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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

*Florentine Codex. General History of the Things of New Spain.* By Fray Bernardino de Sahagún. Books 3 and 7. Translated from the Aztec into English, with notes and illustrations by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble. Santa Fe, New Mexico: The School of American Research and The University of Utah, 1952 and 1953 (Monographs of The School of American Research, No. 14, pts. 4 and 8.

It is easy to imagine many occasions when some serious scholar or writer, not a specialist in the field and not equipped to read Spanish, might want reliable information on ancient Mexico. Until recently such a person would have been restricted to second-hand information in English, and while much of that is of sound quality, the appearance in English of a truly trustworthy translation of our greatest first-hand source is an event.

We already have Bishop Landa's<sup>1</sup> work in Tozzer's wonderfully annotated version, and Bernal Díaz<sup>2</sup> is available, although abridged, in the Maudslay version. But Sahagún remains the most important of all, the source of much which has been long mistakenly considered as source materials. Fray Sahagún wrote parallel columns of Spanish and Nahuatl, but his columns were only physically parallel, often summarizing or amplifying each other rather than simply duplicating in translation. Therefore, even a knowledge of Spanish has only enabled the researcher to read half of Sahagún in the original, leaving him with someone's Spanish version of Sahagún's Nahuatl for the rest.

There is much reason to believe that the Anderson and Dibble translation to English of Sahagún's Nahuatl is the most scrupulous yet made into any language, and therefore

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1. Tozzer, Alfred M. Landa's *Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatan*. Cambridge, Mass.: Papers of the Peabody Museum, Vol. XVIII, 1941.

2. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico*, translated and abridged by A. P. Maudslay. Mexico, D. F.: The Mexico Press, 1928.

our Spanish-speaking friends will now have good reason to refer to an English source of Mexican history.

Four of the planned thirteen volumes are now available, and a fifth is in press; we are dealing here with the two most recent releases. Sahagún divided the History of the Things of New Spain into twelve books, and the plan is to publish them one by one in separate volumes, to be followed at the end by Volume One, containing introductory material, index and so on. Sahagún's order is not being followed, however, and we therefore have, in the order of appearance, his Book One, The Gods; Book Two, The Ceremonies; Book Three, The Origin of the Gods; and Book Seven, The Sun, Moon and Stars, and The Binding of the Years. The volume in press is Book Eight, dealing with kings and nobles, social structure and machinery, and the life of the upper classes.

There really is little for a reviewer to say of such a work of loving and unhurried scholarship as this one. Here we have parallel columns of English and Nahuatl, giving (presumably in their own words) a world of information about Aztec custom and tradition garnered from Aztec informants and in part from Fray Bernardino's own observations. Occasional questions do come to mind in the reading, though, and it may be worthwhile to give some examples.

In Volume Four (Book Three of Sahagún), on page 5 there is a note questioning Seler's rendering of *chicalotl* as the common Mexican prickly poppy, a white-flowered plant resembling a thistle in many ways. Since the plant is commonly called *chicalote* in much of Mexico to this day, and we know the derivation of many similar words (*tomatl*, *tomate*, tomato; *petlatl*, *petate*, rush mat; *tilmatl*, *tilma*, blanket; *tecolotl*, *tecolote*, owl; *tsapotl*, *zapote*, sapote; etc), Seler seems to have been on safe ground.

On page 33, the Nahuatl *coahapan* is rendered in English as Coaapan. In old Spanish spellings of Nahuatl, the letter *h* is used in this way to indicate a glottal stop, and the translators are probably correct in assuming that many or most English speakers will pronounce the *aa* as *a'a*; but their intention is not entirely clear.

Again, on page 47, *tzivactli* (*tsiwaktli* in modern orthography) is rendered as *maguey*, with another note referring to Seler's different choice of cactus to go with the name. But no mention is made of the Nahuatl *mayawel*, from which the Spanish-Mexican name *maguey* for the familiar plant source of *pulque* is clearly derived.

These are quibbles, and as such are an accurate indication of the quality of the work done by Anderson and Dibble; if the reviewer can find no more than this to complain of, he probably should not complain at all.

