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COMMENTARY

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The papers by Dr. John Womack and Dr. Laurens Perry offer us various suggestions for continued investigation as well as additional information on archival sources which need study and analysis.

Dr. Perry seems to attribute the current periodization of Mexican history of the middle nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to those historians gathered around Cosío Villegas. But, in fact, this form of periodization was used long before Cosío Villegas entered the field, and debate over periodization will continue as long as historians write. Periodization will always depend largely on the knowledge and interest of each individual historian. It is more a useful tool for a beginning or ending of a study than a limit that can be finally established. Many historians would periodize the rural police as of the period of the Porfiriato, but a careful study by Paul J. Vanderwood shows that this institution did not begin with Porfirio Díaz or close with his departure from the scene. Doubtless a careful study of the *jefe político* would reveal a similar story. To place the period of the Mexican independence struggle between 1808 and 1821 is just as unsatisfactory. Periodization will always depend on varied factors since political history is a continuous matter and does not begin and end on set dates.

Te most surprising statement in Dr. Perry's paper is that Cosío Villegas stated that he did not intend to write the political history of 1876-1910. Nowhere have I been able to find that Cosío Villegas ever thought of not writing the political history of the Porfiriato. In fact, he has been writing this very history for the past several years, has already completed some 2200 pages of it and hopes to send the completed work to the press before the end of this year. What Cosío Villegas really said was that he would not complete the political history until after the work on the economic, social and diplomatic history of the Porfiriato was available. Thus he would be able to write far more intelligently the political history of those years.

Based on the false assumption that Cosío Villegas did not intend to write this political history, Dr. Perry attempts to explain the decision on the basis of a change in attitude of Cosío toward Díaz *. Cosío Villegas, like any true historian, is the first to admit that as he has learned more and more of the period, his concept of Díaz has changed and developed and never has he considered that this change reflects in any way upon him as a historian.

The second part of Dr. Perry's paper dealing with materials for Porfirian political history in archives of México City is useful to those not already aware of this material. It might be indicated here that Cosío Villegas has been aware of this material as well as of other archival material that needs careful study and analysis. He would like to see the Archivo de Limantour,

which still exist and is in the hands of the Iturbes and the musician Limantour, the Archivo de Manuel González presently in the hands of the sons of Dr. Fernando González Montesinos and the Papeles de Rosendo Pineda once possessed by Aurelio Manrique and now in the hands of José Valadés made available for study in order that an even more complete appraisal of the Porfiriato can be made. The Archivo de Iglesias in the Archivo General de la Nación needs to be made more readily available through a guide to it. Also before the final story is written, the papers and archives of other men —both Díaz's supporters and opponents— need to be located and made available.

Dr. Womack's analysis of Mexican political historiography for the period 1959-1969 is a useful evaluation of the accomplishments of historians in those years. His suggestions for future investigation are also valuable. Especially welcome is his comment that "life in Mexico in no period has been just chaos", for the frequently held assumption that life between 1821 and 1857 was chaos has tended to drive historians away from a study of those years or has caused them to rely almost exclusively for their study or analysis on the limited printed materials produced largely by participants in the events of that time. Because of this mistaken assumption we still lack sound monographic studies based on the wealth of archival material available for the writing of a good history of those years. In the same way that the composition and work of the revolutionary congresses of the twentieth century require more study, the many congresses and conventions of the early nineteenth century —their composition, operation, failures and successes— must be studied along with the activities of the other institutions and events of that time —epidemics, natural calamities and economic and social developments. To date little basic monographic material is available.