



POLITICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE PORFIRIAN PERIOD OF MEXICAN HISTORY

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This essay will embrace three subjects, corresponding to three sections. The first is almost entirely inspired by the exceptionally important works written and edited by Daniel Cosío Villegas, who has provided me with many pleasurable hours of reading. The second section is a partial listing of unused documentary sources in the city of Mexico useful for the writing of political history in the age of Porfirio Díaz. The third section is a consideration of studies which seem to me to be necessary for better understanding that important period.

I

Political historiography of the Porfirian regime, as we all know, has been characterized by factional studies. If this is true of all Mexican history, the problem has been compounded by additional factors in the case of the *Porfiriato*. First, the epic revolution transformed the Porfirian period into the *Ancien Regime* of Mexican history, attended by all the passions and political propaganda which abound in the wake of true revolution, to the disadvantage of objective analysis. Secondly, Porfirio Díaz and the men who surrounded him are suspended between two sets of patriot-heroes, those of the “Second Independence” and those of the “National Revolution”, denegrating the *Porfiriato* and making it less attractive for study. Thirdly, there is some reluctance to enter porfirian historical studies because of the social pressure to support the Revolution. Other factors, such as the wholesale destruction of documents during the revolution, have retarded porfirian studies. This poverty of twentieth century studies has afforded little opportunity to experiment with periodization in nineteenth century political history.

During the last two decades we have been told that Mexico’s “Modern History” began in 1867 with the collapse of the Maximilian monarchy and ended in 1911 with the collapse of the porfirian dictatorship. This periodization, although useful for attracting historians to the least studied period of Mexican history since 1810, has as many

disadvantages as advantages. The school of historians headed by Daniel Cosío Villegas, who promote this view, then proceed to do violence to periodization by dividing it into the "Restored Republic" and the "Porfiriato". At least they find 1876 so significant a watershed that not only the volumes on political history were proposed to divide there, but so too are the volumes on social and economic history. The major political work covering the first decade of the period was written by Dr. Cosío Villegas himself.¹ The theme of the work is that the principal leaders of the Reform and of the Republican resistance to the French Intervention tried to establish a viable progressive democracy in Mexico, and that the prime obstacle upon which success was shattered was the bastard ambitions of a group of unprincipled militarists, led by Porfirio Díaz. This group sapped the energies of the feeble government, forced the diversion of resources by constant rebellion and terminated the experiment in liberal government by insurrection in 1876. Whether or not the interpretation is valid and it is useful for some purposes —the periodization logically should commence in 1854 and terminate in 1876. Logical with the interpretation, the twenty-two year period was the rise, challenge and fall of the liberal democratic dream. The dramatic tragedy is only opening onto the third act in 1867.

The *Porfiriato* then comprises another period, one that might best be studied as a unit from 1876 to 1914, to the overthrow of the regime of Victoriano Huerta, or even to 1938, the liquidation of the last of the oligarchic forces which characterize *porfirismo*.

Of course, other historians will immediately take issue, insisting that many of the principal *porfiristas* were within the liberal tradition of Juárez and Lerdo, and that the liberal period ended in 1884 or 1888 or even 1900. The frequently held view that Díaz was good for Mexico until about 1900 (he solved, in this view, the perennial problem of militarism, balanced the budget, developed the infrastructure and brought international respect to Mexico) is enhanced by this periodization and shortens the *Ancien Regime* to the first decade of the twentieth century. Revolutionary history then begins about 1900 (Old Regime) or 1908 (open and significant opposition).

José Bravo Ugarte uses a periodization similar to that of Cosío with different results, more caustic and cynical, by stressing other characteristics of the period.² He designates the period from 1867 to 1943 as one of constitutional dictatorship —"constitutional" because of the recognition of a supreme law, but "dictatorship" because the law was

¹ Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México. La república restaurada. La vida política*. México, Editorial Hermes, 1955.

² José Bravo Ugarte, *Historia de México*, vol. III (3rd edition, revised). México, Editorial Jus, 1962, pp. 345-346.

not observed in practice. He, too, divides this period into two phases, "personal dictatorship" from 1867 to 1914, and "revolutionary dictatorship" from 1917 to 1943. It is the first phase that is almost coterminous with the periodization of Cosío Villegas. In Ugarte's interpretation Juárez, Lerdo and Díaz were all dictators; the difference was that the regimes of the former two were disorderly and unprogressive and the latter one was orderly and progressive. This is also a useful interpretation, and is internally logical.

Other periodizations of nineteenth century political history immediately come to mind to all of us. The point here is that just as different interpretations of the facts beg different periodization, so too, different periodizations beg different interpretations. I personally have the uneasy feeling that the void in scholarly studies of Mexican history between the dates of 1867 and 1911 was to some important degree a factor for the periodization chosen by the school of historians who gathered around Daniel Cosío Villegas. As great as is the debt which we owe to Cosío Villegas, other historians will best serve the knowledge of history by a continued examination of the periodization they decide to adopt. If in the future 1867 and 1911 are generally accepted as standard divides, the credit will go to the Cosío school for its untiring efforts to convince us, and we shall have abandoned other viable interpretations by default.

