

YOU CAN TEACH AN OLD REVOLUTIONARY HISTORIOGRAPHY NEW TRICKS

Regions, Popular Movements, Culture, and Gender in
Mexico, 1820–1940

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- Plutarco Elías Calles and the Mexican Revolution.** By Jürgen Buchenau. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007. Pp. 275. \$34.95 paper.
- Bandit Nation: A History of Outlaws and Cultural Struggle in Mexico, 1810–1920.** By Chris Frazer. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. Pp. 243. \$45.00.
- Bitter Harvest: The Social Transformation of Morelos, Mexico, and the Origins of the Zapatista Revolution, 1840–1910.** By Paul Hart. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006. Pp. 328. \$42.50 cloth.
- Sons of the Sierra: Juárez, Díaz, and the People of Ixtlán, Oaxaca, 1855–1920.** By Patrick J. McNamara. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. Pp. 296. \$24.95 paper.
- The Sausage Rebellion: Public Health, Private Enterprise and Meat in Mexico City, 1890–1917.** By Jeffrey M. Pilcher. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006. Pp. 245. \$29.95 paper.
- The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920–1940.** Edited by Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen E. Lewis. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006. Pp. 363. \$23.95 paper.

The major innovations in the historiography of the Mexican Revolution over the past three decades lie in four linked areas. First, historians concluded—perhaps following the advice given by Luis González y González in his famous *Invitación a la microhistoria* (1972)—that we can understand the revolution only if we explore what occurred at the state and local levels. Patrick McNamara deftly expresses this idea in his *Sons of the Sierra*: “Like the narrow dirt road that connects Ixtlán with Oaxaca City . . . the interconnection between local and national history in Mexico has always moved in two directions” (4). Second, and this is an outgrowth of the first, historians discovered that the *clases populares* not only were the cannon fodder of the conflict but shaped it as well. For all the revisionism that swept the landscape of Mexican history after the sinister and tragic

events of 1968, and for all the wrong turns that the postrevolutionary regime took toward authoritarianism (in the form of a one-party state) in 1929 and toward corruption and trickle-down development after 1946, the revolution itself was very much the work of subaltern classes. The more that historians investigated the revolution at the local level, the clearer it became that, whether it succeeded or not, it was the product of workers and peasants. Third, as historians looked more closely at the grassroots revolution, it became apparent that the initial protests and subsequent long period of violence did not arise from strictly economic and political factors; instead, there was a strong cultural element. Culture was also crucial in the long period of reconstruction that comprised the second stage of the revolution, from 1920 to 1940. Issues of local autonomy, for example, had as much to do with maintaining custom and tradition as with politics. Finally, local and state researchers revealed the crucial role of gender in shaping the discourse and structure, if not the events, of the revolution. Women, these studies made clear, were fervent revolutionaries, died in the names of various causes, and helped to formulate the outcome of decades of upheaval.

Underlying the various reexaminations of the revolution was also the drive to revisit the periodization of all of Mexican history. In the 1960s, Richard Morse recommended a new chronological framework for Latin America.¹ Most pertinent to our discussion, he suggested that we look at the era from 1760 through 1920 that he labels the colonial period, which runs from the Bourbon reforms through the end of the modern export boom in agricultural commodities and minerals. Dozens of dissertations and first books employing this breakdown followed. By the 1990s, however, periodization again came under review as regional and local historians (of Mexico, at least) questioned the notion that the origins of the revolution lay only as far back as the Porfiriato (1876–1911). The new historiography looked to the early postindependence era, 1821 to the 1860s, or even further back, to the mid-eighteenth century, for the antecedents of the 1910 upheaval. This epoch, long relegated to the status of mystery and labeled “chaotic” and inexplicable, became an integral part of revolutionary history. Historians determined that they had to explain 1821 to 1876 before they could explain the events of 1910 to 1920.² Moreover, they concluded that much of what happened in the postrevolutionary years

1. Richard Morse, “The Heritage of Latin America,” in Louis Hartz, ed., *The Founding of New Societies* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1964), 165. In Morse’s scheme, the periods were indigenous, to 1520; Spanish, 1520 to 1760; colonial, 1760 to 1920; and national, since 1920.

