

The second part refers again to the foundation of Tenochtitlan. The early relations with neighbors are again treated in a veiled manner for the facts were not too flattering to the pride of the Mexicans. What then follows is a list of the kings of Tenochtitlan with surprisingly few data about real doings and conquests. The author is here much more concerned with lengthy pedigrees, carrying them down to his own days at the close of the sixteenth century. To each date given in the Mexican chronological system is attached the corresponding Christian one. It is not clear who established this correlation, but in any case it should be taken with the utmost reserve in light of Paul Kirchhoff's new theory that multiple calendars coexisted in the valley of Mexico.

As a whole, the *Crónica Mexicayotl* in many aspects closely parallels the recently published *Unos anales históricos de la nación mexicana* (also called *Anales de Tlatelolco*). The latter contain the equally biased view points of Tenochtitlan's twin city, Tlatelolco, so that with both complementary sources at hand and a critical mind we can come closer to the historical truth than by the use of only one.

The presentation of the book has suffered through the absence of Adrián León, the able translator, who, after finishing the translation, left Mexico for the United States and therefore did not check the final edition. His foreword is printed but none of the notes and comments offered in the same foreword. Even the arrangement of the book is left unexplained: in the center of each page the original Nahuatl text, below it an almost literal translation, and above it a free translation though not notably different from the literal one. The absence of explanatory notes is certainly a handicap for the non-professional reader; but the specialist will enjoy discovering for himself the parallels with other known sources.

With the inclusion of the Nahuatl text, the *Crónica Mexicayotl* is not only a valuable source book of information to historians but at the same time of inestimable value to linguists.

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Handbook of South American Indians, Vol. VI. Edited by JULIAN H. STEWARD. [Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 143.] (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1950. Pp. xiii, 715. Illustrations, maps, bibliography. \$5.00.)

With the present volume the Smithsonian's great *Handbook of South American Indians* is complete. This final volume consists of four parts considered by the editors to be in some way marginal to the study of

South-American native cultures; these parts cover ancient man, physical anthropology, the languages of South-American Indians, and geography and plant and animal resources. In addition, there is a folding map in a back pocket showing tribal locations and colored according to a classification of native languages. The twenty-one articles of which the text consists were contributed by sixteen different authors representing France, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile as well as the United States.

The *Handbook* (all volumes of it) is a valuable reference tool, but it has to be used with a certain caution—perhaps somewhat more caution than other reference works because it deals with a subject about which we really know very little. The editor suggests the need for caution very diplomatically by including separate articles on related subjects, by different contributors, in which opposite conclusions are drawn from the same data. The first two articles in this volume exemplify this practice: T. D. McCown's remarks on the antiquity of man in South America explicitly reject some of the conclusions of the following article by Joaquín Frenguelli entitled: "The present status of theories concerning primitive man in Argentina." Of course, both writers are not equally right, and the reader who will review for himself the sources cited by the two contributors can make his own judgment. In this particular case, the reviewer finds himself in full agreement with McCown.

It should further be noted that even when there is only one article on a subject in the *Handbook*, its reliability for reference need not be very high. For example, J. A. Mason's classification of South-American Indian languages in this volume is an impressionistic one based on very poor data, and it would be a serious mistake to base any very far-reaching historical conclusions on it. Nevertheless, this classification is accompanied by an admirable bibliography and can be very useful to some one doing research on the subject.

The articles that will be of most direct interest to historians are those on geography and plant and animal resources (pp. 319-543). These are excellent summaries of the topics covered, accompanied by several new maps. This part of the volume begins with sketches of the physical geography of the continent and its climates and vegetation by Carl O. Sauer. These sketches are very compact and systematic, serving primarily as notes to accompany four folding maps: a relief map in black and white, a geognostic map in color, and maps of climate and vegetation, also in color. Next comes an article on fauna and ethnozoology by Raymond M. Gilmore, with photographs and small-scale distribution maps. This article is extremely important, covering in some detail a field which has been especially inaccessible to historians and anthropologists; it is a long article, but one regrets that it could not have been

even longer. The emphasis is on native domestic animals and on the more important game, and local native names are given as well as taxonomic ones.

