

First Impressions: Henry George Ward's *Mexico in 1827*

WILL FOWLER*

Abstract. Henry George Ward's *Mexico in 1827* (published in 1828) is one of the most exhaustive accounts of Mexico and its mining activities in the years following its independence from Spain. Written with a meticulous attention to detail, it provided a unique first-hand interpretation both of Mexico's early governments' achievements and of the not insignificant problems they had as yet to overcome. It highlighted the risks and opportunities Mexico presented to potential British investors and emphasised the benefits of free trade, the need for patience, and how important it was to become meaningfully acquainted with the country before investing in one or several ventures there. This study provides for the first time an analysis of Ward's two-volume survey-cum-travelogue. It shows how Ward's cautiously optimistic appraisal faithfully reflected the short-lived hopes of Guadalupe Victoria's 1824–9 government and provides a sympathetic account of the young republic that would prove anything but common in subsequent British representations of Mexico, as the country's inability to service the London debt and its ensuing instability went on to hinder British–Mexican relations for the greater part of the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Henry George Ward, 'Mexico in 1827', independent Mexico, British–Mexican relations, travel writing

Introduction

This essay is concerned with how an early British account of independent Mexico depicted the country. Ward's *Mexico in 1827* was the first serious and in-depth British-oriented travelogue of Mexico following its independence from Spain.¹ Made up of six books of well over 1,000 pages with supporting

Will Fowler is professor of Latin American Studies at the University of St Andrews. Email: wmf1@st-andrews.ac.uk

* A preliminary version of this article was presented as a paper at the International Conference: 'Mexico and the United Kingdom: Past and Present Perspectives', held at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, 23–5 October 2015 as part of the 2015 Mexico–UK Dual Year. I thank Paul Garner and Alan Knight for their comments and questions at the time. I am also extremely grateful to Matthew Brown and the three anonymous readers who went on to read different subsequent drafts of the essay for their insights and suggestions.

¹ Henry George Ward, *Mexico in 1827* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), 2 vols. Other early British travelogues include Captain Basil Hall, *Extracts from a Journal Written on the*

appendices, it remains to this day one of the most meticulously researched, balanced and detailed accounts of early republican Mexico, comparable in depth, extension and perceptive insights to Alexander von Humboldt's seminal *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain*.² The impact *Mexico in 1827* had on British perceptions of Mexico at the time cannot be overstated,³ and what it tells us about Ward's and, by inference, British, interests in Mexico, offers an invaluable source when attempting to understand the nature and origins of British–Mexican relations. Having said this, although Ward's work has been translated into Spanish and published in Mexico in both abridged and complete versions, to date there is as yet no single study on the work and its representation of 1820s Mexico.⁴ One can but speculate as to why this might be the case, although it could be argued that it is symptomatic of the manner in which the history of British–Mexican relations has

Coasts of Chili, Peru and Mexico in the Years 1820, 1821 and 1822 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Co., 1824), 2 vols.; William Bullock, *Six Months' Residence and Travels in Mexico: Containing Remarks on the Present State of New Spain, its Natural Productions, State of Society, Manufactures, Trade, Agriculture, and Antiquities, & c.* (London: John Murray, 1824); Anonymous, *A Sketch of the Customs and Society of Mexico in a Series of Familiar Letters and a Journal of Travel in the Interior during the Years 1824, 1825 and 1826* (London: Longmans & Co., 1828); Mark Beaufoy, *Mexican Illustrations* (London: Carpenter & Son, 1828); George F. Lyon, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the Republic of Mexico in the Year 1826: With Some Account of the Mines of that Country* (London: John Murray, 1828), 2 vols.; and Lt R. W. H. Hardy RN, *Travels in the Interior of Mexico in 1825, 1826, 1827 and 1828* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1829). None of these was as substantial or detailed as Ward's work. For recent studies on nineteenth-century European depictions of Veracruz specifically and Latin America more generally see Alfred H. Siemens, *Between the Summit and the Sea: Central Veracruz in the Nineteenth Century* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), Desmond Gregory, *Brute New World: The Rediscovery of Latin America in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London: British Academic Press, 1992) and Adriana Méndez Rodenas, *Transatlantic Travels in Nineteenth-Century Latin America. European Women Pilgrims* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2013).

² Alexander von Humboldt, *Essai politique sur le royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne avec un atlas physique et géographique, fondé sur des observations astronomiques, des mesures trigonométriques et des nivellements barométriques* (Paris: F. Schoell, 1811–12).

³ For three enthusiastic reviews Ward's *Mexico in 1827* received at the time, see: *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, issues 23 (July 1828), pp. 45–53, and 27 (September 1829), pp. 386–7; and the *Westminster Review*, vol. 9 (April 1828), pp. 480–500. In the subsequent historiography, Ward has been repeatedly attributed with the original success of British–Mexican relations. As an example, Henry Bamford Parkes was convinced that 'for the success of the British economic penetration [...] Ward was largely responsible'. See Henry Bamford Parkes, *A History of Mexico* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962 [first published: 1938]), p. 163.

⁴ See Ricardo Haas' translation of the complete work: H. G. Ward, *México en 1827* (México, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995 [first published: 1981]). For the abridged version of his translation see: Henry George Ward, *México en 1827. Selección* (México, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica/ Colección Lecturas Mexicanas, 1985).

eschewed academic interest. There is as yet no monograph dedicated to the subject.⁵

The books that have focused on British–Mexican relations are few and have typically concentrated on the British 1824–5 loans and the so-called ‘London debt’ that these resulted in, one which the Mexican government was unable to repay in full until 62 years later in 1886.⁶ There have been a couple of studies written about Britain’s silver mining ventures and the Cornish mining community that became established in Pachuca.⁷ Two British entrepreneurs whose economic activities took them to Mexico have also recently merited biographies, namely William Bullock and Weetman Pearson.⁸ There is one monograph dedicated to Britain’s recognition of Mexican independence,⁹ and British consular activities have elicited a handful of studies.¹⁰ But that

⁵ For Britain and Latin America see D. C. M. Platt, *Latin America and British Trade 1806–1914* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1972); Rory Miller, *Britain and Latin America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London and New York: Longman, 1993); and Matthew Brown (ed.), *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce, and Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell/Society for Latin American Studies, 2008). Also worthy of note is Alan Knight, ‘Britain and Latin America’, in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 3: *The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 123–44. For Britain and Spanish America before independence, see Adrian J. Pearce, *British Trade with Spanish America, 1763–1808* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007). However, there is no study dedicated exclusively to the history of British–Mexican relations.

⁶ For studies on how the British loans affected Mexico, see (in chronological order): Jan Bazant, *Historia de la deuda exterior de México (1823–1946)* (México, DF: El Colegio de México, 1968); Barbara Tenenbaum, *The Politics of Penury. Debts and Taxes in Mexico, 1821–1856* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1986); José Zaragoza, *Historia de la deuda externa de México, 1823–1861* (México, DF: Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas-UNAM, 1996); Leonor Ludlow and Carlos Marichal (eds.), *Un siglo de deuda pública en México* (México, DF: Instituto Mora, 1998); and Silvestre Villegas Revueltas, *Deuda y diplomacia. La relación México–Gran Bretaña, 1824–1884* (México, DF: UNAM, 2005). For two studies that focus on the British investors’ perspective, see by Michael P. Costeloe, *Bonds and Bondholders: British Investors and Mexico’s Foreign Debt, 1824–1888* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), and *Bubbles and Bonanzas: British Investors and Investments in Mexico, 1824–1860* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011).

⁷ For studies on British mining ventures in Mexico, see Robert W. Randall, *Real del Monte. A British Mining Venture in Mexico* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1972), and A. C. Todd, *The Search for Silver. Cornish Miners in Mexico, 1824–1947* (Padstow: The Lodenek Press, 1977). For a history of mining in the state of Mexico in the middle years of the nineteenth century, see Anne Staples, *Bonanzas y borrascas mineras: El estado de México, 1821–1876* (Toluca: El Colegio Mexiquense, 1994).

⁸ See Michael P. Costeloe, *William Bullock: Connoisseur and Virtuoso of the Egyptian Hall. Piccadilly to Mexico (1773–1849)* (Bristol: HiPLAM, 2008) and Paul Garner, *British Lions and Mexican Eagles: Business, Politics, and Empire in the Career of Weetman Pearson in Mexico, 1839–1919* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁹ Henry McKenzie Johnston, *Missions to Mexico. A Tale of British Diplomacy in the 1820s* (London and New York: British Academic Press, 1992).