2. Peter Guardino offers two excellent examples: *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico’s National State. Guerrero, 1800–1857* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), and *The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750–1850* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

of reconstruction had its beginnings in the nineteenth century as well. As Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen Lewis put it in their introduction to *The Eagle and the Virgin*: “while the revolution marked deep ruptures with the past, national identity and memory construction were rooted in the nineteenth century” (2). Paul Hart concurs in *Bitter Harvest*: “the roots of the conflict went back to the middle of the nineteenth century when the region began an intense economic transformation” (1).

REGIONAL AND LOCAL HISTORY

From the maze of details found in the many regional studies of the nineteenth century, the Porfiriato, the revolution, and the postrevolution, it becomes clear that the causes, course, and outcomes of the revolution were locally based. The books by Hart and McNamara fit squarely into the trend to locate the origins of the revolution in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century. All six of the works under review are, moreover, firmly convinced of the primacy of the popular classes in formulating the politics and political discourses of that time.

Hart and McNamara show that the process of alienating countrypeople from the national government began in the mid-nineteenth century, before Díaz took power. Nevertheless, in both Morelos (Hart) and Oaxaca (McNamara), countrypeople did not rise in violent opposition until after 1900 for reasons particular to their home areas. The privatization of common land and the transition to commercial agriculture were at the heart of the disaffection in Morelos. But, as Hart points out, it was not enough for campesinos to have lost their lands and water rights (171, 175). This was a common occurrence throughout the world and in Mexico. Campesinos in Morelos did not rebel for three reasons. First, the state, whatever its inadequacies, had overwhelming coercive power. Second, sugar haciendas employed the people whom they had dispossessed of land, thus ensuring them a degree of material security, even if they had lost their land and autonomy. Third, some people benefited from the changes and this divided the *pueblos*, rendering them incapable of organized resistance. In the instance of Ixtlán, Oaxaca, discussed by McNamara, campesinos enjoyed a special relationship with Porfirio Díaz, who had served as an officer in the local national guard and had been a local political official. The national guard had helped Díaz in his greatest triumphs, such as at Puebla on May 5, 1862 (Cinco de Mayo). In Ixtlán, discontent arose in part from a long-simmering dispute with a neighboring village. But the crucial issue was the breakdown in patron-client relations between villagers and their elite allies at the state level and with Díaz. *Pueblos* in Oaxaca fought, McNamara explains, because the Díaz regime had grown insensitive to local needs for autonomy. Local culture and tradition were what moved Ixtlán to join the fray in 1912 (93–94). Terry Rugeley found a similar pat-

tern in Yucatán leading to the Caste War.³ According to Rugeley, although peasant grievances were widespread from 1821 to 1839, the Maya did not revolt but resisted daily through legal suits and other minor acts. Maya elites kept to their tasks as intermediaries. Rebellion did not occur until peasant elites turned on non-Maya elites and the latter divided in a way that offered hope to peasants that rebellion had a chance to succeed.

Regional studies have made it particularly clear that Porfirio Díaz was much more open to negotiation and flexibility during the first years of his rule than he was to become after 1900. His power was by no means unlimited. When we more closely examine the Díaz era, we find that he began his presidency full well understanding local politics. McNamara describes how this process worked in Oaxaca: "Zapotecs were constantly engaged in a balancing act with mestizo elites, at times cooperating, at other times resisting, and at all times negotiating and discussing delicate political and economic decisions. During the early years of the Porfiriato, this slow process was tolerated because Díaz, his local allies, and rural peasants and workers generally sought a consensus rather than a confrontation on key issues" (96). It was only after 1900 that the regime grew stronger, arrogant, and less responsive to local and regional conditions.

These regional and local studies have clarified a crucial aspect of the Díaz era: the regime was never as strong as the official history of the revolution later claimed. Díaz, though brutally coercive at times, was a negotiator, a broker, and an intermediary. His genius was in maintaining a consistent equilibrium among various, often-hostile interest groups. These ran the gamut from intervillage disputes in Oaxaca; workers striking against their employers; shoppers, butchers, and meatpackers in Mexico City; and mine owners protesting the high rates that railroads charged for freight. For much of his more than three decades in power, Díaz shrewdly and relentlessly kept balances. He did not allow regional elites to grow too powerful. He sometimes overruled local political bosses to keep peasants from rebellion. But, as McNamara points out, Díaz's lieutenants grew old and died, Díaz himself grew old and impatient with interminable negotiations and, as a result, beginning during the 1890s, disequilibrium began to appear (137). By the middle of the first decade of the new century, Díaz's carefully created mosaic of alliances and deals disintegrated and the regime crumbled. The dictator tried to put it together again in 1910, for example ousting hated governors in Chihuahua, Morelos, and Oaxaca, but it was too late.