Volume Eight (Sahagún's Book Seven) illustrates on page 12 the commendable care of the translators' work: where Sahagún used "doors and windows" as his Spanish rendering of a certain Nahuatl phrase, Anderson and Dibble have resorted to the perhaps awkward but more precise "outlets and openings of houses." Sahagún was making the error of equating Aztec architecture with European, but the present translators, realizing that Aztec "doors" and "windows" were not necessarily equivalent *as ideas* to European ones, have made an effort to avoid bringing a false picture to the reader's mind.

In his Book Seven, Sahagún included detailed directions as to how his work should be presented. Here the translators have presented not two but four parallel columns in an appendix, giving Sahagún's Spanish text; an English version of it; Sahagún's Nahuatl version; and, in Spanish, his detailed notes explaining, word by word, the Nahuatl text.

After going to an enormous amount of trouble to spare the English-speaking scholar the necessity of learning Spanish in order to read Sahagún, it would have been a trifling further step to have put the many quotations included as footnotes from German and French sources also into English. There is a tendency for the younger Americanists to be more interested in American native languages than in European ones other than Spanish and English, and to turn to the Orient more than to Europe for further study.

Nahuatl is, unlike many American Indian languages, delightfully simple phonetically, and logical and regular in

general. Therefore, while the desire of Anderson and Dibble to preserve Sahagún's Nahuatl text accurately down to the last pen-stroke is entirely understandable, it really pains one to see a basically simple language presented in his barbarous 16th-century Spanish orthography, which was utterly inadequate to deal with the sounds uttered by his Aztec informants. English orthography does it effortlessly, and one may be permitted to hope that when the introductory volume is published, it will include a full explanation of Nahuatl phonetics and an unravelling of the old Spanish spellings. Spanish orthography certainly renders Spanish speech better than English orthography does English speech, but the attempt to spell Nahuatl with Spanish orthography is disastrous—difficult reading even for a person who has some familiarity with modern spoken Nahuatl.

Mexico, D. F., Mexico  
Calle Tinala 223

JOHN PADDÖCK

*Most Reverend Anthony J. Schuler, S.J., D.D. First Bishop of El Paso. And Some Catholic Activities in the Diocese Between 1915-1942.* By Sister M. Lilliana Owen, S.L., Ph.D. El Paso, Texas: Revista Catolica Press, 1953. Pp. xxiii, 584 (Jesuit Studies—Southwest, No. 3)

Almost a quarter of a century ago, it was the present reviewer's experience to meet Bishop Schuler, Jesuit Bishop of El Paso, at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Los Gatos, California. Those of us then new in the Society of Jesus took an especially long look, for we already knew that few were—and are—the Bishops in the Jesuit Order. I can still recall his nice geniality and sturdy sense of humor and we were pleased with the visit to us of the Shepherd of El Paso. Now there comes to my desk the life of Anthony Joseph Schuler, S.J., D.D. (1868-1944) who served as Bishop of El Paso from 1915-1942. The author is Sister Mary Lilliana Owens who has collaborated within the last few years with other Southwest Catholic scholars to produce a series of three volumes called "Jesuit Studies—Southwest." Already

published are "Jesuit Beginnings in New Mexico, 1867-1882" and "Reverend Carlos M. Pinto, S.J., Apostle of El Paso."

No one will ever say that Sister Mary Lilliana has forgotten the apparatus of the foreword, etc. in this book! In fact, she gives the reader much more than most—for, in addition to the foreword, there is an author's preface, another preface, an introduction and an acknowledgment! Thus prepared, the reader reads on—and on, for the book is a detailed and fairly lengthy one. Yet it is well that the author protests that the "present study does not pretend to cover completely the period under study, much less to evaluate with any historical finality the person of Bishop A. J. Schuler, S.J. . . . it is rather an appreciation of the good accomplished by Bishop Schuler during his incumbency." It is, therefore, intended as a contribution to the general Catholic Church history of the Southwest. It should be judged, therefore, as a source book in a field which needs exploitation and, judged as such, Sister Mary Lilliana Owens has wrought a good work. All who wish to delve into the Catholic history of the period and places she covers will, and this necessarily, meet this author and this work.

