

## THREE CONTRIBUTIONS TO LATIN AMERICAN SOCIAL HISTORY

*JOSÉ MIGUEL DE TAGLE: UN COMERCIANTE AMERICANO DE LOS SIGLOS XVIII Y XIX.* By LILIAN BETTY ROMERO CABRERA. (Córdoba, Argentina: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades, Instituto de Estudios Americanistas "Doctor Enrique Martínez Paz," 1973. Pp. 182.)

*THE LOST PARADISE: THE JESUIT REPUBLIC IN SOUTH AMERICA.* By PHILIP CARAMAN. (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976. Pp. 341. \$14.95.)

*HISTORIA SOCIAL Y ECONÓMICA DE LA ANTIGUA PROVINCIA DE GUAYAQUIL: 1763-1842.* By MICHAEL T. HAMERLY. Translated by WALTER R. SPURRIER. (Guayaquil, Ecuador: Publicaciones del Archivo Histórica de Guayas, 1973. Pp. 212.)

Social history has, during the past decade, come into its own. A large number of Latin American history dissertations written since the mid-60s and much of the research currently being published fall into this genre.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, those Latin American historians concerned with the colonial period have been the quickest to embrace the ideas, techniques, and approaches of social history, and have produced exciting and insightful work, leading to a renaissance in colonial history.<sup>2</sup> This flowering, coming after a "traditional" colonial historiography, which centered on viceregal lives, abstract institutions, and philosophical debates, has been most welcome.

But even with the outpouring of studies in colonial social history, or perhaps because of it, social history remains vaguely defined, a veritable catch-all for much work that cannot easily be cataloged. Studies of ethno-cultural groups (blacks, Indians, Spaniards), of occupational groups (merchants, silver miners, artisans, judges, clergy), of women, of social institutions (*hacienda*, slavery), of social catastrophes, of status groups (nobles), of socioreligious institutions, and of population trends all are included under the mantle of social history.<sup>3</sup> In addition, techniques such as prosopography, family history, and quantification are appearing in many of the latest studies.<sup>4</sup> The three books herein reviewed fall into the general category of social history and illustrate how varied this category can indeed be.

Lilians Betty Romero's monograph, *José Miguel de Tagle*, is a brief biographical study of a native son who practiced commerce in Jujuy (the city of his birth) and Córdoba. It is an attempt to present biography as social history. Based on letters to and from Tagle, the essay contains a wealth of information on the life and business dealings of the provincial trader, but unfortunately fails in relating Tagle to the society and economy in which he lived. Mention is made in the introduction of the crucial role that the bourgeoisie played in the independence period. The author argues that Tagle is representative of the late eighteenth-century merchant middle class, but we are never given any proof of this interesting assertion.

Tagle's life illustrates several social and economic patterns found in merchant society during the viceroyalty of Río de la Plata. Although the author fails to underline these patterns, they are most instructive. Tagle, the grandson of a *maestre de campo*, was attracted to a commercial career, itself a reflection of change in the provincial societies of the Río de la Plata and an interesting example of intergenerational mobility. Moreover, Tagle's life demonstrates that commerce was not limited to the Spanish-born. The dependence of the interior merchants on their Buenos Aires counterparts is also documented by the correspondence between Tagle and José Martínez de Hoz. The role of marriage in creating commercial kinship groups is seen in Tagle's second marriage to the daughter of merchant Francisco de Usandivaras. The importance of kinship is mentioned briefly in Romero's discussion of the Allende family's control of the Córdoba *cabildo*, but she fails to stress how these kinship ties allowed Tagle to become a member of that *cabildo* within one year of moving to the city. Kinship ties between families in Córdoba and Jujuy are also suggested, but never discussed in any detail.

The study does include a number of primary sources, letters and accounts, which are a most informative addition to the text. In sum, this brief monograph is interesting for its documents, and for providing information on one individual, but there is little discussion of Tagle as representative of the provincial commercial bourgeoisie, and even less discussion of the special social patterns of this group in eighteenth-century Argentina.