¹⁰ Will Fowler, ‘Joseph Welsh: A British Santanista (Mexico, 1832)’, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 36: 1 (2004), pp. 29–56; John Mayo, *Commerce and Contraband on Mexico’s West Coast in the Era of Barron, Forbes & Co., 1821–1859* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006); Michael

is all. Compared to the history of Mexican–US relations or Mexican–Spanish relations, that of Mexico and Britain has been relatively neglected.¹¹

This is unfortunate when one considers the influence British commerce, foreign policy and ideas had in the region. Britain played a crucial role in endorsing Mexico's independence from Spain. British investors, moreover, played a major part, albeit not entirely successful or without controversy, in shaping the development of the Mexican economy in the nineteenth century. Between 1824 and 1825 British people invested as much as £10 million in Mexico (i.e. £700 million in current value).¹² At the time of Ward's second Mexican mission there were seven British silver mines up and running¹³ and although by 1850 only one would still be in business, and notwithstanding the resounding failure of these companies, they would set the foundations for the profitable mining ventures of the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ The manner in which Mexico was led to develop an export economy based on primary goods may be attributed in part to the dominance of British manufactured goods in the context of Mexican imports. The writings of British thinkers such as Edmund Burke, alongside those of their French counterparts, clearly permeated early Mexican political thought.¹⁵ The 1861 Tripartite European convention that led to the French Intervention in Mexico (1862–7) started in London. In addition, British

P. Costeloe, 'The British and an Early *Pronunciamento*, 1833–1834', in Will Fowler (ed.), *Forceful Negotiations. The Origins of the Pronunciamento in Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), pp. 125–42.

¹¹ To note but a selection of relevant titles: Josefina Zoraida Vázquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *México frente a Estados Unidos: Un ensayo histórico 1776–1988* (México, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1989); Jaime E. Rodríguez O. and Kathryn Vincent (eds.), *Myths, Misdeeds, and Misunderstandings. The Roots of Conflict in U.S.–Mexican Relations* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1997); Marcela Terrazas y Basante and Gerardo Gurza Laval, *Las relaciones México–Estados Unidos 1756–2010*, vol. 1: *Imperios, repúblicas y pueblos en pugna por el territorio, 1756–1867* (México, DF: UNAM, 2012); Paolo Riguzzi and Patricia de los Ríos, *Las relaciones México–Estados Unidos 1756–2010*, vol. 2: *¿Destino no manifiesto? 1867–2010* (México, DF: UNAM, 2012); Jaime Delgado, *España y México en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1950–3); Antonia Pi-Suñer Llorens and Agustín Sánchez Andrés, *Una historia de encuentros y desencuentros. México y España en el siglo XIX* (México, DF: SRE, 2001).

¹² Costeloe, *Bubbles and Bonanzas*, p. ix.

¹³ These were the Anglo-Mexicano, Bolaños, Guanajuato, Mexican, Real del Monte, Tlalpujahua and United Mexican British-owned mining companies. As noted below, Ward's first mission took place in 1823–4 when he accompanied Lionel Charles Hervey as Second Commissioner.

¹⁴ Randall, *Real del Monte*, pp. 213–19.

¹⁵ José Antonio Aguilar Rivera, *Ausentes del universo. Reflexiones sobre el pensamiento político hispanoamericano en la era de la construcción nacional, 1821–1850* (México, DF: FCE, 2012), pp. 203–9. For a discussion of the influence French thinkers had on Mexican political thought, see Charles A. Hale, *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora, 1821–1853* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 49–64.

engineers were prominent in bringing about Porfirio Díaz's railway revolution, which saw rail tracks increase from 5,731 km in 1884 to 27,280 km by 1910. The origins of arguably Mexico's favourite present-day national sport – football – can be traced back to the role played by the Cornish miners' Pachuca Athletic Club in laying the foundation of the Liga Mexicana de Fútbol in 1902. Although British influence in Mexico became less obvious in the twentieth century, in particular following the outbreak of the First World War,¹⁶ and was never, even in its heyday, as overbearing or hostile as that of Spain, France or the United States, it was still relevant.

Given that Henry George Ward's *Mexico in 1827* was the first attempt to provide an exhaustive study of Mexico by an English diplomat it is important that we understand the manner in which it presented Mexico. That it avoided the derogatory critical vision of so many subsequent British representations of Mexico is in itself worthy of note and merits consideration.¹⁷ Written following the dramatic crash of the 1823–6 London stock market bubble, Ward's account did not present Mexico as a speculators' El Dorado either.¹⁸ With a handful of exceptions, most subsequent British travelogues of Mexico would not come close to offering such a balanced account, and would, in fact, prove consistently critical of the country, depicting it in terms of filth, defilement and immorality. British travel writing about Mexico went on to dwell on the country's violence and banditry, its lawlessness and corruption, typically depicting its people as semi-barbarous against a backdrop of sombreros, *pistolas*, burros, cactus, pyramids, churches, cruelty to animals, disease, heat, *pulque* or *mezcal*-fuelled fiestas and futile sanguinary revolutions.¹⁹

Ward's *Mexico in 1827* avoided such a stance. As noted in the preface to the first volume, it 'was [Ward's] anxious wish to promote ... [a] good understanding between Great Britain and Mexico'.²⁰ Thinking ahead to the manner in which Mexico would come to be commonly represented in British travelogues, Ward's more open-minded and sympathetic account

¹⁶ Lorenzo Meyer, *Su Majestad Británica contra la Revolución Mexicana, 1900–1950. El fin de un imperio informal* (México, DF: El Colegio de México, 1991).

¹⁷ As reported by Desmond Gregory, most nineteenth-century British travellers were ultimately disappointed with Latin America, depicting the region in terms of 'universal strife, jealousy, hatred, rivalry and fraud, corruption in official circles, xenophobia, religious prejudice, filthiness and destitution, brutality and rudeness of manner': see his *Brute New World*, p. 183.

¹⁸ Between 1823 and 1826 close to 700 new Latin American-based companies were created, with shares reaching the astronomical total value of £372 million. These collapsed dramatically in 1826 (only 127 of these 700 enterprises survived). Costeloe, 'The British and an Early *Pronunciamiento*', pp. 125–8.

¹⁹ See Will Fowler, "'As Empty a Piece of Gasconading Stuff as I Ever Read": The *Pronunciamiento* through Foreign Eyes', in Will Fowler (ed.), *Celebrating Insurrection. The Commemoration and Representation of the Nineteenth-Century Mexican Pronunciamiento* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), pp. 247–72.

²⁰ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 1, p. xvi.

deserves to be studied since it evidences a brief, albeit crucial time, when Britain's first impressions of independent Mexico, as represented by Ward, were characterised by goodwill and a search for mutual benefits and understanding.

Following a brief biography of Ward and a concise summary of Mexico's historical context between 1823 and 1827, the remainder of this article is dedicated to analysing the work itself and its cautiously optimistic interpretation.

Henry George Ward and the Early Years of the First Federal Republic

Henry George Ward was one of Britain's first diplomats to visit Mexico following the country's independence from Spain in 1821. Born in London on 27 February 1797, the son of MP and best-selling political writer and novelist Robert Plumer Ward,²¹ he was a bright, self-assured, enthusiastic 26-year-old when he first went to Mexico in an official capacity in October 1823. At the time of his first mission to Mexico, he had already had seven years' experience in the diplomatic corps, having served in the British legations in Stockholm (1816–18), The Hague (1818) and Madrid (1819–23). A gifted, congenial linguist, educated at Harrow, he was to undertake two crucial missions in Mexico, the first in 1823–4 and the second in 1825–7. Thereafter he was forced to leave the diplomatic corps as a result of financial profligacy and went on to pursue a long and eventful career in British politics, eventually becoming a colonial governor. For two decades he proved himself a committed moderate Radical MP, representing first St Albans (1832–7) and later Sheffield (1837–49) in the House of Commons, serving as Secretary to the Admiralty in 1846. He was subsequently Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands (1849–55), where he had to deal with a major rebellion in Cephalonia, Governor of Ceylon (1855–60), where he dispatched all of his British troops to Bengal during the 1857 Great Indian Mutiny, and finally Governor of Madras (1860), where he died of cholera on 2 August, having been there for less than a month. He was tall, an engaging orator, a keen swordsman, and of a particularly lively and energetic disposition. He was also a *bon viveur*, which may account for the fact that he could be notoriously extravagant with his finances, something which would lead, in part, to George Canning's decision to recall him from Mexico in 1827 on the grounds that in one year alone he

²¹ Robert Plumer Ward (1765–1846) authored the novels *Tremaine; or, The Man of Refinement* (London: Henry Colburn, 1825); *Devere; or, The Man of Independence* (London: Henry Colburn, 1827); and *De Clifford; or, The Constant Man* (London: Henry Colburn, 1841). He also published a number of political and juridical treatises such as *An Enquiry into the Manner in which the Different Wars in Europe Have Commenced, during the Last Two Centuries: to which are Added the Authorities upon the Nature of a Modern Declaration, by the Author of The History and Foundation of the Law of Nations in Europe* (London: J. Butterworth and J. Stockdale, 1805) and *Thoughts on Purity of Election by a Member of Parliament* (London: J. Olivier, 1842).

had spent more than the British embassies in Paris, Vienna and St Petersburg put together.²² From his writings it is possible to discern he had a keen eye for detail, shared an adventurous spirit with his feisty artist wife Em (Emily Elizabeth Ward, née Swinburne, 1798–1882),²³ thoroughly enjoyed hunting and the open air, and had a clear and strong sense of duty.