Anyone coming to the study of the political history of the porfirian regime understands that he will deal with the works of Daniel Cosío Villegas, although the most important work for the political history of the period will not be written: *Historia moderna de México. El porfiriato. La vida política interior*. * Cosío announced two reasons for his decision to substitute *La vida política exterior* for the former.³ One seems to me good, the other bad. The inaccessibility of documentation is valid and tragic. We can only hope the situation is temporary and remediable. However, the second reason, that "... about the internal political life of the *Porfiriato* much has been written, ..." ⁴ is true only

* About a month before the Oaxtepec Conference where this paper was presented, but after it was submitted to the organizational committee, don Daniel Cosío Villegas informed me that he had not abandoned the project of the internal political history of the Porfirian period. Therefore, some of the judgments and implications of this *ponencia* are premature. The author offered apologies at the conference and wishes to repeat them here, hoping that his assumptions have caused no inconveniences to anyone.

³ Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México. El porfiriato. La vida política exterior*. Primera Parte. México, Editorial Hermes, 1960, pp. xiv-xvi.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

of quantity rather than quality. Cosío Villegas himself has said the same.⁵ The decision is regrettable, however necessary.

A second misfortune resulting from Cosío's abandonment of his original plan is the loss of a final statement by Cosío Villegas concerning Porfirio Díaz as a man, politician and statesman. This is of interest because of the suspicion that a mellowing evolution is discernible in the attitude of Cosío Villegas toward Díaz. This supposed evolution has been discerned for some time and might be accounted for in a number of ways. Has it been the influence of further study? The thought here is that Díaz has slowly advanced in the approbation of Cosío as the latter has come to appreciate the former. If this were true, in no way would it reflect disparagingly upon the historian in question.

The implication, however, is that Cosío began his works with a decided prejudice against Díaz. Silvio Zavala noted that Juárez came off better than Díaz in one of Cosío's early works "in part for historic reasons, in part for reasons personal to the author".⁶ A second Mexican historian referred in 1956 to Cosío's "notorious *antiporfirismo*", but a third was happy to note that Cosío was escaping his early prejudice.⁷ Interestingly, in 1949 Cosío applauded Valadés for escaping the same prejudice in the latter's work on porfirian history.⁸ However, it is not possible that Cosío Villegas has found more to approve in Díaz' later career than in his rebel career?

To rephrase: is it not possible for a moderate man who believes that Juárez and Lerdo were trying to reconstruct Mexican political life for the solution of national problems in the image of the liberal program—to despair of Díaz, whose goals and methods ran contrary to the program of the former men? One might disagree that such was the program of Juárez and Lerdo, or even that Cosío has successfully described porfirian goals and methods. Nevertheless, could not the "evolution" seen in Cosío Villegas, and which he sees in Valadés, better be applied to Díaz? Could those historians have been disgusted with

⁵ Daniel Cosío Villegas, "El Porfiriato: Su Historiografía o Arte Histórico", *Extremos de América*. México, Tezontle, 1949, pp. 115-147. This excellent essay, followed by 276 titles, is an appraisal of the printed works on the political history of the Porfirian regime and is the best bibliography of the period.

⁶ Silvio Zavala, "Cosío Villegas, historiador", *Historia Mexicana*, vol. III, núm. 12 (April-June, 1954), p. 608.

⁷ The "second Mexican historian" was José Fuentes Mares, "Sobre la Historia Moderna de México", *Historia Mexicana*, vol. V, núm. 19 (January-March, 1956), p. 464. The author cannot relocate the criticism of the third historian mentioned, and believes it appeared in the Mexican press in the mid-1950's and that it was written by José Bravo Ugarte. If this is inexact, apologies are extended.

⁸ Daniel Cosío Villegas, "El Porfirismo: Su historiografía", *Extremos de América*, México, Tezontle, 1949, p. 141. Cosío was remarking about *El Porfirismo* by José C. Valadés. México, vol. I, José Porrúa e Hijos, 1941, vol. II, Editorial Patria, 1947.

Díaz the rebel and later have approved of Díaz the statesman? If so, is the evolution in the historian? Or is it not in Díaz!

Arguing for this proposition is evidence that Cosío early in his career recognized an evolution in Díaz. In 1953 Cosío asked, "How can it be explained that Porfirio, who until 1876 was a simple soldier, a *militarote*, . . . was able to transform himself. . . into a *gobnante extraordinario* (?)"⁹ The question is perhaps not the best one. The historian should perhaps have chosen to note and explain why a large and important group of people between 1867 and 1876 thought of Díaz as a *militarote* and then why a large and important group of people years later considered him a *gobnante extraordinario*. Cosío might have asked these questions: How large and important was the group which thought such-and-such a way? Who were those people? Were they the same people in the two periods? How did those beliefs manifest themselves in action? How important were those beliefs in the determination of developments? Who thought differently and what was their source of strength? These and other questions might better have been asked. Nevertheless, the fact that Cosío Villegas was asking when Díaz changed, and what were the influences upon him which caused that change, is indicative that from the beginning of Cosío's career as an historian he recognized an evolution in the person of Díaz.

There is yet another explanation for evolution in porfirian historians. The consideration here is that over the past two decades the Mexican intellectual climate of which Dr. Cosío is a part has perceptively shifted. The shift itself is away from the emotional necessity of justifying the Revolution by denegrating the *Porfiriato*. Certainly the factor of time is important. One has less commitment to the justification of the Revolution if not involved personally; every year fewer Mexican were. A prerequisite for objectivity is the subordination of emotional involvement, which is facilitated by the absence of the need for justification.

