

printed that all the qualities of these cool, translucent objects from the Pre-Columbian past may be immediately appreciated.

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*Tarascan Myths & Legends. A Rich and Imaginative "History" of the Tarascans.* By MAURICE BOYD. Fort Worth, 1969. Texas Christian University Press. Illustrations. Maps. Index. Pp. xviii, 82. Paper. \$3.50.

This is an expansion of the author's *Eight Tarascan Legends* published in 1958 by the University of Florida State Museum. The subtitle, "Rich and Imaginative 'History'" says more than the author probably intended; certainly imagination takes precedence over history, and folklore too as far as that goes. *Tarascan Myths & Legends* is an attractively gotten up "popular" volume for the non-professional aficionado. If this were all that it intended to be, the following criticism would be unjustified. It is, however, presented as No. 4 in Texas Christian University's series, "Monographs in History and Culture," which suggests some pretensions to scholarship. Professor Boyd says that he "chose the most sophisticated and excitingly literate rendition available where a choice presented itself." The problem is he doesn't tell us when he had a choice, or even the source of the legends. In checking *Eight Tarascan Legends* I find credits to a Morelia housemaid, a mestizo of Capula (misspelled Copula, which in any event has not been Tarascan for generations), another "collective" effort of several "natives" of Cuitzeo, likewise long since mestizo, and a former tourist guide in Tzintzuntzan who had a "uniquely exciting, urbane style." Only one of the eight came from a Tarascan informant.

The legend "The Birth of Cueróhperi," which introduces the new collection, is presented in such fashion that the *Relación de Michoacán* appears to be the source. However, the identical version in the earlier work is attributed to the Morelia housemaid. "Just as the Birds," which by a process of exclusion must be assigned to the tourist guide is, in fact, a near-literal translation of "Como las Aves," pp. 15-19 in Jesús Romero Flores, *Michoacán histórico y legendario*, published in Mexico City in 1936, nowhere cited in the present work. "Forever Feliz" sounds very much like the sort of thing a tourist guide would relate, and, though badly garbled, it is in fact a well-known Tzintzuntzan legend. However, the family name, to which the legend is purported to give rise, is *Felices*, not *Feliz*, as Boyd states.

In his brief historical summary of the Tarascan area, Professor

Boyd notes that pre-Conquest Tarascan pueblos in the lower altitudes specialized in tropical fruits, including the mango. This is indeed rich and imaginative history, since as is well known the mango is a native of southern Asia, and presumably came to Mexico via the Manila Galleon.

Readers will understand, I am sure, why this reviewer cannot consider *Tarascan Myths & Legends* to be a serious scholarly work.

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*Spain.* By GEORGE HILLS. New York, 1970. Praeger Publishers. Nations of the Modern World. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 480. \$9.50.

Presumably every historian, whatever his personal emotions, tries to be accurate in his writing, and feels a sense of responsibility towards the thousands of readers who will take him at his word, with or without academic pedigrees and scholarly footnotes. Mr. Hills writes well, is frank in his views, and knows a great deal about many aspects of Spain, but his book contains so many errors or exaggerations that I would not be able to recommend it unless one could accompany it with a detailed series of corrections. He begins with the totally misleading statement that "uppermost in the conscience of the greater number of Spaniards is the belief that life on earth is of secondary importance." There is absolutely no way of knowing how many Spaniards believe in personal immortality. My own experience of Spain, and my reading of recent Spanish literature, both fiction and nonfiction, nevertheless force me unequivocally to reject Mr. Hills' confident generalization—a generalization which is then followed by a non-sequitur, to the effect that the absence of national and political divisions in the hereafter may perhaps explain why Spaniards have found political activities so important on earth.

In his short chapter on the Muslim conquest, Hills writes, without the slightest suggestion that the incident may be only legendary, that in 718 "a Visigothic nobleman, Pelayo, defeated a force of Arabs sent to liquidate him." Speaking of one of the decisive battles of the *Reconquista* at Las Navas de Tolosa in the year 1212, he states that the Muslim commander "had formed a barrier of 10,000 Negroes bound with chains to form a human wall around his tent. The Navarrese crashed through them without counting the cost." There is no evidence for such a human chain. Slicing through one, if it had existed, would have cost less than fighting unchained infantry or