

were no seafaring peoples, for the simple reason that no wood was to be found on the desert coast of Peru. For geobotanical reasons balsa navigation was limited to the equatorial tribes. And archaeological evidence corroborates a *critical* study of historical sources, to the effect that the Inca conquest on the coast never reached beyond Túmbez.

The omission of a modern map of the Archipelago is to be regretted.

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COLONIAL PERIOD

The Colonial Period in the History of the New World. By SILVIO ZAVALA. Abridgement in English by MAX SAVELLE. México, 1962. Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia. Maps. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 354. Paper.

Superficiality is the bane of syntheses and comparative studies of historical phenomena. Despite the immensity of the task of surveying for the first time the development of the Western Hemisphere in the colonial period Dr. Silvio Zavala and his collaborators have successfully avoided this all-too-frequent pitfall. Judged by the criteria of perspective, thoroughness, and depth, this study has on the whole achieved a high plane of endeavor.

Colonial historians have long been familiar with the general aim of this ambitious project. Since the teachings of Herbert Bolton there has been the hope of viewing the course of civilization in the Americas as a whole instead of from divergent regional and nationalistic standpoints. The feasibility of the present undertaking rests mainly on the assumption that fundamental unities do exist. Sponsored by the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, a commission of distinguished scholars from north and south of the Rio Grande has worked for some years toward this goal. Studies of the pre-Columbian and nationalist periods will complete the picture.

Patently, difficulties in the selection, organization, and presentation of this huge amount of data were manifold. Dr. Zavala's introduction, published earlier in the *American Historical Review* (July, 1961), is an excellent exposition of the problems encountered. The inclusion of the European background and the interaction of such "antecedents and the American areas of colonization" could not be avoided. Hence the collaborators agreed, and rightly so, on a "dual focus," even though this detracts from the unity of the work. To a

minor degree, influences emanating from Africa and Asia are identified. Complicating the search for similarities are the relationships produced by one colonizing movement upon another through proximity in location, the survival of aboriginal customs, and the appearance of "compound phenomena," such as the plantation. The factors of "change and the march of time" are taken into consideration, for colonial institutions were assuredly not immutable. The eighteenth century "introduced into all the hemisphere an acceleration of historical changes and precipitated a state of crisis in the colonial structures" (p. XXVI). As a phase of the quickening tempo there was an expansion of the "exterior and interior contacts of America" (p. XXVII).

In addition, there was the matter of internal treatment. In the account of colonial societies it was wisely decided to describe and compare "types of phenomena" in the various colonies rather than to deal with specific geographical areas or with periods or centuries. By necessity, brevity was a virtue. The allocation of space to the topics shows balance and judgment. Thus greater attention is given to political, economic, and social conditions in the Americas than to contacts with the Orient and Africa. The abridgement in English is well done.

On the other hand, defects, some almost inevitable in a discussion of a subject of this magnitude, are apparent. There are occasional hasty generalizations and inaccuracies. Is it true to state that "the abundance of the native population in the Amazon region expedited the establishment of missions" (p. 251)? The bibliography, selected to include only significant works and monographs, fails to note studies of the Viceroyalty of Peru, one of the two most important areas in the Spanish Empire. More careful editorial coordination might have eliminated unnecessary repetition of facts and dates. Thus the union of Spain and Portugal, with dates, is mentioned at least seven times.

To the reviewer the general conclusions of the survey come as no surprise. But that they support "the advisability of rejecting flat or absolute affirmations on the unity or diversity in the history of the New World" does not impair the worth of this unique study. To the students of colonial history it is an unsurpassed compendium of parallels, contrasts, and suggested relationships of events, movements, and institutions. Not the least of its merits is the opening up of new fields of inquiry in scholarship. To the more zealous and curious it is the beginning rather than the last word.

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