

social structures are profoundly different, and the ensuing contrasts allow a much more comprehensive picture to be drawn than would either state considered alone. In Veracruz, the legacy of agrarian radicalism met with the failing state of the mid 1930s to the mid 1940s to create a decentralized world of road-making fiefdoms, some run by local communities and others by crony capitalists, resulting in a web of roads without a single hub. In Nuevo León, by contrast, a business-friendly administration built a centrally planned network of highways linking Monterrey to the border and Mexico City, with feeder roads from these running out to the state's smaller towns and villages. In both states that Bess considers, however, the fundamental reality was what he calls "a dynamic, robust, and exceedingly contentious political process" (144), in which the federal government acted as a gatekeeper to the postwar boom, and a host of local, bureaucratic, and capitalist actors alternately struggled and cooperated to build the roads that led there.

As will be apparent, this book is not just an important piece of political economy, but also a microcosm of the broader functioning of postrevolutionary politics, with its haggling, force, pragmatism, corruption, and strategic delivery of benefits—a world wherein, as Bess observes, left-wing presidents work with conservative businessmen, and right-wing presidents with revolutionary peasants. Its rich research would have benefitted from further contextualization in national terms—the *Cristiada* goes unobserved—or comparative terms.

Introducing the story from Brazil, with some of the same resources, challenges, and even *bochos* (there, *fuscas*) would have been interesting in gauging just how specific Mexico was. Above all, it would be extremely interesting to know how far the promises of roads were fulfilled, going beyond the individual sketches of economic and anomic impact that we have for places like Zinacantán or San José de Gracia. Yet, this would fill another book, and one with different intentions, built on the basis of this fine study. It is to be hoped that there will be a sequel.

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*From Idols to Antiquity: Forging the National Museum of Mexico.* By Miruna Achim.  
Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017. Pp. 327. \$60.00 cloth; \$30.00 paper.  
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Visitors to Mexico City's National Anthropology Museum have for the last 54 years marveled at that institution and its integration of cultural heritage with both monumental modernist architecture and the modern nation-state. Miruna Achim's invaluable new book, a history of the first half-century of that museum's predecessor,

reveals the rocky start of the Museo Nacional in the tumultuous decades that followed Mexico's independence.

In 1825, Lucas Alamán, minister of internal and external affairs for the new nation, led the conversion of a mathematics classroom at the national university into a depository and exhibition space for antiquities, seashells, antique coins, minerals, and botanical specimens. The institution's goals of educating the public and fostering a national identity reflected the new nation's ambitions and the Enlightenment ideas that spurred the independence movement, but the endless and disruptive political battles that followed between liberals and conservatives, and between federalists and centralists, resulted in upheavals that prevented any sustained government support.

This troubled start of the museum contrasts with the contemporaneous successes and cultural acquisitions of many non-Mexican visitors, including Alexander von Humboldt, the fantastic Count Jean-Frédéric Waldeck, John Lloyd Stephens, and Maximilien Franck, some of whom exported important collections to Europe, in spite of laws designed to prevent this. The frankly imperialist ambitions of the governments of France and the United States (which took nearly half of Mexico's territory in 1848) made these exports something more than simply looted patrimony: symbolic appropriations that anticipated later land grabs. Both foreign visitors and Mexican scholars participated in debates about the rightful ownership and meaning of these archaeological objects, as well as the origins and nature of pre-Conquest societies, debates that Achim ably synthesizes.

One unlikely hero who emerges in this study is José Fernando Ramírez, a scholar, lawyer, bibliophile, politician, and the museum's erudite director during much of the 1850s and 1860s. He reluctantly collaborated with Maximilian's administration during the ill-fated Second Empire, which allowed him to accompany the Empress Carlota on her trip to the Yucatan peninsula, and he was subsequently forced into exile as a result, living out his last years in Germany. More so than Ramírez, some of the antiquarians, writers, and scholars discussed here—the English impresario William Bullock, Lord Edward Kingsborough, William H. Prescott, Stephens, and Frederick Catherwood—will already be familiar to students of the history of Mesoamerican archaeology; yet, through her meticulous and wide-ranging archival research, Achim sheds new light on their roles in this history. She devotes a chapter to a case study on the ruins of Palenque, and the visits there by the likes of the French abbot Henri Baradère and Waldeck. Early descriptions of the site led a Parisian geographic society to offer a prize to the author of the most thorough study of the site.

Parts of this history have been covered in other books, including Ignacio Bernal's *Historia de la arqueología en México* (1979), and the Dumbarton Oaks' anthologies *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past* (1993) and *Past Presented* (2012). While there are a few inexplicable omissions—Worcester, Massachusetts's American Antiquarian Society goes unmentioned, unaccountably—Achim's commendable accomplishment

adds many details and nuances. Octavio Paz wrote in 1970 that the National Anthropology Museum could be understood as an elegant justification of an authoritarian government, in which “anthropology and history have been made to serve an idea . . . and that idea is the foundation, the buried and immovable base, that sustains our conception of the state, of political power, and of social order.” Achim’s sophisticated study reveals that far from immovable and eternal, that foundation was for many decades a highly precarious construction begun under the most adverse circumstances.

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## PERU

*Historical Dictionary of Peru*. By Peter E Klarén. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017.  
 Pp. 496. \$110.00 cloth.  
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In a world dominated by online encyclopedias like *Wikipedia*, the publication of a historical dictionary in paper should be considered a sort of an academic manifesto. The author, Peter Klarén, has meticulously compiled information about Peru for years and now offers his vast knowledge in a 500-page volume that contains a formidable selection of entries and references. Call me a nostalgic, but as someone who grew up in the transition from an analogic to a digital society, works like this *Historical Dictionary* reveal the persistence of a genre and its potential advantages as an effective alternative to anonymous digital platforms. The dictionary continues and expands the work of illustrious predecessors such as the *Enciclopedia Tauro del Pino* (Lima, 1987, 2001, 17 vols.) by offering a format that is more convenient and accessible. Its price, however, might confine the book to libraries and reference rooms, at least for the moment.

Klarén takes full advantage of his previous work *Peru: Society and Nationhood in the Andes* (2000) to adapt the information, originally displayed in a concise historical narrative, into entries alphabetically arranged for this publication. I was particularly pleased to encounter thoughtful and informative entries on the Agrarian Reform, feminism, cuisine, Peruvian cinema, the artisan Edilberto Jiménez Quispe, the Afro-Peruvian activist María Elena Moyano, emigration, the late Carlos Iván Degregori, corruption, the forced sterilization of Andean women in the 1990s, inflation, neighborhood communal kitchens, and so forth. Even recent events like the Andahuaylas rebellion (the *Andahuaylazo*), a 2005 upheaval led by President Ollanta Humala’s reckless brother Antauro, are well explained.

One major asset of the book is that it can be read as a monograph, from the beginning to the end, or targeted for specific information. The book has incorporated a helpful system