A further refinement of the argument for a shift in the intellectual climate of contemporary Mexico might be based upon the belief that the Revolutionary development parallels the development of *porfirismo*. A policy of political concentration and the bringing of all political ambition into a common fold by the rewarding of loyalty and effort through controlled promotion of careers; an early period of international difficulty with problems of recognition, pivoting on foreign debts and privileged foreigners with claims and concessions; a Mexican diplomatic victory in the face of greater foreign power, followed by a period of international good will and cooperation, investment and increasing trade; political problems solved, particularly that of succession, with a change of emphasis to economic development, characterized by low priority

⁹ Daniel Cosío Villegas, "Porfirio contra Juárez", *Excelsior*, 14 October 1953.

for widespread distribution; overwhelming financial difficulties followed by budgetary and monetary stability and international credit; a relaxation of tensions between church and state following an earlier period of considerable hostility; recognition of indigenous problems but with hopes placed on a final absorption into the national culture without bold attempts to protect the former; all of this describes both the *Porfiriato* and the Revolutionary period. Should not the present historian note these parallels and reevaluate the *Porfiriato*?

If the early twentieth century historians who were apologetic to *porfirismo* were frank *porfiristas*—men like Salvador Quevedo y Zubieta, Pablo Martínez del Río, Alberto María Carreño, Justo Sierra, Emilio Rabasa—not the same can be said of others. Genaro Fernández MacGregor, José Bravo Ugarte, José C. Valadés, Jorge Fernando Iturribarria, Ángel Taracena—these are more moderate historians, neither claiming for the *Porfiriato* an Augustinian age, nor feeling the need to demonstrate hatred for it. They all weigh and measure—each in his own way; they all find much that is decent and progressive in the pre-revolutionary period. These men are Cosío's contemporaries; he must have respect for some of them; they undoubtedly influenced one another. They are part of a new intellectual climate which is neither reactionary nor radically revolutionary. This is the shifting intellectual climate to which an evolution in Cosío Villegas might be accredited.

As for me, however, I think the way to view Cosío Villegas is not primarily as an increasingly more knowledgeable historian, nor as an increasingly objective twentieth century revolutionary, but rather as a nineteenth century Juárez liberal. Certainly Cosío was part of the idealistic generation of the Revolution.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Revolution has many traditions, one of which was the early belief that the ideals of the Reform were alive and about to be effected. The very questions Cosío formulates, "... whether political institutions were consolidated during the *Porfiriato*"; "Is it possible to respect a law that is not enforced?"; "Can a law which is not enforced remain in force?"; "Can a law which is not enforced someday recover its ascendancy?";¹¹ these are the type of question asked by the men at the constituent assembly of 1856-1857, not by the men of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*. The age of Porfirio Díaz, like the age of the PRI, is the direct heir of the best and the worst of Mexican history. The values of the

¹⁰ Of Cosío's extensive writing, the most autobiographical piece known to me, in which he recalls his revolutionary ardor "to do something for Mexico", is his introductory essay in *Ensayos y Notas*, México, Editorial Hermes, 1966.

¹¹ Daniel Cosío Villegas, "El porfiriato, era de consolidación", *Historia Mexicana*, vol. XIII, núm. 49 (July-September), p. 85.

Juárez liberals, in whose image Cosío Villegas studies and judges the politics of *porfirismo*, are admirable but limited criteria.

More important than has been the supposed evolution in Cosío Villegas was the real evolution of Juárez Liberalism. The ideals of the Reformers of 1854-1857 suffered two great attacks, the Three Years War and the French Intervention. The composition of Juárez Liberalism was chemically altered by those conflagrations and emerged in 1867 a different compound with tendencies toward different characteristics. Díaz merely carried those tendencies to their final reality: the concentration of power in a single individual, extolling the forms of the constitution of 1857, while controlling substance by dominating the personnel of government. I expect that had Cosío Villegas written the promised detailed story of that political consolidation, he would have acknowledged Díaz as a successful politician, but would nevertheless have judged the system harshly. Not only did it fail to answer the social and economic needs of Mexico, but it violated everything held holy by the Reformers of 1857, which by 1867 was being abandoned by most of the remaining Reformers.

From the beginning of the project which has produced the *Historia moderna de México* critics have discussed the methodology and the sources. There was fear that the team could never synthesize the material researched as well as the individual historian, or that the synthesizing historian would inevitably misuse the *fichas* gathered by the researchers. The fears have been largely unfounded; the project is enormously successful. Error has doubtlessly crept in; a note on a card is used by the synthesizer in a way which he might not have used it had he the whole document before him. A mistake is passed along which the master would have caught. So Díaz is accused of blackmail on page 869 of *La república restaurada. Vida política*, based on a letter Carreño attributed to Díaz. A reading of the whole letter rather than the part quoted by Cosío shows that Díaz was the recipient of the letter, Servando Canales the sender.¹² There are other mistakes, but perhaps fewer than the individual historian makes, and few have I caught in relation to the number of notes I have checked.

My objections are two. First, I regret the system of notations. Cosío felt it necessary to compromise between the full academic notation and the needs of the general reader.¹³ My own view is that the

¹² Porfirio Díaz to Servando Canales (sic), 23 March 1876; *Archivo del General Porfirio Díaz, Memorias y Documentos*, Alberto María Carreño, ed., vol. xii, 106-107. Díaz, not Servando, had recently moved his forces and was in a position to march quickly on Matamoros.

