

pressed in one last chapter. It is debatable to see the birth of Mexico as a nation (part of the title) confined to the sixteenth century alone, disregarding two hundred years more of change and development.

Cheetham's main interest is the physical and cultural confrontation and interaction between Indians and Spaniards. As a consequence, he dwells on certain aspects of the conquest and on the following deeds of such figures as Pedro de Gante, Vasco de Quiroga and Bernardino de Sahagún. He also surveys such issues as the education of the Indians, the encomienda system and the controversy over a just system of government for the indigenous population. He highlights the accomplishments of the evangelizing friars for whom he has an obvious admiration. His treatment of the relationship between the regular orders and Indians is sympathetic and on the whole satisfying. However, the intellectual interaction between some outstanding friars and their protégées is not enough to give a complete picture of the role of the Church in New Spain. Such an important event as the Third Mexican Council of 1585 is not even mentioned.

This work falls short of being a complete or balanced history of New Spain. The author has focused on well-known topics without adding any new interpretations or considering the most recent historical revisions or bibliographical additions to the literature. For example, he adopts Morley's concept of an old and new Maya empires, an interpretation which has been rejected by contemporary archeologists. The bibliography misses the works of Benedict Warren, Donald Chipman, Robert Padden, Richard Greenleaf and Charles Braden, to name a few. There is no attempt to incorporate discussions on economic issues, urban development or demographic problems. There are no footnotes. In spite of these shortcomings, the writer spins his narrative with accomplished grace and facility. His ability to convey a sufficiently sound historical account in an elegant and most readable style recommends this book to the interested but non-academic audience.

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Sixteenth-Century Mexico: The Work of Sahagún. Edited by MUNRO S. EDMONSON. Foreword by DOUGLAS W. SCHWARTZ. Albuquerque, 1974. University of New Mexico Press. Illustrations. Tables. Figures. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xv, 292. Cloth. \$15.00.

Sixteenth-Century Mexico: The Work of Sahagún is a collection of eleven articles which center around the life and times of the six-

teenth-century Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún and his best known and most important work, the encyclopedic *General History of the Things of New Spain*. Sahagún's *General History* is a major source of information on pre-Conquest Valley of Mexico religion, life, and language as well as more indirectly a source of information on the shifting cultural processes of the early post-Conquest era. The wide variety of topics and approaches found in *Sixteenth-Century Mexico* testifies to the significance, complexity, and richness of Sahagún's work.

A brief summary of Sahagún's life and work is given in the introductory article by Munro S. Edmonson. Articles by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Georges Baudot discuss Sahagún's work as seen in an historical context. The questionnaires Sahagún used to obtain information from native informants for the *General History* are partially reconstructed by Alfredo López Austin. S. Jeffrey K. Wilkerson attributes the sixteenth-century Codex Tudela to Fray Andrés de Olmos and considers Olmos' methodological approach similar to but earlier than that of Sahagún.

The *huehuetlatolli* collected by Sahagún are discussed and defined by Thelma D. Sullivan as rhetorical orations "in which the traditional religious, moral, and social concepts handed down from generation to generation were expressed in traditional language" (p. 82). Charles E. Dibble discusses Nahuatl literary style, specifically the use of pre-Hispanic metaphors, employed by Sahagún in various Christian texts. The need for critical evaluation of Sahagún's *General History* texts as used for sociological information is stressed by Edward E. Calnek. López Austin, in a second article, proposes ways in which the medical texts of Sahagún might best be studied. The high degree of Spanish influence in the architectural illustrations of the *General History* suggests to Donald Robertson the possibility of equal Spanish influence in the text. The final article, by Miguel León-Portilla, sets forth seven areas relative to Sahagún's work which need further study.

This book is of importance not only to historians of sixteenth-century Mexico but also to ethnohistorians of pre-Conquest Mexico who obtain information from sixteenth-century documents.

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