

Antonio Bachiller y Morales in 1859. Bachiller wrote that at that time Valdés was the most popular historian of Cuba. Other contemporary Cuban critics were less kind. For example, Jacobo de la Pezuela wrote that Valdés was an eager but ill-read student without style or literary taste, whose main source of information was to be found in the records of the municipal government of Havana. He further accused the author of lack of clarity and method, to the point where his work seemed to be nothing more than a review of the entrance and exit of the administrators of Havana and Santiago. Pezuela also found numerous errors and omissions of important dates. A bit harsh, perhaps, but Pezuela's evaluation, reprinted in the current edition, strikes the modern reader as still valid.

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*Epidemic Disease in Mexico City, 1761-1813. An Administrative, Social, and Medical Study.* By DONALD B. COOPER. Austin, 1965. University of Texas Press for the Institute of Latin American Studies. Bibliography. Index. Pp. x, 236.

In this book Donald B. Cooper breaks ground in a field largely ignored not only by historians of Mexico, but by all historians. As a group we historians are courageous enough to hazard economic analysis based on a few figures concerning maize production, and we blithely inform our students and readers that what Karl Marx *really* meant to say was . . . , but we ignore or only mention epidemic disease. Our excuse is that we are, after all, not MDs. The subject is of far too great importance to ignore, however, and we do not need to be doctors of medicine in order to take into full consideration the impact of disease any more than we have to be skilled economists to note the influence of inflation.

Cooper's book contains no esoteric terminology to discourage the lay reader. He obviously knows a good deal about epidemiology, but he gives the reader the benefit—not the burden—of his special knowledge. His research was done almost exclusively in very important but previously unmined manuscript sources. Thus the book is essential reading for anyone claiming acquaintance with the literature on colonial Mexico. In the period 1761 to 1813 *at least* 50,000 died of epidemic disease in Mexico City, a statistic which points to a factor that no historian worthy of his craft should overlook. The only real criticism of the book—and it is one that can be made of many monographs—is that the author has not tried to relate his special subject to the general trends of the time. Was there anything

uniquely Mexican or Spanish American about Mexico City's reaction to epidemic? What does that reaction tell us about the cohesiveness of Mexican society at that time?

The most significant generality that this reader draws from the book is that although Mexico City lay far from the centers of scientific research, it handled the problem of epidemic disease about as well as any of the cities of the world. It faced the special problem of Indian distrust of European medicine and lacked the closer English acquaintance with the blessing of inoculation, but in this period indifference to the most basic principles of public health was no more common in Mexico than in the centers of world civilization. What Cooper says of the people of Mexico City of this era could be said as well of those of Philadelphia, London, or Canton: "Some grieved in humble resignation as they said their prayers, and buried the dead. Others cursed the killer . . . , and buried their dead. In the end it was the same: there was little one could do" (pp. 155-156).

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*Lima la horrible*. By SEBASTIÁN SALAZAR BONDY. México, 1964. Ediciones Era. Illustrations. Pp. 102. Paper.

The theme of the book's eleven brief chapters is that Peru's colonial period has been wrongly idealized as an Arcadia in which master and servant, foreigner and native lived in peace and abundance. Originally a refuge from Chilean military occupation, this cult of the past was thereafter given impulse by the "great families" desiring to maintain their social, economic, and political advantage. In order to evoke colonial Arcadia the ruling caste promotes *criollismo*, a popular set of Lima-sponsored attitudes on language, music, food, religion, and succeeding in life (through *viveza* and *perricholismo*). The "great families," once mainly landowners, are flexible and have founded a banking system and developed a partly industrialized coast while using the fellowship of *criollismo* as a screen. Another but smaller segment of the upper class partakes of the "American way of life." Both groups fear reform, revolution, and unionism and are convinced that their world will not end as long as Lima's Edenic legend is superimposed on Peru's reality.

Salazar Bondy asks whether Dame Fortune is not Peru's deity. He then relates her to a general desire for better housing and education by means of which the individual of lower and middle class may approach the "great families" and their stability. Since the individual is trained to respect the socio-economic structure, and upward