

transfer of this wealth from the mines of Potosí to the king's purse.

Most impressive is the rapidity with which adequate institutions were developed to collect taxes and audit the records. Administrative reforms were numerous, which is hardly surprising in a century when trial and error had to substitute for previous experience. Direct treasury administration seemed to work better in America than the *encabezamiento* or *arrendamiento*, although in Spain repeated recommendations to abolish tax-farming were ineffective. I note the author's omission of the *asiento de negros*, introduced by Charles V; perhaps he considers this a part of metropolitan finance.

The 12-page bibliography furnishes an ample list of printed works, including the *documentos inéditos*, but one has to consult the footnotes to verify the manuscript material consulted. Duke University Press will be interested to know that *HAHR* is published in Baltimore.

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ROBERT S. SMITH

*Introducción crítica a la "Historia verdadera" de Bernal Díaz del Castillo.* By CARMELO SÁENZ DE SANTA MARÍA, S. I. Madrid 1967. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 145. Paper. Ptas. 100.00.

Carmelo Sáenz' well-written book makes a notable contribution to historical criticism of the *True History*. While the *True History* is one of the literary classics of the era of the Conquest, its chivalric style of writing makes it suspect to the modern scholar. It is, nonetheless, a major source which has been made more significant and vital by Sáenz' work. Sáenz illuminates the value of a highly subjective account which can, however, preserve the emotional impact of living history. Through his careful, penetrating evaluation of the original manuscripts of the *True History*, the author has thus added a new dimension to the historiography of the Conquest.

Sáenz leads the reader through an analysis, manuscript by manuscript, paragraph by paragraph, and even word by word, searching carefully in the whimsical spelling, the indifferent punctuation, and the confused syntax for Díaz' original meaning. Evaluating the three manuscripts, "Guatemala," "Remón," and "Alegría," by both internal and external criticism, he scrutinizes their discrepancies through one episode after another: the discovery of New Spain, the expedition of Grijalva, Cortés at Veracruz, the Noche Triste, the pacification of the tributary tribes, the expedition to Honduras, and

the death of Cuauhtémoc. By careful study of the paper, print, and ink, Sáenz gleans evidence of changes made by copyists, thus bringing new interpretations to the annotations made in the manuscripts. The author also evaluates various editions and translations of the manuscripts, as well as critics of the manuscripts and their translations.

The weakest section of the book is that in which the author involves himself in the typical speculation of Bernal Díaz' historical identity and his official position in the Conquest and later in Guatemala. To substantiate his arguments on these matters Sáenz cites such official documents as death certificates, the credentials of the encomienda, the testimony of Hernán Cortés, and the records of the Council of the Indies.

The entire work is characterized by thorough scholarship. Sáenz approaches his subject with care, utilizing the archival holdings of Spain, Mexico, and Guatemala, and his analysis, as described above, is painstaking. Despite the amount of detail, the book is both clear and concise. Moreover, the section concerning Díaz' life does not detract from the value of this work, for it is strengthened by Sáenz' critical erudition. In addition, the annotated bibliography of manuscripts, documents, letters, and works on Díaz and the *True History* will be of use to all who are interested in Hispanic American studies.

Chapman College

MERRILL MULCH

*Juan Vázquez de Coronado y su ética en la conquista de Costa Rica.*

By VICTORIA URBANO. Madrid, 1968. Ediciones Cultura Hispánica. Bibliography. Pp. 317. Paper. Ptas. 250.00 (Span.).

One of the most controversial periods of Latin American History is the age of the conquistadores. Historians have been attracted to sixteenth-century conquests for over a century, but they frequently become preoccupied with individuals and not with the relationship of the man to his environment and age. Furthermore, they either endorse or attack the *leyenda negra* and focus repeatedly upon the same figures, thereby failing to discover new individuals and fresh material from archival sources. Even those unfamiliar with Latin America can recount some of the events and figures of these conquests. But who has heard of Juan Vázquez de Coronado? It is safe to say that not many professional historians have or else they confuse him with Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, the famous explorer of the