

focuses on the background and character of the Spanish overseas dominion and on the monarchy's policy toward ecclesiastical affairs.

The longest and most suggestive contribution comes from Díaz Rementería, of Seville, who is responsible for seven chapters. He deals with the constitution of both sociopolitical "republics" of Spaniards and Indians in America, and inquires into the formation (and conceptualization) of a proper colonial legal system. In the latter regard he points out a royal decree of 1614 that enabled the Council of the Indies to determine which Castilian ordinances should be valid overseas and which not—thereby setting off a relative emancipation by the *Derecho Indiano* (p. 40). Furthermore, Díaz Rementería analyzes, though unfortunately in a very summary manner, such crucial topics as censos, mayorazgos, successions, contracts, insurance, and trading corporations. It is evident that only by insisting on the study of these social and economic institutions and their effective repercussions in the New World will juridical historiography go beyond the merely theoretical sphere of legislation and contribute to a more realistic image of colonial Spanish America.

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Portraits from the Age of Exploration: Selections from André Thevet's Vrais portraits et vies des hommes illustres. Edited by ROGER SCHLESINGER. Translated by EDWARD BENSON. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993. Illustrations. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 159 pp. Cloth. \$24.95.

This book offers English-speaking readers selections from a major Renaissance biographical encyclopedia, *The True Portraits and Lives of Illustrious Men* (1584) of André Thevet, the first such work to accord the honor of inclusion to Indian worthies like Moctezuma, Atahualpa, and the redoubtable Brazilian chief Quoniambec. The present work features Thevet's six sketches of Indian notables and an equal number of lives of European explorers—Columbus, Magellan, Cortés, Pizarro, Albuquerque, and Vespucci—together with reproductions of the original copper-engraved portraits of the subjects done by Thevet, according to the editor of the present work, with considerable concern for authenticity.

André Thevet and his works were and are, to put it mildly, extremely controversial. In his own time, Thevet's veracity and scholarship as a geographer and writer of travel accounts came under heavy attack. His unhappy reputation clung to him until the twentieth century, when anthropologists discovered the value of the ethnographic, mythological, and historical material on the Brazilian, Mexican, and Canadian Indians in his writings. But Thevet's rehabilitation remains partial, and his faults—his medieval lack of critical sense and his tendency to invent legends, his careless and sometimes dishonest use of sources, his attribution to other writers of statements that never actually existed—are patent to scholars who read his writings.

The selections from the *True Portraits* in this book reveal these flaws. Roger

Schlesinger and Edward Benson have made no serious effort to assess the truth or falsity of Thevet's accounts, limiting their annotation to "items of special interest." Indeed, the sketches of such figures as Cortés, Pizarro, Moctezuma, and Atahualpa are riddled with errors, and they possess much less informational value than the contemporary accounts of Spanish chroniclers. However, Schlesinger correctly asserts that these sketches "provide a unique example of the information disseminated about the Age of Exploration and the New World in late sixteenth-century Europe, especially in France. . . . Therefore their significance does not depend solely upon their truthfulness" (p. 17). Certainly they tell a good deal about Thevet's own *mentalité*. Items I find of special interest include his violent attack on the *Brevissima relación* of Las Casas as written by an impostor; and his portrait of Moctezuma as a Renaissance ruler who schemed and dissembled with Cortés, trying by every possible means to avoid defeat but failing miserably, having to contend with one more cunning than himself.

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Bureaucrats, Planters, and Workers: The Making of the Tobacco Monopoly in Bourbon Mexico. By SUSAN DEANS-SMITH. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992. Maps. Graphs. Tables. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. xxi, 362 pp. Cloth. \$35.00.

Susan Deans-Smith's comprehensive study of the colonial tobacco monopoly of Mexico from its origin in 1764 until it was greatly weakened by the wars for independence will long endure as the standard work on the topic. The subjects of the roughly coequal three sections of the book indicate the breadth of coverage. The first treats the political and administrative history of the monopoly, situating it neatly in the context of Bourbon initiatives of the second half of the eighteenth century and providing some good information on the life and career patterns of its functionaries. The second considers the tobacco growers of the upland Veracruz region and their responses to the monopoly's demands, as well as the monopoly's enduring difficulties obtaining an adequate supply of paper. The third looks at the operation of the tobacco factory of Mexico City, its employees, and their grievances and protests.

The book benefits greatly from the depth of documentation substantiating its arguments. Deans-Smith mined thoroughly the major archives in Mexico and Spain, and her section on tobacco cultivation draws heavily from the notarial archives of Orizaba. This study complements—and generally substantiates—previously articulated views on Bourbon Mexico by such authors as Brading, Ladd, and Coatsworth, and nicely integrates Deans-Smith's reading of theoretical literature and works on monopoly, business organization, and tobacco production in other parts of the world.