

chart. The second section of the volume reproduces several documents relating to the expedition, including the report of Don Carlos. This is the most detailed survey of Florida topography to that time made by the Spanish. This in translation, was included by Leonard (1939) in his *The Spanish Approach to Pensacola, 1689-1693* (Vol. IX, Quivira Society, Albuquerque, N. M.).

The brief third section reveals the continued interest of the Spanish authorities in the security of Pensacola Bay, and presents four short documents of 1698 and 1699, of which Don Carlos contributed three. The bay itself was not permanently occupied until 1698.

For several years prior to his death in 1700, Don Carlos suffered excruciatingly from calculi. In his will he requested an autopsy be made so as to reveal to the physicians whether these were biliary or renal. It is obvious Don Carlos' innate ability was developed exclusively in New Spain. It is also evident credit for its recognition and encouragement must be given to the Jesuits, who must have stimulated his talents.

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Breve historia de Coyoacán. By SALVADOR NOVO. Altos, 1962. Ediciones Era, S.A. Illustrations. Index. Bibliography. Pp. 109. Paper.

The above mentioned book is exactly what its title suggests. The author, who is primarily a dramatist, desired to provide a short narrative history of Coyoacán, the city immediately adjacent to Mexico's capital on the south. Since a work of original scholarship was not his intention, Novo relied upon standard sources, especially in the pre-Conquest and Conquest periods, often using them quite effectively for his purposes. The writer displays both the virtues and the defects of a playwright venturing into historical writing: The quality of the writing is first-rate, with humor and irony used especially well. Novo likewise

displays a keen sense of the dramatic and esthetic aspects of history. On the other hand his account is somewhat too episodic and insufficiently analytical.

After a brief explanation, with sketches, of the volcanic origins of the area provided by Dr. Atl, the author recounts the Tepanac period in pre-Conquest history in some detail. The Conquest, insofar as it related to Coyoacán, is also given fairly fully. The author takes an exceedingly dim view of Cortés, who for a time established his residence at Coyoacán. Novo intersperses this part of his narrative with frequent quotations, occasionally overly long.

Regrettably, only about a fourth of the book concerns Coyoacán since the 16th century. In this part the author does not attempt a connected narrative, preferring descriptions, anecdotes, references to historic buildings or streets, comments on the undoubted beauties of his city, and occasional population statistics. The one reference to the United States is an unflattering one, relating to an incident in the advance on Mexico City during the Mexican War. As a consequence of this episodic technique, the reader gains very little understanding of Coyoacán's political, social, and demographic relationship to the revolutionary changes that have taken place in Mexico in this century.

The chief utility of this book is for students of Indian and early colonial Mexico. The narrative is not sufficiently well sustained for the scholar of the modern history of the country to find much of value.

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Bernal Díaz. Historian of the Conquest. By HERBERT CERWIN. Norman, 1963. University of Oklahoma Press. Maps. Illustrations. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xii, 239. \$4.95.

The importance of Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *True History of the Conquest of Mexico* is well known to anyone who has even a passing interest in the story

of Cortés and his expedition. Less well known, and inevitably still unknown in some ways, is the story of the old soldier in Guatemala who provided this basic chronicle. Cerwin has attempted to provide the reader with "a better insight into Bernal Díaz's life, his character, and the period in which he lived." This he has done in a scholarly and entertaining manner. In some respects this book is only a synthesis of available historical scholarship, but the synthesis has been compiled with care and with enough additional information to make it valuable. Cerwin says of Bernal Díaz's account, "It is gossipy, full of human interest, and it has by now become a classic." This biographical study probably will not become a classic but it does qualify for a similar description on the first two counts.

Taking advantage of his personal knowledge of Guatemala (The author was born in Guatemala City and, while compiling this book, traveled over a part of the territory to which Bernal Díaz refers), and making use of pertinent archives in Mexico, Spain, and Guatemala, Cerwin has pieced together as much as he could of the personal life and fortune of this famous conquistador. Bernal Díaz emerges as a human being with predictable virtues and faults and as a persistent, if only partially successful, lobbyist on behalf of the soldiers of the Conquest. Two trips to Spain to plead his personal case before the king and the Council of the Indies made him no less the spokesman for others like him. His *True History* was in part a propaganda document aimed toward the same end.

All of the uncertainties concerning the life of Bernal Díaz have not been resolved by this work. The date of his birth, the actual date of the writing of the *True History*, the question of his participation in the Yucatán expedition of 1518, the relationship of the colonists to specific colonial officials—these and other such items are still subject to dispute. Cerwin, however, has presented such disagreements fairly and without excessive dogmatism. He

does attempt to establish his own belief that the manuscript in the Guatemala archives, long considered the original, is a copy, and his evidence is convincing. It is not apparent, however, what real difference this makes in the uses that have been made of the *True History*.

This is a worthwhile book for students of Latin American history and should be a most entertaining book for the general reader. Cerwin writes clearly, interestingly, and well. The University of Oklahoma Press has done its usual excellent job in the preparation and presentation of the book.

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La conquista de la Nueva Castilla.
Edited by F. RAND MORTON. México, 1963. Colección Studium. 38. Pp. lxxxi, 99. Paper.

The publication of this "Relación de la conquista y descubrimiento que hizo el marqués don Francisco Piçarro . . ." is welcome news to all those who are interested in the conquest of what then was called Peru. Known also as "crónica rimada," this narrative poem of ca. 1537 was an intangible phantom for the majority of investigators, since of the 1848 edition there seems to be left only one known copy, while the manuscript itself is kept in Vienna.

This welcome new edition was prepared by Professor F. Rand Morton, who also provided an excellent preliminary study.

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Estudios de etnología antigua de Venezuela. 2nd ed. By MIGUEL ACOSTA SAIGNES. Caracas, 1961. Universidad Central de Venezuela. Colección Ciencias Sociales. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xxiv, 247.

There are no significant changes in this second edition of a work originally published in 1954. However, this fact will disappoint only those