McNamara presents convincing documentation that Díaz grew increasingly apart from his constituencies. This was nowhere more evident than in Oaxaca, where the longtime Porfirista Francisco Mejueiro passed

3. Terry Rugeley, *Yucatan's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

the mantle to his son Guillermo in 1890. The elder Meijueiro had led the Zapotec Indian national guard through the civil wars and French intervention. He understood the terms by which the Porfiristas had come to power. However, the new generation had nothing in common with the old warhorses. They did not care what the elderly, former soldiers thought or wanted. A similar phenomenon took place in Chihuahua with the transition from Luis Terrazas to his children. As McNamara puts it, "conflicts increased because a new generation of men initiated a unilateral and heavy-handed approach to controlling regional politics in Oaxaca. . . . The slow erosion of consensus began in 1890 and had completely collapsed by 1906" (124).

During the first fifteen years of the Díaz dictatorship, disruptions in Morelos occurred at as high a level as they had in decades past. But Díaz was then able to "make effective use of state control in order to eliminate opportunities for localized popular actions to blend with larger political and ideological alternatives like they had in earlier moments of elite crisis, foreign invasion, and civil war" (Hart, 181). There was relative calm for the next nearly twenty years, from the early 1890s to 1910. According to Hart, the Porfiriato crumbled in Morelos only when Mexican sugar production exceeded domestic demand, with little possibility of exporting the surplus because competing producers could grow sugar more cheaply. Because plantations could no longer employ displaced campesinos, unrest arose.

Jeffrey M. Pilcher's exploration of the meatpacking industry during the Porfiriato, *The Sausage Rebellion*, points clearly to the strengths and weaknesses of the Díaz regime, particularly its occasional unwillingness and not infrequent inability to impose its will on local and regional interests even if, as in this case, the locale was Mexico City itself. Díaz sought to reform the meatpacking industry to provision the capital adequately, but local factors of consumer preference, suppliers, and politicians blocked his efforts.

As much as the postrevolutionary state wanted to nationalize Mexico, it could not rid the nation of its local focus. Politics continued to be local. Nowhere is this more evident than in the history of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) during the 1920s and 1930s, as related in Stephen E. Lewis's essay in *The Eagle and the Virgin*. The revolutionaries sought to forge a Mexican national identity through education. These efforts targeted indigenous peoples. In the 1930s, "socialist education" became the mantra. The success or failure of this mission, however, depended entirely on the interactions between implementers of the various programs and local populations. Outsiders from the SEP, who ignored local tradition, often had to flee or lost their lives. Local prerogatives also played an important role in highway construction, as described by Wendy Waters in *The Eagle and the Virgin*. Without the cooperation of local governments and constituents, the enterprise of road building would have failed.

THE POPULAR REVOLUTION

Popular participation in the revolution and its aftermath took three forms. First, everyday people, though often in conjunction with elite neighbors, generated local issues such as access to land, taxes, and village autonomy. Second, the popular classes provided soldiers to fight in the revolution. Third, local issues advocated by campesinos and workers framed national discourses on land reform, the role of religion, and many other questions.

As we have seen, Hart and McNamara explore the first two of these forms of popular participation in Morelos and Oaxaca, respectively. Chris Frazer's *Bandit Nation* looks more specifically at popular participation in politics through the lens of elite discourse and popular culture. Frazer maintains that the importance of banditry in discussions of national identity and state formation was a clear indication of the profound distrust that elite Mexicans had for the lower classes. In the eyes of the elites, the disorder that predominated during the first six decades after independence reinforced the profound disdain for the mostly rural mestizos and Indians who comprised the majority of the population (21). Already deeply troubled by the independence movement of Father Hidalgo, and by other events such as the election as president of the mulatto Vicente Guerrero (1829) and the accompanying Parián riot, Mexican elites worried constantly about the threat of the lower classes. In 1847 and 1848, these elites were moved so far as to sell out their own nation to the North Americans and sue for peace long before necessary to prevent subalterns from taking over the war effort. This disregard for the lower classes only grew as Mexico modernized and positivist thought further underlined the disparities in outlook between the upper and lower classes. However, exerting social control over subalterns was not easy. A centralized national state did not emerge until the last decade of the nineteenth century. Frazer maintains that the unmitigated disdain that elites had for their fellow Mexicans served as the underpinnings for the authoritarian strain in Mexican politics, which led first to the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz and then to the one-party postrevolutionary state (12, 206). Thus, postrevolutionary authoritarianism also had its origins in the nineteenth century.⁴

