

## BACKGROUND

*Mexico. Ancient Peoples and Places.* By MICHAEL D. COE. New York, 1962. Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher. Illustrations. Maps. Table. Bibliography. Notes. Index. Pp. 245. \$6.95.

Students who desire a brief, authoritative survey of modern knowledge concerning Mexican archaeology will find it in this volume by Michael Coe. The subject is one that changes rapidly, with fresh discoveries and revisions of hypotheses, and there is a continuous need for new general works. In Mexican archaeology the gulf between expert and layman is unusually wide, partly because of the subject's own accelerated growth, partly because the uninformed reader is not in a position to distinguish good popularization from bad. Michael Coe may be categorically identified as a good popularizer. The presentation is controlled and sober. There is no appeal to the more bizarre forms of human interest. There is no romanticism. Fact and speculation are carefully distinguished. The material is up to date. The style is easy and assured.

The book begins with the environment and languages of Mexico and proceeds at once to ancient man. The subject is developed chronologically through the four periods, Archaic, Formative, Classic, and Post-Classic. The Maya are not included, "Mexico" here being the area from Tehuantepec to the northern frontier between settled and nomadic peoples. The chapters dealing with Early Hunters and Archaic and Formative cultures are successful surveys of complex subjects rarely treated in a comprehensive way in English. In the Classic period we have a clear explanation of the position of Teotihuacan in Mexican archaeology, quite different from the position once assigned it by Vaillant and others. A final chapter relates to the Aztec empire at the end of this long sequence. Chronologies are tabulated. Maps are clear and uncluttered. There are numerous drawings and good photographs of scenes, sites, and artifacts. The bibliography is brief and selective.

This useful book would be still more useful, in my opinion, if the text were longer and more detailed and if scholarly citations were systematically keyed to the discussion. The seventy-five plates are carefully identified, but there are no comparable identifications of the textual statements through written sources.

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*El mestizaje en la historia de Ibero-América.* Edited by MAGNUS MÖRNER. Mexico, 1961. Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia. Index. Pp. 104. Paper.

Organized by the Instituto Ibero-América of Stockholm (in cooperation with the Commission on History), the Colloquium of which these are the Proceedings was held August 19, 1960, in connection with the Eleventh International Congress of Historical Sciences in Stockholm. These various sponsors reflect the international flavor of the gathering, which brought together to discuss *mestizaje* about 45 specialists from Europe (including Russia), the United States, and Latin America itself. They listened to five prepared papers, several prepared comments, and what in Spanish appears as "interventions," but here innocuously meaning general remarks in free discussion.

As the topic of the meeting was mixtures—racial and cultural—there was no lack of controversial views, often strongly stated. Not all participants fully agreed with our colleague Professor Bailey Diffie who, after tracing his own Indian ancestry and relating his known views on lack of Indian contribution to Spanish colonial civilization, stated flatly, "we are talking about questions of little value" (p. 92).

As background to the discussions and meeting, its chief organizer, Magnus Mörner, prepared and circulated in advance a long paper on the state of research concerning *mestizaje*, with extended bibliography. It is here printed (pp. 9-51), the longest and possibly most substantial essay in the Proceedings. Richard Konetzke read a prepared paper, "La legislación española y el *mestizaje* en América," which summarized rights and some of the legal restrictions placed on cross-breeds by the colonial laws of Spanish America. Woodrow Borah presented (in Spanish) an essay (printed here in English) outlining the theoretical base for study of race mixture along demographic lines which he and Sherburne F. Cooke (who appears as co-author in the Proceedings) are pursuing. John Gillin, in speaking on "The Social Transformation of the *Mestizos*," sustained the thesis that (in contrast to colonial days) the social status of modern *mestizos* is now "respectable" in many parts of Latin America, that the concept of aristocratic "pure whiteness" is fading for a number of reasons. Wigberto Jiménez Moreno spoke at some length, his revised remarks appearing here as "El *mestizaje* y la transculturación en Mexiamérica." For the puzzled, the latter area is the Southwest of the United States, Mexico, and Central America; his theme was the varied impact of European culture in various parts of Mexico, and that, as such, the *mestizo* as a group did not act as one until the period of the Wars of Independence. The final prepared talk, by J. M. Siso Martínez, dealt with the Venezuelan social process and its interpreta-

tion. After inevitably invoking the Liberator's views, he reviewed the various sociological interpretations of social classes and their role in Venezuelan history by national historians.

It would be unwise, if not impossible, to try to summarize the widely divergent statements which various commentators and discussants are reported to have made. These ranged from Marxian views to the best nineteenth-century romantic, it being obvious or at least assumed that any and all persons can be expert in a field so ill-defined and plagued by semantic traps and emotional pitfalls.

The least that can be said by way of conclusions is that there was some consensus that the problems of *mestizaje* are complex. Like all good academic meetings, there was a strong feeling that there should be more study, and more conferences about it. In view of the importance of the subject, this may well be true. This was a useful attempt to set some perimeters of the various problems, indicating in general that intuition more than research underlies most generalizations about the genesis, role, historical function, and importance of classes in colonial Latin America.

Hispanic Foundation

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*The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila.* By TERESA OF ÁVILA. Translated by DAVID LEWIS. Westminster, Maryland, 1962. The Newman Press. Index. Pp. xxii, 432. \$4.50.

*Felipe. Being the Little Known History of the Only Canonized Saint Born in North America.* By HELENE MARGARET. Milwaukee, 1962. The Bruce Publishing Company. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. viii, 107. \$3.00.

This *Life* has long stood the test of a classic in autobiography. Though couched in direct and unadorned diction—it was written in what spare half-hours the author could salvage from a very active life—there is a sweep to the thought and narrative not unlike the movement of a Mozart concerto. How she handled her theme is told in Teresa's own words: "I have put down all that has happened to me with all the simplicity and sincerity possible." (350) A disarming preface pictures her childhood, family, home, friends. Then quite easily the reader is borne up to the level of her mature years, and the work begins to take on power. Its course was defined for her by her then spiritual director, Pedro Ibáñez. To help him teach this most able student, he instructed her to "describe at length my way of