Latin America and Caribbean/L'Amérique latine et Antilles

Idolatry and Its Enemies: Colonial Andean Religion and Extirpation, 1640-1750, by Kenneth Mills. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1997. xiii, 337 pp. $55.00 U.S.

English-language historiography of the colonial experience in Peru, from the time of Prescott on, has afforded non-Spanish readers access to a diverse and evolving body of work. In recent years the theme of Indian resistance to Spanish rule has been the subject of illuminating attention by, among other distinguished contributors, Rolena Adorno, Karen Spalding, and Steve J. Stern. The standoff between natives and newcomers as it was enacted in matters of religion has been notably advanced by the labours of Sabine MacCormack. As a worthy complement to MacCormack's examination of early religious encounters we now have an erudite volume by Kenneth Mills, whose research focuses temporally on what he calls the "mid-colonial" (p. 3) period, the century or so between the years 1640 and 1750, about which relatively little has been written. His spatial unit of analysis is the Archdiocese of Lima, a region that stretched over four hundred kilometres north and south along the coast from the City of the Kings and, to the east, reached over two hundred kilometres high up into the Andes. This represents, in terms of present-day geography, about one-eighth of the national territory of Peru.

Mills does well to impart to us, by way of a strategically placed map opposite the first page of his text, an important sense of scale, if not quite a palpable sense of difficult and varied terrain. How is it possible, the reader is forced to ask at the outset, that a small group of Christians could have set themselves the mammoth task of converting to the True Word of *one* Omnipotent God such a large number of "idolatrous" Indians? The people to be converted, it turned out, were a savvy, astute, accomplished lot, the inheritors of long-established cultural traditions who lived organized lives in sustainable, far-flung communities associated with an array of locally revered ancestral gods, gods whom they believed to inhabit the natural world. How did the Christians ever expect their evangelizing mission to succeed?

With the moral conviction, Mills makes clear, of ecclesiastical leaders like Pedro de Villagómez, the Archbishop of Lima between 1641 and 1671 whose campaign of extirpation furnishes him with fascinating documentation that he weaves into a vivid, at times enthralling account of religious continuity and change. Villagómez faced "a basic predicament," (p. 9) namely that "the vast space and population" over which he was spiritually responsible contained "far more parishioners" — the Archbishop himself reckoned at least 131,000 souls in 1664 — than "the average priest" — there were only about 175 of them, usually confined to one particular city or town location — "could care for or monitor." The ratio of some eight hundred recalcitrant rural neophytes to one urban Spanish clergyman did not augur well, and Mills reminds us that these numbers pertain to a native population "still stuttering in its recovery from the onslaught of disease and displacement" (p. 8) but destined, in the long run, to increase not diminish in size.

What the Catholic church considered deviance from Christian orthodoxy was therefore very much the order of the day, with Indians getting up to all sorts of tricks in the *huacas* or sacred places where *chancas* (lineage gods) and *conopas* (personal gods of fecundity) were worshipped.

Mills devotes two chapters to these Andean phenomena, and one to the "specialists" skilled at keeping pre-Christian ways alive while at the same time selectively incorporating non-Andean beliefs into local rites and customs. Indians, the Jesuit chronicler Bernabé Cobo wrote, celebrate "visible secondary causes," not the "first and invisible cause" (p. 199). Chapter by chapter Mills reconstructs, on the part of the Indians, episode after episode of religious improvisation and confrontation, often with narrative flair and an ethnographer's eye for detail. From a Spanish Catholic perspective he concludes that "the results of the exercises were very different from the hopes that attended them," observing that the "rewards" that came the clergy's way "were often slight payment for the rigors of their labors in remote regions" (p. 269). His sober assessment is reminiscent of the distinction Carlos Fuentes made in the 1984 Massey Lectures between the "real country" and the "legal country." The efforts of Villagómez, as with so many other imperial initiatives, in the end fell well short of the mark. Mills writes: "The transformations of Andean religious ideas and practices, and the indisputable penetrations of Christianity into an evolving Andean religious framework, seem to have owed little to coercive tactics such as those of the Extirpation" (p. 270). Villagómez was no innocent, and certainly no fool. One is moved to marvel, despite its ruthlessness and obstinacy, at the resolve that drove him and his kind on and on and on. They must surely have died, as yet another set of idols was discovered near where some had recently been destroyed, as the bones of the ancestors were buried and consecrated in new hiding places while others were unearthed and obliterated at old ones, wondering if it had all been worth it.

This book will be of interest to several academic constituencies. Andeanist historians of the colonial period should think of it as required reading, but it can also be highly recommended for colonial Latin Americanists of other parts of the former Spanish empire, as well as for scholars interested in church history and native religion. Mills is to be congratulated on producing a substantive work that advances considerably our knowledge of Spanish-Indian relations in colonial Peru.

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Governance and Society in Colonial Mexico: Chihuahua in the Eighteenth Century, by Cheryl English Martin. Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1996. viii, 264 pp. $39.50 U.S.

In this book Cheryl English Martin represents a mining district about one thousand miles northwest of Mexico City as "a microcosm of colonial Mexican society" (p. 2). San Felipe el Real de Chihuahua sprang into existence after a silver strike in 1702. Migrants flocked to the area, and by 1718 it was a *villa* exercising