¹³ Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México. La república restaurada. La vida política*. México, Hermes, 1953, p. 39.

standard footnote is already a compromise between, on the one hand, repeating whole passages and arguing questions with previous authors directly in the text, and on the other hand, omitting all notation. The collective citation is unusable. The system used in *La Noria*, the time-honored footnote, is far better.¹⁴

Secondly, the argument for relying so heavily on newspapers in *Vida política* is in my opinion mistaken. Don Daniel argues that newspaper reporting was more reliable during the Restored Republic because "there have never been governors of Mexico more determinedly respectful of press liberty than Juárez and Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada".¹⁵ However, the salient feature of the Mexican press during the Restored Republic was not its liberty, but its irresponsible factionalism. That is, although the press was free, that freedom was utilized to beguile the reading public to interpret news in the interest of the politics of each newspaper's owner. Not even reported fact is above suspicion, for the editor's sense of responsibility was not above blatant lie. The saving grace in the work cited is Dr. Cosío's critical use of the press—as a reflection of factionalism rather than as a source of information. The alternative to general confidence in Dr. Cosío's competence and integrity in the use of newspapers is shattering in the extreme, but relative faith may be restored by a comparison of Cosío's section IV, on the insurrection of Tuxtepec, to the book on the same subject by Ciro B. Ceballos.¹⁶ One observes with great relief that archival sources predominate over newspapers in the two fine volumes on foreign affairs.¹⁷ If abandonment of the political history of the *Porfiriato* saved us from an account based largely on newspapers, we can probably sigh with relief.

II. SOME UNUSED MATERIALS USEFUL FOR PORFIRIAN POLITICAL HISTORY IN ARCHIVES OF MEXICO CITY

The following description is the result of a preliminary search which is by no means complete. The hope was to have much more information

¹⁴ Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Porfirio Díaz en la Revuelta de la Noria*, México, Editorial Hermes, 1953.

¹⁵ Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México. La república restaurada. La vida política*. México, Editorial Hermes, 1953, p. 37.

¹⁶ Ciro B. Ceballos, *Aurora y Ocaso, la historia de la revolución de Tuxtepec*, México (publisher not mentioned), 1912. Ceballos despaired so deeply of the press that he frequently printed versions from two capital papers of the same military action, versions which reason can hardly convince one to believe refer to the same events.

¹⁷ Daniel Cosío Villegas, *El porfiriato. La vida política exterior. Primera Parte. Segunda Parte*. México, Editorial Hermes, 1960 and 1963.

available before submitting this paper. However, some archives are in such disorder that even extensive searching has not enabled a report to be made, while conditions of access to others proscribes making a report. As it is, no claim is made that these materials exhaust the possibilities. Indeed, the contrary is true: there is an enormous amount of materials available in Mexico City. Some of it is without organization even in major archives, some well organized and readily available, and some in private collection with limited access. More materials are in private hands awaiting the collector. Hopefully all these materials will soon be collected in adequate depositories, organized, catalogued, made available to historians and described in a single bibliographical guide.

The *Archivo General de la Nación* is the single most important source of materials on the *Porfiriato*. Not yet used thoroughly for porfirian political history, it is rich in both printed primary sources and documents. The former include innumerable political pamphlets, annual reports (*Memorias*) of the various ministries, presidential informes, the congressional debates, proceedings and records of the state governments, budgets, projects, and copies of many kinds of materials from government and private presses. The single most important *ramo* of documents I have surveyed at present is the *Ramo de Gobernación*. The *Ramo de Gobernación* is grouped in 2,041 *legajos*, of which 1,196 are from the porfirian years. A full seventy-eight percent of these pertain to the *Cuerpos Rurales*. Materials in other *legajos* include militia reports, decrees of the national, state and local governments, police reports, budgets, salary schedules, employee registers, government circulars, muster reports of military units, inventories, receipts, records of expenses of various departments, inter-office correspondence, developmental proposals and estimates, lottery reports, election results, correspondence to state officials, sanitation reports, Monte de Piedad records, contracts, etc. A forty-two page typewritten calendar is available in the library of the AGN noting the *legajo* number, the year of the materials and the general subject. Other *ramos* exist which this compiler has not yet consulted.

The Library in the National Museum of Anthropology and History (*Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia*) is divided into three sections, the collection of books, the microfilm section and the documentary archive, all under the direction of Sr. Antonio Pompa y Pompa. The latter two sections are of interest here. The microfilm section (*Fondo de Microfotografía*, formerly the *Centro de Documentación* housed at Chapultepec Castle) is composed of some 20 to 25 "series", each dedicated to a different topic or region of the republic. Some series are anthropological materials, other historic. Of the historic materials, the majority are official and parroquial records from the

provinces, and the majority of those are from the colonial period. Collections of provincial newspapers and a few private collections of correspondence and manuscripts complete the microfilmed materials. In the selection of materials to be microfilmed little emphasis was placed on the years after 1876, probably on the assumption that priority had to be given to older materials in the attempt to preserve them from decay. Almost all of the rolls are briefly described in eleven typed calendars arranged by roll number within each series. These *catálogos* total between one and two thousand typed pages. From those pages I have extracted the following register of materials of use for the political history of the *Porfiriato*, which is doubtlessly the least representative period in this collection.

Serie Acolman

Rollo 1497. *Archivo del exconvento de Acolman. Defunciones.* 1881-1913.

Serie Archivo Judicial de Puebla

Rollo 11. *Lista de las causas criminales. Tribunal Supremo de Justicia, juzgado de sentencia.* 1836-1894. *Causas criminales. Relación. Cuadro Sinóptico. Juzgado de sentencia.* Teziutlán. 1893-1894.

Rollo 30. *Inventario en el avalúo de la hacienda de Tres Jahueyes.* 1888.

