

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 Most of the modern authorities he has consulted strike the reviewer as being either out of date or second rate.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.

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*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

with political geography, and in the bibliography. The latter, which includes five hundred titles, has few references later than 1931.

In addition to the fact that this book makes available in Spanish a modern treatment of regional geography, there are several other reasons why this translation is of interest to students of the Americas. The problem of translating quasi-technical terms into Spanish and Portuguese, especially with reference to land forms, involves many difficulties. Neither Spanish nor Portuguese has a well-developed terminology for such things as mountains, hills, ridges, escarpments, karst features, and different kinds of valleys. The Spanish *sierra* is used without discrimination for high mountains, hills, and hog-back ridges. It is important to note that where Spanish words have been borrowed in English and given a technical definition (such as *bolson*, *cuesta*, *mesa*, or *playa*), in Spanish the words have no such restricted meanings. For example, the surface features found in the Great Basin of Utah and Nevada, or in the northern part of the Mexican Highlands, are commonly described in English as "Mountain and Bolson." But the translation describes this country as composed of *sierras y cuencas* (and in one footnote as *montañas y cuencas*). Similarly both the Piedmont region in eastern United States, and the Colorado Plateau in the arid and semiarid southwest are described as *mesetas*. This difficulty is found in English, also. Generally the translations are careful and based on a real understanding of the precise meaning of the German, but a few slips are inevitable—as where "Küstenland von Arauco" in Middle Chile is translated as *Planicie Costera* (page 795). There is no solution short of a detailed study by an international committee; but this translation has been made with sufficient care and understanding so that it merits the attention of any one interested in the precise meaning of words.

The original German publications were accompanied by a large number of black and white maps. Cartographically these originals were good, but not excellent; and geographically they were generalized rather than precise. The maps have been mostly reproduced exactly, in some cases without redrawing, in other cases redrawn with exactly the same symbols and patterns, but with Spanish names replacing the German. A very interesting change has been made on the map on page 535, however. This is a map of the political divisions of Middle America. On the original German map (*Länderkunde Mittelamerikas*, 1934, page 28) Cuba and Panamá were shown as "protectorates" of the United States, and Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic (but not Costa Rica or Mexico) were shown as "under strong American influence." On the German original (and on the map of the translation) the territory of the United States is shown

in heavy black bars—a favorite trick of the prostituted geopolitical literature of that period in Germany. In the translation a footnote (p. 537) explains that the imperialistic expansion of the United States in Middle America has been renounced since the inauguration of the Good Neighbor Policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

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*Historia de la cultura en la América Hispánica.* By PEDRO HENRÍQUEZ UREÑA. [Colección Tierra Firme, 28.] (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1947. Pp. 238. Illustrations. Paper.)

Shortly before the death of probably the most eminent authority of his time on Hispanic-American culture, the author of this book, there appeared from the Harvard University Press in 1945 his immensely valuable *Literary Currents in Hispanic America* based on the Charles Eliot Norton lectures he had given in Cambridge during the academic year 1940-1941. The latter work told a larger story than the title indicates, for it included remarks on art, music, and other aspects of cultural and intellectual history as well as giving a broad treatment of literature. The appearance of a new volume comparatively soon after the passing of the beloved scholar naturally prompts the question: is it merely a translation of the previous work or a completely new one? The answer is that it is neither one thing or the other. Rather, it is a manual offering a somewhat detailed outline of a major *opus* which its author, had he lived, could have achieved better than any of his contemporaries. In a way, this brief book underscores the irreparable loss which the study of Hispanic-American culture has suffered through the decease of a master-craftsman in the fullness of his power and maturity.

Like the *Literary Currents in Hispanic America*, this posthumously published work is divided into eight chapters whose chronological limits, however, do not coincide exactly with the periods indicated in its predecessor, and whose contents vary considerably from it. Indeed, the relatively thin volume under review attempts in smaller compass a more comprehensive treatment, including art, architecture, music, education, science, learning, etc., of both Spanish and Portuguese America. The compression of so much material results in succinct, factual data, incompletely illuminated by the author's well-known insights, and inevitably some paragraphs and pages hold little more than a bare catalogue of names and dates. The title given to this manual is, therefore, somewhat deceptive since it leads one to expect more than a skeletal treatment of the subject matter; it would, perhaps, have been wiser to prefix the words "Bosquejo de la" to the designation *Historia de la*