At the time of Ward's two trips to Mexico, the country was going through a period of marked hope and great expectations. Having consummated its independence from Spain in 1821 after an eleven-year-long civil war, and witnessed the rise and fall of liberator Agustín de Iturbide, whose monarchical experiment lasted less than a year (1822–3), the Mexican political class had succeeded in finding a relative degree of unity and purpose in forging a liberal federal constitution. Thus, following a brief spell during which Mexico was governed by a triumvirate termed the Supreme Executive Power (1823–4), a constituent

²² Surprisingly, very little has been written about Henry George Ward. There is no biography as yet. For concise biographical sketches of his career see: Charles Alexander Harris, 'Ward, Henry George', *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885–1990, vol. 59, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ward,_Henry_George_\(DNB00\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ward,_Henry_George_(DNB00)) (all websites cited in this article were last accessed on 6 April 2017), and A. A. D. Seymour, 'Ward, Sir Henry George (1797–1860), Politician and Colonial Governor', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28685>. The only studies published to date about his role in Mexico are: N. Ray Gilmore, 'Henry George Ward, British Publicist of Mexican Mines', *Pacific Historical Review* 32: 1 (Feb. 1963), pp. 35–47, and Elmer W. Flaccus, 'The Secret Adversary: Henry George Ward and Texas, 1825–1827', *East Texas Historical Journal* 4: 1 (1966), pp. 5–15. Henry McKenzie Johnston's *Missions to Mexico*, albeit not exclusively about Ward's role in Mexico, provides the most detailed account to date of his Mexican missions. Also see Maty F. de Sommer's brief introductory 'Estudio preliminar' to Ward, *México en 1827* (trans. Haas), pp. 7–19. For Ward's subsequent career, see: Robert Eadon Leader, *Chapters in the Political History of Sheffield, 1832–1849: Consisting of Letters from Mr John Parker, MP and Mr Henry George Ward, MP* (Sheffield: Leader & Sons, 1884), and S. V. Balasingham, *The Administration of Sir Henry Ward, Governor of Ceylon, 1855–60* (Dehiwala: Tisara Prakashakayo, 1968). For George Canning's rebuke of Ward's 'profuse expenditure [...] and very objectionable attempts to justify it', see Public Record Office, Foreign Office Papers (henceforth referred to as PRO/FO) 97/272: Canning to Ward, 15 Jan. 1827. Ward's financial extravagance as an MP would elicit regular criticisms in the press. For an example, see the *Sheffield Mercury*, 15 April 1843.

²³ Married on Thursday 8 April 1824 at St George's Church in Hanover Square, London, between Ward's two Mexican missions, Henry and Em had two daughters who were born whilst they were in Mexico: Frances Guadalupe María de Jesús, born on 19 April 1825, and Georgina Katherine Petronella, born 31 May 1826. According to British genealogy website Ancestry they had eight further children together: Charles Dudley Ward (b. 1828), Jane Hamilton Ward (b. 1829), Swinburne Ward (b. 1830), Emily Rohesia Ward (b. 1831), Katherine Cecilia Ward (b. 1834), Julia Onofrel Ward (b. 1835), Henry Constantine Ward (b. 1837), and Alice Ward (b. 1839) (http://www.ancestry.co.uk/genealogy/records/emily-elizabeth-swinburne_54131852?geo_a=r&geo_s=us&geo_r=uk&geo_v=2.0.0&co_iid=41013&co_lid=41013&co_sch=Web+Property). In Ward's private correspondence with his wife's father, Sir John Swinburne, he affectionately called her his 'dear Em': see as an example the Swinburne (Capheaton) Manuscripts: Northumberland County Record Office, Newcastle upon Tyne, Swinburne/26: Ward to Sir John Swinburne, begun at Vera Cruz [sic] and finished at Jalapa, 22 Dec. 1823.

Congress thrashed out the 1824 Federal Constitution that was to last until October 1835, finding itself restored between 1846 and 1853. Former insurgent leader General Guadalupe Victoria, with whom Ward would establish a particularly good working relationship, won the presidential elections, becoming the first elected Mexican president as well as the only one who would succeed in completing his term in office without being overthrown by a coup or a *pronunciamiento* cycle until José Joaquín de Herrera managed to repeat his record between 1848 and 1851.²⁴

At the beginning of President Guadalupe Victoria's presidency the burning issues of the day were: the need to ensure that the country's independence was formally recognised internationally;²⁵ consolidation of the institutions established in the 1824 Constitution (this entailed the drafting and approval of a whole array of constitutions at state level);²⁶ resolution of the treasury's desperate shortage of capital; and expulsion of the Spanish forces that hung onto the island garrison of San Juan de Ulúa in Veracruz harbour until 23 November 1825. As Victoria's four-year term in office progressed, his government had to deal with the emergence of Masonic political rivalries and factionalism,²⁷ a growing hatred of the Spanish community in Mexico (which was, in part, provoked by Spain's refusal to recognise Mexican independence, and led to the approval of a battery of expulsion laws in 1827 whereby 5,000 Spaniards

²⁴ Often translated as revolts, *pronunciamientos* were a complex form of insurrectionary action that relied first on the proclamation and circulation of a plan that listed the petitioners' demands and then on endorsement by copycat *pronunciamientos* that forced the authorities, national or regional, to the negotiating table. For a discussion on how *pronunciamientos* unfolded as 'cycles', 'waves' or 'constellations', on the back of numerous and different types of *pronunciamientos* of allegiance, see Will Fowler, *Independent Mexico. The Pronunciamiento in the Age of Santa Anna, 1821–1858* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), pp. 9–19.

²⁵ This included gaining the Vatican's recognition, something that did not happen until 1836. The problems that this would generate ranged from who would now exercise the *patronato*, whereby vacant ecclesiastical posts could be filled, to what it meant to be a Catholic priest in a country whose existence the Pope vehemently refused to acknowledge. Ward dedicates an entire section of vol. 1 to the challenges the church was facing at the time: Book III, Section III, 'Religion: State of Ecclesiastical Establishments in Mexico: Number of Bishporics – of Secular and Regular Clergy – Revenues – Influence – Effects produced by the Revolution – Foreigners, how situated', pp. 320–59. See Michael P. Costeloe, *Church and State in Independent Mexico: A Study of the Patronage Debate, 1821–1857* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978); Anne Staples, *La iglesia en la primera república federal mexicana (1824–1835)* (México, DF: SepSetentas, 1976); and Brian Connaughton, *Entre la voz de Dios y el llamado de la patria: religión, identidad y ciudadanía en México, siglo XIX* (México, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2010).

²⁶ See Josefina Zoraida Vázquez (ed.), *El establecimiento del federalismo en México (1821–1827)* (México, DF: El Colegio de México, 2003).

²⁷ Following the formation of the Rite of York in 1825, in part instigated by US Minister Plenipotentiary Joel Poinsett, the political class became divided between two loosely-termed political parties – the *escoceses* and the *yorkinos* based around the Scottish Rite and Rite of York Masonic lodges.

were forced to leave the country), and an early awakening to the fact that Mexico's extremely liberal colonisation laws had resulted in the northern state of Coahuila-Texas fast becoming a region predominantly populated by disobedient Protestant, English-speaking, slave-owning US immigrants. Compared to the tumultuous years that both preceded and succeeded Victoria's presidency, this was a period of comparative peace and stability. The 1826 congressional elections, albeit hotly contested, took place without major upheavals. The *pronunciamientos* that were launched during these years were either primarily focused on lobbying the government to expel the Spanish population from Mexico or concerned with strictly local issues.²⁸ The only major nationally-oriented *pronunciamiento* cycle, that of Otumba-Tulancingo of December 1827–January 1828, in which Vice-President Nicolás Bravo became involved, was successfully quelled, and took place after Ward had left Mexico. Worthy of note, given the optimism that underpins much of *Mexico in 1827* (one that was shared by numerous Mexican intellectuals at the time),²⁹ is that the much more serious and violent *pronunciamiento* cycle of Perote–Oaxaca–La Acordada of September–December 1828, which would ultimately derail Mexico's constitutional path with the forced and unlawful imposition of runner-up candidate Vicente Guerrero to the presidency, took place *after* the two volumes had been published.³⁰

It was during Victoria's presidency that Britain eventually signed its first Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, in no small measure thanks to Ward's exertions who, in a couple of crucial instances, disobeyed Canning's inflexible instructions from London in order to accommodate the Mexicans' demands.³¹ It was also during these years that Mexican

²⁸ See Chapter 3, 'The Voice of the Provinces: The Insurreccional Contagion of Mexico's First *Pronunciamientos*, 1821–1831', in Fowler, *Independent Mexico*, pp. 76–131.