Rollo 37. A few documents of *Tierras y Aguas*.

Rollo 56. *Impresos oficiales de Puebla.* Including: *Decretos que el gobernador da a conocer a los ciudadanos.* 1881-1882, 1889. *Ley y reglamento del impuesto del timbre sobre bebidas alcohólicas.* 1895. *Memoria que el departamento ejecutivo presenta al XVIII congreso.* 1903.

Serie Archivo de Matías Romero

Rollos 1-72. This is the microfilm of the famous collection housed at the *Banco de México* and forms for porfirian history the most important part of the microfilms of the *Biblioteca Nacional*. The materials include letters, newspaper clips, copies of public documents and even books. Dates range from 1837 to 1900.

Serie Chiapas

Rollo 77. *Archivo Histórico Chiapaneco. Palacio de la Cultura. Tuxtla Gutiérrez. Ramo Civil 1875-1890.*

Rollo 78 & 79. Documents from the *Archivo de la Alcaldía de Chiapas*. 1881-1899.

Rollos 82-84. *Ibid. Decretos*. 1877-1898.

Rollo 85. *Memorias del Sargento José María Montesinos*. Ms. 1866-1878.

Rollos 87, 88, 91. Various newspaper collections from Chiapas.

Rollo 96 & 97. San Cristóbal de las Casas. Chiapas. *Libro de Actas de la Cofradía del Santísimo Rosario*. Comitán. 1885. *Defunciones*. 1862-1900.

Rollo 98. *Archivo Parroquial*. Comitán. Chiapas. *Libro de Gobierno de la Parroquia*. 1873-1889.

Rollo 107. Tenejapa, Chiapas. *Archivo Parroquial. Circulares*. 1876-1889.

Serie Guadalajara

Rollo 97. *Colección particular de D. Ricardo Delgado. "Escritos relativos a la persona del Gral. D. Porfirio Díaz"*. Ms. Letter from Hilario Frías y Soto to Diputado Francisco Bulnes. 1903.

Rollo 103. *Colección de Acuerdos sobre Bienes de Indígenas y Fondos Legales*. T. iv. 1879.

Rollo 104. *Ibid*. T. vi. 1882. *Noticia Geográfica Estadística del Partido de Sánchez Román. Estado de Zacatecas al Cd. T. de la Cadena*. 1881. A few copies of Juan Panadero, a political weekly of Guadalajara. 1871. "Noticia Geográfica, Estadística y Administrativa del Partido de Juchipila formada por Juan I. Matute". 1885. Correspondence of Francisco del Paso y Troncoso.

Rollo 115 & 116. *Libro de patentes*. 1853-1925.

Rollo 117. *Apuntes para la Historia del Pueblo de Etzatlán*. Jalisco. By Apolinar Pérez Alonso.

Serie Guatemala, 3ª Serie

Taken from *Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional de México. Archivo Histórico, Estado de Chiapas.*

Rollo 3. Military and political documents of Chiapas, some pertaining to boundary problems with Guatemala. 1856-1885.

Serie Hidalgo

Rollos 7-9. Mostly newspapers from the state of Hidalgo. Some official documents in roll 7.

Serie León

Rollos 43-49. Mostly newspapers from the state of Nuevo León.

Rollos 54-57. Official documents of the state and other reports and manuscripts.

Serie Miscelánea

Rollo 16. *El Lapso más Tormentoso de la Dictadura porfirista.* By Jesús González Monroy. *El porfirismo y la oposición Cananca.* Typescript. Oct. 30, 1965, pp. 538.

Rollo 25. Correspondence of Rufino José Cuervo to Joaquín García Icazbalceta. 1885-1889.

Rollo 27. *Colección de Cuadros Sinópticos de los Pueblos, Haciendas y Ranchos del Estado Libre y Soberano de Oaxaca.* 1883.

Rollo 79. About 600 letters to Pbro. Fortino Hipólito Vera. 1870-1896.

Serie Monterrey

Rollo 1. *Inventarios de la documentación del Archivo Municipal de Monterrey.* 1860-1907.

Rollos 28-38. Newspapers of the day from Monterrey and other northern cities.

Rollos 42 & 43. *Índice del Archivo General del Edo. de Nuevo León.*

1866-1898. 1879-1923. Also: *Archivo del Gral. Francisco Naranjo*, from the *Fondo Alberto Naranjo* in the *Biblioteca Universitaria Alfonso Reyes*. Monterrey. Nuevo León. Letters from 1900-1907.

Rollos 44 & 45. *Ibid.* 1904.

Rollos 46-49. Newspapers.

Rollos 50-54. *Correspondencia del Lic. Genaro Garza García, Gobernador de Nuevo León*. 436 letters. 1865-1878.

Rollos 56-72. *Archivo Jerónimo Treviño*, from the *Biblioteca Universitaria Alfonso Reyes*. Letters from 1865-1872.

Serie Morelia

Rollo 3. Contains some official documents from Michoacán.

Rollos 13 & 14, 16-19. Michoacán newspapers.

Serie Relación de Conflicto Religioso

Rollo 1. *El Catolicismo social en México*. 1903-1911.

Serie San Juan Teotihuacán

Rollos 10-12, 16, 17, 22, 23. Baptisms. Marriages. Burials. 1857-1911.

Serie San Luis Potosí

Rollo 46. *La Unión Democrática*, official newspaper of the state. 1877. *Acta levantada por la guarnición de San Luis Potosí uniéndose al plan de regeneración política reclamada en Guadalajara*. 1876.