The career of Plutarco Elías Calles, president of Mexico from 1924 to 1928 and power-behind-the-president from 1928 to 1934, both reinforces and contradicts much of what I have argued herein. In his biography of the strongman, Jürgen Buchenau argues that Calles was "an authoritarian

4. Frazer is not concerned so much with the social origins of banditry or the composition of bandit gangs (there is a discussion of these on 39–43) as with the stories that people told about bandits. "Elite discourse on banditry intertwined with the struggle to create a durable state and national identity in postcolonial Mexico," he maintains, and "the elite's legal discourse on banditry was therefore a core element in state formation" (21).

populist" who believed he represented the needs of the people "regardless of the popularity of his ideas and the means he chose to implement them" (xxiii).⁵ It is ironic that Calles, the product of Sonora, where all politics were local and fiercely contested, would forge the origins of the one-party, authoritarian postrevolutionary regime that became the "Leviathan on the Zócalo." Calles's revolution was thus neither local nor popular. Nonetheless, Calles was the product of Sonora and—with Adolfo de la Huerta, who was president in 1920, and Alvaro Obregón, who was president from 1920 to 1924 and reelected in 1928—part of the Sonoran triumvirate that won the revolution, tearing it from the likes of Emiliano Zapata, Francisco Villa, and Venustiano Carranza. In terms of outlook and method, Calles was unquestionably the son of the northern frontier.

Calles rose through the hardscrabble politics of Sonora's localities in the Fronteras region, serving at various times as sheriff, municipal councilor, and mayor during the Díaz era (1876–1911). He entered politics because it was the only way to secure business success. But all his entrepreneurial ventures failed. Relatively late in life, in his thirties, he found his place, first as a local government official under the auspices of the revolution, and then as a behind-the-scenes operator in the shadow of Obregón, the best general of the revolution. He proved a brilliant survivor. He learned the ropes of success by failing in the rough and tumble of the Sonoran Porfiriato and revolution and continued his political education as governor of Sonora during the 1910s, using reform and brutal coercion to further his power. He then went to Mexico City as a member of Obregón's cabinet. However, his career was squarely based on his regional origins, his connections to Obregón and de la Huerta.

As governor, Calles learned, above all, that he had to satisfy the popular base, even if he was not personally interested in reform, and whether or not he was personally attractive to the masses. As president, he distributed three million acres to three hundred thousand campesino families and poured money into rural education, building two thousand primary schools. He carried out this program because he recognized from his Sonoran experience that the *clases populares* were crucial to his regime, as they had been crucial to the revolution.

5. *Authoritarian* is a far more appropriate term than *populist*. Hated far and wide, ill tempered, and taciturn, Calles hardly fit the mold of the charismatic leaders generally associated with populism, such as Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina or Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico. Historians have often mislabeled as populists leaders of little or no attraction, who pushed policies that benefited the working and middle classes and peasants. Thus, Douglas Richmond has insisted that Venustiano Carranza was a populist; others have written similarly about Hipólito Yrigoyen in Argentina in the 1910s and Getúlio Vargas in Brazil in the 1930s. Neither delivered very much for their purported constituencies.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The cultural concerns of the revolution, particularly those revolving around autonomy on the local level, were, as we have seen, paramount. It is clear from monographic studies of various regions that the compelling motive for much discontent at the end of the Porfiriato was the regime's intrusion into the cultural life of the countryside. Resistance to modernization imposed from outside was strong and broadly based. As typified by *The Eagle and the Virgin*, much new work on the revolution has focused on the years of reconstruction after 1917, when, amid the ruins, victorious generals and politicians sought to forge a new Mexican culture from below. The contributors to this collection explore the sources of "postrevolutionary national aesthetics," which emerged from "three prerevolutionary bodies of commodified images, types, objects, and sounds": the knowledge compiled by intellectuals about ancient indigenous civilizations, the exoticization of Mexican country people by foreign travelers, and the penny press that put forward images of poverty and misery not in keeping with the previous two sources (4–5).

In many ways the revolution was shaped more by its aftermath than by its violent stage from 1910 to 1917. Views of the upheaval derived as much from painters and writers of the 1920s and 1930s as from the soldiers who fought so long and hard. Who, more than Rivera, Siquieros, and Orozco, imagined the revolution with such lasting effect? What could have created the popular revolution more effectively than their murals? Theirs was a revolution of campesinos and workers. Never mind that it was the middle class that had won.

