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JEFFREY PILCHER (ed.): *The Human Tradition in Mexico*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly resources, 2002.

In 1987, Scholarly Resources, then a fairly new publisher, released a collection of essays, *The Human Tradition in Latin America. The Twentieth Century*, edited by William H. Beezley and Judith Ewell. The editors found their title in *Two Cheers for Democracy* by E.M. Forster, in which he posited an aristocracy “of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky” who represented “the true human tradition.” They used the phrase to emphasize their focus on the stories of individuals who demonstrated something unique, rather than those who might be mentioned in a regular political history course.

Beezley and Ewell’s new approach was so successful that they followed it with another volume focusing on the nineteenth century. Beginning in 2000, William Beezley and Colin Maclachlan, University of Arizona and Tulane, respectively, expanded the original concept into a “Human Tradition around the World series.” *The Human Tradition in Mexico*, edited by Jeffrey M. Pilcher, is the sixth volume of the group, following similar works on modern Russia, France, and Japan, pre-modern China, and colonial Latin America. As its advertising points out, the Mexico volume is “designed as a supplemental text for world history, Mexican, and Latin American history courses,” and features “colorful and engaging narratives of Mexicans throughout the country’s rich past.”

Pilcher, author of two books on modern Mexican culture, has produced a very lively and interesting compilation of Mexican stories, joined together by an ingenious design. As he notes in his excellent introduction, the 15 separate essays, mostly written by younger scholars, are connected by references to specific stops of the Mexico City metro system. His plan will give students an insider’s feel for the city, and perhaps an additional impetus to visit.

The volume begins with Linda Curcio-Nagy’s powerful tale of Josefa Ordóñez, an eighteenth-century beauty who managed to break most of the taboos of colonial Mexico as actress, courtesan, and business owner, amassing considerable wealth in the process and honor at the end. Karen Racine’s excellent contribution, in contrast, looks at a rather famous person, Fray Servando Teresa de Mier, a vociferous supporter of Mexican independence, who spent much of his life in prison for his beliefs. Pedro Santoni compellingly presents the life of tailor Lucas Balderas, who fought in federalist militias and died in the battle of Molino del Rey in 1847, while defending Mexico against U.S. invaders. Balderas has become such a symbol of heroic nationalist resistance that an important Metro stop bears his name.

The second section, 1850-1910, opens with David Coffey and Eugenia Roldán Vera's portrait of Agnes Salm-Salm, a woman from the U.S. who married Prince Felix Salm-Salm and lived with him in Mexico at the end of the French empire. Even the editor has trouble situating her in his Metro framework, since she was such a minor figure and her story, while "colorful," sheds little light on things Mexican. In his insightful piece, "Felipe García and the Real Heroes of Guelatao," Patrick McNamara, in contrast, is the first to take the reader outside Mexico City. McNamara discusses Guelatao, Oaxaca, the birthplace of President Benito Juárez, showing how his actions and those of fellow Oaxaqueño Porfirio Díaz affected life back home. This selection really needs a map of the entire country, so that readers can see exactly where Guelatao and Oaxaca lie. The story Glen Kuecker tells about civil engineer Alejandro Prieto and how his plan for a "Grand Canal" for the port city of Tampico failed during the epoch of Porfirian modernization, also requires a map. Susie S. Porter ends the section with an exciting article on Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza, a courageous woman who allied herself with the anarchists and then with the Zapatistas, wrote and printed her own opposition newspapers, produced women's magazines, spent considerable time in jail, and ultimately became a teacher.

The first essay in the section on the revolution, "Te Amo Mucho" by William French, touchingly discusses the melodramatic consequences of a love affair gone wrong in Parral, Chihuahua. Sarah Buck then looks at Rosa Torre González of Yucatán, who joined the Mexican Revolution in her teens as a *soldadera* and not only cared for the troops, but fought alongside them, and later became a feminist and political activist. Anne Rubenstein argues for the importance of a Mexican female artist, other than Frida Kahlo, with the story of Carmen Monragón. Raised to be a pillar of the Porfirian establishment, she reinvents herself as Nahui Olin, a shockingly bohemian artist and part of the pro-indigenous circle surrounding her lover, the great painter Geraldo Murillo, known as Dr. Atl. Enrique Ochoa concludes the section with the intriguing and sad story of Moisés T. de la Peña, an "economist on horseback." Paradoxically, as he rode all over various states to see how the Mexican government could help the indigenous people living there, the regime in Mexico City became less and less interested in helping them.

The last section, "Mexicans in the Global Village, 1940 to the Present," seems the most likely to grab students' attention with tales of "sex, drugs, and rock and roll." Andrew Wood's study of screen idol María Félix's short-lived marriage to brilliant songwriter Agustín Lara is gripping, even without badly-needed illustration. Editor Pilcher charmingly presents Josefina Velázquez de León, the "apostle of the enchilada," as she adapts new ideas and international

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styles to Mexican kitchens. Eric Zolov follows Armando Nava and his struggles for cross-over success for his rock band, Los Dug Dug's. Finally, the volume concludes with a meeting between Gabriel Espíndola Martínez, tequila master, and author José Orozco, as the latter learns to appreciate the national drink as a Mexican brandy, rather than as something drunk with a mix.

Ultimately, this addition to the "human tradition" series should make students shout, "¡Que Vivan los Mexicanos!"

**Barbara A. Tenenbaum**

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**RODERIC CAMP: *Mexico's Mandarins: Crafting a Power Elite for the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.**

Roderic Camp has produced another masterpiece in his most recent work on Mexico. *Mexico's Mandarins* convincingly argues that policy-making in Mexico during the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries cannot be fully comprehended without a clear understanding of the composition and culture of the Mexican "power elite." He implicitly (and at times explicitly) challenges the increasingly dominant view in western Political Science that policy is the derivative of the institutional setting from which it emerges. Although this approach may closely approximate reality in highly institutionalized, post-industrial countries, it is less well suited to developing countries characterized by weak institutional development and national cultures imbued with informal social networks linking individuals regardless of their institutional affiliations. Institutions still matter in the developing world, but an exclusively institutional analysis can produce distortions and misperceptions.

Roderic Camp attempts to expand our understanding of policy-making in Mexico by focusing on the Mexican elite. He demonstrates that a power elite exists in Mexico, that its character is distinctly Mexican, and that it strongly influences the country's policy direction. Unlike power elites in post-industrial countries, the Mexican power elite is not a tightly interconnected politico-economic group but a much more loosely interconnected and broader elite class encompassing intellectual, religious, and military elites alongside political and business leaders. For anyone who lives in Mexico, this is far from a revelation. But it is a reality that is too often overlooked by analysts of Mexican politics and economics and by Washington policy makers.