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seventeenth-century Mexican society, and her story makes fascinating reading.

Born in 1674 on the outskirts of Querétaro, Francisca was one of nine children of impoverished but respectable parents. From childhood, she showed signs of unusual devotion and a mystical bent. At the age of nine she began to confess with the Franciscan friars of the newly founded Colegio de Santa Cruz; they quickly acknowledged her precocious spirituality, convincing her father to allow her to don the habit of a Franciscan tertiary. From that point until her death in 1744, Francisca consistently manifested spiritual gifts that earned her the patronage of Franciscan friars and the inhabitants of Querétaro. She was trusted by the friars to advise on evangelization and even, reputedly, bilocated to Texas to serve as a missionary herself. Unlike some of her contemporaries, she emerged successfully from a brush with the Inquisition and became foundress of an important religious institution. At the end of her life in 1744, Francisca presided as headmistress over the daughters of Querétaro's lower elite while retaining her reputation for sanctity. Gunnarsdóttir's careful study does justice to the manner in which Francisca's religious career developed and to the tensions implicit in the role of a neighborhood holy woman. Her natural tendency was to the interior life of prayer and meditation; however, her ability to sustain herself depended upon the piety and patronage of fellow citizens. As her gifts became more widely acknowledged, she moved from the (anyway risky) path of mystical union and bilocation to the more practical and less perilous occupations of a foundress. In so doing, she consolidated what must be one of the longer and more successful careers enjoyed by a Mexican holy woman. But while her success as a foundress may have taken her to a more stable and secure position than that of a neighborhood visionary, it may also have cast her into the relative obscurity from which Gunnarsdóttir has rescued her.

Any biographer must navigate between the attractions of the particular and the importance of context, and every biographer steers by a different measure of where the balance between the two must lie. While Gunnarsdóttir provides a wealth of contextual information in her first and final chapters, context might have been enhanced in various locations in between. For example, it seems clear that Francisca was a reluctant foundress pushed into creating a *beaterio* by the twin forces of financial need and the hunger of *queretanos* for foundations. Gunnarsdóttir misses an opportunity to integrate this foundation into a more general tendency within Mexican urbanism, exemplified by but not limited to Mexico City. Furthermore, Gunnarsdóttir's life-cycle approach is a useful way to study a long and complex life, but at times she forces the consonance between Francisca's life and her career. For example, although 1713 may have represented a period of consolidation for Francisca, it may be a bit premature to decree that the thirty-seven-year-old *beata* had entered "old age." And finally, though the author believes that a study of high baroque piety yields "a more fruitful

perspective" than would a gender-based analysis, Francisca's biography offers the opportunity to integrate both. Her identification as a "tomboy" in childhood, her sense of herself as a "spiritual male," her feelings of superiority to upper-class nuns, her conflicts with sometimes capricious male confessors and benefactors: all cry out for an analysis that acknowledges Francisca's rootedness in gender and class hierarchies. Indeed, one of the characteristics of baroque popular religion was its capacity to effect the kind of class and gender inversions that allowed a young Mexican girl from an impoverished family to become the adviser and confidant of educated Spanish missionaries. These inversions, however, were never permanent, and an understanding of how a woman like Francisca could simultaneously occupy the role of spiritual colleague and obedience-bound confessant demands a nuanced treatment of gender and class. Still, Gunnarsdóttir's treatment is meticulously researched, thoughtful, and thorough, and its focus on the spiritual context offers its own rewards. This is a useful and important book. Readable and engaging, it will be essential reading for those interested in Mexican women's history and Counter Reformation religiosity.

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TIMOTHY HAWKINS. *José de Bustamante and Central American Independence: Colonial Administration in an Age of Imperial Crisis*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 2004. Pp xxviii, 283. \$40.00.

Our knowledge of how independence was achieved throughout Spanish America favors those who fought to overthrow the imperial yoke and, by so doing, became icons of the nations that were forged in the aftermath of often brutal armed conflict. Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos figure prominently in the liberation and construction of Mexico, just as Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín dominate the emergence from colony to republic in the countries of South America. As is frequently the case, Central America marches to the beat of a different drum. Administered as the Kingdom of Guatemala, which stretched from Chiapas to Costa Rica, the isthmus of Central America produced no inspirational leader who could galvanize secessionist fervor. As noteworthy as the transition to independence is the story of the man who did his royalist best to prevent it. José de Bustamante was a steely Spaniard who, between 1811 and 1818, did much to ensure that Central America did not experience the autonomous seizures that undermined Spanish authority elsewhere in the New World.

Timothy Hawkins begins his study of Bustamante by dissecting the extant literature. He observes that scholars, especially those from Central America, have traditionally portrayed Bustamante as "the personification of Spanish absolutism, supervising a 'reign of terror' that stifled dissent and crushed overt opposition" (p. viii), thus creating a "Bustamante myth" (p. xvii). In his

revisionist critique, Hawkins focuses on “the preservation of empire rather than the struggle for independence,” examining “the methods utilized by imperial officials to maintain order” and illuminating “the degree and nature of support for Spanish rule in the colony” (p. xxvi).

