

about the renaissance of Acadia, but neither attempted any cross-references. L. G. Thomas's discussion of Western historiography, perhaps most notable for its notion of the "privileged settlers" whose descendants became the second generation of western academic historians, did not respond to Forbes's comments on the Maritime situation. T. W. Acheson's useful analysis of the role of the merchants in retarding economic development in Saint John 1820–50 (they did retard but in no simple sense) might well have benefitted from the discussion of later prairie development by Alan Artibise, who in turn might well have asked whether his cities were as unique as his presentation of them suggests. J. Murray Beck questioned whether the Atlantic region was indeed a region, or merely four provinces which behaved similarly much of the time; David Smith, meanwhile, assumed that the Prairies were a region in terms of political culture and pushed on from that point. Gerald Friesen's paper on prairie fiction and cultural history presumably had some Atlantic counterpart not printed here, and his illuminating argument for the relationship between literature and environment would only have been enhanced by the example of Atlantic Canada, which has an equally coherent literary fabric following much the same pattern of development as Friesen detects for the prairies. David Alexander was too concerned to bridge the gap between Newfoundland and the three Maritime provinces to stretch across to the West. And so, one presumes, it went.

Only a fool would deny that, as editors Buckner and Bercuson point out in their preface, "local and regional studies force Canada to face two realities at the same time: that Canada is marked by regional differences, and that these differences contribute to a fragile national existence". Nor can it be gainsaid that the blows of the regional specialists had fallen heavily upon an historical tradition which had become extremely sterile and narrow in focus. But at the moment, what we seem to have is a new narrowness. Those studying particular regions (or provinces, or municipalities, or whatever) need not apologize for their perspective, but it would be useful if they could broaden it, much as they have forced others to do. Canada's existence remains too fragile to tolerate a further perpetuation of academic parochialism in new guises.

One notes with dismay that, with the exception of two political scientists, all the contributors to these pages are historians, an observation which raises yet another problem for Canadian scholarship, but one beyond the scope of this review. The book is attractively presented but there is no index.

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ROBERT M. CARMACK, *The Quiché Mayas of Uatatlán: The Evolution of a Highland Guatemala Kingdom* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981. Pp. xviii+435. \$35.00)

In 1973, Robert Carmack published, to critical scholarly acclaim, a volume entitled *Quichean Civilization: The Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Sources*. As its title indicates, *Quichean Civilization* is primarily a work of bibliographic appraisal. Carmack, an anthropologist, insisted that such an undertaking was necessary before embarking on an historical narrative based on the rich Quichean material. The appearance of this new work thus marks the successful completion of the second stage of an ambitious project stretching back over the past two decades. Although not quite as tightly written, convincingly argued, or lucidly expounded as *Quichean Civilization*, *The Quiché Mayas of Uatatlán* certainly warrants the scrutiny of historical geographers, and will be of special interest to those most concerned with aspects of pre-Columbian cultural survival in Latin America.

The preface and first two chapters relate the author's personal situation in the work and set an intellectual framework for the material under discussion. Maintaining that "the basic problem of the book is clearly historical in nature" (p. 10), Carmack answers

the questions he poses by analysing and arranging data chronologically. Within this historical perspective the evolution of the Umatlán community is stressed by careful consideration of major thematic issues. Interpretation and narration are woven throughout each chapter. Thus chapters 3–9 focus on the origins of the Quiché Maya, placing them in an ecological setting and tracing their development from the first migrations into highland Guatemala from the Gulf Coast homeland (c. A.D. 1250) until the Spanish Conquest of Umatlán in 1524. The minute details of these chapters stand in rather sharp contrast to the broad sweep of chapter 10, in which the fate of the Umatlán community under colonial and early republican rule is only sketched in outline. Further archival work will yield more information to fill in that outline; none the less Carmack reconstructs sufficient strands of evidence for a distinctive pattern—“a remarkable syncretism between native and Hispanic cultures” (p. 12)—to emerge. An equally compact chapter 11, focussing primarily on cultural continuity and change, delineates the way of life of the Quiché Maya in the twentieth century, from a process of “deculturation” in most communities to retreat into a “culture of refuge” in more traditional communities such as Chichicastenango. A fine concluding chapter not only reviews the principal findings but also places them in a broader context by comparing, and contrasting, the cultural evolution of the Quiché of Umatlán with that of other Mesoamerican (Mayan and non-Mayan) communities.

Several points of criticism, some of them specifically geographical in nature, may be raised. While the major thrust of inquiry is directed towards the Umatlán community, Carmack also extends his investigations to adjoining or nearby Quichean communities. At times, however, the precise areas covered by the data are unclear and, in at least one instance, become confusing and somewhat contradictory. For example, Carmack postulates a contact population of some 50,000 inhabitants “for the entire Quiché area” (p. 105), surely an extremely conservative estimate; yet beforehand, he puts forward this same number for “the central Quiché area” (p. 91). The problem of clarifying the spatial extent of the categories under discussion could easily have been overcome by fixing their position on figure 1.1. Although this particular map has sufficient legend information to make it self-explanatory without recourse to the text, others unfortunately do not (e.g. 3.1 and 8.2). Other figures show limited cartographic inspiration. As with the photo-reproduction (often rather insipid, and lacking sharp definition) the graphic material could have been more imaginatively presented by the publisher.

In terms of employment of documentary sources, certain Mesoamericanists will likely remain sceptical of what they regard as too literal an interpretation of, and heavy reliance upon, the *Popol Vuh*. Ironically, Carmack himself considers these same traits that limit the contribution of Francisco Ximenez, the Dominican friar who discovered and translated the *Popol Vuh* in the early eighteenth century. Also too literal is Carmack’s acceptance of the reliability of the 1940 census, known now to be one of President Ubico’s more blatant excesses; the most likely reason for there being “little change” (p. 104) in the population of the Quiché area between 1940 and 1950 is not retarded growth over the decade but Ubico’s desire for Guatemala to have more inhabitants than the census takers actually recorded. And anyone who has read the *Annals of the Cakchiquels* (and accepts, as Carmack himself does, its testimony of the Cakchiquels’ military superiority over the Quiché by the close of the fifteenth century) will surely dispute the assertion on the dust-jacket that “at the time of the Spanish conquest the Quichés were the most powerful group in the Guatemala highlands”.

These observations notwithstanding, *The Quiché Mayas of Umatlán* offers stimulating reading and is an accomplished work of synthesis.