

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

an appended chapter comparing Aztec and Inca societies.

The reviewer of the original edition, Charles Dibble, noted that Katz had failed to take into account recent publications on the Aztecs by Alfonso Caso and others. There is no evidence here that the text and bibliography have been brought up to date, though Katz does note some of the work of the past decade in his preface. This edition will be helpful chiefly for the Latin Americanists who do not know German and who therefore did not read the 1956 edition.

R. E. Q

Flute of the Smoking Mirror. A Portrait of Nezahualcoyotl—Poet-King of the Aztecs. By FRANCES GILLMOR. Tucson, 1968. University of Arizona Press. Illustrations. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 183. \$6.50.

Frances Gillmor first published this fictionalized account of the life of the Aztec poet-king Nezahualcoyotl in 1949. That edition was not reviewed in the *HAHR*. No one could confuse the book with a serious and scholarly history, though it does have footnotes and a bibliography. But it is useful for extra reading assignments in undergraduate courses, and I have included it on my book lists through the years. For this reason the new edition (a reprinting actually) should be welcomed by teachers of Latin American history.

R. E. Q.

Excavación en el Caney del Castillo. By J. M. GUARCH and R. PAYARES. La Habana, 1964. Academia de Ciencias de la República de Cuba. Departamento de Antropología. Illustrations. Maps. Charts. Tables. Figures. Appendices. Bibliography. Pp. 35. Paper.

These excavations were made in 1957, while the authors were fighting in the southern part of Camaguey province. The caney is a circular, artificially constructed burial mound yielding a single skeleton. The excavations by Guarch

and Payares were done in 20 cm. layers, and somehow in spite of the war they were able to draw sections of the profile and save all or most of the artifacts. These include shell gouges, worked flint, and hammerstones, all of which are well described, with provenience and frequency noted in a series of tables. For comparative purposes there is a map showing the locations of other mounds in this general area, as well as a chart itemizing the artifacts recovered from them. The authors conclude that the burial mound which they dug is typical of preceramic burials in the south of Camaguey and suggest that on the basis of present evidence it should be a few thousand years old.

JEREMIAH F. EPSTEIN

University of Texas

Excavaciones en Arroyo del Palo, Mayarí, Cuba. By ERNESTO E. TABLO and J. M. GUARCH. La Habana, 1966. Academia de Ciencias de la República de Cuba. Departamento de Antropología. Illustrations. Maps. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 82. Paper.

This well-written, important monograph details the results of ten days of excavations made during 1964 in a rock shelter at the base of Arroyo del Palo, Mayarí, Oriente Province. The culture deposit was a meter thick and yielded ceramics, ground stone, shell, bone, and two burials. Of the 4,481 sherds obtained, only 282 were decorated. Three ceramic groups, plain, incised, and painted, are established, and superb descriptions are given of each, along with data on design modes and frequencies.

The absence of the *buren*, a circular griddle-like vessel used for cooking casave and tortillas, leads the authors to consider the remains as preagricultural, and they note that the pottery interjects a new note in what would otherwise be viewed as a Ciboney culture. The source of these ceramics, the earliest known for Cuba, is tentatively considered as related to Ostiones of Puerto Rico. On the basis of com-