

the outbreak of the Thirty Years War. All these subjects receive skillful attention in this informative, lucidly presented monograph.

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*La Real Academia Sevillana de Buenas Letras en el siglo XVIII.* By FRANCISCO AGUILAR PIÑAL. Madrid, 1966. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. Anejos de Revista de Literatura. Illustrations. Appendices. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xix, 392.

Most students of Spanish history recognize the important influence of institutions such as the Real Academia de la Lengua or the Real Academia de la Historia. Unfortunately, other academies of lesser fame, but perhaps of equal importance collectively, are little known to students of Spanish history. With admirable diligence Aguilar Piñal has consulted the papers of some twenty archives to give us a careful and comprehensive picture of the history, personnel, and scholarly work of a Sevillian counterpart to these national academies. Founded in 1751, the Real Academia Sevillana de Buenas Letras met regularly until 1808. Refounded in 1820, it continues in activity to the present day.

The author begins by tracing in a general way the academy movement in Spain and particularly in Seville. Next come biographical sketches of the founding members, and these are followed by three chapters on the internal organization and history of the academy until 1808. The most interesting and significant part of the book is the second half, devoted to evaluating the intellectual activity of the academy. Here the author considers the content of dissertations read before the academy, the publications of its members, and, in general, the intellectual role and orientation of the academy and its members.

His principal findings can be given under three headings. First, during the second half of the eighteenth century there appeared in the indolent and tradition-bound capital of Andalucía an important center of the Enlightenment at this academy, which "cooperated passionately with the government in the enterprise of national restoration" (p. 281). Second, though religiously orthodox, even at the end of the eighteenth century, these academicians "saw themselves as disciples of Feijóo and, as such, moderate skeptics, experimental philosophers, and furious anti-scholastics" (p. 278). Third, the academicians constituted a part of the "intellectual middle class . . . composed of lawyers, merchants, artisans, functionaries, men of finance, and philosophers," whose manner of life and values contrasted radically with the nobility of Spain (p. 218).

The academy had its most promising opportunity for lasting general influence in connection with the reform of the University of Seville, and the author attributes to one of its members the authorship of a new plan of studies prepared in 1767 and submitted to the crown by Pablo Olavide, then *asistente* in Seville. Unfortunately, the plan did not go into effect.

The book has appendices containing the documents of foundation, the personnel and officers of the academy, and the titles of the dissertations read before the academy, as well as other writings preserved in its archives. There is an index of names, but none of materials.

In summary, this is a well-researched, thorough book, perhaps a bit too discursive for American taste, but nevertheless a worthwhile contribution to the study of eighteenth-century Spain that illuminates perceptively the role of the Sevillian academy.

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*Northern Mists*. By CARL O. SAUER. Berkeley, 1968. University of California Press. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Index. Pp. 204. \$5.75.

Carl O. Sauer has combined a broad knowledge of geography with legend, saga, and history to produce a highly readable work. His theme is the North Atlantic in the thousand years before Columbus, as he traces maritime activity in that ocean back from the immediately pre-Columbian voyages of the Portuguese, Danish, and English through the pursuits of the Hansa and the Hermandad de las Marismas (a kind of southern Hansa of the Basque and Asturian coasts) during the High Middle Ages and on to Viking and possible Celtic explorations of a still earlier day. Sauer's contention is that all these Europeans looked upon the North Atlantic not as a "tenebrous sea," but as a highway to religious and political refuge or to the main chance, particularly when economic opportunities of the Mediterranean basin declined. The net result is to diminish Columbus' claims to preeminence, which in this as in other works Sauer is at some pains to discredit.

The point which will probably excite the most interest is his attempt to validate an old surmise by pushing the discovery of America back beyond the Norse to the Irish. According to him, in the fifth century, chiefly for religious reasons, the Irish began a westward advance that carried them via the Hebrides, Orkneys, Shetlands, and Faroes to Iceland, where they arrived at least a century before the