

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

Norse. Pressed by the Viking invaders, they then pushed on to Greenland and America, where they settled "Hvitramannaland"—Ireland the Great—in the St. Lawrence Valley some time in the tenth century.

Sauer bases these speculations chiefly on three pieces of evidence. The first is the prominence of Hvitramannaland in the Norse sagas; it is actually mentioned more often than Vinland. The second is the recent archaeological discovery of Helge and Anne Ingstad at the Strait of Belle Isle. Because of carbon dating and extensive evidence of ironworking, an activity seldom found among the Greenland Norse, Sauer argues that the site was Irish rather than Norse. Finally he cites frequent observations by the post-Columbian explorers that the Algonquian Indians practiced ceremonies resembling those of the Christian religion, an indication that they had been in contact with a Christian people over an extended period. While the first two arguments may have merit, the last is not convincing, for such observations were common among European explorers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries wherever they went.

Aside from the case for an Irish discovery and settlement of America, most of what Sauer has to say is not particularly original. He relies for documentation and for some of his interpretive ideas on Fridtjof Nansen's *In Northern Mists*, published in 1911, and on a relatively small number of other books. At least that is what one must assume from the rather inadequate footnotes and the total lack of bibliography. The insights and synthesis are nonetheless interesting and well worth the reader's time.

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COLONIAL AND INDEPENDENCE PERIODS

Colonial Art in Mexico. By MANUEL TOUSSAINT. Translated and edited by ELIZABETH WILDER WEISMANN. Austin, 1967. University of Texas. The Texas Pan American Series. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xxvi, 493.

As Mrs. Weismann graciously indicates in her foreword, Don Manuel Toussaint was the presiding genius of colonial Mexican art history—through a rich and active life, unhappily cut short in 1955. His many roles—researcher, teacher, and administrator—are firmly institutionalized in the History of Art division of the University of