²⁹ For examples, see Lorenzo de Zavala, *Obras. El historiador y representante popular: Ensayo histórico de las revoluciones de México desde 1808 hasta 1830* (México, DF: Porrúa, 1969 [first published: 1831]), p. 222, and Lucas Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, vol. 5 (México, DF: Libros del Bachiller Sansón Carrasco, 1986 [first published: 1852]), pp. 469–73.

³⁰ For the years of the Triumvirate and Guadalupe Victoria's presidency, see, in alphabetical order: Timothy E. Anna, *Forging Mexico, 1821–1835* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), pp. 98–209; and 'Guadalupe Victoria', in Will Fowler (ed.), *Gobernantes mexicanos*, vol. 1 (México, DF: FCE, 2008), pp. 51–74; Michael P. Costeloe, *La primera república federal de México (1824–1835)* (México, DF: FCE, 1975), pp. 11–216; Fowler, *Independent Mexico*, pp. 76–131; Stanley C. Green, *The Mexican Republic: The First Decade 1823–1832* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), pp. 31–161; Harold D. Sims, *The Expulsion of Mexico's Spaniards 1821–1836* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), pp. 7–109; and Richard A. Warren, *Vagrants and Citizens. Politics and the Masses in Mexico City from Colony to Republic* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001), pp. 75–98.

³¹ Most notably this revolved around Ward's disposition not to make religious tolerance a condition of the Treaty, accepting as he did, notwithstanding his personal anti-Catholic sentiments, that Mexico's 1824 Constitution had decreed in its very first article that Mexico was a Catholic nation with tolerance of no other religion. For a detailed and particularly

Treasury bonds were put up for sale in London, contributing to a stock market bubble that had begun in 1823 and burst dramatically in 1826 because of what Ward termed the British investors' 'delusive hope' and 'unbridled speculation', a buying and selling frenzy that was fuelled, moreover, by their 'warped and distorted' understanding of the Americas. The first set of bonds was offered for sale in 1824 at a total face value of £3.2 million with a promised annual 5 per cent dividend. The second bond came out in 1825, with the same par value of £3.2 million but with an increased annual interest of 6 per cent.³²

From a Mexican perspective, Britain featured, at least initially, as a potentially extremely important ally. Along with the United States it was amongst the first nations to recognise Mexican independence (the United States did so in 1822, Britain in 1823),³³ at a time when Spain and the Holy Alliance, consisting of France and the Russian, Prussian and Austrian monarchies, refused to do so. Spain, in fact, would not recognise Mexican independence until 1836 and would send an expeditionary army from Cuba in 1829 in a quixotic attempt to reconquer its former colony. It was also British investors who provided Mexico with the cash investment it so desperately needed after the devastating eleven-year-long civil war of independence, enabling it, or so the Mexican political class thought, to kick-start the new nation's much-needed process of recovery and regeneration. In a context where Spain remained hostile and in which some started to perceive the activities of the US settlers migrating into Texas as a potential problem, imperial Britain was understandably seen as a desirable and sought-after friend, not as a future exploiter.³⁴ As Guadalupe Victoria himself admitted to Ward, he 'regarded England as the natural ally and protectress of Mexico, *the* nation

engaging account of the protracted negotiations that lasted a good three years before the Treaty was ratified, see Johnston, *Missions to Mexico*.

³² Costeloe, *Bubbles and Bonanzas*, pp. 23–33; Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 1, pp. vi–vii.

³³ Britain's recognition of Mexican independence needs to be qualified. Since it was Canning's hope that Britain could persuade Spain to recognise Mexico's independence before Britain did so formally, in the hope that Britain and Spain could thus remain allies should France set out on the war path once more, *de jure* recognition of independence was not actually given until the 1826 Treaty was ratified in London on 26 Dec. 1826. However, *de facto* recognition was implicit in Britain's open willingness to enter into commercial and diplomatic relations with Mexico as confirmed by the dispatch of Lionel Charles Hervey's 1823 mission to Mexico, to which Ward was attached as Second Commissioner.

³⁴ It would be wrong to suggest all Mexicans had a positive view of Britain. Mexico's first envoy to Britain, José Mariano Michelena, considered Britain's to be 'the most treacherous cabinet in Europe!' and warned the Mexican chamber of deputies that, were they to ratify the first draft of the Treaty of Friendship that was presented to them, 'they would soon find to their cost that the simplest terms in English diplomacy admitted of a double interpretation': reported in Ward's private correspondence with Canning. See Leeds District Archives, Harewood Collection, George Canning Papers: Ward to Canning, Mexico City, 10 March 1826.

par excellence with which she ought most intimately to connect herself'.³⁵ In a similar vein, Minister of Interior and Exterior Relations Lucas Alamán would be attributed with writing an article in the press noting that Britain

is the first among those of Europe which has done us the justice to declare that we ought to be admitted in the rank of Nations [...] her resources have supplied the deficiencies of our finances [...] But she asks nothing – she desires nothing but to have our markets opened to her upon equal terms with other nations [...] England without Mexico will always be the first nation in the world, whereas Mexico without England can be nothing.³⁶

Ward's exertions, as joint commissioner with Lionel Hervey in 1823–4 and later as *chargé d'affaires* in 1825–7, are certainly worthy of mention and proved decisive because of the fundamental part he played alongside Guadalupe Victoria in the protracted negotiations that eventually led to the ratifying of the 1826 Treaty of Friendship and Commerce that would ultimately define British–Mexican relations for the next four decades.³⁷ British diplomat and historian Henry McKenzie Johnston would reach the verdict that: 'It was Ward who persisted, at the risk of his own career, in heading Canning off from what might have been a fatal head-on collision over the issue of religious tolerance.'³⁸ However, Ward's importance, in terms of the impact his views on Mexico had for his and subsequent generations, must be sought in his *Mexico in 1827*, which, as N. Ray Gilmore rightly reminds us, 'was tremendously important in helping Mexican mining companies regain public confidence and obtain more capital' and 'replaced Humboldt as a standard authority in Mexico'.³⁹

'Mexico in 1827'

Mexico in 1827 consists of two volumes, both published by Henry Colburn, the publisher of Ward's novelist father, in 1828. The first, relying heavily on Humboldt's *Political Essay* and Carlos María de Bustamante's history of the revolution of independence⁴⁰ (since Ward was fluent in

³⁵ PRO/FO 50/13/176: Ward dispatch No. 21, Mexico City, 14 Jan. 1825.

³⁶ PRO/FO 50/12/293: Translation of editorial of *El Sol* of 25 April 1825.

³⁷ The text of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation concluded between Britain and Mexico on 26 Dec. 1826 is included as an appendix in Johnston, *Missions to Mexico*, pp. 257–64. It is located in PRO/FO 93/59/2. The Treaty was superseded by the breaking off of diplomatic relations in 1867, 40 years later. A new Treaty was subsequently negotiated and signed in 1887.

³⁸ Johnston, *Missions to Mexico*, p. 246.

³⁹ Gilmore, 'Henry George Ward', pp. 46–7.

