infinitely worse than Pedro.

In retrospect, this appraisal was always too simplistic. Pedro had a great many personal defects that compromised his role as monarch. He could be stubborn (as during the Paraguayan War), short-sighted (as during the 'Military Question' of the late 1870s), and a bit lazy (as during the debates about abolition). Besides, the imperial system he nominally directed was slavocratic, unrepresentative, and on many occasions cruelly indifferent to the poverty of his less-favoured subjects. As Jeffrey Needell, Emilia Viotti da Costa, and a dozen other scholars have pointed out, the monarch must inevitably share the blame for sustaining this unjust political order and

indirectly for the sad traces it has left even in today's Brazil. And yet, as one peruses the writings of these critics, one can still sense considerable affection for the man himself.

This feeling of distant admiration, even nostalgia, permeates the story laid out for us here by Lilia Schwarcz, and it is little wonder. Having mastered the standard biographies, she has moved beyond them to examine the official and unofficial iconography of Dom Pedro. She has discovered a rich vein of new material – formal portraits, caricatures, the elaborate mastheads of newspapers and imperial proclamations, magazine advertisements, pencil sketches, and, of course, photos. Some of these images are marvelous to behold, especially those rendered here in colour. But there must nonetheless be an important caveat to our appreciation of these visuals: the majority were produced in order to legitimate the emperor's authority, to impart to Dom Pedro an air of omniscience, dignity, and seriousness, to make him appear, in a word, 'regal'. Thus were all the insecurities that Brazilians felt about their country submerged in the majesty of the emperor. Slavery, poverty, national weakness – these things faded when set alongside the person of Pedro II. The images are thus propaganda; they represent a forthright attempt to mythologize the man, and it is very tempting to slip ourselves too readily into that attempt.

Schwarcz, to her credit, recognizes this distortion as a potential problem. To admire the iconography in the absence of analysis is to collude with the mythmakers who sought to make Dom Pedro larger-than-life. Schwarcz notes the difficulty of affirming a civilized, constitutional image of monarchy within a social order that at bottom was hierarchical and violent. Yet she finds it hard to say that a good man can do bad things.

It is certainly understandable being pulled towards that conclusion. After all, the graduate student instructors who called Pedro 'the Magnanimous' were neither cynical nor fawning; they simply reflected the common view of the day. A thorough, balanced, 'man-and-his-times' treatment cannot, however, be built on such a thin basis. Brazil was not just an 'Empire of Festivals', it was ever so much more.

Schwarcz might have been well-advised to focus on a narrow exploration of the images, for here she has some nuanced tales to tell. For example, she offers an intriguing look at the portrayal of Pedro's aging. While many monarchs are invariably presented as young and vigorous (and without pockmarks) well into middle age, in the case of Pedro we see a man prematurely gray, then prematurely white. This image was rendered into the standard portraiture a bit earlier than it was in real life, for thus did the artists add the gravitas that was necessary in thinking the monarchy a stable and mature institution. A similarly revealing thing happened with a painting done in the 1930s in which we see the Pedro of November 1889 depicted as an almost-ancient figure, ready and anxious to pass the baton of power to the republicans, whom the angels bless. Thus, as Schwarcz shows, the circle of power from old to new is closed and comprehensible.

This analysis is fine stuff as far as it goes. But it should not be confused with broader biography except in the most parenthetical sense. For an in-depth study of Brazil's Second Empire, the reader is referred to Roderick Barman's *Citizen Emperor: Pedro II and the Making of Modern Brazil* (Stanford, 1999), mention of which should probably have been included in a revamped bibliography for Schwarcz's English-language edition. Better yet, it would be a good idea to read the two works side by side, for they do tend to reinforce each other in a lively way.

Thomas Whigham, *University of Georgia*