

Studies Number 2. Notes. Tables. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 75.

A brief, informative summary of how, where, and by whom Latin American politics is studied in American universities. Some of the conclusions reached are fairly obvious, and the information does not go beyond the mid-1960s. The bibliography is a useful checklist of American books and articles dealing with Latin American governments.

D. M. P.

*Aproximaciones a la literatura hispano-americana.* By SALVADOR BUENO. La Habana, 1967. Instituto del Libro. Pp. 221. Paper.

In this little volume Salvador Bueno has published a collection of eighteen essays about literary subjects ranging in time from the *Popol Vuh* of the sixteenth century to the poetry of Gabriela Mistral in the twentieth. The essays were written originally for publication in newspapers or for public lectures between 1951 and 1967. They present topics of undeniable interest, but unfortunately, Bueno's approach to his subjects is calculated only to serve the needs of the general reader or beginning students of Latin American literature and contain practically nothing of interest to specialists or even to reasonably well-informed readers. The author's goal is modest—simply to provide basic facts and a modicum of literary interpretation and criticism—and this he achieves in articles which are usually sound and well written. In the United States, precisely because of these qualities, they might be most useful in undergraduate survey courses on Latin American literature as a supplement to the anthologies which are commonly used.

M. E. S.

*America's First Civilization. Discovering the Olmec.* By MICHAEL D. COE. New York, 1968. American Heritage Publishing Company in association with the Smithsonian Institution.

Illustrations. Maps. Figures. Appendix. Index. Pp. 159. \$4.95.

Michael Coe is one of the best of the young American archaeologists now working in Mexico and without doubt the best writer among them. It was only natural, therefore, that the *American Heritage* editors, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, should call upon him to write on the Olmec civilization.

Coe traces not only the history of the Olmecs, but also the history of Olmec studies. There are digressions, and much of the book deals with other areas and other peoples. The logic of including a reproduction of the Aztec calendar stone, for example, escaped me, though I must admit that it is attractively reproduced. All of the art work—maps, photographs, line drawings, charts, etc.—is up to the high standard maintained in *American Heritage*.

The prose does not read like *echt* Coe, however, and I suspect that the editors touched it up considerably to fit their notions of what the general public likes to read or can read. Still it is a beautiful work, and if history writing must be popularized, it could not have been under more happy circumstances.

R. E. Q.

*Situación social y económica de los Aztecas durante los siglos XV y XVI.* By FRIEDRICH KATZ. México, 1966. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. vii, 208. Paper.

Friedrich Katz is a Professor of Latin American History at Humboldt University in the German Democratic Republic who has specialized in both pre-conquest and twentieth-century Mexico. His doctoral dissertation on socioeconomic conditions among the Aztecs in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was published in Berlin in 1956 (reviewed in *HAHR*, May 1958). The present volume is substantially a translation of that work, with