

*La expedición de Sebastián de Belalcázar al mar del norte y su llegada al Nuevo Reino de Granada.* By JOSÉ IGNACIO AVELLANEDA NAYAS. Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1992. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 252 pp. Cloth.

This volume concerns the men who accompanied Sebastián de Belalcázar from Popayán on his expedition to the North Sea, but who remained in New Granada to colonize the lands of the Muiscas. In the historiographical tradition of Mario Góngora, James Lockhart, and Carmen Gómez, Avellaneda aims to identify the conquistador colonists, analyze them prosopographically, and then assess their social, economic, and political contributions. To complete his mission, he worked the archives of Spain and Colombia and consulted the abundant published documentation, making special use of the accounts left by the several chroniclers.

Out of a possible 70 to 90 conquistadores, Avellaneda has managed to identify 62, along with 8 Indian or mestizo companions, including 5 women. The individual biographies of these people take up more than two-thirds of the text. The prosopographic analysis produces no real surprises, except perhaps that 86 percent could at least sign their names, although Belalcázar apparently could not. The average age of 29 was high but, as one might expect for this group, the participants were experienced, averaging six years' residence in America. Nearly all were natives of Andalucía, Extremadura, or the two Castiles. None of the Spanish could claim nobility, although a small number had assumed the status of *hijodalgo notorio* by reputation.

Avellaneda analyzes various dimensions of the colonization process. He assesses Belalcázar's contribution to the founding of Santa Fe de Bogotá and identifies the cities established by his followers, including Vélez, Tunja, Neiva, Tocaima, and Pamplona. The author lists consorts of the conquistadores, both wives and mistresses, and those who acquired encomiendas or eventually held offices in the municipalities and the royal administration. He also briefly discusses other occupations.

Avellaneda has meticulously assembled an impressive amount of biographical data on one of the groups that undertook the subjugation and exploitation of inland New Granada. In so doing, he has added to our growing understanding of the process of Spanish conquest and colonization in America.

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*La Nueva Segovia de Barquisimeto.* Vols. 1 and 2. By NIEVES AVELLÁN DE TAMAYO. Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1992. Map. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 1,254 pp. Paper.

Associated with such well-known sixteenth-century figures as Nicolás Federmann and Lope de Aguirre and located in a rich agricultural and mining district near the borders of the Segovia highlands, the Venezuelan Andes, and the Llanos, Nueva Segovia de Barquisimeto was a place of some distinction in the colonial period.

Nevertheless, its citizens apparently neglected its history. While preparing a local ecclesiastical history in 1788, Fr. Antonio de Herrera lamented the lack of both historical knowledge and documentation in the city (vol. 1, p. 353). Nieves Avellán de Tamayo took a cue from that complaint and compiled an impressive, encyclopedic survey of the city's colonial past. In so doing, the author has established a solid, modern—albeit traditional—foundation for understanding and remembering the past inhabitants, culture, and monuments of Barquisimeto.

Avellán's work begins with a look at Aguirre and at Juan de Villegas, the founder of Nueva Segovia. Thereafter, however, it displays, from a Spanish perspective, a sweeping comprehensiveness. It presents material along broad topical lines, such as "Social Aspects" (chap. 5) and "Fiscal Aspects" (chap. 13); and in familiar historiographical contexts, such as "Indian Encomiendas" (chap. 8), "Slaves" (chap. 9), and "The Church" (chap. 10). Avellán packs each chapter with carefully documented detail gleaned from a variety of archives large and small, Venezuelan and Spanish, and organizes it into a number of topical sections. Chapter 4, "Some Aspects of Culture," for example, contains 20 such segments, ranging from the establishment of the city's first monastery to the books and libraries mentioned in Barquisimetan wills. Similarly, the useful, 23-section architectural survey of the city in chapter 3, "City Changes" (*Las mudanzas de la ciudad*), spans topics from urban planning to home furnishings. Avellán demonstrates, too, a paleographic bent by devoting an entire chapter (6) to the reproduction of nearly 175 signatures, representing a cross section of society from the local male elite to resident "doñas, mestizas, mulatas, y esclavas." Signatures illustrate other chapters as well.

Not surprisingly, some of the data are significant and some trivial, an impression reinforced by the brevity (two to four pages) of many of the sections. Nevertheless, this handbook structure, augmented by an extensive index of proper names, leaves the final judgment of the work's importance to each reader. It also makes these two volumes a worthy resource for Venezuelan local history and colonial social history in general.

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*El Superintendente Manuel Ignacio Fernández (1778–1783): las reformas borbónicas en el Virreinato de Buenos Aires.* By RICARDO REES JONES. Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones de Historia del Derecho, 1992. Tables. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. 371 pp. Paper.

The Viceroyalty of Buenos Aires was not only a creation of the Bourbon Reforms; it was a region of the Spanish Empire where many colonial reforms were first tried, amended, perfected, or sometimes abandoned. Such was certainly the case of the intendancy system, which was introduced in Buenos Aires in 1778, enlarged to include a superintendent overseeing local intendants in 1783, and later extended throughout the empire, only to see the superintendency disbanded in Buenos Aires by 1788.