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Jaime E. Rodriguez O. *The Origins of Mexican National Politics, 1808-1847.* Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1997. xi + 126 pp. $16.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8420-2723-6.

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This work is the first in a series of monographs being released by Scholarly Resources as part of the larger *The Evolution of the Mexican Political System.* This collection consists of four essays that deal with early stages of political development in Mexico. These essays are "Politicization of the Army of New Spain during the War of Independence, 1810-1821" by Christon I. Archer; "The First Popular Elections in Mexico City, 1812-1813" by Virginia Guedea; "The Constitution of 1824 and the Formation of the Mexican State" by Jaime E. Rodriguez O.; and "The Making of a Fait Accompli: Mexico and the Provincias Internas, 1776-1846" by Barbara A. Tenenbaum.

The four essays work well together in weaving a thread through the early development of a Mexican national polity. Of particular interest is the way in which the essays build upon one another to give the reader a fuller understanding on how the Mexican polity developed during this period.

Archer's work looks at how the Army of New Spain was affected by the Hidalgo uprising in 1810. The army was greatly affected by the rebellion and took a hard line against the criollo clergy and the Indian population. Writes Archer, "like many other army commanders, Cruz blamed the criollo clergy for legitimizing rebellion and for organizing the towns that joined Hidalgo" (p. 13). As the Army put down the rebellion, it also solidified a base of power for itself in New Spain. A point of interest in Archer's work is a discussion of the military tactics used by the military commander of the Army of New Spain. Archer then chronicles the collapse of the New Spain, and of the Army, in 1820.

The second essay follows the flow of the discussion in looking at the first elections held in Mexico city in 1810. Guedea outlines in great detail the process by which Mexico City chose representatives to send to the Junta Suprema Central Gubernativa del Reino. The process by which these people were chosen affected further development of the political system in Mexico. From these elections, Guedea points that these "elections brought into the open the struggle between Europeans and Americans" (p. 62). Guedea points out that "as a result of the electoral process, the politics of New Spain not only expanded but also achieved a new dynamic" (p. 63).

Rodriguez O. follows this development with an examination of the Constitution of 1824 and how it evolved out of the political process started in 1810 with the Army of New Spain putting down the Hidalgo rebellion. How the delegates to the two separate conventions developed and laid out a framework for a Mexican Constitution is set out in great detail. For all the struggles to develop a Constitution, Rodriguez O. states that given "the rise of localism and the intense political participation throughout the country, it is doubtful that any other form of government would have better suited the needs of the nation" (p. 84).

Tenenbaum's essay was one of the most thought provoking. In the opening paragraph, she challenges "historians to reexamine" the nature of the union between Northern Mexico and the rest of Mexico in 1823, while Central America broke away (p. 85). Tenenbaum contends that the reason Northern Mexico stayed was due to the financial relations between Northern Mexico and Mexico City from 1776 to 1846. Through an examination of how other parts of the Spanish empire chose to form independent nations when given a chance, Tenenbaum challenges the notion that Mexico simply inherited the Provincias Internas from Spain. Rather, contends Tenenbaum, the Provincias Internas chose to be loyal and made substantial payments to the Mexico City, even "spending their own funds within the region to defray expenses rightfully belonging to Mexico City" (p. 97). Tenenbaum provides eleven separate graphs to support her contentions.

Taken as a whole, these essays provide a great deal of insight to the development of national Mexican politics. This would prove useful for a graduate seminar on the early national period in Mexico and would also provide a foundation for a larger discussion of how nations in gen-

eral develop a sense of political identity. The only complaint, and it is a small one, is that there was no attempt at a summarizing chapter that tied together the themes brought out in the four essays. Given that, I for one, look forward to the next monograph that will be released from the larger *The Evolution of the Mexican Political System* series.

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