It is my impression that Sister Mary Lilliana is a better researcher than a writer and, since this is avowedly a source book, the author should not be unduly alarmed at the perfectly honest observation. There are certain irritating features in the style adopted, chief among which I found the constant repetition of "Bishop A. J. Schuler, S.J.," which, conservatively, must appear several hundred times in her pages. Would it not have been much smoother to have varied the bishop's mention by use of the customary synonyms—i.e. "the prelate"—the "Ordinary of El Paso," etc.? But no doubt is left in the reader's mind as to whom is being discussed in the pages! An idiosyncrasy—but it would be neither kind or just to conclude from this one facet of the book that the author has not done her work well. A labor of love does not result in notably critical or definitive history—but such was not Sister Mary Lilliana's intent. What she has done she has done well and her work is what she

hoped it would be—a contribution of worth to the story she has chosen to tell.

JOHN BERNARD MCGLOIN, S.J.

University of San Francisco

*Antoine Robidoux, 1794-1860: A Biography of a Western Venturer.* By William Swilling Wallace. Los Angeles: Glen Dawson, 1953. Pp. xii, 59. \$5.00 (Early California Travel Series, vol. XIV).

Antoine Robidoux is an example of one of the important smaller figures that played so significant a part in the development of the Far American West. He is also an example of the persistence of the French influence in the same region. Perhaps if much more were known about Antoine and his work, and other adventurers of his kind, the history of the Far West would lay less stress on the sensational achievements of numerous, romantic, "over advertised" contemporaries of mixed fact and fancy.

Antoine, if not a major figure, nevertheless played a highly constructive part in the development of the Intermontane Corridor, and deserves great credit for his achievements. He was one of the first penetrators of the entire Corridor. Also, he was the first adventurer "to remain long enough in a large section of the Corridor to establish himself . . . This distinction came about through his establishment of a small fort on the banks of the Gunnison River, a short distance below the mouth of the Uncompahgre River, in what is now Western Colorado." This introduction of Indo-European civilization was "extended to a second fort which he constructed near the forks of the Uinta River and White Rocks Creek, in northeastern Utah."

These initial activities of about 1830 settled into a successful Indian trading business which continued until 1844, when Antoine discontinued all his intermontane activities, following the destruction of Fort Uintah by the powerful Utes. Influenced, no doubt, by the hazardous and transitory nature of his operations in the Corridor, Antoine returned

to St. Joseph, Missouri, a town recently founded by a brother, Joseph Robidoux III.

The Mexican War called Antoine in 1846, despite his fifty-two years of age, in the capacity of an interpreter for Colonel Stephen W. Kearny. This experience reached a climax at the battle of San Pasqual, where Antoine was grievously wounded. His severance from the interpreter's post in 1847 was followed by a swift onslaught of old age, although his perseverance in the quest of a military pension was perhaps a strong indication of the firmness of purpose which must have been an outstanding trait of his character. He was almost sixty-six years of age when he died an invalid on August 29, 1860.

In this excellent little book Mr. Wallace produces ample evidence to show that the Robidoux family was a positive and dynamic force throughout the history of the early Far West, and that Antoine's claim to distinction lies in his contribution as a primary factor in the opening and development of the Intermontane Corridor. The book maintains a high level of interest and is well written. Moreover, the student will be gratified by the ten pages of copious and illuminating notes that follow the narrative. The format is delightful.

R. H. OGLE

Phoenix High Schools and Phoenix College

*Franco-Spanish Rivalry in North America.* By Henry Folmer. Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Company. Pp. 346. \$10.00.

A number of studies have been made during the past three decades on the rivalry of Spain and France in North America, but Henry Folmer, in this work, has compassed the noteworthy pioneering achievement of being the first to provide a continuous summary-synthesis of this rivalry.

Covering the period, principally, from 1524 to 1763, Dr. Folmer proceeds from the premise that both Spain and France pursued consistent policies which originated during the earliest stages of their overseas competition. Basically, then, the source of these policies would be found in Spain's

adamant assertions of exclusive title to all territories lying west of the Papal line of demarcation, occupied or unoccupied, and France's equally insistent denial of the validity of that Papal assignment, to which the House of Bourbon had not been a party. France demanded to see Adam's will dividing the world, and avowed her right to those lands which she discovered or occupied, which had not been previously effectively occupied by Spain; and to freedom of the seas for her vessels.

Although Franco-Spanish diplomacy and statesmanship failed to resolve their conflicting claims, and thus left North America in a perpetual state of conflict, the differences and difficulties "beyond the line" became largely separated from official relations in Europe between the French and Spanish monarchs. During the period, however, the vast wealth of the Spanish Empire in the New World, and particularly the rich mines of Mexico, attracted the fancies of French expansionists, especially Louis XIV, and plans were actually formulated to conquer the mines of New Spain. La Salle's discovery, plus other information, made the French conquest of parts of Spanish North America feasible, and there is reason to believe that French occupation of Gulf spots might also be partially explained in the light of their acquisition of bases from which an attack on Mexico might be launched.