Philip Caraman's book on the Jesuits in South America is another example of a work that falls under the social history rubric. This book looks at both a social institution (the Jesuit missions), and an ethno-cultural group (the Indians who lived in them). *The Lost Paradise: The Jesuit Republic in South America* is essentially a popular history of the Jesuit social experiment in the Guairá, Paraná, Chiquitos, and Chaco regions of present-day Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil. (The original subtitle of the book, "An Account of the Jesuit Communes in South America," would have been somewhat more accurate than the one eventually adopted.) Caraman draws heavily on del Techo's early history of the Jesuit Reductions, *Historia Provinciae Paraquariae* (published in 1673), on Dobrizhoffer's *Historia de Abiponibus* (published in 1783), on Cunningham Graham's *Vanished Arcadia* (published in 1901), and on work by the late Guillermo Furlong. He claims to have consulted manuscript materials in both Rome and Buenos Aires, but nowhere is there any reference to this unpublished material. Although the bibliography is a bit sketchy for serious historical purposes, some of the appendices and the maps are most informative. Interesting photographs of the ruins of the missions and the descendants of the Indian mission population are also included.

Caraman's book, however studded with generalizations, provides a complete although one-sided picture of the conquest, the Jesuit system, the economy and politics of the missions, the quality of life for both the reverend fathers and their wards, hostile incursions into the Jesuit territory, and the downfall of the entire mission system. Caraman's general attitude is one of great admiration, indeed adulation, for the Jesuit accomplishments; his uncritical position leads

him into such exaggerations as "Jesuits in colonial Paraguay . . . created a vigorous civilization comparable to that of the Incas." His general insensitivity to Indian culture and his overwhelming reliance on Jesuit sources are also important flaws. Nevertheless, Caraman's rendering of the story of the Jesuit missions, although biased, is highly readable.

Hamerly's *Historia social y económica de la antigua provincia de guayaquil* is, of the three books reviewed here, the most serious and valuable social study. Concerned with demography, with the relationship of population growth to society and economy, and with a description of society and life style, Hamerly's work draws on a variety of original materials, including summaries, complete censuses and nominal lists of inhabitants, as well as cabildo records and reports. His project is ambitious, for he is interested in the history of the entire province of Guayaquil over approximately an eighty-year period (1763 to 1842) defined by Hamerly as the first episode in the cacao cycle, a definition based on economic and demographic, rather than political, events.

Hamerly is at his best when dealing with the demography of the Ecuadorian coast. Guayaquil was, for most of the colonial period, a peripheral region that came under several civil and religious jurisdictions. The region was characterized as well by a variety of geographical and climatic conditions, and a poor transportation and communication network with the highlands. Against this background, the author masterfully outlines the redistribution of population and the resultant changes in racial patterns that occurred from the late eighteenth century on. Hamerly's thesis is that internal migration from the *altiplano* to the city of Guayaquil and the cacao producing zones of Guayas helped achieve an economic boom in the region. This population redistribution began as a result of the Bourbon economic reforms and was only checked by widespread yellow fever epidemics in the mid-nineteenth century. Hamerly understands well the complexity of demographic history, the regional variations within broad geographic zones, and the multiplicity of causes and effects of this internal redistribution of population. He also treats his sources with a good dose of scholarly skepticism, and does not hesitate to point out defects in his data.

Any criticism of this study must come after stressing that it is an essential and exciting contribution to demographic and social history. The book, although containing a facsimile copy of an 1804 map of the region, could easily do with clear maps of the province and city of Guayaquil. In addition, the chapter dealing with the city itself is by far the weakest section, being little more than a rather lengthy description of urban growth based on Hamerly's analysis of a series of maps. Again, the inclusion of one or more maps of the city would make this material more interesting, but what is really needed is a good discussion of the city's population, including the occupational and racial structure, and changes within this population over the period under study. In addition, Hamerly's discussion of population growth and decline could be made more convincing by including sample data culled from parish records, a need for which he is well aware. Parish records could be used for vital statistics, and information contained in life-cycle entries might also provide more concrete data on the exact origin of the migrants to the Guayaquil area.

