

História geral da civilização brasileira. Vol. II: *O Brasil monárquico.* Part 2: *Dispersão e unidade.* Edited by SÉRGIO BUARQUE DE HOLANDA. São Paulo, 1964. Difusão Européia do Livro. Illustrations. Pp. 549.

This is a fourth volume in the series begun in 1960 by the Paulista publisher, Paul Jean Monteil, who has also sponsored Portuguese translations of the *Histoire générale des civilisations* and the *Histoire générale des sciences*, and who has produced a notable collection of social science monographs called "Corpo e Alma do Brasil."

The general plan of the *História geral*, as conceived by Buarque de Holanda, is that of a broadly synthetic cultural history that would include economic, social, and intellectual material and would avoid rigid periodization. The editor foresaw considerable diversity in methods and interpretation among the contributors, since he intended to find the most knowledgeable historians for each chapter, regardless of their outlooks. The result of his eclectic direction has been a generally superior collection of historical essays, but in point of fact most of the contributors have been Paulistas. Twenty-seven of the thirty-five contributors to the first three volumes are from São Paulo, and all but six of these were social scientists from the University of São Paulo.

Most of the best chapters were written by these academically trained scholars. But with this latest volume, covering the years 1831 to 1848, the inadequate attention to the north and northeast becomes more evident, because it has been organized by provinces. The essays contributed by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda on São Paulo, Fernando Henrique Cardoso on the southern provinces, and Francisco Iglêsias on Minas are the best in the book. They are well organized and analytical and conform to the concept of a history combining economic and social factors.

On the other hand, less analysis is evident in the remaining sections. The chapters on Maranhão and Grão Pará, for example, are narrations in stupefying detail of political factionalism, with little regard for its dynamics and no consideration at all of nonpolitical forces. The introductory and concluding chapters are also disappointing. The fragmentary provincial histories call for a summary or introduction to bind them together and demonstrate the *unidade* of the subtitle. Instead, the first and last sections are consumed by minute descriptions of court intrigue and party politics.

Nevertheless, the series as a whole is an important contribution to the historical literature of Latin America, and should be included in even the most limited collection devoted to the area. At the end of each volume are a subject index and an extensive bibliography. Difusão Européia has kept the earlier volumes in print.

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The Hispanic American Historical
Review, 47(2):299-300, maio 1967.