At the interstices of culture and region was the Exhibition of Popular Arts, dreamed up by Dr. Atl, Roberto Montenegro, and José Enciso in 1921. Their idea was to gather popular art from all over Mexico, showing high-quality examples with the hope of creating a market for it among upper- and middle-class consumers. This effort was at first stymied by the lack of depositories of popular artwork and, more important, by the lack of knowledge about localities and regions. As Rick Lopez points out, it was no small irony that "Enciso had to rely on local knowledge at the very moment he was attempting to transform local assumptions and power relations" (Vaughan and Lewis, 32). The only way to construct a national identity or a national state was to acquire local knowledge. There, perhaps, in a nutshell is the lesson of the past four decades of historical research and writing on Mexico!

What Mario Velázquez and Mary Kay Vaughan label "musical nationalism" was also at the meeting point of culture and region, for, as they propose, it was a "movement of mestizaje or mixture—the intermingling of music and musicians, rural and urban, regional, and national and trans-

national, classical and popular" (Vaughan and Lewis, 94). From 1910 to 1920, as soldiers from different parts of the country converged at various points, "brass bands accompanying the armies exchanged repertoires in a vigorous musical effervescence and nationalization that combined cosmopolitan with more popular, regional, and rural traditions" (Vaughan and Lewis, 99).

New technologies were perhaps the most important tool for forging the Mexican nation in the image sought by the revolutionaries. Joy Elizabeth Hayes examines how radio facilitated the standardization of cultural practices, overcoming the local to create a national culture and tradition. "Given Mexico's difficult terrain, limited means of transportation, and low literacy rates," she explains, radio was "to play a central role in connecting these dispersed communities and promoting national politics and culture" (Vaughan and Lewis, 245). The SEP actually used regional music to create what Hayes calls a "national panorama" of musical tradition (Vaughan and Lewis, 250).

The Cristero revolt of 1924–1927 is perhaps the most obvious example of the impact that local and regional culture had on politics. Pushed into rebellion by the relentless anticlericalism of the Calles administration, the countryside of western Mexico nearly toppled the postrevolutionary regime. According to Adrian Bantjes, the primary issue was not so much the role of the Catholic Church but rather the practice of popular religion, which was disdained by the middle class that had won the revolution: "folk religion" was a way of life "closely intertwined with local politics and gender relations" (Vaughan and Lewis, 147). Bantjes points to the cargo system that informed the civil and religious administration of many indigenous and mestizo villages as the glue that held together these communities. The cargo system produced leadership by elder males, which in turn allowed for village autonomy and "ensured community security through the perpetuation of reciprocal ties with the saints" (Vaughan and Lewis, 147). The campesinos of Michoacán and Jalisco were willing to fight to maintain these local cultural prerogatives.

THE GENDERED REVOLUTION

Studies of gender's role in prerevolutionary and revolutionary Mexico have revolved around two general aspects of society: patriarchy and the closely related phenomenon of war. In the rural society of nineteenth-century Mexico, of course, almost everything was gendered. Hart relates a conflict between the villagers of Apatlaco, Morelos, and the administrator of the Cuahuixtla hacienda, who designed to throw them off their lands. When the villagers protested, the administrator ordered his security forces to raid the village while the men were out working their own or the hacienda's fields. Finding only women at home, the hired police took

them away and allegedly imprisoned them at the hacienda. Although the administrator had held them for a day, he denied this, at the same time saying that “everyone knows what kind of women they are” (130) and accusing them of bad character as wives and relatives of bandits. The powerful administrator had terrified and insulted these women to make an object lesson. Furthermore, he blatantly sullied the honor of the village. Thus, in explicitly gendered terms, he imposed his masculinity on the village, which had dared to oppose him.

War was at the heart of patriarchy. Men considered war and politics masculine endeavors. The revolution was, of course, Mexico’s longest and most brutal and bitter war. The civil wars of the mid-nineteenth century, including the French intervention (1862–1867), were only minimally less costly in terms of destruction and casualties. Women were deeply involved in both conflicts but received no recognition from either the men of the time or, until very recently, historians of later eras.

