

Historia de Chile desde su descubrimiento hasta el año 1575. By ALONZO DE GÓNGORA MARMOLEJO. Santiago, 1969. Editorial Universitaria. Escritores Coloniales de Chile. Illustrations. Notes. Pp. 121. \$120.

Historia general de el Reino de Chile, Flandes indiano. By P. DIEGO DE ROSALES. Santiago, 1969. Editorial Universitaria. Escritores Coloniales de Chile. Illustrations. Notes. Pp. 119. Paper. \$1.20.

It is disappointing to report that the subjects of this review are not reprints or new editions of the colonial histories named above. Instead they are severely edited abridgements of the original works, consisting of fragments and selected chapters and preceded by brief editorial remarks. They are offered in this form as volumes two and three of *Escritores Coloniales de Chile*, a new series designed to make available to the general reader some representative examples of Chilean colonial literature, a field which has been little explored by any except students of history.

The protracted conquest of Chile created in that colony a social and political climate which inspired an unusual number of chronicles and more ambitious works of history. Of these, the *Historia de Chile* by Alonzo de Góngora Marmolejo and the *Historia General* of Padre Diego de Rosales are accounted the most valuable from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively. Góngora, a soldier of the Conquest and one of Pedro de Valdivia's captains, was moved by the defects which he found in Alonso de Ercilla's *Araucana* to compose his own history of Chile and set the record straight. The result was a straightforward, narrative account of men and events from Diego de Almagro's first penetration into Chile down to the year 1575. Though his style is unpolished and inconsistent, Góngora wrote with sober impartiality and revealed a shrewd talent for seizing the truth. These qualities are well preserved in the present abridgement, which also carries an abundance of footnotes to help the reader cope with the old soldier's syntax.

The *Historia General* of the Jesuit missionary Padre Diego de Rosales is a more difficult work to represent in the narrow limits permitted by this series. Running to three volumes in its original published form, it was the most complete history of Chile produced in the seventeenth century and contained not only a detailed account of the colony's progress to 1652, but also sections devoted to geography and natural history and to the customs of the indigenes. The volume at hand is composed of fragments extracted from this work. These

are arranged in a manner calculated to display the author's style and the character of his thought, his concern for accuracy, his plodding attention to detail, and his open sense of wonder at the works of God and man.

The editors who prepared these two volumes have succeeded in their purpose of revealing the essential literary qualities of the complete works, but samplings of this kind are of little use to the historian. Fortunately, Góngora's *Historia de Chile* was published in complete edition as late as 1960 by Francisco Esteve Barba in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* (Vol. CXXXI). This succeeds its previous publication in 1862 in the *Colección de Historiadores de Chile*, which is already crumbling on library shelves. Less available is the one and only edition of Rosales' *Historia General*, published by Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna in 1877. A new edition of this is now in order.

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Thomas Gage in Spanish America. By NORMAN NEWTON. New York, 1969. Barnes & Noble. Great Travellers Series. Illustrations. Maps. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 214. \$4.75.

“Contemptible” and “avaricious, unmitigated scoundrel” are fair samples of the epithets that posterity has pinned on that seventeenth-century Roman Catholic-turned-Puritan clergyman and writer, Thomas Gage. Such distaste for him is understandable. He seems to have been an inveterate deserter and betrayer, and the mealy-mouthed piety with which he sought to justify himself is enough to turn the strongest stomach.

That Gage's principal work has fared much better than his character at the hands of posterity is also easy to understand. Written a few years after his apostasy from Roman Catholicism, the book was first published in London in 1648 under the title *The English-American, his Travels by Sea and Land: or, a New Survey of the West Indies*. Gage had produced largely an account of his sojourn as a Dominican friar in Mexico and Central America from 1625 to 1637. It was the first eyewitness account of residence inside Spanish America ever written by an Englishman, and Gage wrote interestingly, though in a difficult style, about many aspects of Spanish American life, secular as well as clerical. In addition, his book helped to launch Cromwell's expedition against Hispaniola which, when repulsed there, wrested Jamaica from the Spaniards in 1655. Appropriately,