⁴⁰ Carlos María de Bustamante, *Cuadro histórico de la revolución mejicana comenzada en 15 de septiembre de 1810 por el ciudadano Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, cura del pueblo de Dolores, en el obispado de Michoacán*, 5 vols. (México, DF: Imprenta de J. M. Lara, 1827). He also consulted William Davis Robinson, *Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution including a Narrative of the Expedition of General Xavier Mina to which are Annexed some Observations on the*

Spanish),⁴¹ concentrates on Mexico's geography, history and society. The second provides an in-depth study of Mexico's mines followed by a personal narrative of Ward's two visits to Mexico. Each is accompanied by a wealth of relevant appendices and includes a number of illustrations by his wife Em. Ward hoped to give 'a fair and dispassionate view', and was intent, in order to avoid another financial crash like that of 1826, on providing 'proper data for the regulation of our opinions [...] with regard to one very interesting portion of the former dominions of Spain'. Regarding this last point, Ward's hope was that his work would 'have the effect of directing the attention of my countrymen to a field, the importance of which has been hitherto but little suspected'. Considering that, apart from Humboldt's *Political Essay*, news from the Americas whilst under Spanish control had been scarce and unreliable in Britain, Ward's work also had the merit of offering for the first time an up-to-date and detailed account of the country's past and current situation in English. As Ward himself recognised: 'we have acquired more information respecting America, and a greater insight into the capabilities of the country, and the character of its inhabitants, in the last three years, than had been obtained during the three centuries which preceded them'.⁴²

As will be seen in the following analysis of the two volumes, there was a more than evident desire on his part to foster British–Mexican relations. Ward's attempt to offer an objective interpretation – albeit one clearly open to challenge – found expression at different junctures where, rather than proffer an opinion, he chose instead to stick to facts and figures.⁴³ The extraordinary detail that went into the extensive passages dedicated to the mining sector, written on the back of Ward's own personal visits to all seven British mining ventures in Mexico, is ample proof that he was committed to ensuring British readers had, as one review of his work put it, the kind of information that 'alone can settle [speculative] fluctuations, and enable our countrymen to

Practicability of Opening a Commerce between the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans through an Isthmus in the Mexican Province of Oaxaca or at the Lake of Nicaragua, and the Vast Importance of such Commerce to the Civilized World (London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor and Lepard, 1821), 2 vols.

⁴¹ One would have thought that, as a matter of principle and common sense, any British diplomat sent to Mexico would be expected to speak Spanish. However, Ward's superior during his second mission, James Justinian Morier, could not understand the language (Johnston, *Missions to Mexico*, pp. 112, 151).

⁴² Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 1, pp. 123, vii; vol. 2, pp. 600, 218.

⁴³ As an example, when discussing the policies and behaviour of Finance Minister José Ignacio Esteva, Ward makes a point of stating that he would not allow himself 'to be influenced by that party spirit, which has but too much prevailed with regards to his measures in his own country', preferring instead to 'endeavour simply to judge him by his works': Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 1, p. 367.

profit by the fair advantages which the "second discovery of the New World" holds out to honest exertion'.⁴⁴ In Ward's own words:

So little was known in the city of Mexico of the manner in which the affairs of the great English Mining Companies were conducted, and such contradictory reports prevailed with regard to the system pursued by them, that I determined to seek, by personal observation, that information which I found it impossible to draw from any other source.⁴⁵

In order to engage with the work's Anglo-Mexican agenda, the following analysis concentrates on eight different yet interrelated overarching features in *Mexico in 1827*: Ward's defence of free trade; his belief in the need for patience and meaningfully understanding the country (which meant appreciating the not insignificant problems Mexico faced after the devastation of an 11-year-long civil war and 300 years of Spanish domination); the nature of his cautiously upbeat representation of Mexico at the time; the importance he placed on silver mining bolstered by British financial and technological involvement; his conviction that Anglo-Mexican collaboration was of mutual benefit; the importance he granted Britain vis-à-vis Spain and what he already saw as the threat of US expansionism; the affection he clearly felt and openly expressed for Mexico; and the praise he accorded to a range of Mexican individuals and political institutions.

Ward's Defence of Free Trade

That Ward was a staunch defender of free trade shines throughout *Mexico in 1827* and clearly resonated not just with British imperial ideology at the time, but a growing global outlook at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ He was persuaded that one of the main reasons why the *criollos* rebelled against Spain was precisely to have access to free trade, something the Spanish crown had doggedly prevented them from doing. He was also of the opinion that, once free trade was established, there was no looking back: 'a sense of the advantages of an unrestrained intercourse with foreign nations, when once acquired, can never again be lost'. From a pragmatic perspective, given that under Spanish control Mexico had undergone no serious process

⁴⁴ 'Article IX – Mexico in 1827. By H. G. Ward', *Westminster Review*, 9 (April 1828), p. 481.

⁴⁵ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 2, p. 308.

⁴⁶ C. R. Fay, 'The Movement towards Free Trade, 1820–1853', *The Cambridge History of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), vol. 2, pp. 388–414; Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815–1914. A Study of Empire and Expansionism* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1976), pp. 25–31; P. J. Cain, 'Economics and Empire: The Metropolitan Context'; B. R. Tomlinson, 'Economics and Empire: The Periphery and the Imperial Economy'; and Martin Lynn, 'British Policy, Trade, and Informal Empire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', all in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 3: *The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 31–52, 53–74 and 101–21, respectively.

of industrialisation, it followed that it should focus its energy on exporting primary goods such as coffee, cotton, sugar, indigo, cacao, cochineal and precious metals, whilst benefiting from the ‘internal consumption of British manufactured goods’. From a British perspective, such a state of affairs meant that it was not ‘a mere theory to suppose that the progress of such a country must exercise a considerable influence upon the manufacturing industry of the Old World’. It was a standpoint Ward maintained throughout the two volumes.⁴⁷

He was certainly aware that, in a comparatively unindustrialised country like Mexico,⁴⁸ it was inevitable – once free trade had come into place – that it would prove impossible for Mexico’s handmade clothes and products to compete with Britain’s manufactured goods. Already by 1826, Ward noticed that

Imitations of some of the best of the Mexican manufactures have been tried at Glasgow, and it has been found that a Serape, or party-coloured woollen wrapper, which, at Saltillo, or Querétaro, sells for eighteen, twenty, and even twenty-four dollars, might be made here, sent across the Atlantic, and sold on the Table land [Central Mexican Plateau or Altiplano], with freight, carriage, and profit included, for eight, or, at most, ten dollars.

Similarly, in travelling through the Bajío (north-central Mexico), he noted that ‘the “Mantas”, “Rebozos”, “Pañetes”, and “Gergetillas” [different types of blankets and shawls], for which they [León, Irapuato, Silao, San Miguel, and Salamanca] were famous, have already been replaced by similar articles from Europe and the United States’. However, he did not see this necessarily as a problem, since ‘Their decadence has fortunately been gradual during the last fifteen years, so that they will require no violent transition to give employment to the hands thus occupied, in some other pursuit, where no competition is to be apprehended.’ From Ward’s standard British outlook of the time, this was the natural order of things. Mexicans would, of course, buy manufactured goods that were cheaper and of a better quality than the handmade products that were available. What was important was that Mexico countered the influx of European manufactured imports with the development and export of primary goods, in particular silver, a process that in itself, he thought, would regenerate the local economy, create employment, and incentivise the local agriculture that would be needed to feed the growing mining communities. Once the mining sector was up and running again, Mexico would benefit greatly from free trade. Thus Ward advocated free trade not because he

⁴⁷ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 1, pp. 111, 142, 89, 90.

⁴⁸ Although attempts at industrialisation had been made in certain regions such as Puebla, it is fair to say that Mexico, compared to Britain, was comparatively unindustrialised. As Guy P. C. Thomson notes, notwithstanding the manufacturing developments in Puebla ‘even the most modern technology [...] would not be instrumental in transforming Mexico from being a predominantly rural and agricultural society until beyond the middle of the twentieth century’: Guy P. C. Thomson, *Puebla de los Angeles. Industry and Society in a Mexican City, 1700–1850* (Boulder, CO, and London: Westview Press, 1989), p. 33.

thought it was good to stunt the Mexican economy and destroy its handicraft industry with British manufactured goods; he believed in free trade because, like almost everybody of his generation, he was convinced – rightly or wrongly – that it resulted in mutual benefits. Needless to say, as is well documented, free trade was to prove problematic and detrimental to Mexico's incipient industries, despite Ward's faith in it. Notwithstanding the protectionist policies pursued by a number of Mexican governments between 1830 and 1856, Mexico became an importer of manufactured goods (mainly British textiles) and an exporter of primary products (namely silver).⁴⁹

Ward's Belief in the Need for Patience and Understanding

Alongside Ward's defence of free trade was his belief that British investors had to learn to be patient. Thinking of the 1826 crash, Ward was adamant that before you invested all your savings in a given country or specific mining venture, you needed to understand the context, both of the country and of the mine in question. That there were in 1827 British mining companies that were struggling had to be blamed on the impatience and the ignorance of the original investors who 'proceeded, in a great measure, from the want of a proper knowledge of the country, in the first instance', spending exorbitant sums that could have been saved had they gone about researching the mines first, pursuing 'a more judicious system on commencing their operations'. It was a lament he would make at different junctures in the book, whether criticising William Bullock's choices ('influenced rather by the beauties of the scenery, than by the intrinsic value of the mine') or those who applied 'new theories to the opposite hemisphere' without properly inquiring into the state of the mines they were investing in. In a similar vein, Ward complained that the 1826 crash had scared away investment at a time when mining ventures that were just beginning to prove successful needed it most. For the Anglo-Mexican mining companies to succeed the investors needed to be patient: 'the resources of the country cannot be developed in a day'. It was unrealistic of British investors, therefore, to 'imagine, that because a very large sum has been laid out upon the Mines of Mexico by British Capitalists, the produce of those Mines ought, at once, to equal that of the best years before the Revolution'.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 1, p. 422, footnote; vol. 2, p. 462; vol. 1, p. 439. For studies on how the Mexican textile industry struggled in the nineteenth century as a result of free trade and Britain's industrial might, see Dawn Keremitsis, *La industria textil mexicana en el siglo XIX* (México, DF: SepSetentas, 1973) and Richard J. Salvucci, *Textiles and Capitalism in Mexico. An Economic History of the Obrajes, 1539–1840* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 135–69. Also relevant is: Inés Herrera Canales, *El comercio exterior de México, 1821–1875* (México, DF: El Colegio de México, 1977).

