

Prehistoric Maya Settlements in the Belize Valley reports on a series of archaeological finds made by the Peabody Museum of Harvard University. The report is oriented about the problems of settlement patterns: the form and function of buildings, the relation of buildings to one another, the composition of villages and towns, the relation of buildings and building clusters to terrain, and the groupings of towns within regions. The main work was conducted along the Belize River in British Honduras, an area of numerous ceremonial centers and house-mound groups. Temple mounds, palace platforms, ball courts, and house mounds stretch out along the river. Detailed investigation was made at the Barton Ramie site, an "arbitrarily defined segment of the continuum of settlement," with 262 mounds of which 65 were excavated. The excavations allow for a reconstruction of some eight chronological periods, beginning with small agricultural hamlets and changing about 100 B.C. into the continuous strip of settlements with much larger population. This population was the one that built the ceremonial centers. Firm connections are made with other Maya sites. After about 600 A.D. the population appears to have reached the limits of food supply, but building and other activity underwent a period of renewed intensity before abating near the end of the Late Classic period. The alluvial plain was the preferred living location. Older house sites were on the middle and upper terraces. Much evidence supports the conclusion that the small mounds were for residential houses. In the most populous period they occurred at a frequency of about one hundred per square kilometer. The book is a model of modern archaeological reporting, and its final pages (561-581) contain an excellent nontechnical summary of the subject.

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Süd-und Mittelamerika I. Die Indianerkulturen Altamerikas und die Spanisch Portugiesische Kolonialherrschaft. By RICHARD KONETZKE. Frankfurt am Main, 1965. Fischer Bücherei KG. Fischer Weltgeschichte. Vol. 22. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Pp. 390. Paper.

With this book Professor Konetzke wins an honored place for the history of South and Central America under Iberian rule among the volumes of world history which make up the Fischer Series. In the modest dress of a paperback, this volume contains the best summary picture of the colonial era of Latin America as it is now viewed by historians. No other book of similar scope adds to a general presentation

so much precision and suggestion. The story as seen in 1965 is a construct of many frames with the virtue of a modern photograph in which detail over a wide range does not distort the whole.

Three brief introductory chapters are focused forward upon the story to follow. One presents the native culture and stresses the characteristics which played a role in the conquest. A second chapter treats the question of the title to the Indies, and a third concerns the settlement patterns and policies followed by the Spanish and Portuguese crowns. The strongest part of the book is made up of five central chapters which take up 295 of the 343 pages of narrative text. These concern the makeup of the population, the development of colonial government in Europe and overseas in all its aspects, the mission and action of the Church, and the economic development of the area.

To illustrate the versatility of approach, three topics may be chosen. In the first place the demographic debate, recently of greatest concern to historians, is covered in chapters IV and VI. These passages are rich in suggestions in source quotations. For someone not well acquainted with the field all may seem deceptively serene, but in fact the author has inserted some note or passage in the text to account for almost every point of view. A second subject newly reinterpreted is the history of the colonial militia. Here the author has enlarged the scope of recent studies and furnished new data toward the construction of a solid colonial base for the study of the military in modern Latin America, a base which it has lacked so far. In a third field, Church history, the vast amount of material has led the author arbitrarily to narrow the discussion of Church growth in modern times. He warns of oversimplification implied in attributing this growth to the Counter-Reformation and the rise of the Jesuit Order.

The story of Brazil is handled wherever possible by comparison or contrast with Spanish America. The last chapter promises guidelines for the cultural development of the area, but the remarks, interesting in themselves, can hardly be called guidelines. There are a few words on education, some inevitable remarks about the Inquisition, and a mere glimpse at architecture. We are shown where recent contributions have been concentrated.

The heart of the work is social history, and its presentation is characteristic of our day. It is a book in which "nothing happens"; it is not a story of men or heroes. The stress is not on events but on change under observation, for the author has undertaken a description

of the very fabric of social experience in colonial Latin America which made up its history over three centuries.

The references are up to date, a running commentary for the specialist. The style of the work is austere, declarative prose which should be most welcome to non-German-speaking readers. This book is a landmark which will long be kept in sight.

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COLONIAL AND INDEPENDENCE PERIODS

Cristóbal Colón. Siete años decisivos de su vida, 1485-1492. By JUAN MANZANO MANZANO. Madrid, 1964. Ediciones Cultura Hispánica. Notes. Pp. 531.

Manzano's purpose is to cover chronologically the time Columbus spent in Spain before the departure of his fleet from Palos in August 1492. This part of the discoverer's life is far less known than historians often confidently assume.

The author follows main lines traced by the late Antonio Ballesteros Beretta in *Cristobal Colón y el descubrimiento de América* though differing from the *maestro* (his own word) in some important particulars. Manzano says that non-Spanish writers have concentrated on the discovery voyages to the neglect of these preparatory years, and though this statement can be seriously disputed, he provides the best account so far of Columbus's years of waiting and disappointment, while hoping for royal backing. Although Columbus spent some time with the Duke of Medinaceli, Manzano is reasonable in supposing that he stuck as close to the court as circumstances and pecuniary resources would permit. The problem is thus to trace the movements of Ferdinand and Isabella's perambulating *ménage* in those years when Castile had no fixed capital and when the war with Granada and internal disturbances caused them to move frequently.

Manzano believes that the discovery project which Columbus presented to various royal agencies and finally to the sovereigns was the generally accepted one of opening a western route to Marco Polo's Cipangu and Cathay. Reasons for Spanish delay in backing the voyage, as he sees them, were also the conventional ones: the Granadan war dragged on longer than anticipated, the royal treasury was empty, geographical experts rightly considered Columbus's estimate of the earth's circumference incorrect, and the future admiral demanded a very high price.