

basic tenets of European and Spanish schools of thought until the discovery of America, Zavala discusses the opposing philosophies of the nature of man and just government brought forth in the controversies of the sixteenth century regarding possession of the New World and the status of the natives, with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda an outstanding advocate of the doctrine of the inherent inequality of man, and Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomé de las Casas brilliant champions of the doctrine of liberty, through to the triumph of the principle of liberty and its final enshrinement in the Laws of the Indies. Then, proceeding beyond, in a very important section of his treatise, Zavala carries the evolution of political thought concerning the Indies and their peoples further, and develops the effects produced by the Age of Enlightenment, until at the end of the colonial period, with the forward movement of civilization and the social and political complexity which had arisen in the colonies with the growth of creole and mestizo elements, a truly liberal, equalitarian political theory at length emerged, a doctrine which projected itself forward in the bodies politic of the nations which rose out of the final disintegration of the Spanish empire.

ROBERT S. CHAMBERLAIN.

University of Miami.

*Historia colonial de la América Española.* Tomo primero, *Los viajes de Colón.* By ALFONSO TORO. (Mexico City: Editorial Patria, S. A., 1946. Pp. 472. Maps, illustrations, facsimiles. Paper.)

The first volume of Licenciado Toro's history of colonial Spanish America compels the reviewer to say several unfavorable things, though with regrets, because the work as a whole is better than the sum of its parts. It has been conceived on an ambitious scale, being no less than a survey of European culture, with special emphasis on navigation, from the time of the Phoenicians to the completion of Columbus's voyages. This would have been a stiff undertaking for the greatest scholar of our times, which Toro, despite his many abilities, is not. It would have required the consultation and advice of specialists in the various historical fields represented here. Either the specialists were not available or Sr. Toro did not use them. He has proceeded bravely alone and has well merited what success he has achieved. But there are many errors of fact and several major misunderstandings.

As one example, in his lengthy sketch of the decline of the Byzantine empire, Toro out-Gibbons Gibbon in the severity of his indictments. He has the unfortunate empire begin its thousand-year history in a state of decay and continue to one of downright putrefaction. From his picture, no reader could help wondering how the empire lasted a

decade, let alone a millennium. The reviewer feels that present historians of Byzantine civilization would disagree sharply with Toro.

This tendency to extremes is characteristic of the whole book. The author seems to deal only in blacks and whites, with no intervening tinges allowed. Just as in *1066 and All That*, history is divided into "good things" and "bad things."

When we get to the Age of Discovery the treatment is the same. Concerning his hero, Columbus, Toro has two *bêtes noires*. These are the "eruditos" with more learning than common sense, and the "detractores de Colón." The two categories turn out to be pretty much the same, since "detractores" are mostly those "eruditos" who are unwilling to take Ferdinand Columbus's biography of his father as gospel and let it go at that. If we follow Ferdinand, thinks Toro, all will be well, though even he claims the private right to disagree with the junior Columbus in a place or two where his statements cannot be swallowed.

Toro has enough right on his side in the castigation of the "eruditos" to cause them some embarrassment. But he spoils his effect by leaving them too many openings. When he bases important arguments on his repeated assertion that the historian João de Barros knew Columbus at the Portuguese court, the "erudito" is sure to have his say regarding this chronological absurdity. Also, when he goes to lengths to prove that Columbus had read Marco Polo before his first voyage, it is just as well to point out that the discoverer makes a pretty convincing statement to the contrary in his own journal. Toro ridicules the savants for their hesitancy in accepting vague accounts of Columbus's interview with the Salamanca scholars, about which nothing is really known. He may be within his rights here, but he certainly is not when he next gives an imaginary account, several pages long, of this Salamanca interview as he thinks it *might* have happened. He even drags in that venerable chestnut, the flatness versus the sphericity of the earth, to aid Columbus in discomfiting the learned doctors. Later we have Queen Isabella on the verge of pawning her jewels, though she is talked out of the idea, and still later we get the egg-balancing performance, though Toro presents it as allegory.

The watchword of the whole Columbus biography is "back to orthodoxy." Thus again we have the discoverer of America spending several years of his youth as a merry "gentleman of fortune" and making his appearance in Portugal, to be welcomed by his Genoese compatriots, just after an unsuccessful attempt to plunder several Genoese ships off Cape St. Vincent. The Toscanelli correspondence presents no difficulties other than those dreamed up by the "eruditos." Columbus on his first voyage was bound for mainland Asia, all nonsense about Antilia

and Cipangu to the contrary. On that voyage he lived in daily peril of being thrown overboard by his chicken-hearted seamen, and Martín Alonso Pinzón was the villain of the piece.

Regarding the voyages themselves, Toro seems familiar with a minor work by Samuel E. Morison, but appears not to have read *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*. Most of the modern authorities he has consulted strike the reviewer as being either out of date or second rate.

Toro, who is a Mexican, is reacting mainly against a school of Spanish historians that for patriotic reasons has tried to put Columbus in the shade and to glorify at his expense the Iberian element in the discovery of America. Such writers have indeed gone much too far, and Toro, in spite of his own excesses, may be doing useful work in providing an antidote. The outside reviewer feels that he is listening in on a Spanish family dispute, and that his own criticisms, however valid, are not the main point at issue here.

Other features of Toro's book merit a good word. Though as a synthesis of European maritime history it is not altogether successful, it still contains useful information not easily found elsewhere in one place. The work is well planned and the literary style is good. Toro is one of the few people who has made an effort to learn something about the culture of the West Indian islanders at the time of the discovery. His contributions here are perhaps the most original and valuable part of the volume.

Another excellent feature is the abundance of the illustrations, which are well selected. Bad proofreading is undoubtedly responsible for most of the small factual errors.

CHARLES E. NOWELL.

University of Illinois.

*Geografía de América: América del Norte: América Central: América del Sur.* By OSCAR SCHMIEDER. (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1946. Pp. 1116. Maps, tables, diagrams.)

The great German work of Oscar Schmieder has been translated into Spanish and published by the Fondo de Cultura Económica in Mexico. The original publication of Schmieder's books on the Americas (North America, Middle America, and South America) was in the *Enzyklopädie der Erdkunde* (Oskar Kende, ed.) in 1932 and 1934. The Spanish edition brings the three separate parts together in one volume which is incomparably the best book on regional geography available in Spanish. Unfortunately the war made it impossible to ask Schmieder himself to make the necessary corrections and additions to bring his book up to date. This difficulty is felt chiefly in the paragraphs dealing