

varied. Céspedes also begged “that we all abstain from polemics on the virtues of one or another methodological orientation.” He held that we should not try “to prove the superiority of a certain school while despising others” (p. 207). Such a plea seemed to be in order, especially in view of the acrid attacks on Professor Webb. The book herein reviewed is well balanced and the papers are well written. The editors have compiled a useful index. A book of this sort is always worthwhile. It will long be valuable to students interested in historiography.

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*Archivo General de Simancas guía del investigador.* Edited by ÁNGEL DE LA PLAZA. Valladolid, 1962. Gráficas Andrés Martín, S. A. Dirección General de Archivos y Bibliotecas. Patronato Nacional de Archivos Históricos. Notes. Charts. Tables. Indices. Illustrations. Pp. CVIII, 288. Paper.

Although the Archivo General de Simancas is considered one of the “Big Three” in Spain, along with the Archivo General de Indias at Seville and the Archivo Histórico Nacional of Madrid, its complex holdings have defied those archivists who sought to write guides in the past. In 1921 Mariano Alcocer published one, and in 1958 Ricardo Magdalena did a thumb-nail sketch of the AGS. Former director, Ángel de la Plaza, has written one of the most valuable studies of the archives and its vast collections.

With an abiding affection for the “very loyal town of Simancas,” as well as for its document-filled fortress, Señor Plaza traces the panorama of the charming rural town from the fourth century to the present day. The scene of much fighting during the Reconquest, Simancas was chosen by the admirals Fadrique and Alonso Enríquez as the site for the construction of a fortress between 1467 and 1480. Although it served the Catholic Monarchs after 1490, and during the sixteenth century witnessed the torture and secret murders of a host of state prisoners, the Simancas fortress was destined to become the repository of the royal archival collections of Castile. Between 1540 and 1545 documents poured into the musty chambers under the care of Antonio Catalán, first “keeper” of the archives.

Winters are often brutal at Simancas as Spanish chronicler Juan Bautista Muñoz discovered in 1784 when he almost froze while doing research for his *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*. Because of this experience, he suggested organizing a new archives with all documents dealing with the Americas in a warmer clime, say Seville. Some 3,000 legajos

were subsequently transferred in the first shipment of documents to the now-famous Archivo General de Indias. Simancas has suffered a more recent loss, when many legajos dealing with naval affairs were transferred to the newly-organized Archivo de Guerra de Marina Alvaro de Bazán, at el Viso del Marqués in the southern Mancha.

Señor Plaza describes the recent improvements in the ancient structure, which have resulted in a modern, fire-proof, maximum security vault, complete with de-humidifying equipment, which all seem out of place when one crosses a fifteenth-century drawbridge into a fairy-tale dungeon! Another example of foresightedness is the *residencia* opened in 1955 for the benefit of researchers who wish to avoid the daily round-trip to Valladolid. Equipped with modern, airy rooms and boasting an excellent cuisine, Simancas researchers may pause to enjoy their tasks.

After this excellent introduction to the town and the archives, the author gets down to the meat-and-potatoes of his book: the organization, contents, and subject matter of the thousands of legajos. Basically, the documents can be divided into eight significant groups: *Patronato Real*; Diplomatic and *Consejo de Estado* correspondence; correspondence relating to the consulates and councils of Flanders, Italy, and Portugal during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; acts and correspondence of the Council and Chamber of Castile; the "*Registro del Sello de Corte*"; *Casa Real-Obras y Bosques*; the secretariats of Grace and Justice, War, and Marine; and *Hacienda*.

The *Patronato Real* section, first organized by Diego de Ayala in the sixteenth century, is one of the oldest and most valuable groups of documents. Consisting of more than 91 legajos and 46 volumes, the time span is from 810 to 1791, and the subject matter everything from feudal homage and treaties between Moors and Christians to papal bulls, the Inquisition, and royal appointments to ecclesiastical positions

The *Consejo Real de Castilla*, one of the oldest and certainly the most typical of the Spanish councils, exercised administrative, legislative, and judicial powers, so its 3,000-plus legajos provide a revealing glimpse of internal history for Castile during the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries.

Of most interest to Americanists will be the section known as *Guerra Moderna*, legajos 6,799 through 7,327, which contain documents dealing with Buenos Aires, Cuba, Chile, the Borderlands of the United States, Guatemala, and other areas in Latin America. A wealth of material on regular and militia organization, service records, fortifications, Indian revolts and foreign rivalry are contained therein.

In each case, where he introduces a major section of the Archives, Señor Plaza has given an informative, succinct introduction to the Spanish institutions, which is most useful to the student just beginning to study Spanish colonial history. His book, supplemented by an adequate index and excellent photographs of the town and fortress, is destined to become a standard reference tool for those studying Spanish history or intending to do research at Simancas.

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#### COLONIAL PERIOD

*Magellan's Voyage Around the World, Three Contemporary Accounts.*

Edited by CHARLES E. NOWELL. Evanston, 1962. Northwestern University Press. Maps. Notes. Index. Pp. 349. \$7.50.

Here is a new book on Magellan's voyage which brings both excitement and pleasure in its fresh presentation of three original accounts of the voyage, its fascinating biographical sketches, its excellent analysis of the geographical ideas of the time which inspired this voyage which, in turn, played such havoc with them, and its lucid summary of the whole project.

Most useful to scholars in the field will be the excellent bibliographical notes found throughout all the sections of the book, bringing the reader up to date on the best studies which have been made on this subject. Professor Nowell is completely at home in his field and provides sure guidance to the best in the maze of Magellan literature that has appeared during the past four centuries. The bibliographical references are so rich that one wishes that a formal listing of the materials used might also have been included to add to the ease of reference.

Welcome though this book may be to Magellan experts, it is not primarily designed for them. Its purpose, as clearly stated in the introduction, is to offer to modern readers three of the most interesting contemporary accounts of Magellan's voyage. All three of these accounts have appeared before in excellent English translations and, in fact, Professor Nowell has used the best of these (J. A. Robertson's translation of Pigafetta's account and the translations appearing in the Hakluyt Society's publication of Lord Stanley of Alderley's *First Voyage around the World by Magellan* for the other two) rather than new translations, his purpose again being to make these newly and more readily accessible to the reading public.