

America, which, thanks to the conquests of Cortés and Pedrarias, had now begun to loom up as a region of considerable size. Adrian's *Omnimoda*, says Torres, was designed to complement, though not to supersede, the famous *Inter caetera* issued by Alexander VI in 1493, which had provided for future religious conversion but which had not gone into detail. By the new edict, Adrian tried to regulate missionary effort in the New World more closely and to increase papal authority over the work of conversion.

The *Omnimoda* was frequently a matter of controversy in later years, particularly because the church hierarchy in Mexico and elsewhere disliked the liberties granted to Franciscans and Dominicans, which the bishops believed excessive. Another question that arose involved the desirability of extending the *Omnimoda* to the Portuguese empire, after it had been brought under the Crown of Spain in 1580. Various later popes confirmed the original powers granted the mendicants. But the bishops gradually won their fight, and within a century after its promulgation the *Omnimoda* had ceased to be important.

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La catedral de México y el Sagrario Metropolitano; su historia, su tesoro, su arte. By MANUEL TOUSSAINT. [Comisión Diocesana de Orden y Decoro.] (Mexico City: 1948. Pp. 340.)

This de luxe volume on the cathedral of Mexico, ostentatiously costly, and issued in a limited edition of 100 copies, demands special notice because it is also the cardinal text on that great building. It should be explained that the book was conceived for the purpose of raising funds for a Museum of Religious Art to house the Treasure of the cathedral, rather as a reward for contributions than as an object of commercial sale. But since the text was happily entrusted to Manuel Toussaint, dean of the historians of colonial art in Mexico, the result is not merely an expensive volume, but the most valuable monograph Mexico has produced in this field. It is particularly important, in view of its unavailability, that historians should be aware of its existence, and of the new material which it contains, relevant not only to architecture and the associated arts, but to religious, social and political history as well. I am informed that the Library of Congress has acquired a copy; in Mexico unbound sheets are available in the library of the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas. It is to be hoped that an inexpensive edition of the text will eventually appear, so that knowledge of this important building will not be restricted to the pious rich.

A word should be said of the volume itself: a folio, handsomely

printed on Strathmore Staple (19" x 14"), it deserves to become a collector's item. The typography is excellent in scale and lay-out; one might take exception only to the illuminated capitals, and the architectural details used as tail-pieces, which seem too big, or too red, to balance the text. Illustrations are abundant: color plates go far to suggest the richness of the building and its furniture; the black-and-white reproductions permit a real acquaintance with this great church, though the best of them, by Guillermo Kahlo, date back to the first quarter of the century. There are also plans and elevations (unfortunately without scale) and there are a few textual illustrations, including the laying of the cathedral's foundations from the *Pintura del Gobernador* of 1564. This is certainly the most impressive book to issue from Mexican presses for a long time.

One can hardly exaggerate the importance of the text itself. For the first time the archives of the cathedral have been made available, and we are extremely fortunate that the person best equipped to deal with the material has worked over it. Fifty-eight documents, of which only six had been published previously, are transcribed in full. Though some of these have been referred to and even quoted before, it is quite a different thing to have the whole document; and many of them not only give fresh material but change, or prove, our deductions about the history of the building. In addition to these documents, archival references to many others are given in the text. Historians will regret that all the relevant documents have not been transcribed, since a document never gives up its whole meaning to one investigator or for a single purpose. One can quite see, however, that this would imply publishing the entire archive of the cathedral (a desirable project, but hardly appropriate to this volume). We can console ourselves that Toussaint's report is as dependable as seeing the document itself. In fact the only serious gap now in the story of the cathedral is the documentation in the Spanish archives; Spanish historians have referred to some of this material, but too often without characterizing the documents or giving any reference whatever.