⁵⁰ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 2, pp. 83, 377, 594, 93–4; vol. 1, p. 78; vol. 2, p. 74.

Following on from this, it was also crucial to acquire ‘a proper knowledge of the country, and the nature of the enterprises which they were about to undertake’ before investing. It might take time initially to do so, but in the long term this made sense to Ward. The experience of the first years of British investment and speculation had witnessed ‘vast sums [...] embarked in schemes, of which the very persons, who staked their all upon the result, knew literally nothing, except the name’. Evidently, one of the key aims of *Mexico in 1827* was precisely to correct British ignorance on the matter and in so doing encourage well-informed investments and mining ventures with a long-term view.⁵¹

Understanding Mexico meant appreciating the not insignificant problems its government and commercial enterprises needed to overcome. Whilst these were not insurmountable, from Ward’s pre-1828 optimistic outlook, they were not inconsiderable either. If Ward expected British investors to be patient it was precisely because of the problems Mexico presented. Not to take these into consideration would lead to the kind of misinformed rash speculations and ensuing panic that characterised the frenzied 1823–6 boom and crash investment cycle. Ward highlighted two significant obstacles throughout his work. The first revolved around the legacy of the revolution’s destruction: ‘the state of absolute stagnation, into which every thing has been thrown, during the last fifteen years, by the civil war’: the practical, tangible consequences of the war, such as abandoned and deliberately sabotaged mines, and the war’s psychological and emotional scars, with a government facing the unenviable task of having to ‘re-organize society after the dissolution of all earlier ties [and] curb passions once let loose’. The second major obstacle was the horrendous state of communications. There were quite simply ‘no navigable rivers; nor does the nature of the roads allow of a general use of wheel-carriages’. If there was one thing that could stand in the way of the expansion of trade it was precisely the country’s non-existent or appalling roads. The anecdote Ward related, regarding the length of time it took a steam pumping engine and its various parts to reach Real de Catorce, was in itself indicative of the problems any mechanised business enterprise in Mexico faced. Dispatched in 1821, it reached the port of Tampico in May 1822, taking another five months to reach Catorce on 11 November 1822. But this was not the end of the engine’s journey. Given that it had not been sent with the pipes it needed to function, it was not fully operational until 1 June 1826, i.e. five years after it had first left Britain. Evidently, once installed, the steam pumping engine worked like a dream and in a matter of five months drained the mine entirely. However, this remained a cautionary tale.⁵²

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 62, 71, 74.

⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 22, 147–8, 16; vol. 2, p. 179; vol. 1, pp. 22, 147–8, 16; vol. 2, pp. 179, 502–4.

Ward's Cautiously Upbeat Representation of Mexico

Notwithstanding these serious concerns Ward was ultimately upbeat about Mexico's prospects. He was not to know, as neither were his Mexican contemporaries, that the way events would unfold following the *pronunciamiento* cycle of Perote-Oaxaca-La Acordada of September–November 1828 would sadly prove him wrong on so many fronts. However, his optimism, not entirely delusional,⁵³ is noteworthy because of the way it stemmed from his perception of the Mexican government's achievements. In this sense, Ward was open-minded about the emergent political class. He did not harbour the kind of patronising mistrust that would subsequently become so common among nineteenth-century British politicians and diplomats, of the ability of the 'natives' to keep their house in order, epitomised by Lord Palmerston's 1850 view that

these half civilised governments [...] all require a dressing down every eight to ten years to keep them in order. Their minds are too shallow to receive any impression that will last longer than some such period and warning is of little use. They care little for words and they must not only see the stick but actually feel it on their shoulders.⁵⁴

Rather than seeing the Mexican political class as incapable of governing its own country, Ward was impressed with their aims and achievements. As an example, he thought that Minister of War Manuel Gómez Pedraza was on his way to a successful reconstruction of the army, and that *pronunciamientos* were a thing of the past. He was also fairly confident that the treasury was being more than adequately reformed. Perhaps most importantly, Ward argued, was that 'Mexico has already surmounted the greatest difficulty, the commencement of a new career', and he went on to stress that 'however ill-judged many parts of the present System may be, there has been a gradual tendency towards improvement, during the last three years, which augurs well for the future, and warrants the expectation of a better order of things'.⁵⁵

⁵³ Ward *did* warn against the dangers of civil conflict and political instability when he stated 'The seeds of disorder certainly still exist in Mexico; and it is unfortunately, not less certain that, were they to lead to civil dissensions of a serious nature, the mines must suffer from the effects of the struggle': *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 2, p. 121.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, p. 51. Another eloquent example of such cultural prejudice may be seen in a letter written by British merchant and diplomat William Parish Robertson to Foreign Secretary Lord Malmesbury in 1859, in which he characteristically claimed the Mexicans were quite simply incapable of governing themselves, and that, as far as the Republic's future was concerned, 'the only permanent remedy, the only one that can prove the salvation of that rich and fine country, and of the property and everyone in it – [is] namely, its annexation to, or the protectorate of the United States': quoted in Costeloe, *Bonds and Bondholders*, p. 209.

⁵⁵ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 1, pp. 312, 313, 398, 457.

The Importance of Mining

Needless to say, mining was at the heart of Ward's great expectations for Mexico and, in turn, where he believed British investment would prove immensely beneficial for both Mexico and Britain – i.e. not just those British investors who might become involved in the mining sector but Britain's manufacturing industry too, which would find in a prosperous mining-bonanza-driven Mexican economy a new and important market for its manufactured goods. He was entirely convinced that 'the prosperity of the mines of Mexico [was] intimately connected with that of our own trade and manufactures'. As he noted time and again throughout the two volumes: 'it is to the Mines that we must look for the source of every future improvement in Mexico'. He did not care that he repeated himself: 'Mexico without her mines, (I cannot too often repeat it,) notwithstanding the fertility of her soil, and the vast amount of her former Agricultural produce, can never rise to any importance in the scale of nations.' From a Mexican perspective he was adamant that, with the 'aid of Foreign Capital', a thriving mining sector would resolve all of the country's problems.⁵⁶

Anglo-Mexican Collaboration

Underlying the joint Anglo-Mexican effort which Ward enthusiastically favoured and promoted to rescue Mexico's abandoned or destroyed mines was a heartfelt conviction that this was an endeavour of mutual benefit. Mexico had the silver mines, Britain had the funds to get them working again and the technological know-how to resolve the perennial problem of flooding, by importing British steam pumping engines that could drain the mines at a rate of 10,000 tons per week, something the mule-driven *malacate* (horse-whim) system could never equal. The manner in which the recently arrived British entrepreneurs and engineers had been welcomed was evidence in itself, he thought, of this being a mutually beneficial endeavour. Amongst the mining companies he praised the most were those where British and Mexican managers worked together. It was a match made in Heaven:

the accession of science, and skill in machinery, which we bring into the present coalition, when combined with the knowledge of their own country, which the Mexican miners possess in the very highest degree, and applied, gradually, in the mode best adapted to the local peculiarities of each District, must, in the end, have a beneficial influence, and must tend to increase, ultimately, the annual produce of the mines.