Rollo 53. *Archivo Municipal del Río Verde*. 1882. *Libro de Actas. Proyecto original del ferrocarril de Río Verde*. 1882. *Actas del Cabildo Río Verde*. 1876-1890. *Archivo del Juzgado de la primera instancia*.

Rollos 55 & 56. *El Estandarte*. Newspaper of San Luis Potosí. 1885-1893.

Serie Sonora

Rollo 1. *Leyes, Decretos y Reglamentos del Estado de Sonora*. 1884-1899.

Rollos 6-9, 11 & 12. *Documentos para la historia de Sonora, compilados por don Fernando Pesqueira*. 1869-1944.

Rollo 13. *La Estrella de Occidente*. Sonora newspaper.

Rollo 14. Materials concerning the Yaqui War.

Rollos 19 & 20. Materials concerning the Apache campaigns.

Rollo 25. Documents for the history of Sonora. 1857-1882.

Serie Yucatán

Rollo 33. *Archivo de Cabildo de la Ciudad de Mérida. Actas de la Junta patriótica de Mérida*. 1874-1877. *Acuerdos*. 1877-1879.

Rollos 34 & 35. *Copiadores de oficios del Ayuntamiento*. 1879-1882 & 1887. *Acuerdos*. 1880-1887 & 1891.

The second part of the *Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia* in the *Museo Nacional* of interest to porfirian domestic political history is the documentary archive. Here too, the emphasis lies in colonial history. Only a scattering of materials are of use to the historian of *porfirismo*. From the several collections catalogued in a crossindex card catalogue—including the *Colección Francisco Paso y Troncoso* and the *Colección García de Orozco*—only fifteen items useful to porfirian history emerged from 2,000 cards checked. Another collection merits more attention, the *Correspondencia del Archivo del Ejército de Oriente*. Numbered consecutively, it is composed of two parts, the *Archivo del General Porfirio Díaz*, and the *Archivo del Licenciado Justo Benítez*. The former is composed of 6,739 documents—letters to Porfirio Díaz, with a few *borradores* of outgoing letters, *oficios* and reports. The Justo Benítez collection (2,624 items, numbered 6719-9343) is essentially incoming letters during that period when Lic. Benítez was working for Porfirio Díaz and promoting his career. Both collections are more important for Reform and Intervention history than for the history of either the Restored Republic or the *Porfiriato*. Indeed, only some ten percent of those nearly 10,000 documents are useful for the *Porfiriato*, *per se*, and probably more than ninety percent of those pertain to the years 1876 and 1877. Nevertheless, the historian inter-

ested in the founding of the *Porfiriato* cannot afford to overlook this collection, particularly in view of the important political role played by Lic. Justo Benítez, comparable only to the latter role of Manuel Romero Rubio. A calendar exists for both the Díaz papers and the Benítez papers, giving the document number, the identification of the document (*carta, oficio, minuta, borrador, decreto*, etc.) the author of the document, the recipient and the date. Resumes are included only for manuscripts and odd materials other than the correspondence. Because the order of the documents is chronological only within each *legajo, paquete, sobre* and *carpeta*, and the calendars are included within each group, use of the collection requires opening each of the hundredodd packages. The collections may with time expand to include these.

The Documentary Archive of the University of the Americas (also *Archivo Documental de la Universidad de las Americas*) is a newly founded archive having as its purpose the preservation and cataloguing of documents and other research materials for the history of Mexico. Its major holding, and only holding at present for the political history of the *Porfiriato*, is the *Colección General Porfirio Díaz*, the private papers of Porfirio Díaz principally from 1876 to 1915. This is the collection which Dr. Alberto María Carreño began to publish in a selected and annotated form to 1880. (*Archivo del General Porfirio Díaz, memorias y documentos*. México: Editorial Elede, S. A. 30 vols., 1947-1961). On permanent loan to the University of the Americas from the Díaz family, the collection covers 109 meters of shelf space and contains 663,843 items of the following types: letters, almost entirely addressed to Porfirio Díaz, 500,699; telegrams, both incoming and outgoing, 161,275; *copiadores*, bound outgoing correspondence from Porfirio Díaz, 9,000 letters; pamphlets, newspapers, maps, reports, manuscripts and other bound materials, 858; and codes, principally used for telegraphic communications, 228. The entire collection is arranged chronologically, numbered, housed in 1,451 titled archive boxes, in seventy-two *legajos*. The collection is microfilmed—nearly one million frames—on 374 rolls of 16 mm film. The collection is of primary use for three kinds of studies, political history, Díaz family history, and economic history. Two archival tools have been developed for its use, first a 58 page published guide,¹⁸ which identifies the materials in each *legajo* and roll of microfilm by date and number, and which contains an alphabetical table of persons who used the codes; and a 60 page calendar of *legajo 42 Folletos y periódicos de la Colección General Porfirio Díaz* for internal work in the archive. The major tool

¹⁸ Laurens B. Perry, *Inventario y Guía de la Colección General Porfirio Díaz*, México, University of the Americas Press, 1969, 58 pp.

will be the name-place-subject catalogue, which is presently underway, after which the collection will be opened for historical investigation. It should perhaps be noted that there are approximately 10,000 documents covering the period which Carreño published —documents which he did not have— and an unknown number of items in the *Museo de Historia* on the *Plaza Carlos Pacheco* —documents which Carreño excluded from publication after appraising them. We may presume that most of those latter documents were so unimportant that no one will care to look at them, but some of them may be coded letters and telegrams for which codes exist in the *Colección General Porfirio Díaz*.