Hawkins takes care to chart key elements of Bustamante’s career before his arrival in Central America. He discerns formative experiences in Bustamante’s training at the naval academy in Cádiz and his partnership thereafter with Alejandro Malaspina in convincing Charles III, figurehead of the Bourbon reforms, to fund “a voyage around the world that would combine geographic exploration and scientific discovery with a thorough investigation of the political, social, and commercial status of the Spanish colonies” (p. 8). Both Malaspina and Bustamante “were products of the Enlightenment,” but the mother country they sailed from in 1789 was not the one to which they returned five years later. A once “energetic, activist state” now had Charles IV on the throne, a fickle heir who “allowed a young and inexperienced favorite named Manuel Godoy to assume the reins of power,” precipitating “almost permanent crisis” (p. 10). The outspoken, liberal-minded Malaspina fell foul of Godoy and soon found himself “stripped of all his titles and honors and imprisoned” (p. 12). Bustamante, in stark contrast, “presented the [C]rown with a detailed report on how to secure the commercial and defense needs of the colonies in the midst of the European hostilities” (p. 13). Godoy was impressed by Bustamante’s strategic thinking. While Malaspina languished in jail in La Coruña, Bustamante was dispatched to Montevideo, where he served as the crown’s highest representative for “seven successful years” (p. 18).

Bustamante’s “proven record” in Montevideo, Hawkins makes clear, paved the way for his appointment in 1810 as “captain general, governor, and president of the Kingdom of Guatemala” (p. 21). With Spain and its empire in turmoil—the French invasion of 1808 had resulted in the overthrow of Godoy and the abdication of Charles IV—Bustamante arrived in Central America in 1811 with an uncompromising vision. “The masses confuse the words *patria* and *pais*, patriotism and citizenship,” he declared. “The country where one is born, where one develops reason, where one’s soul forms its most permanent impressions, deserves and inspires affection. But how distinct is the wide, true love for the *Patria*, which includes all of the peoples united by the same social bonds, all those under one Religion, one King, one Law, one culture, one will, and one character.” Bustamante’s firm belief—for him, as for all “good Spaniards,” there was “no distinction between kingdoms, nor between the provinces which comprise the vast extent of the Monarchy” (p. 84)—was matched by a resolute sense of purpose, of what to do on behalf of the crown in order to protect its interests.

Hawkins depicts Bustamante at work with telling detail, responding to unrest in El Salvador and Nicaragua by devising “a counterinsurgency state” (p. 115) that

marshalled the manpower of “some four thousand troops.” Bustamante’s “active military forces” (p. 141) were deployed in Oaxaca to stop Mexican moves for autonomy from spilling over into Central America. He intercepted the mail, kept a close watch on the movement of goods and people, and imprisoned anyone who aroused suspicion. When, ruling in the crown’s name, the Cortés of Cádiz promulgated the Constitution of 1812, its progressive ideas were decidedly at odds with Bustamante’s, who saw the blueprint for a new colonial order “as something to be tolerated when possible and obstructed when necessary” (p. 143).

Bustamante became “a figure of hatred at the highest levels of colonial society” not just because his policies curtailed elite privileges but because “his guarded nature and reserved manner, his dislike of ostentation, and his scrupulousness in refusing gifts or bribes” (p. 186) clashed with elite pretensions and proclivities. Professional substance combined with personal style to offend creole pride and diminish creole prestige. When, in 1818, Carlos de Urrutia replaced him, Bustamante’s departure was celebrated by the creole elite, who cooperated gladly with Urrutia in drawing up a list of forty-seven charges against Bustamante when his term of office was formally reviewed. The admiral from Asturias, however, was not only cleared of all accusations but went on to serve the crown in several subsequent positions, dying in Madrid in 1825 after a half-century of “continuous service to Spain and its empire” (p. 212).

The interpretive acumen by which Hawkins contemplates evidence and argues his case is striking. His conclusion—that “the controversies that so deeply marked Bustamante’s tenure . . . resulted from a struggle for power between rival institutions during a particularly unstable time” (p. 210)—does not dispel the “Bustamante myth” so much as clarify why it might have been useful to construct it in the first place.

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ALINE HELG. *Liberty and Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770–1835*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2004. Pp. xiv, 363. Cloth \$59.95, paper \$22.50.

Aline Helg opens her book with three questions about absences in Colombian, especially Caribbean Colombian, history: “Why did Caribbean Colombian lower classes of color not collectively challenge the small white elite during this process [of nation formation]? Why did race not become an organizational category in the region? Why did the Caribbean Coast integrate into Andean Colombia without asserting its Afro-Caribbeanness?” (pp. 6–7). By asking these questions, the author proposes to offer some explanation for the origins of “Colombia’s long-lasting self-representation as a mestizo nation” (p. 7) that effaces its African roots.

Asking why people in the past did not behave in ways that we might expect is a tricky proposition. One fears