

cessful in conveying the interest and excitement of the familiar story of Columbus and the conquistadores, and the somewhat less familiar travels of Humboldt and La Condamine. To the traditional motives of gold, glory, and God that spurred the conquistadores on to the New World, Leithäuser adds sex—the allurements of naked Indian women. But although the reading is good, it is also apparent that the author is not always abreast of the latest work done in the fields which he traverses so speedily. This is particularly obvious in his treatment of the leading Indian civilizations in the New World. Furthermore, he appears to be a victim of the Black Legend in such remarks as: "If Dutch navigators rather than Spaniards had discovered and colonized America, their more humane outlook might have spared mankind one of its blackest epochs." It is curious that although Leithäuser regards Amerigo Vespucci as "this braggart chronicler of travels," and has few kind words to say of him, he (or perhaps a Knopf editor) inserts on page 88 a map of the route of Vespucci's controversial first voyage which gives Vespucci credit for exploring the coasts of North America as far north as Virginia. This seems to be the same map that appears on page 163 of Germán Arciniegas' *Amerigo and the New World*, also published in 1955 by Knopf—a book that is filled with kind words about Vespucci.

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## BACKGROUND

*Apu Inca Atawallpaman. Elegía quechua anónima.* Collected by J. M. FARFÁN. Translation by JOSÉ MARÍA ARGUEDAS. Lima, 1955. Juan Mejía Baca and P. L. Villanueva. Illustrations. Pp. 23. Paper.

This new translation by José María Arguedas, the eminent Quechuist, is a closer reading of the form as well as the words of the anonymous elegy discovered by J. M. B. Farfán, the indefatigable devotee of Quechua traditions. Farfán has published two of

his own versions, one in his collection *Poesía folklórica quechua* in 1942, the second in the book of the Bolivian writer, Jesús Lara, *La poesía quechua*, in 1947.

In the introduction to the present handsomely printed volume, Arguedas tells how the elegy was found, not previously related, and why he disagrees with Farfán and Lara who place the poem as a piece of pre-Columbian literature. His reasoning is valid: that it is impossible to determine conclusively the characteristics of Incaic poetry by the few fragments which remain, and that the tone of the elegy, in reacting to the death of Atahualpa, with whom the Inca dynasty ended when he was killed by Pizarro, implies it was written at a distance in years when the fact of what his death meant, their loss as an independent people, had had time to be impressed on the Indians.

It is a beautiful elegy, swelling with dignity and sorrow, a lament for the Quechua people as much as for Atahualpa. The sun darkens to nightfall, they sing, *it shrouds Atahualpa, his body, and his name.* The tight syllabic construction of the verses, with which Arguedas has been scrupulously careful, brings out a rhythm of crisp cries. Arguedas, moreover, in translating by image rather than by descriptive adjectives, like Farfán, shows the imaginative vision of Quechua poetry.

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*Bonampak, Chiapas, México.* By KARL RUPPERT, J. ERIC S. THOMPSON, and TATIANA PROSKOURIAKOFF. Washington, 1955. Carnegie Institution of Washington. Illustrations. Maps. Appendix. References. Pp. xii, 71. Paper. \$3.00.

This volume, written for the expert and not the general reader, is an archaeological description of the Mayan ruins at Bonampak. Part I is a thorough description of the site: its buildings, sculpture, and hieroglyphic texts, together with a summary of the history and geography of the area. Included are sectional drawings illustrating various elevations of ten of the