It is a pleasure to find, in this work of serious scholarship, a text readable and even entertaining. The author steers his course as quietly through the mass of controversial material as if he wrote for the first time, not without reference to former opinions, but without any unfruitful battle against old notions which new and definitive documentation makes negligible. The story cannot, of course, be fully known, but it has been complicated more by opinion than by conflicting facts. Thus the controversy as to the date of beginning the building seems to have been cleared up: foundations for a cathedral on the model of

Seville (i.e., with nave and four aisles, oriented east-west) were actually begun before 1563, when the ceremony of the cornerstone took place; but after 1569 the new foundation, north-south, of the present building was begun. Another old argument, as to the roles of the Royal Architect Juan Gómez de Mora, of Claudio de Arciniega, and of Juan Miguel de Agüero in designing the building, is really quite clear: a document of 1567 refers to Arciniega's plan, and one of 1616 states the determination to follow the "traza del dicho Claudio de Arciniegas (*sic*) y modelo de Juan Miguel de Agüero." Toussaint suggests that Agüero took over after Arciniega's death—certainly after completing the cathedral of Mérida in 1598, and that it was perhaps he who substituted vaulting for the wooden roof discussed in the 1509-1616 documents.

Unfortunately one cannot begin to refer here to all such new and clarifying material. Not only the structure, but the decorative elements, the work of sculptors, wood-carvers, painters, gilders, and metal-workers is discussed, to the enrichment of our knowledge of the whole field of colonial art. A romantic chapter deals with the commissioning of the choir-screen in Macao, and the details of its manufacture and transportation through the Philippines: a telling demonstration of the meaning of the Spanish Empire in the eighteenth century. A large section is devoted to inventories of the Treasures of the cathedral, dating back to Archbishop Zumárraga's of 1541, invaluable source-material not only for the minor arts, but for the society and economy of the Viceroyalty. There is full documentation for the great Altar de los Reyes, which was finally designed by the Spaniard Gerónimo de Balbás, and for the Sagrario, the equivalent architectural masterpiece of Lorenzo Rodríguez. Some of the most interesting material deals with the final work, after mid-eighteenth century, to complete façade, towers, and dome: accounts of payments and progress-reports make clear the change in methods of work and in the attitude toward craftsmen since the sixteenth century.

Withal, the author conveys a fine sense of the significance of this building in Mexico's architectural history: how it enlisted the most distinguished artists of every period, and sums up the whole sequence of styles, from Gothic to Neo-Classical. With considerable felicity of expression he evokes the feeling of the great church and its variety of mood: of the immense scale of this building that carries so forcefully across the quarter-mile plaza. Not the least of Toussaint's wisdom is his understanding that a work of art like the cathedral of Mexico need not be "pure" in the stylistic sense: that when all the parts are good, a late Gothic sacristy with Baroque painting need not suffer beside a Churrigueresque retable or a classical cupola.

And indeed, the making of such a building, over four centuries of history, is a matter to meditate. It has some of the cumulative effect of man's effort that we find in a legal system, or the economic structure that supplies a nation's needs. It is not only that a series of styles can be isolated, like so many geological deposits, fascinating as this is to the cataloguer of style development. It is not only the evidence of the efforts and additions of succeeding generations that holds us, although the whole complex is undoubtedly a great historical document. In the end, something has been made: in the end we have the building, which, like some great living creature, is more than an end-product of evolution. It is a thing in itself, a splendid reality, a unique statement.

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NATIONAL PERIOD

Relaciones diplomáticas hispano-mexicanas (1839-1898). Serie I: Despachos generales, I (1839-1841). (México: El Colegio de México, 1949. Pp. xxxii, 379. Paper. Indices.)

The historical value of the archives of the Spanish Embassy has long been known, especially since Genaro Estrada used them for his study of General Prim. El Colegio de México is therefore adding another to its already imposing list of significant contributions to the revival of historical studies in Mexico with this initial volume of carefully selected and edited correspondence from the Embassy archives covering the period of the first Spanish minister to Mexico, Don Angel Calderón de la Barca, and the first few months of the period of his successor, Don Pedro Pascual de Oliver. In the introduction the editors announce that the collection will cover the years 1839 to 1898, and will embrace two series, *Despachos generales*, of which this is the first volume, and *Despachos especiales*, special collections on such topics as the Cuban War, and various treaties and conventions. If the work is continued in the ample scope of the present volume the collection may well rival in size the *Archivo histórico diplomático mexicano*, which already numbers some fifty volumes.

Selection and annotation of the documents are the work of a trio of competent historical scholars, Javier Malagón y Barceló, Enriqueta Lópezlira de Díaz Thomé and J. M. Miquel i Vergés, with the active collaboration of the Spanish Ambassador to Mexico, Dr. Luis Nicolau d'Olwer, who has contributed a critical prologue. Apparently documents have been printed without deletions or omissions, and in general the editors are to be highly commended for the selection of documents