The *Archivo Histórico del Ex-Ayuntamiento de México*, located on the *Zócalo*, has a useful and well organized collection of materials. A fifty-two page typewritten guide describes the materials in two sections. The first section is for documents found on the ground floor, which are primarily *Actas de Cabildo* bound in 2,700 volumes in chronological order from 1524 to 1928. The seventy volumes numbered from 208 to 277 refer to the years 1876 to 1911, as well as the fourteen volumes, volumes 316 through 329, entitled *Actas de Cabildo — Originales de Sesiones Secretas*, and nineteen volumes, numbers 393-411, covering the period 1879-1899, *Actas de Cabildo*, *Índices*. Also on the ground floor are the following: #422, *Índice Alfabético-Cronológico*, 1878; # 514-626, *Actas de Cabildo Borradores*, 1876-1911; # 677-750, *Actas de Cabildo Libros Impresos*, 1879-1903; # 775-841, *Diario Oficial*, 1900-May, 1911; # 1052-1271, *Sub-Dirección de Ramos Municipales - Pólizas y Comprobantes de Ingresos - Egresos*, 1905-1912; #1272-1596, *Dirección General de Obras Públicas*, 1866-1923; and # 1597-2003, and 4660-4662, *Obras Públicas del Distrito Federal*, 1903-1914. The second section of the archive is arranged by subject in alphabetical order in 4,721 bound volumes found on the first, second and third floors of the *Ayuntamiento* building. The guide in the reading room will suffice to indicate to the investigator what subjects are to be found in this magnificent collection. Although this material will be more useful for social and economic history than for purely political history, the political implications of much of the materials will be recognized. The following partial listing will indicate the types of materials available for the *Porfiriato*: # 862-869, elections, 1820-1921; # 2272-2275, inundations, 1714-1903; # 2725-2728, *judiciales*, 1871-1919; # 2730-2737, *jurados criminales*, 1869-1880; # 3649, *incendios*, 1774-1886; # 3676 and 3678-3682, *salubridad-epidemias*, 1879-1915 and 1832-1892; # 4019, *teléfonos*, 1883-1905; # 4020, *telégrafos*, 1857-1916; # 4577-4579, *dirección de aguas*, 1898-1902; # 4586-4589, *actas impresas del cabildo*, 1879, 1880, 1894, 1903; # 4592, *censos*, 1838-1909. Other volumes of documents

pertain to vaccination, drainage, beautification, public instruction, slaughterhouses, theaters, parks, markets, etc.

Tantalizing in its potential is the new private archive of Condumex, S. A., under the able directorship of Sr. Juan Luis Mutiozabal V. de L. Called the *Centro de Estudios de Historia de México*, the collection contains both a 20,000 volume library on the history of Mexico, and a documentary archive of some quarter million documents. At present the archive contains materials for the colonial period, the national period to 1867 and the twentieth century after 1911. For the porfirian years the archive has only two research tools, a complete set of *Diario Oficial* and a complete collection of the newspaper *Hijo del Ahuizote*. Thus this archive does not at present hold private or official correspondence from the porfirian period. It is mentioned here to bring to the historian's attention the existence of an active and extremely well organized archive, which may in the future expand its holdings to rectify its lacunae, to mention the newspaper collection, and perhaps to save the porfirian historian valuable investigation time and effort.

III. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE INVESTIGATION

At regular intervals there appears the judgement that a more systematic approach be made to the study of Mexican history, replacing the hit and miss results of current practice.¹⁹ This inevitably means a preference for social, economic and intellectual history over political-military history. I dissent. Even while recognizing the short-term value of the results, I feel that historical investigation must remain the choice of individual scholars. The systematic approach implies a degree of compulsion with a simultaneous loss of intellectual satisfaction, which would be disastrous over the long run. I can do no better than quote the eminent Latin Americanist, France V. Scholes:

I hope that this Congress recognizes and will assert the right of the individual historian to pursue his labors in his own way and according to his own lights; the right freely to choose his own subject for investigation; the right not to be placed under pressure, direct or indirect, by any agency, private or governmental (including universities); the right to channel his investigations along lines for which funds may be available, without sacrificing research projects of his own preference or choice.²⁰

¹⁹ See, for example, the remarks attributed to C. Harvey Gardiner in Robert A. Naylor, "Research Opportunities: Mexico and Central America", *Americas*, 18 (March, 1962), p. 557.

²⁰ France V. Scholes, "Freedom for the Historian", *The New World Looks at its History: Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Historians of the United States and Mexico*, eds. Archibald R. Lewis and Thomas F. McGann

There are numerous biographical studies yet to be done. One merely need reflect upon the lack of biographical studies of such persons as Protasio Tagle, Justo Benítez, Carlos Pacheco, Luis Mier y Terán, the Baranda brothers, the Díez Gutiérrez brothers, Servando Canales, Felipe Berriozábal, Pablo Macedo, Ignacio Vallarta, to lament the efforts in this genre of historical investigation. Although biographical work has been done on some figures, for example Teodoro Dehesa, Luis Terrazas, Bernardo Reyes, Gerónimo Treviño, Ignacio Mariscal, Manuel Romero Rubio, José Ives Limantour, Ramón Corral, Enrique Creel, and Manuel González, there is still much more to do with these individuals. More has been done with intellectual figures like Ignacio Altamirano, Justo Sierra, Francisco Bulnes, Francisco Paso y Troncoso and Manuel Orozco y Berra than with purely political and military figures. Indeed, it may be said that there is to date no study of a single figure from the political history of the porfirian period, which is adequate by modern historical standards.