He was in fact prepared to admit that the recently arrived British managers could learn from their Mexican counterparts. Ward did not share the arrogance of so many of his British contemporaries who deemed themselves far

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 162–3, 600, 37, 155, 4.

superior to anyone belonging to a different nationality, and had no problem in admitting that: 'I think so highly of the ability and practical experience of the Mexicans in all mining matters, that I am very much inclined to believe that we have, at least, as much to learn from them, as they from us.'⁵⁷

Britain as a Counterweight to Spain and the United States

In addition to Britain's role in aiding and benefitting from Mexico's mining sector, Ward also gave thought to other ways Britain could be of assistance to Mexico. Albeit not a matter discussed in *Mexico in 1827*, Ward's diplomatic correspondence evidences the extent to which he saw Britain's activities in Mexico and recognition of independence as a key factor in putting an end to any serious schemes Spain might have entertained of reconquering her former colony. However, nor was Ward oblivious to the growing threat posed by the United States and he did allude to it, somewhat prophetically, in *Mexico in 1827*. As early as 1826, and even before General Manuel Mier y Terán had returned from his fact-finding expedition⁵⁸ – the very one that would set the alarm bells ringing in the corridors of the National Palace with news that US settlers outnumbered the Mexican population in the region by ten to one – Ward was aware that events in Texas posed a serious threat to the republic. Most perceptively, he saw in 'the rich and beautiful province of Texas [...] a source of contention'. It was a problem of immigration, made all the more severe because the thousands of settlers pouring into Texas originated from the United States. Ward did not mince his words. Were Mexico and the United States to go to war, Texas would, by now, side with the United States:

In the event of a war, at any future period, between the two republics, it is not difficult to foresee that Mexico, instead of gaining strength by this numerical addition to her population, will find in her new subjects very questionable allies. Their habits and feelings must be American, and not Mexican; for religion, language, and early associations, are all enlisted against a nominal adhesion to a government, from which they have little to expect, and less to apprehend. The ultimate incorporation of Texas with the Anglo-American states, may therefore be regarded as by no means an improbable event, unless the Mexican government should succeed in checking the tide of emigration.

Ward's concern, 'as an Englishman', was to see the US 'line of coast extended as far South as the Río Bravo del Norte, which would bring them three days sail of Tampico and Veracruz, and give them the means of closing at pleasure all communications between New Spain and any European power, with which

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 89–92; vol. 1, p. 354; vol. 2, pp. 119–20, 119.

⁵⁸ Jack Jackson (ed.), *Texas by Terán. The Diary Kept by General Manuel de Mier y Terán on his 1828 Inspection of Texas*, translated by John Wheat (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2000).

they might happen to be at variance themselves'. It was a concern that would find expression the following decade in the various failed attempts made by the British Foreign Office to persuade the Mexican government to recognise Texan independence in the wake of the 1835–6 Texan Revolution, so that the Lone Star Republic could serve as a buffer state between the United States and Mexico thereby preventing the United States from spreading even further south or annexing Mexico's northern departments. Aware that the US immigrants moving into Texas were bringing slaves with them, Ward made a point of praising Mexico for its abolitionist laws, something which contrasted most noticeably with the US attitude towards the subject. Although Ward did not articulate the idea that Britain, for Mexico, could prove an important ally against both its past and potential future imperial enemies, Spain and the United States, the implication was there.⁵⁹

Affection for Mexico

Ward's affection and admiration for Mexico definitely adds an emotive dimension to his work which ultimately persuades the reader, as one reviewer put it, that his 'picture of the present state of Mexico [...] strikes us as being faithful. Certainly its colours have the loveliness of truth.'⁶⁰ This is because, in showing his affection, Ward could not help but convey the idea that he cared about Mexico. Putting aside the xenophobic treatment Ward and his family were subjected to in Zacatecas, where they were 'honoured [...] repeatedly with the appellation of Judíos (Jews)', he found that Mexicans were overall and generally remarkably hospitable, friendly and welcoming. He was particularly taken by the Mexicans' extraordinary generosity: 'I have met with much kindness in Mexico.'⁶¹ Whilst he admitted in a private letter to his father-in-law that he found the British residents in Mexico City 'a terrible set' whose 'great deal of vulgarity & stupidity, both Em and I' suffered 'with patience',⁶² he spoke particularly warmly of his Mexican friends.⁶³

Praise for Mexican Individuals and Political Institutions

Numerous, in fact, are the examples in Ward's personal narrative, in Books V and VI, of different Mexican hosts, not all of them rich or privileged, doing everything they could to make the Wards' stay with them comfortable and

⁵⁹ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 1, p. 5; vol. 2, pp. 586–7, 590; vol. 1, pp. 37–9.

⁶⁰ 'Article XI: *Mexico in 1827*', p. 481.

⁶¹ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 2, p. 636; vol. 1, p. xv. Ward's contemporary, the traveller George F. Lyon, also encountered anti-Semitism in Zacatecas. See his *Journal of a Residence*, vol. 1, p. 267.

⁶² Swinburne/44: Ward to Sir John Swinburne, Mexico City, 18–30 Sept. 1825.

⁶³ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 2, pp. 711–12.

enjoyable. At one end of the spectrum one finds the Count and Countess of Regla taking over the entire organisation of the celebration of the baptism of the Wards' first daughter, 'with hundreds of wax-lights, and music, and crowds of attendants [...] [hosting] a dinner of twenty people, and [with] presents of diamonds'. At the other, there is the occasion when, finding themselves travelling in the middle of nowhere, somewhere in the desert on the way to Aguascalientes, the Wards met with 'a man carrying a large dish of frijoles and tortillas to some shepherds in a neighbouring field' who offered these to them. Ward writes: 'notwithstanding the simplicity of our fare, we agreed, when we had completely cleared our dish of haricots and chile, into which we dipped alternately with Moctezuma's spoons [*tortillas*], that we had seldom made a more delicious meal'. It is also clear that he very much fell in love with Mexico City, its pure and transparent sky, its beautiful environs.⁶⁴

Tied in with Ward's affectionate view of Mexico is the praise he happily lavished on a range of Mexican politicians, institutions and customs. He celebrated the liberal values behind the 1821 Plan of Iguala that led to the consummation of independence. He was also duly impressed with the 1824 Constitution. Whether this stemmed from Ward's open mindedness or Mexico's promising situation at the time, here was a British diplomat who did not assume, just because the constitution had been drafted by a group of inexperienced Catholic foreigners, that it would be inevitably and inherently flawed. He actually dedicated pp. 285–302 of vol. 1 to summarising its contents, noting that 'It is certainly well adapted, by the subdivision of the governing powers, to a country of such vast extent as to render the transmission of orders, from any central point, difficult, and uncertain.' Ward was, in fact, quite confident that 'the adoption of the Federal system will be found to have been productive of many good effects'.⁶⁵ Unlike Canning, who occasionally let slip his distinct disdain for the Mexican government,⁶⁶ Ward appeared genuinely impressed with what the 1824 Constitution said about the Mexican political class, and made a point of calling the attention of his readers

to the laudable anxiety which the Mexican Constitutional Act displays, for the general improvement of the country, by disseminating the blessings of education, opening roads, establishing copyrights, patents, and the liberty of the press, founding colleges, promoting naturalization, and throwing open the ports to foreign trade, abolishing torture, arbitrary imprisonment, confiscation of property, retroactive laws, and all

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 711, 638–9, 222, 271.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 268, 303.

⁶⁶ Throughout the negotiations that took place to reach an agreement over the wording of the 1826 Treaty of Friendship, Canning repeatedly made disparaging comments about the Mexicans, almost indignant that they could have the audacity to think of themselves on an equal standing to the British Empire. They had, he said in one letter, a 'somewhat extravagant estimate of the importance of Mexico': PRO/FO 50/9/102. Foreign Dispatch No. 10, 9 Sept. 1825 (W I 476).

the abuses of absolute power, and protecting the houses and persons of all the inhabitants of the republic, against the undue exercise of authority in any shape.⁶⁷

He was impressed as well with how fast the country had progressed, in a matter of a year, between his first and second visit, noting in a number of instances how education was spreading thanks to the Lancastrian system.⁶⁸ He made a point of highlighting those cases where the underprivileged were making it into educational establishments. To note one example, in the Academy of San Carlos, ‘a most liberal institution’, he was pleasantly surprised to discover that ‘some of the most promising pupils were found amongst the least civilised of the Indian population’.⁶⁹

Overall, the lasting impression the reader is left with is that Ward enjoyed his time in Mexico and became particularly fond of the Mexican people, whom he did not hold back from praising, even though, in characteristic understated British fashion, he found their exuberance at times unsettling: ‘they possess great natural shrewdness and ability: they are brave, hospitable, warm-hearted where met with kindness, and only too magnificent in their ideas of what the intercourse of society requires [...] whatever they attempt is executed with a splendour, which is at times almost embarrassing’. As he admitted in the closing sentences of the work, he had ‘a lively interest in the welfare of Mexico, both from my long residence in the country, and my conviction that the commercial interests of Great Britain are most intimately connected with the prosperity of the New World’.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Only months after *Mexico in 1827* was published events in Mexico took a nasty turn. On 16 September 1828 General Antonio López de Santa Anna launched the *pronunciamiento* of Perote calling for General Manuel Gómez Pedraza’s electoral victory to be annulled and for runner-up candidate and former insurgent hero General Vicente Guerrero to be declared president. This *pronunciamiento*, eventually proving successful after Gómez Pedraza fled the country in the wake of the Acordada barracks revolt and the Parián Riot that brought the capital to its knees between 30 November and 4 December 1828, left the

⁶⁷ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 1, pp. 304–5.

