

SUSAN DEANS-SMITH & ERIC VAN YOUNG (eds.): *Mexican Soundings: Essays in Honour of David A. Brading*. London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2007.

Mexican Soundings is a compilation of essays written to honor the contributions of David Brading, one of the most established scholars of Mexican history. And a fitting tribute it is. Now retired, Brading built a long and successful career as a member of the faculty at such institutions as University of California at Berkeley, Yale, and Cambridge. Edited by two prominent scholars in their own right—Susan Deans-Smith and Eric Van Young—*Mexican Soundings* stands as a testament to the legacy of Brady's prolific research. The book presents a combination of autobiography, historiography, and new scholarship. Brading's former students and his colleagues offer their own insight on a myriad of topics that have formed the basis for Brading's work over the years. *Mexican Soundings* will surely become a must-read text and a historiographical tool for advanced students as well as other scholars of Mexican history. But the book is also valuable for its breadth of chronological and topical coverage, which make it well suited for adoption in undergraduate courses on Mexican history.

Susan Deans-Smith's well-written introduction sets up the rest of the book, which is divided into two parts. Part I includes a self-reflection by David Brading himself, which is based on Brading's own recollections of his early career and the memoirs he kept during his long stays conducting research in Mexico. In Brading's chapter, the reader takes a delightful peregrination on the winding path of the scholar's early career. The third-person narrative points to the many intellectual diversions Brading encountered through his Catholic upbringing in England—including his interest in Italian art and medieval Mediterranean history—followed by an evolution of his passion for the study of Mexican history. Throughout Brading's early digressions, one trait remained constant: his sustained pursuit of knowledge. Brading's autobiographical essay is followed by a brief but meaningful tribute by Enrique Florescano and a historiographical essay by Eric Van Young. Van Young considers the span of Brading's abundant scholarship comprehensively, but he emphasizes Brading's ability to bridge the scholarly gap between the colonial and national periods in Mexican history. Van Young sees this as one of the most important foundations laid by Brading's work, which is now accepted as the prevailing model among Mexican scholars. He notes that Brading's arguments—particularly in works such as *Haciendas and Ranchos* and *The First America*—provided the framework for the notion of the "Age of Revolution." That temporal schema allows historians to cast aside traditional chronological divisions and consider the "century" 1750-1850 as a transitional phase of Mexican history. As a defining principle, the "Age

of Revolution” periodization has become one of Brading’s most fundamental contributions to the field of Mexican history.

Part II of the book comprises six chapters by noted scholars offering new insights into an impressive assortment of themes that make up Brading’s earlier research. Two chapters by Brading’s former students illustrate the scholar’s influence as a mentor and teacher during his career. Susan Deans-Smith’s chapter examines the social dynamic of baroque painters in seventeenth-century Mexico. Ellen Gunnarsdóttir’s study presents the life of *beata* and mystic Francisca de los Ángeles as a representation of the somewhat hidden flexibility and openness of the Spanish Church through popular religion. Other essays in Part II are written by Brading’s colleagues, but similarly cover topics that relate to Brading’s own research. Brian Hamnett, Marta Eugenia García Ugarte, and Guy Thompson each treat the important theme of conflict between liberal and conservative movements in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Hamnett’s chapter examines the early career of Tomás Mejía, who eventually became one of the most important conservative supporters of the Empire of Maximilian in the 1860s. Following the trajectory of Brading’s research during the later years of his career, Hamnett considers Mejía’s political rise in terms of the popular conservative base in the Sierra Gorda of Querétaro. García Ugarte constructs a history of the Catholic Church in the 1850s through the writings and actions of the bishop of Puebla during the Revolution of Ayutla. She casts aside earlier scholarly portrayals of Bishop Pelagio Antonio Labastida y Dávalos as a traitor and paints a portrait of the Bishop as an influential church leader whose moderate stances were ultimately suppressed by liberals and conservatives alike. Guy Thompson continues the focus on Puebla with his study of the popular liberalism of Juan Francisco Lucas. The final chapter of the volume—a thoughtful analytical piece by Alan Knight—addresses the large question of Mexican national identity, with particular focus on the first half of the twentieth century. Knight seems to support the stance taken by Brading’s earlier assessments of national identity, that is, that the concept must be defined precisely and that scholars should limit their reliance on sweeping notions of national identity to explain complex historical issues.

The editors of *Mexican Soundings* have compiled an impressive collection of essays that reflect the scope of David Brading’s long and influential career and that pay tribute to his scholarly contributions. The book is accessible to a general audience and organized in a way that makes it most useful to scholars. The essays are well written, although the occasional typo seems to have escaped the attention of copy-editors. One would have hoped for each essayist in Part II to make more explicit connections between their work and that of the scholar they are honoring. But this omission does not detract from the overall quality of the work, and the most significant links are discussed thoroughly in Deans-

Smith's introduction. Overall, *Mexican Soundings* is an important work and a much-deserved tribute to a worthy scholar.

Monica A. Rankin

University of Texas at Dallas

ALBERTO ULLOA BORNEMANN: *Surviving Mexico's Dirty War: A Political Prisoner's Memoir*. Edited and translated by Arthur Schmidt and Aurora Camacho de Schmidt. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007.

Ulloa Bornemann has given us a gift in his memoir documenting how he survived Mexico's dirty war in the 1960s and 1970s. His gift is a sensitive, personal, profoundly moving account that opens the doors on the brutality and violence of the Mexican state, the goals of left wing civil movements and the role that one man plays. Ulloa Bornemann's book follows the model of a testimonial or *testimonio* — a rich traditional literary trope in Latin America — but at the same time it is much more. The author has opened an important window to a painful period in Mexico's history, one that some would argue continues to the present given the persistence of civil unrest as well as the sustained and heavy handed response of the state.

Ulloa Bornemann's book comprises four chapters that follow his life as an adult, experiences in left wing movements, his imprisonment (that includes four years in various prisons) and finally, his freedom. The editor-translators Aurora Camacho de Schmidt and Arthur Schmidt contribute an important and useful introduction—*Translating Fear: A Mexican Narrative of Militancy, Horror, and Redemption*.

The introduction by Camacho de Schmidt and Schmidt is critical, particularly for the new student of Mexican history, Mexican politics, the politics of protest in Latin America and the testimonial as a literary trope. The authors use the introduction to review key events in Mexico's history, describe the dirty war and the use of terror, but also, and perhaps most importantly, to introduce Alberto Ulloa Bornemann.

Ulloa Bornemann's story fills the four chapters of the book. He begins not with his youth, nor with joining left wing movements, but with his capture and imprisonment. There is a quality in Ulloa Bornemann's description of these events that is profound. He is able to combine an absurd kind of humor with a sense of terror that truly communicates just how horrific the situation was. Writing about his capture on that first page of chapter one, Ulloa Bornemann states, "The car engine faltered, but I didn't want it to fail. That was the greatest absurdity of all, as if I were in a hurry to arrive at our destination [Campo Militar Número