

Garcia-Bryce, Inigo L.: *Crafting the Republic. Lima's Artisans and Nation Building in Peru, 1821-1879*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press 2004. ISBN: 0-8263-3392-3; 220 S.

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This book on urban Lima during some critical decades of the nineteenth century represents another study that concentrates on the development of civic society, political culture, and nation building in early-republican Peru. With his focus on artisans as part of a middle sector of the urban society, Garcia-Bryce presents a valuable addition to the chain of books published in recent years.¹ The author describes the transformation Lima artisans experienced from the late-colonial period, when they were organized in guilds and – at least more affluent masters – had a thorough corporate social identity, to political players of the second half of the nineteenth century, who had adapted to republican principles and the liberal discourse. The presentation of this process of political and social transformation is not entirely new, but the author does an excellent job in applying recently developed theoretical considerations and his own research on the racially and economically rather diverse artisan sector of a major Latin American city. According to Garcia-Bryce by the 1870s Lima artisans were organized in numerous mutual-aid-societies and political associations, which made them a key political player of the urban society.

Traditionally labour historians paid little attention to artisans, and even less to master craftsmen. For them labour history began only with industrialization and the emergence of trade unions and it was closely linked to class struggle. This book does not only bridge the period between the times of pre-industrial urban artisan production and the 1870s when the industrial age emerged gradually in Latin America, it also makes a major contribution by linking labour history to more recent trends in political and social history (emphasis on nation building, civil society, forms of political participation, etc.) and by turning artisans into influential political players of

post-colonial Latin American cities. Garcia-Bryce argues that artisans actively and forcefully adapted to post-colonial republican rule and even to the liberal discourse that gained strength in the early 1850s. Artisans did not only manage to adapt to political and economic change, partially due to their organizational strength, they turned into a powerful force in the political arena of Lima. For Garcia-Bryce Lima artisans show, how significant were what he calls „urban middle sectors“ for the process of nineteenth-century nation building in Peru.

Chapter one of this study concentrates on Lima artisans during the late-colonial period, when they were organized in guilds and brotherhoods. At that time the Bourbon Reforms brought more state control over their organizations and a first light wave of liberal threats to their corporate identity. Guilds did not disappear with Independence. As shown in chapter two, guilds lose their political and economic significance only gradually and somewhat parallel to artisans' unsuccessful protectionist demands. The first three decades of the Republican period were particularly difficult for craftsmen, because the process of leaving behind corporate ideas and coming to terms with the liberal discourse of the 1850s meant a major challenge to them. The book demonstrates this transition and shows how craftsmen learnt to address Congress and to appeal to public opinion. Craftsmen understood that at the peak of the guano boom, simple protectionist demands would hardly find open ears in Lima.

In chapter three and four – in my view the key chapters of this study – the author tra-

¹ Among others I should mention: Mc Evoy, Carmen, *La Utopía Republicana. Ideales y Realidades en la Formación de la Cultura Política Peruana (1871 – 1919)*, Lima 1997; Thurner, Mark, *From Two Republics to One Divided. Contradictions of Postcolonial Nationmaking in Andean Peru*, Durham 1997; Parker, David, *The Idea of the Middle Class. White Collar Workers and Peruvian Society, 1900-1950*, University Park 1998; Chambers, Sarah C., *From Subjects to Citizens. Honor, Gender, and Politics in Arqueipa, Peru 1780 – 1854*, University Park 1999; Walker, Charles F., *Smoldering Ashes. Cuzco and the Creation of Republican Peru*, Durham 1999; de Losada, Cristóbal Aljovín, *Caudillos y Constituciones. Peru 1821 – 1845*, Lima 2000, and Mücke, Ulrich, *Political Culture in Nineteenth-century Peru. The Rise of the Partido Civil*, Pittsburgh 2004.

ces very nicely the transition of artisans into respectable citizens particularly since the 1850s. He argues that the liberal notion of turning the popular sector into productive workers and responsible citizens coincided with the artisans' demand for government support and access to education. For that reason politicians did not only establish trade schools, they even organized national trade exhibitions, of which artisans eagerly took advantage to demonstrate their skills and to underpin their respectability. Politicians were aware of artisans' important role as supporters and craftsmen knew how to take advantage of that power. Since the 1860s mainly master artisans were organized in mutual aid societies, which served as a place to strengthen their common identity and as their platform of public representation at the same time. Still, artisan societies did only represent a certain part of the entire artisans' sector. Poor craftsmen and journeymen clearly drifted towards the emerging working class. In the fifth chapter the author addresses the issue of Lima artisans and social class. He argues that during the 1870s the artisans' press starts to define artisans as part of the working class. However, this class is by no means revolutionary. On the contrary, artisans carefully avoid to create any sort of social conflict, instead they portrayed themselves as being prepared to contribute to the education of the plebeian sector and to the progress of the Peruvian nation.

Garcia-Bryce presents a thorough study which is solidly based on archival evidence and on clearly stated theoretical considerations. It is perfectly comprehensible and justified to finish this study in 1879 with the War of the Pacific. The author succeeds in presenting Lima artisans as important political players particularly of the second half of the nineteenth century. The result of his research is that in fact he does not only present the history of Lima artisans, instead he gives excellent insights into the urban political culture of the Peruvian capital. However, in a sense, it leaves the reader with a number of questions: What happens to the respectable artisans of Lima during the early-twentieth century? Do they turn into entrepreneurs? Do they maintain their level of respectability? Perhaps a future book will answer these questions and

continue where Garcia-Bryce left us with his study.

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