

without competitors in the field of popular histories of Mexico in English, and attractively written, it does not show evidence of much "revision." A few new references have been added to the bibliography and a new concluding chapter has been added, but there is scant evidence of any reevaluation of Mexican history in the light of the developments of the thirteen years since the earlier edition appeared.

BACKGROUND

(European and American)

The Tovar Calendar. By GEORGE KUBLER and CHARLES GIBSON. [Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol. XI.] (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951. Pp. 82. Illustrations, appendix, bibliography. Paper. \$6.00.)

In the John Carter Brown Library in Providence there is a bound volume of sixteenth-century manuscripts formerly in the library of Sir Thomas Phillips; this material is little known and hardly utilized by scholars. Kubler and Gibson have performed a service to workers in the specialized field of sixteenth-century New Spain by reproducing some of those items and accompanying them with critical and expository accounts and a helpful hand-list of texts available for the study of the Mexican calendar systems (excluding the Maya) and scholarly writings on them. Contents of the Phillips volume include an exchange of letters between the Spanish Jesuit José de Acosta and a Mexican cleric, Juan de Tovar; the version of the Mexican historical text known as "Relación del origen de los Yndios" (Codex Ramírez); a series of paintings like those in the Durán Atlas; several pages of calendrical and other miscellany; and finally, a calendar of Aztec "months" illuminated by an Indian draftsman around 1585, with a gloss attributed by these authors to Tovar. Plates I-III reproduce the title page of the Phillips volume and the correspondence between Acosta and Tovar; Plates IV through XIV are reproductions of the calendar with the gloss.

Working individually and jointly Kubler and Gibson have put these materials through a full-blown academic workout. Part I, by Gibson, describes the manuscript material minutely, discusses its dating, and relation to other source materials, and provides biographical data on Tovar. Part II, by both authors, presents transcriptions, translations, and commentaries on the drawings in the calendar. Kubler, in Part III, discusses the form of the calendar, its style, its correlation with the Christian calendar, and its implications for the general study of Mexican chronology. The text ends with the hand-list of sources. An appendix, in which translation of the correspondence between Acosta and Tovar is given, is followed by a bibliography.

Though there are derivative and subordinate values, the chief im-

portance of this new corpus of material lies in the rediscovered calendar. Tovar's "Historia" was merely a digest of Durán's work, but the calendar presents us with a new Indian-Christian correlation, as well as new and unique light on rituals. Nuggets of new information of ethnological interest are few, but important.

As in the Maya field, attempts to relate Indian to Christian dates in the highland areas have proved increasingly difficult. First serious students of the matter, like H. H. Bancroft, assumed that there were several regional and other variations, but later in the nineteenth century and to the present there has been a search for a "unitary" theory based on the idea that the Indian groups had one "New Year's Day" which fell at the same time all over the area. The German scholar, Eduard Selser and the distinguished Mexicanist, Alfonso Caso, have been the chief proponents of this view.

A mass of data and acute criticism by Kubler seriously damage if they do not demolish the unitary arguments. Kubler suggests that there were probably many original variations. He adds that a neat and compact table of symbols for the Mexican twenty-day periods, on which theorizing has been based, is largely a colonial invention conditioned by European calendrical practices which gave aboriginal American usages a precision and sharpness they did not originally ever possess. Kubler (and Gibson) argue that the tendency to generalize and systematize the operation of calendar systems was a pre-Cortesian trait, that each successive political and cultural wave attempted to systematize the local variants, and that the process produced disintegration of the latter and change in the more generalized systems. They conclude, "With the advent of the Spaniards, the Aztec calendar was probably already a mosaic of fragments inherited, adapted, and partly systematized from numbers of nearly forgotten and rearranged calendrical practices. The Spaniards themselves repeated the process."

In this connection it is worth while to mention a recent and important work by Alfonso Caso, which appeared after the Kubler-Gibson work. At the XXIX International Congress of Americanists held in New York (1949) Señor Caso presented a paper entitled "El Mapa de Teozacoalco." It is a preview and summary of a much larger work which Caso says he has in press. In it Caso has managed to translate an important group of historical manuscripts written in Indian hieroglyphs and thus provides a chronological framework for the Mixteca area going back to about A.D. 838. Accompanied by reproductions of the principal sources and an explanation of how he was able to crack the enigma, his paper appears in *Cuadernos Americanos* (VII [September-October 1949, No. 5] 145-181), with illustrations. According to Caso's reading of the new Mixteca material sometime in 973 or 985 the local

ruler of one of the dynasties in southern Mexico made important changes in the local calendar system, shifting it from the Zapotec system to one more near the Aztec and other Mixtec ones. Though Señor Caso's short synthesis gives us the major conclusions and data Americanists familiar with his views so long have awaited, it merely whets the appetite for the longer, more detailed work, parts of which can be set in the framework sketched by Kubler and Gibson.

In the extensive and impressive bibliography (one of the most complete to date on the highly specialized matter of Mexican chronology) one notes with surprise the absence of certain old favorites like H. H. Bancroft, and the old but useful papers of Cyrus Thomas. There can be no doubt, however, that the able synthesis and critique furnished by Kubler and Gibson provides a point of departure for reevaluating old work and attempting new. This is a sound monographic treatment, beautifully manufactured by the Yale University Press. It is a specialist's item.

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HOWARD CLINE.

Crónica Mexicayotl. By FERNANDO ALVARADO TEZOMOC, translated from Nahuatl by ADRIÁN LEÓN. [Instituto de Historia, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.] (México City: Imprenta Universitaria, 1949. Pp. xxvii, 189. Illustration, index. Paper.)

The publication of the *Crónica Mexicayotl* fills a bad gap in our knowledge of Mexico's pre-Spanish history. Known as an existing source for two hundred years, it was available only to those students who were able to read Nahuatl and could also afford to consult the manuscript at the National Library in Paris. It was written around 1609 by a grandson of the unfortunate Moctezuma, Don Fernando Alvarado Tezomoc, long since famous for his Spanish *Crónica mexicana*, and, as the initial statements of this noble Indian historian clearly reveal, contains the biased points of view of the once ruling house of Tenochtitlan.

The first part deals with the long migrations of the Aztecs or Mexicans after departing from the mythological places of Aztlán and Chicomoztóc under the leadership of their tribal god Huitzilopochtli. Later we learn of their arrival in the valley of Mexico but the difficulties they had to overcome with the people already established there are barely sketched. Finally, Tenochtitlan is founded on the islands in lake Texcoco. All this is vividly described with many interesting details such as the migrants' primitive way of life, their relationship with the Michoacanos and the struggle between Huitzilopochtli and his mythological relatives.