There is a wealth of information about the Guayaquil region in this book. The two chapters entitled "La Vida Diaria," for example, contain much data, which historians previously assumed had been destroyed, on sanitation, medicine, education, *gremios*, the cost of living, women, and religion. Although some of this material should better be related to the economic and social framework of the volume, Hamerly does present a vibrant picture of life in an early nineteenth-century Ecuadorian boom area. His work also raises a series of interesting questions. What, for example, happened to the artisan class when the inflationary economy decreased their real wages? Did the artisans of Guayaquil join the human stream making its way to the cacao regions? How did a reduced standard of living affect the natural demographic growth of this group? What was its racial composition? I hope that questions such as these will be answered in future studies by Hamerly.

Although demonstrating three different genres of social history, and showing how varied a mix "social history" has become, each of these studies has something of value to offer the reader. In a real sense these books point out where social history has come from, histories of atypical communities and biographical studies, and where it is going, to sophisticated, complex studies of the economic, social and demographic background of Latin America.

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#### NOTES

1. See John J. TePaske, "Recent Trends in Quantitative History: Colonial Latin America," *LARR* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1975):51–62; Charles W. Bergquist, "Recent United States Studies in Latin American History: Trends since 1965," *LARR* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1974):3–36; William Paul McGreevey, "Recent Material and Opportunities for Quantitative Research in Latin American History: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *LARR* 9, no. 2 (Summer 1974):73–82.
2. Bergquist, "Recent United States Studies," p. 7; James Lockhart, "The Social History of Colonial Spanish America: Evolution and Potential," *LARR* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1972):6–45; Karen Spalding, "The Colonial Indian: Past and Future Research Perspectives," *LARR* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1972):47–76; Frederick P. Bowser, "The African in Colonial Spanish America: Reflections on Research Achievements and Priorities," *LARR* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1972):77–94.
3. Some examples of work in these categories are : Leslie B. Rout, Jr., *The African Experience in Spanish America: 1502 to the Present Day* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Karen Spalding, "Kurakas and Commerce: A Chapter in the Evolution of Andean Society," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 53, no. 4 (Nov. 1973): 581–99; James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru 1532–1560: A Colonial Society* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968); D. A. Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico: 1763–1810* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Lyman L. Johnson, "The Silversmiths of Buenos Aires: A Case Study in the Failure of Corporate Social Organization," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 8, no. 2 (Nov. 1976): 181–213; Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sovereignty and Society in Colonial Brazil: The High Court of Bahia and Its Judges, 1609–1751* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Francisco Morales, *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth-Century Mexico* (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1973); Susan Soeiro, "The Social and Economic Role of the Convent: Women and Nuns in Colonial Bahia, 1677–1800," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 54, no. 2 (May 1974):209–32, William B. Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University

- Press, 1972); Frederick P. Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru: 1524–1650* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1974); Kenneth R. Maxwell, *Conflicts and Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal, 1750–1808* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Richard Everett Boyer, *La Gran Inundación: Vida y sociedad en la ciudad de México, 1629–1638* (México: SepSetentas, 1975); Doris M. Ladd, *The Mexican Nobility at Independence: 1780–1826* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976); A. J. R. Russell-Wood, *Fidalgos and Philanthropists: The Santa Casa da Misericórdia of Bahia, 1550–1755* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968); Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz, *The Population of Latin America: A History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); John V. Lombardi, *People and Places in Colonial Venezuela* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1976).
4. See, for example, Stuart B. Schwartz, "State and Society in Colonial Spanish America: An Opportunity for Prosopography," in Richard Graham and Peter Smith, eds., *New Approaches to Latin American History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), pp. 3–35; James Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca: A Social and Biographical Study of the First Conquerors of Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972); Charles H. Harris, III, *A Mexican Family Empire: The Latifundio of the Sánchez Navarro Family, 1765–1867* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975); Mary Lowenthal Felstiner, "Kinship Politics in the Chilean Independence Movement," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 56, no. 1 (Feb. 1976): 31–80; John J. TePaske, "Recent Trends."