

United States and in Latin America. Most of the titles listed are familiar, but page 47 contains a useful list of recent articles, some of them in Latin American journals and probably not listed elsewhere.

#### BACKGROUND

*The Aztecs. The History of the Indies of New Spain.* By FRAY DIEGO DURÁN. Translated and with notes by DORIS HEYDEN and FERNANDO HORCASITAS. New York, 1964. Orion Press. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xxxii, 382. \$12.50.

This is a beautiful book with excellent plates and maps. The publishers are to be congratulated on a fine contribution to the historiography of pre-conquest Mexico. With Charles Dibble's translation of Sahagún's work and Francis Borgia Steek's Motolinía, it is one of the all-too-few Indian histories available in English. The text is useful for reconstructing the Aztec rise to power, but one must admit that it is not easy to read, and that it is more important for content than for style. Also much valuable material in the original edition on Aztec culture has been omitted. We must still turn to the Spanish version for accounts of Aztec religion, for example. In a well-written introduction Ignacio Bernal traces the history of the Durán manuscript and makes clear its importance in reconstructing the pre-conquest history of Mexico.

*In Search of the Cid.* By STEPHEN CLISSOLD. London, 1965. Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Pp. 254. 35s.

Two Englishmen have this year produced works on the charismatic figure of Spain's Middle Ages, Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar. One by Robert C. Goldston is entitled *The Legend of the Cid* (Kaye, Ward: London, 1965), and the other is the carefully studied biography here noticed. The author of this second

work, who has written interestingly on Pedro de Sarmiento Gamboa and the Seven Cities of Cibola, found inspiration for his latest book in a youthful reading of Lockhart's *Ancient Spanish Ballads*. Owing to the heavy mist of myth enveloping them, the life and deeds of the eleventh-century hero, El Cid Campeador, inevitably remain dim and imprecise. (The fact that the Cid began his career fighting *against* the Christians does not make for clarity.) To validate his account the author has combed the *romances* or ballads and the chronicles of the period, particularly the epic *Poema de Mio Cid* (written about 1140). Aided by modern scholarship, notably the vast investigations of the remarkable nonagenarian Spanish scholar, Menéndez Pidal, this earnest effort to separate history from myth for the English-reading public justifies the author's use of the word "search" in his title. The task remains difficult owing to the confused background, the complicated chain of events, the numerous petty kings and rulers, Moslem and Christian, and many intertwined legendary elements. The narrative is often too dense to hold the general readers' attention. Of special interest is the final chapter tracing the Cid theme in literature down to the recent film *El Cid*, in which the medieval hero becomes a paladin of the "new creed" of "peaceful coexistence" between Islam and Christendom.

IRVING A. LEONARD

Heathbrook,  
South Tamworth, N. H.

#### COLONIAL AND INDEPENDENCE PERIODS

*The Century after Cortés.* By FERNANDO BENÍTEZ. Translated by JOAN MACLEAN. Chicago, 1965. The University of Chicago Press. Illustrations. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 296. \$7.50.

Describers of the past range from the dry-as-dust "scientific" historians plodding after facts in the manner of Leopold von Ranke to the historical