

BOOK NOTICES

Initialed notices were written by members of the editorial staff.

A History of Medieval Spain. By JOSEPH F. O'CALLAGHAN. Ithaca, 1975. Cornell University Press. Maps. Illustrations. Tables. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 729. Cloth. \$25.00.

In view of recently published syntheses in English of medieval Iberian history, among them Gabriel Jackson's and Stanley Payne's chapters, the question is: What does this big book contribute? Its five parts cover the years from 415 to 1492 over the entire Peninsula. The political narrative inescapably made up of kings and battles is written in an agreeable and straightforward style. The author points out recent revisions as well as obscure areas and controversies past and current. To these chapters are added special topics which reflect the growing wealth of sources and complexities of scholarly debate concerning society, culture, economy and religion. The narrative fixes convenient pegs from which to suspend the drape of social history. We are made aware of the deceptive firmness of the chronological pegs as well as of the contrasting firmness of apparently ephemeral social annals.

The problem of the many technical terms derived from multiple sources (especially Arabic, Catalan and Portuguese) with which the historian of Iberia has to contend are cleverly handled. Where definition is either doubtful or unimportant in the context, several usages are given in parentheses. This way many more terms are introduced than can be defined without difficulty. It is a pity that they are not given an index and must be dug out of the text.

Some pictures, maps and ten genealogical tables are appended. The bibliography is highly selective and quite up to date and prevents no one from following his own inclination. This is a book for people who do not look for quick answers to questions about the Iberian Middle Ages, but who will take the time (a college course) to see what there is to be found out. Curiously, it is the virtue of the longer format to raise questions.

U.L.

Camden Miscellany. Vol. XXV. By THE OFFICES OF THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY. London, 1974. University College, London. Tables. Maps. Index. Pp. viii, 278. Cloth.

This Miscellany edited by the Royal Historical Society is truly a miscellany. This volume has documents from the period of Henry VIII, a parliamentary diary of the late eighteenth century and an 1827 report on Bolivia by the private secretary (Joseph Barclay Pentland) of Charles Milner Ricketts, the British Consul General in Lima, Peru. The Pentland report, up to now unknown to me, is a most useful document for early Bolivian history. As the editor states, it should be con-