The constant warfare of mid-nineteenth century Oaxaca brought gender to the forefront. Women were at the heart of the conflict between liberals and conservatives because the former believed that women were proclerical fanatics because they attended church. McNamara claims that many women actively supported the liberal cause. Regardless, the liberal national guard did not provide any formal positions for women, even though women fed the men, cared for the wounded, and even acted as spies. Despite this lack of recognition, women were indispensable and suffered considerable hardship. As McNamara states, the national guard “reinforced male control over the conduct of war and later over the ways in which the war was remembered” (35). Gender was used to motivate troops on both sides of the civil war, with each side accusing the other of endangering women and children. Conservatives were constantly perplexed, according to McNamara, by their inability to keep women out of political and military conflicts.

Women, historians have discovered, were participants in all aspects of society, good and bad. Frazer points out that in the nineteenth century women committed more serious crimes than elites supposed. Women went to prison more often than men did for “moral and sexual offenses, but . . . the most common female crime was murder (20 percent)” (41). He adds that most crime was closely linked to poverty and that women were the poorest of the population.

Popular culture was also gendered, of course, reinforcing male domination. For example, corridos, the famous songs of the countryside, conveyed much popular information about bandits, portraying them as heroes and idealized figures of “mestizo masculinity and rel[ying] on specific notions of gender to explicate and interpret the character of individual bandits. These ideas were grounded in patriarchal structures, which privileged masculine identities over feminine ones” (Frazer, 142).

In an otherwise excellent history of business, corruption, and politics, Pilcher does not explore the gendered aspects of meat consumption. Nevertheless, he begins his study with a witty exchange between a butcher in Mexico City and a female customer, the housekeeper of a respectable family. Pilcher is unable to follow through, however, probably due to the paucity of sources. The resistance to refrigerated beef and pork in favor of freshly butchered meat that he deftly traces throughout the Porfiriato was certainly, at least in part, a female rebellion, for women purchased provisions for households rich and poor. It was women who did not want the newfangled product. And it is likely that some vendors were women as well.

Historians have struggled to include gender in their analyses of the nineteenth century but have more successfully integrated it into their examination of the era of postrevolutionary reconstruction. Ilene O'Malley led the way in her *The Myth of the Revolution* by revealing how the official history of the revolution promulgated by the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR) and its successors transformed Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa into machos rather than serious revolutionary visionaries.⁶ Hart discusses the role of women in the Zapatista movement, observing that in it, as in the nineteenth-century civil wars, women provisioned and furnished medical care for the battling armies. Probably more than previously, they fought as well: "nearly every Zapatista knew at least one female combatant" (209). In contrast, Buchenau misses a chance to explore the role of gender, most obviously patriarchy, in the psyche of Calles, who professed to clearly know what his people needed, as he was their "father." Calles had a dozen children and thirty-five grandchildren. Surely, this is food for thought as well.

Bantjes's examination of the origins of the Cristero revolt shows just how complicated the postrevolutionary era became for establishing women's roles. Anticlerical revolutionaries sought to intervene in the practice of religion in western Mexico, a sphere in which women had always exerted considerable influence. So, while many women supported the revolution, others opposed it because they had "found opportunities for personal perfection, community, and empowerment with the church" (Vaughan and Lewis, 148). Women had a real stake in religious praxis. They could escape the confines of domesticity. Religion offered them outlets for "sociability and influence" (Vaughan and Lewis, 148). Women played central roles in church finances, catechism, and education. Nevertheless, the new master narratives branded them superstitious and fanatic. Thus, women were conflicted in their consideration of what the revolution had to give them. Ultimately, they fought the anticlericals and in the long term won.

6. Ilene O'Malley, *The Myth of the Revolution. Hero Cults and the Institutionalization of the Mexican State, 1920-1940* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

Jean Meyer concurs with this analysis and furthermore maintains that women were the driving force behind the Cristero rebellion. They provoked the men, questioning their manhood if they did not defend the church. The Cristeros' Plan de los Altos de Jalisco (1928), Meyer reminds us, claimed the right of each woman to "continue vigorous and resolved in her redemptive activities in the hour of national reconstruction" and went on to advocate her right to vote (Vaughan and Lewis, 288).

These five fine monographs and one provocative collection of essays are, of course, just a sampling of the flood of illuminating studies on the Mexican Revolution in English. In Mexico, revolutionary historiography is a tidal wave, with innumerable rich explorations in local and state archives. All of this work has created a "new" revolution: a movement with deep roots in postindependence history, driven by the interaction of local interests with national and international events, trends, and conditions, shaped by Mexicans of all classes, races, and genders.