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Gallegos, Bernardo P., Literacy, Education, and Society in New Mexico, 1693-1821

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In his examination of questions which have plagued scholars concerning the degree of veracity of the *diario* in its various forms, he employs an analytical technique which includes the use of comparative tables of key word transcription and translation. These tables reveal some of the problems which paleographers as well as translators face in dealing with manuscripts. They also prove helpful in following the critical analysis.

Henige's premise and attempt at such analysis is admirable. In conclusion he states, "But a close and disinterested study of the text of the *diario* not only fails to warrant such flights of fancy, it reveals a text that is a composite of many hands, written and rewritten with many purposes in mind and transcribed far too frequently for comfort. Consequently, the *diario* resembles nothing so much as a kaleidoscope that with each turning glints with a different light and whose essence is inextricably bound up with the perspective of the observer." (Pp. 285-86) As he himself has stated, with each rendering a bit of the copyist, transcriber, and translator is left behind, added for good or ill to the whole. In that case, has not Henige's exposition added to this interposition as well?

However, in sum, this presentation is stimulating and is food for thought in this quincennial year. Included is a bibliography of the various versions of the *diario* and subsequent studies in English, Spanish and other languages, not only of the record of Columbus's first voyage, but also of the mechanics of transcription, translation, and critical analysis. All in all, this makes for a good addition to the library of any serious student of the Columbus voyages.

Rosalind Z. Rock
San Antonio Missions

Literacy, Education, and Society in New Mexico, 1693-1821. By Bernardo P. Gallegos. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992. viii + 119 pp. Map, tables, appendix, references, index. \$27.50 cloth, \$11.95 paper.)

This book will finally put to rest an inaccurate and perpetual myth. The myth, conceived by the likes of Josiah Gregg in *Commerce of the Prairies* and New Mexico's second Territorial governor, William Carr Lane, proclaims that historically the majority of New Mexico's native Hispanic population was, before American occupation, illiterate. This book will also undoubtedly shake up a number of modern academics working in the Southwest today.

Using primary sources from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe Archives and the Spanish Archives of New Mexico, Bernardo Gallegos turns the erroneous assumption of native illiteracy in colonial New Mexico a full 360

degrees. He begins this process by examining traditional and often one-sided studies of literacy. For example, R.E. Ackerman's (1933) study which uses data from the U.S. census records between 1870 and 1930 concludes that "American occupation of New Mexico was responsible for the elimination of illiteracy in the territory." What Ackerman fails to mention is the dramatic decline in literacy from 1850, just after the conquest, until around 1870.

Gallegos develops his documentation with a series of interrelated chapters. Chapter 1 establishes a social context of the period, focusing on the nature of the population, political structures, and the economy. Chapter 2 examines education and the forms that it took. Chapter 3 contains a quantitative analysis of male literacy rates based on signatures from military enlistment papers, as well as an examination of reading materials. And finally, chapter 4 explores the relationship between literacy, education, and society.

The reader quickly learns from the author the sophistication of the Spanish educational system in the province when he defines the term *doctrinarios*, "native Hispanic boys who were students of the missionaries;" but, unlike the rest of the villagers who were also students, the *doctrinarios* actually were raised by the religious within the convent and separated from the others. *Ladino*, Gallegos tells us, "is a word that was used to identify natives who were educated and could read and write."

To demonstrate the relationship between literacy and colonial social structure, Gallegos documents several categories of written patrimony from the archives. These archival sources include examples of meticulously kept colonial record keeping systems. Baptismal records, marriage records, death records, and censuses are cited. He also demonstrates the importance of mass communication in the form of public readings, which required print and script. And he illustrates the power of the written word in economic formats such as land ownership and interactions between the populace and the government. Finally, the author notes the importance of the scribe in the Spanish bureaucracy.

In four well-researched sections, Gallegos paints a realistic picture of the actual level of literacy in the Spanish colonial period. He makes use of countless documents and literary remnants which effectively eliminate the previously misleading myths of an illiterate legacy. This book opens many doors for further research and makes the reader long for more.

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