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Christina Bueno. *The Pursuit of Ruins: Archaeology, History, and the Making of Modern Mexico.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2016. 280 pp. $29.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8263-5732-8.

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Commissioned by Casey M. Lurtz (Johns Hopkins University)

Christina Bueno's book is a fascinating exploration of how remnants of the pre-Hispanic past were transformed into patrimonial and "Mexican" objects during the Porfiriato. More specifically, Bueno examines the role that Porfirian archaeology played in the larger process of late nineteenth-century nation-building by considering how the Díaz regime brought ancient objects under state control both legally, by strengthening federal legislation and establishing the first agency dedicated to their protection, and more concretely, by concentrating collections of ancient objects in the capital's museum, sponsoring the reconstruction of pyramids, and placing guards at such sites. Bueno argues that the Porfirian elite "did not simply uncover the past, but constructed it" by piecing the past together "a stone at a time" (p. 213). She concludes that this process of construction, which continued and escalated during the post-revolution, was, however, "full of contradiction" (p. 13) because the veneration of the ancient indigenous past existed side by side with the disdain for the contemporary indigenous population.

The Pursuit of Ruins is a strong contribution to the established body of works on nineteenth-century nationalism, which considers the ways in which the pre-Columbian era was incorporated into national history. It complements Rebecca Earle's *The Return of the Native* (2007), Miruna Achim's *From Idols to Antiquity* (2017), Shelley Garrigan's *Collecting Mexico* (2012), as well as Mauricio Tenorio's *Mexico at the Word's Fairs* (1996). Not unlike these scholars, Bueno delves into the *indigenismo* of the Porfiriato by focusing not only on the ideas constituting the imagination of the intellectual political elite, locals, and foreigners—a subject Bueno covers broadly in part 1—but also on the actual, practical work through which the remains of the pre-Hispanic past were protected, collected, showcased, and reconstructed by Mexico's "patriotic archaeology" (p. 71)—the subject of the rest of the book. Part 2 focuses on the institutions and legal framework in which state archaeologists operated. Here, we are introduced to the main character of the book, Leopoldo Batres, head of the Inspectorate of Monuments, the agency responsible for protecting the remains of the ancient past. Part 3, a particularly strong section of the book, follows Batres's efforts to protect, inspect, centralize, and showcase archaeological patrimony. The section begins with his efforts to establish a network of guards in prominent sites, from Xochicalco to Chichen-Itza and Mitla to Tajín. It then moves to elucidate how he supervised and interfered with excavation projects being undertaken by researchers in the Valley of Mexico, Oaxaca, as well as the Yucatán Peninsula.

Next, Bueno follows Batres as he works to transfer pre-Hispanic artifacts from Teotihuacan, Tepoztlan, and Tetlama to Mexico's National Museum. Finally, she examines his attempts to reconstruct the Pyramid of the Sun in Teotihuacan.

Each of these chapters works as an independent essay, but they are nicely woven together through a discussion of Batres's various aspirations and antagonisms. Nevertheless, a similar problem as that which bears upon Batres's project is evident in the book. Not unlike Batres's ***Archaeological Map of the Republic***—where he sought to plot all of Mexico's major ruins—***The Pursuit of Ruins*** attempts to cover a vast territory, with material spreading from one end of the country to another. Given the richness of the material that Bueno was able to recover from central Mexico, it is worth considering whether the book could have benefited from a tighter regional focus and a different kind of depth. At its core, though, ***The Pursuit of Ruins*** presents a careful and original reading of archaeological and museum records. This will make the book particularly rewarding for scholars of the Porfiriato as well as those studying postrevolutionary Mexico. In fact, one of the central insights of this book is the reassessment of Batres's contribution to Mexican archaeology as well as the enduring legacy of the exclusionary institutional framework he laid down. This framework, within which the state would take possession of pre-Hispanic ruins, is still in place today. In terms of the creation of Mexico's ancient patrimony, Bueno concludes, the Mexican Revolution brought more continuity than change.