Indian Freedom: The Cause of Bartolomé de Las Casas, 1484–1566, A Reader. Translated and annotated by FRANCIS PATRICK SULLIVAN, S.J. Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1995. Glossary. Indexes. 371 pp. Paper. $24.95.

Francis Patrick Sullivan, a Jesuit theologian at Boston College, has previously written about Bartolomé de Las Casas and compiled editions of a couple of his works. In this reader, he offers a number of generally short selections from Las Casas' writings, many of them drawn from the *History of the Indies*. His purpose is to illustrate the acclaimed Dominican's consistent sponsorship of Indian rights and freedom against the demands of the Spanish colonists, and sometimes against the government and the church.

The author's introduction amounts to a brief overview of Las Casas' life and preoccupations. It is reliable but unexceptional. Each selection is prefaced only by a short "prenote," which does little to set the context. And this void constitutes a substantial deficiency. Sullivan does not provide any historical framework for the understanding of Las Casas' views. The reader who does not already know a great deal about the early colonial period and the issues at play will learn little about them from this collection. When this lack is combined with the tendentiousness of Las Casas' writings, especially as presented here, the compilation fails as a possible reader for history students.

Indeed, one must wonder what the intended readership of this collection is. Scholars knowledgeable about "the Spanish struggle for justice" will find nothing fresh here. As noted, the choice of selections and the scant scholarly apparatus make this volume inappropriate for students in the social sciences or humanities. Its best use, it would seem, is for students of religion and theology who wish to gain a rapid and reliable exposure to Las Casas' perspectives on the inherent nature of the Native American peoples, the ravages of (some) early Spanish colonization, and the possible avenues of peaceful conversion of the indigenous peoples.

JOHN E. KICZA, Washington State University

Un rostro encubierto: los indios del Tabasco colonial. By MARIO HUMBERTO RUZ. Mexico City: CIESAS, 1994. Photographs. Illustrations. Maps. Graphs. Tables. Glossary. Bibliography. 352 pp. Paper.

The southeastern Mexican state of Tabasco has been neglected by historians of both Mexico and its indigenous peoples. It is not hard to fathom why. Although Tabasco played a central role in precontact Mesoamerica as a cacao producer and a link in lucrative trade networks, the native population plummeted and the area withered soon after the Spanish conquest. The survivors struggled with the few Spaniards attracted to this impoverished backwater and with a growing mixed-race population. As the title of this study suggests, the Indian face of Tabasco was masked in the process of mestizaje. Mario Humberto Ruz thus takes on a twofold challenge: to recover both the lost history of Tabasco and that of its native peoples.

Ruz has written a competent and often rich survey of colonial Tabasco, drawing on secondary sources, chronicles, and primary research, mainly in the Archivo General de Indias and the Archivo General de la Nación. An array of illustrations, graphics, and maps will help readers unfamiliar with Tabasco's unique landscapes, flora, and fauna. An appendix of 16 documents from across the colonial period caps this handsome volume.

Yet as a study of indigenous Tabasco, this book can be frustrating. Ruz says little about precontact culture in the region. An apparent paucity of sources by and about native Tabasqueños places limits on the entire book. (The rapid decline of the native population—94 percent in 56 years—may explain this.) Ruz tells a story of three centuries of native exploitation as related less by the Indians and more by their colonial lords. Each chapter details how Spanish officials, priests, and vecinos maneuvered to control Indian labor and land, especially the cacao orchards. At times, Ruz points out strategies and episodes of native resistance, such as flight, rebellion, or noncooperation; but this reviewer was surprised by how much the Indians used the Spanish judicial system to protect themselves, given their relative isolation from centers of colonial power.

Ruz stresses the importance of race mixture in Tabasco, warning that no study of its Indians can ignore the growing non-Indian population (p. 96). By 1794, Africans and Afro-Indians comprised 33 percent of Tabasco's population (p. 211). Even rural Indians had to contend with numerous Spanish and other non-Indian neighbors. Ruz's emphasis is well placed, but he seldom documents the day-to-day meanings of the racial coexistence that so typified Tabasco. In the end, this book reads best as an introduction to colonial Tabasco and less well for what it says about the region's Indian past.

Ethnohistorians will appreciate an exceptional document in the appendix. In 1541, the Indian Coatle was charged with murdering a Spaniard and stirring up native resistance. The resultant testimonies intimately show Indian culture in flux (pp. 287–99). One wishes that more of the book revealed so much about change in the colonial Indian world.

DEBORAH KANTER, Albion College

The Caddo Indians: Tribes at the Convergence of Empires, 1542–1854. By F. TODD SMITH. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 229 pp. Cloth. $24.50.

This aptly titled and richly detailed narrative works remarkably well as a case study. Although the number of Caddos thinned and groups amalgamated, Todd Smith deftly orchestrates all three multitribe Caddo confederacies—Hasinai, Natchitoches, and Kadohadacho—and their intricate dances with the Spaniards, French, and Anglo-Americans. Yet all the while, he keeps the spotlight on the Caddos, providing just enough background but refusing to be drawn too far offstage into European diplomacy, Franciscan geopolitics, or west bank Mississippi Valley intrigues.