The subject of plants is introduced by a thoughtful summary of the use of wild plants in tropical South America by Claude Lévi-Strauss. The Andean area and the temperate south are not covered, although wild plants are also used to a very considerable extent in both areas, for food, dyes, and medicine. It is in the tropical part of the continent, however, that exploitation of wild plants and trees has been commercially important in modern times, so that a discussion of this area is especially welcome. The subject is so vast that the author has little space to devote to any one species.

The last article in the volume is another one by Sauer. It deals with cultivated plants of Central and South America and is perhaps the most important article in the volume under review. The field it covers is one in which there is a vast amount of very recent literature written by geneticists, ethnobotanists, and diffusionists, and Sauer has missed very little of it in his survey. He is especially interested in problems relating to the place and date of domestication of the various plants and he discusses them as problems, summarizing the evidence and leaving unsolved questions open. Such an approach gives the reader a far truer picture of our knowledge of the subject than he will get from some other *Handbook* articles which simply summarize the conclusions preferred by the author.

If there is anything to criticize in Sauer's article, it is his over-optimistic belief that domesticated plants, considered as culture traits, "may also reveal cultural origins and movements far antecedent to the usual data of archeology" (p. 488). None of the reconstructions of cultural movements suggested are based exclusively on genetic data; they also involve interpretations of distributions. Unfortunately, we are very far from having an entirely reliable set of rules with which to make reconstructions from distributions, nor have we any assurance that such rules can ever be formulated. Furthermore, plants move so far outside the range of historical record that we will probably never be able to establish the full distributions of domestic plants in America at first white contact even if we secure complete present day distributions. Sauer is perfectly well aware of these problems in specific cases, however, and I do not want to make too much of a single optimistic statement.

The large folding tribal map at the end of the volume deserves particular comment. It was compiled by the editor, Julian H. Steward, and some discussion of its sources and limitations will be found in the

preface (p. xi). It needs a great deal more explanation than this. In the course of compiling a rival map, I have had to review all the problems involved and have found a very large number of inaccuracies and distortions in Steward's map, most serious, perhaps, in Colombia and Venezuela. Like the text, the map should be approached with caution.

The volumes of the *Handbook* issued to date have no indexes, but a separate index to the whole work has been promised. It is to be hoped that this index will appear soon, for the work is too complex to be used easily without it.

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BRIEF MENTION

The Pre-Conquest Tribute and Service System of the Maya as Preparation for the Spanish "Repartimiento-Encomienda" in Yucatan. By ROBERT S. CHAMBERLAIN. [University of Miami Hispanic-American Studies, No. 10.] (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1951. Pp. 31. Paper.) A study based on a wide acquaintance with the sources and the literature by an expert in the history of Yucatan. In brief compass it provides an excellent explanation of the Spanish institutions involved and by quotations from various sources illustrates the Maya antecedents. Exemplifies one of the many ways in which sixteenth-century Spaniards and Indians reciprocally influenced each other, apart from the influence of brute force.

Etnografía del Estado Mérida. By JOSÉ IGNACIO LARES. [Publicaciones de la Dirección de Cultura, Universidad de los Andes.] (Mérida: 1950. Pp. 34. Paper.) A reissue of an ethnographical curiosity written in the late nineteenth century by an amateur scholar. Because a good deal of tradition, since lost, and some linguistic data are included the reprint is justified. The author apparently did a good deal of field work in an unsystematic way.

COLONIAL PERIOD

Historia de México. By ANDRÉS CAVO. Annotated by ERNESTO J. BURRUS, S. J. Preface by MARIANO CUEVAS, S. J. (Mexico City: Editorial Patria, S. A., 1949. Pp. 491. Index, bibliography. Paper.)

This new edition of Cavo's *Historia de México* may be regarded as the definitive text for scholars and general readers. Previous publications (Mexico, 1836; Mexico, 1852; Jalapa, 1870) depended upon the editorial labors of Carlos María Bustamante and were not wholly faithful to the original. The present text is a transcription of the Spanish manuscript in the University of Texas, with notes by Cavo, Bustamante, and the new editor, P. Ernesto J. Burrus, S. J. An edition of the Latin manuscript, which parallels the Spanish, is also planned.

Cavo, an eighteenth-century Mexican Jesuit, moved in the historical circle of Pichardo and León y Gama. His life was spent in New Spain