Not even Porfirio Díaz himself, whose biographies have formed a life of their own, has received a definitive study. The two best biographies are recent and should be given more attention than has yet been done, those by Jorge Fernando Iturrigarria and Ángel Taracena.²¹ Also an attractive study, from the point of view of philosophic positivism as applied biography, is the work of Agustín Aragón.²² These works will be the point of departure for future Díaz biographies, disregarding all others prior to them, with the exception of two or three still useful works, to be used with care.²³

A useful study yet to be done of an analytical rather than narrative nature is the study of backgrounds of the many governors, generals, senators, ministers, ambassadors, and deputies of the period. A tabu-

(Austin, University of Texas Press, 1963), pp. 173-183. Reprinted in Lewis Hanke, ed., *History of Latin American Civilization; Sources and Interpretations*, vol. II, Irvine: University of California, 1967, pp. 492-495.

²¹ Jorge Fernando Iturrigarria, *Porfirio Díaz ante la historia*, México (publisher not mentioned), 1967, and Ángel Taracena, *Porfirio Díaz*, México, Editorial Jus, from the series "Figuras y episodios de la historia de México", núm. 88, 1960. The three volumes by José C. Valadés, cited above, are not exactly biographical, but rank with the very best literature on the period.

²² Agustín Aragón, *Porfirio Díaz*, 2 vols., México, Editora Intercontinental, 1962.

²³ Francisco Bulnes *El Verdadero Díaz y la Revolución*, México, Eusebio Gómez de la Puente, Editor, 1920 is an *a la Tocqueville* analysis of *porfirismo* as *Ancién Regime*. Rafael de Zayas Enríquez (*Porfirio Díaz*, New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1908) is useful as a contemporary appraisal of political problems in the late *Porfiriato*. If a third standard may be named, the biography by Nemesio García Naranjo (*Porfirio Díaz*, San Antonio, Casa Editorial Lozano, 1930) is still influential and to be consulted, at least partially, because of the author's active opposition to the Madero government.

lation of the political and economic background of some two hundred of those figures would tell us a great deal about vested interests, of the "policy of conciliation" and of social mobility in the *Porfiriato*. The figures might be classified in one correlation as "Maximilian Conservatives", "Juarista Liberals", "Lerdo Liberals", "Iglesistas", "Tuxtepecanos", "Gonzalistas", and "New Porfiristas". In what proportions were they in inner circles of government in 1876? 1880? 1888? 1900? Did a significant number of them become *hacendados* during the period? Did they gain advantages by government concessions in banking, industry and commerce? To what extent were they related by blood ties, marriage and *compadrazgo*? A competent prosopographical study of this nature carrying over from the Reform Period to the *Porfiriato*, relating the early *Porfiriato* to the late *Porfiriato*, and ultimately tying in the late *Porfiriato* to the Revolutionary Period, would teach us a great deal about oligarchy, political dictatorship, and even about revolution.

Election studies, particularly on the local level, need to be written. The object should not only be to determine the degree of corruption and fraud, but also to understand local issues and local factions, how those issues and factional struggles were used for the benefit of the regime, and whether systematically or sporadically. Who voted, who were the opposition candidates, what were their connections with the ruling oligarchy and what did they do thereafter; these questions need answers and will have bearing on special interests and political stability. When returns of this kind of study are in, useful comparative studies can be made with other countries and with other periods of Mexican history, such as twentieth century Mexican revolutionary history.

Documents recently published in the Mexican press by Ángel Taracena concerning incidents of land distribution in the *Porfiriato*, attempts by Díaz to curb the rapacity of *hacendados* and examples of reprimanding cruelty to *hacienda* peons and communal Indians must be examined at length.²⁴ It is important to learn if the porfirian regime in the last years was losing *hacendado* support, as did the Spanish regime and the Maximilian regime in their last days.

An area of investigation urgently needing study is the process of government, its structure, its administration, its internal movement, the relationships between branches of government and between departments, the working of pressure groups, the formation of public opinion, and all the other concerns of the political scientist. That procedural practice did not reflect the constitution will make the study

²⁴ See, for example, Ángel Taracena, "Otra Carta de don Porfirio en defensa del campesino mexicano", *Sol de México*, 8 February 1969.

difficult. However, much material is already available in memoir literature, contemporary and later criticisms, and in proposals for reform. Thus the historian of governmental procedure need not start from scratch, but the material must be collected, organized, analyzed and supported with archival study. Perhaps the most certain beliefs we hold are only true for one phase of a continual evolutionary process. Perhaps we will be surprised by the similarities between porfirian governmental practices and those of former and more recent times.

A vital study for our understanding of the *Porfiriato*, one done by the legal historian, is the sifting and analyzing of court cases. The bald statement that the judiciary was used to reward the supporters of the regime and was completely dominated by the president of the nation must be authenticated or modified by careful investigations. The ramifications of such a study will only be known once the project is underway, but may be great indeed.

These are some of the areas which occur to me. Every historian will be able to think of others, perhaps parallel to studies done for other times and places. Frequently these investigations are of even greater value in comparative studies. Again I suggest that the most interesting comparative studies might be between porfirian and Revolutionary Mexico, but comparative studies with other contemporaneous societies would do a great deal to place the *Porfiriato* in perspective.