⁶⁸ In the Lancastrian system, one adult teacher would teach a large group of pupils at low cost by getting the more advanced students to teach the day’s lesson alongside him to the rest of the class in small groups. See Will Fowler, ‘The Compañía Lancasteriana and the Élite in Independent Mexico, 1822–1845’, *Tesserae. Journal of Iberian and Latin-American Studies*, 2: 1 (1996), pp. 81–110; and Anne Staples, *Recuento de una batalla inconclusa. La educación mexicana de Iturbide a Juárez* (México, DF: El Colegio de México, 2005), pp. 237–73.

⁶⁹ Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, vol. 2, pp. 273, 237.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 710, 730.

government's legitimacy and authority in tatters. Thereafter and for the following four to five decades, up until General Porfirio Díaz's rise to power in 1876, Mexican politics became characterised by repeated *pronunciamiento* cycles, fiscal disarray, financial penury and acute instability. Civil wars such as those of 1832, 1854–5 and 1857–61 would prove devastating; so too would the Texan Revolution (1835–6), the French Pastry War (1838–9), the Mexican–United States War (1846–8) – whereby Mexico lost half of its territory to the United States – the Caste War in Yucatán (1847–52), and the French Intervention (1862–7) that witnessed the imposition of an Austrian archduke on the Mexican throne. By the 1840s it was not just foreigners but Mexico's very own independence generation that found itself looking back in despair as it grappled with trying to understand how things had gone so horribly wrong.⁷¹

As argued by Michael Costeloe, British perceptions of Mexico also changed in reaction to the Mexican government's defaulting of debt payments as early as 1827 and the *pronunciamiento* cycles of 1828–32 and, in particular that of 1833, which saw General Mariano Arista's *pronunciados* (rebel forces) ransack the British United Mexican Mining Association's Rayas mine in Guanajuato. There were to be no new British investments to Mexico after 1833 for many years.⁷² In fact, as Barbara Tenenbaum reminds us, 'In the period from 1830 to 1854, British investment in Latin America actually declined from 23 to 15 percent of the total amount, and most of the new monies went to Brazil. Mexico received little at all.'⁷³ Ward's first impressions, cautiously hopeful, well-meaning and friendly, would be superseded by travelogues that, with a couple of exceptions, invariably condemned Mexico.⁷⁴

Ward's account of Mexico in 1827 was unquestionably sympathetic toward the country he visited, lived in and travelled across. His view of Mexico was one which celebrated its early achievements whilst noting its problems, and which sought to encourage, with his emphasis on mining and free trade, a British–Mexican economic partnership that would be of mutual benefit. His vision was one that captured and shared the hopes of General Victoria's government. Although subsequent events would prove wrong both Ward and the

⁷¹ For the politics of despair of the 1840s see, by Will Fowler, *Mexico in the Age of Proposals, 1821–1853* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), pp. 25–32; and *Santa Anna of Mexico* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), pp. 289–93.

⁷² Costeloe, 'The British and an Early *Pronunciamiento*', p. 141.

⁷³ Tenenbaum, *Politics of Penury*, p. 36.

⁷⁴ Albeit not without prejudice or critical passages, the following four British accounts of Mexico share with Ward's work an ultimately affectionate understanding of the country: [Frances Erskine Inglis] *Madame Calderón de la Barca, Life in Mexico: During a Residence of Two Years in that Country* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1843); Mrs. Alec Tweedie, *Mexico As I Saw It* (London: Hurst and Blakett, 1902); and, by Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano* (London: Penguin, 1984 [first published: 1947]) and *Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend is Laid* (London: Penguin, 1988 [first published: 1968]).

hopeful Mexican independence generation, it nonetheless remains an atypically candid and respectful travelogue in the light of British travel writing about Mexico more generally. Ward's vision of Mexico, unique because it was written during a brief period when Mexicans themselves believed an auspicious future awaited them, was representative of the British faith in free trade of the time, and the as yet undented conviction that British investment and technology, paired with Mexican local knowledge, expertise and natural resources could establish the foundations of a long-lasting cooperative relationship. Studying *Mexico in 1827* is thus important because it serves to highlight the extent to which both Ward and Victoria's entourage shared a common vision as well as the hope that Mexico, with British investment and expertise, could genuinely thrive as an independent country following its break from Spain. It similarly demonstrates that, as far as first impressions and good intentions go, British–Mexican relations began respectfully, with both parties seeking a mutually beneficial partnership. Britain's establishment of an informal empire in Mexico does not negate these intentions.⁷⁵

But *Mexico in 1827* was also the product of a young man who very clearly empathised and sympathised with Mexico and wanted British–Mexican relations to prosper. That few subsequent British accounts of Mexico would recapture Ward's goodwill and open-mindedness is sad, and indicative both of the problems Mexico went on to encounter and of the manner in which a British imperial outlook developed thereafter and throughout the nineteenth century. It also highlights Ward's own individual merit as an Englishman who spoke Spanish fluently, embraced Mexican culture fully, and took it upon himself to write what remains to this day, as noted by Desmond Gregory, 'probably the most informative and vivid account of the country's condition in 1827'.⁷⁶ In the words of the review that came out in *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* in July 1828: 'The whole of these volumes display, in the most advantageous point of view, the talents, the industry, and the temper of their author.'⁷⁷

⁷⁵ For recent studies that question the view that Britain established an informal empire in Mexico see Paul Garner, 'El "Imperio Informal" británico en América Latina: ¿Realidad o ficción?', *Historia Mexicana*, 65: 2 (2015), pp. 541–59; and Will Fowler, 'La historia de la relación entre México y el Reino Unido en el siglo XIX y la polémica sobre el imperio informal británico', in Will Fowler and Marcela Terrazas (eds.), *Diplomacia, negocios y política. Ensayos sobre la relación entre México y el Reino Unido en el siglo XIX* (México, DF: UNAM, in press).

⁷⁶ Gregory, *Brute New World*, p. 133.

⁷⁷ 'Mexico in 1827', *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, 23/91 (July 1828), p. 52.

Spanish and Portuguese abstracts

Spanish abstract. *México en 1827* (publicado en 1828) de Henry George Ward es uno de los recuentos más exhaustivos de México y sus actividades mineras en los años posteriores a su independencia de España. Escrito con una meticulosa atención al detalle, este proveyó una interpretación de primera mano única acerca de los logros de los primeros gobiernos de México y de los no pocos problemas que tenían todavía por superar. También señaló los riesgos y oportunidades que representó México a potenciales inversionistas británicos y enfatizó los beneficios del libre comercio, la necesidad de ser pacientes, y lo importante que fue desarrollar una relación basada en el conocimiento del país antes de invertir en uno o varios proyectos ahí. Este estudio desarrolla por primera vez un análisis de los dos volúmenes del texto de Ward, tanto estudio como relato de viaje. Muestra cómo la mesuradamente optimista interpretación de Ward reflejó fielmente las expectativas efímeras del gobierno de Guadalupe Victoria (1824–9), desarrollando un recuento positivo de la joven república que no se repitió en las subsquentes representaciones británicas de México en la medida que la inhabilidad del país de pagar la deuda con Londres y su consecuente inestabilidad tuvo un impacto negativo sobre las relaciones británico-mexicanas durante la mayor parte del siglo XIX.

Spanish keywords: Henry George Ward, 'México en 1827', México independiente, relaciones británico-mexicanas, escritos de viaje

Portuguese abstract. *México em 1827* (publicado em 1828), de Henry George Ward, é um dos relatos mais completos do México e de suas atividades de mineração nos anos que seguiram sua independência da Espanha. Escrita com meticulosa atenção a detalhes, a crônica ofereceu uma singular interpretação em primeira mão tanto das realizações dos primeiros governos mexicanos quanto dos problemas não desprezíveis que eles ainda teriam que superar. A obra destacou os riscos e oportunidades que o México apresentava a investidores britânicos, e enfatizou os benefícios do mercado livre, e a necessidade de se ter paciência e de se conhecer bem o país antes de investir em uma ou mais empreitadas. Este estudo oferece pela primeira vez uma análise dos dois volumes da pesquisa/diário de viagem de Ward. Demonstra como a avaliação otimista e cuidadosa de Ward reproduziu fielmente as esperanças do curto governo de Guadalupe Victoria (1824–9), oferecendo uma perspectiva simpática da jovem república, ângulo este que se mostraria incomum nas posteriores representações britânicas do México, uma vez que a inabilidade do país em quitar a dívida com Londres e sua consequente instabilidade passaram a dificultar as relações entre México e Grã-Bretanha durante a maior parte do século XIX.

Portuguese keywords: Henry George Ward, 'México em 1827', México independente, relações México–Grã-Bretanha, relato de viagem