Albeit these French plans, combined with Spain's perennial suspicions of her Gallic neighbor, kept Spanish fears on edge, it appears to the reviewer that the most important facets of the Franco-Spanish rivalry are to be found in the activities of the French in North America in the 18th century: their expansion into unoccupied areas, and the subsequent narrowing of the northern frontiers of New Spain; their expanding trade with the Indians, which eventually led them to the Plains Indians; their explorations of the Missouri and its tributaries, and the frontier conflicts in Texas and Florida—and the Spanish reactions to such French advances. It is in this field that Dr. Folmer has made his earlier contributions and scholarly studies, and yet, strangely, only a very small portion of *Franco-Spanish Rivalry in North America* has been devoted to this important

struggle. It is true enough that the number of scholarly studies in this field are limited, but this reviewer is frankly disappointed in Dr. Folmer's not doing a more thorough job in this field, with which he is so familiar (especially the last chapter).

The reviewer also feels that far too much importance, and space, has been devoted to the earlier positions of France and Spain (for instance, La Salle is not discussed until page 134). While in joining the threads of Paris-Madrid diplomacy on the one hand, and the story of the actual colonization activities on the other, Dr. Folmer has woven a complete tapestry of the period for the first time (which is this work's important contribution), this reviewer feels that a much more balanced picture would have been formed had Folmer devoted a great deal less space to the period before La Salle (in which he has added little that is new), and had given a great deal more space to the colonial activities and rivalries from La Salle's time on. In reality, the 18th century is not extensively discussed until Folmer's dealing with the "Race for Pensacola," this on p. 189. Real colonial rivalry begins with Iberville and the French occupation of the Mississippi Valley, but this is past p. 200, in a volume of some 310 pages of text.

*Franco-Spanish Rivalry in North America* is a well printed book and rightly is included in the A. H. Clark Company's "Spain in the West" series. Folmer writes clearly and has co-ordinated events into a whole story rather well. He shows his familiarity with the printed literature on his field. His archival references and bibliography is in the main limited to transcripts in the Library of Congress, the University of Texas, and a few other repositories in the United States. A number of archival references noted in the footnotes have been printed and/or quoted in printed works listed in his bibliography. The reviewer noted the omission in the bibliography of Hackett's notable contribution to Spanish Policy regarding French encroachments which appeared in *New Spain and the West*. Several dissertations at the University of Texas would have bolstered his story of

rivalry in the Texas area. The greatest fault which the reviewer has found, however, is faulty accenting of Spanish names and terms.

Folmer's volume would have been much enhanced in its use and value to readers and students had he included some maps. The only map and illustration included in the volume is Delisle's well-known and many times published map of 1718, but it is too small to be of much value to the reader. This is partly compensated by the inclusion of a good index.

Despite many minor things with which this reviewer might quibble with Folmer, the learned doctor has pioneered a new field in a well done piece of work.

A. P. NASATIR

San Diego State College

*Lost Mines of Death Valley.* By Harold O. Weight. Twenty-nine Palms, California: The Calico Press, 1953. Pp. 72. \$1.50. (Southwest Panorama, No. 2)

Death Valley is a legendary place in the annals of the Southwest. Hunting lost mines is an old western practice. Both legends and huntings are brought together in this paper-bound *Lost Mines of Death Valley*.

Some of the stories have been told before, others are less well-known. In either case, the author has worked diligently to make them as complete and authentic as possible. Reading interest is heightened by an excellent map drawn by Norton Allen. Several photographs present pioneers of Death Valley, ghost mining towns and the rugged grandeur of the country.

A closing chapter includes excellent advice to those who would seek lost mines, advice on what not to do! It is good even for those travelers who just want to tour the Valley. If you feel the urge to adventure, just remember that "year after year men die needlessly on the deserts. Lost mine hunting can be an exciting and entertaining pastime. But it can turn with shocking suddenness into absolute and irredeemable tragedy." If this closing statement sounds too alarming, enjoy a vicarious thrill by reading the book.

F. D. R.

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