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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

The Life of Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, 1823-1889. A study of Influence and Obscurity. Frank Averill Knapp. The Institute of Latin-American Studies, University of Texas, No. XII. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1951. Pp. 292.

For the first time a careful, detailed and thoroughly documented study of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada is presented. Mr. Knapp feels that the neglect of this political figure is due to the overshadowing importance and acclaim given to Benito Juárez on the one hand and Porfirio Díaz on the other. So, Mexico's President, following the untimely death of Juárez (1872), has been obscured by his illustrious predecessor and the short period of Lerdo's peaceful presidency negated by his dictator successor.

Covering the early life of Sebastián Lerdo briefly the work is devoted largely to the twenty some years of his political career. From his work as an educator, he was rector of the National College of San Ildefonso, 1852-1863, he became more and more concerned with political events. He was *fiscal* of the Supreme Court (1855), and alternate magistrate; in the Cabinet of Ignacio Comonfort as Minister of Foreign Relations (1857); a deputy in Congress (1861-1863); intimate of Juárez and his Minister of Justice; then later Minister of Relations and Government which made him Chief of the Cabinet. He shared President Juárez' wanderings during the days of Maximilian, and returned with him in triumph after the fall of the French, became *ad interim* president of Mexico in 1872 and was elected to serve as the chief executive, 1872-1876.

Throughout his political life, Sebastián Lerdo was a liberal working for the realization of constitutional government. He developed his own party which fell before the popular militarist, Porfirio Díaz. The last years of his life were spent in exile in the United States.

This complicated career is handled with understanding and sometimes great clarity of writing. However, the author

resorts too frequently to rhetorical questions. Some colloquial expressions and confused and awkward writing also obscure the clear thread of development.

Two matters merit special attention, first, the excellent chart or time table of the movements of Juárez and his staff during the French occupation which has never been done before; second, the separation of the careers of Sebastián and Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, his brother. Writers have frequently confused the two men both of whom served Mexico during the Juárez period. The chapter on the nomadic government of Juárez could be cut. It is confused by detail. The diplomatic and, perhaps, other aspects of the period could have been organized into another section and thus clarify the story.

One regrets Mr. Knapp's depreciating of his materials. He has examined a number of sources as shown in his notes and bibliography, has sifted out much pertinent information and woven together a most welcome study on this prominent figure of Mexico's nineteenth century history. It is a pioneer project and, despite the faults, a distinctive addition to the literature of this period.

University of New Mexico

DOROTHY WOODWARD

Reports of the Awatovi Expedition, Barbara Lawrence. Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Report No. 4. Part I: Mammals found at the Awatovi site. Part II: Post-cranial skeletal characters of deer, pronghorn, and sheep-goat with notes on Bos and Bison. Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, XXXV, No. 3, vii+43. 20 figs. Harvard University, 1951.

This fourth report of the Awatovi Expedition is in two parts, each of which is further subdivided into two. Part one is brief. It contains a discussion of the mammal remains found in the ruins on Antelope Mesa in the Hopi country of northeastern Arizona and a discussion of the canid remains from the southwest in general. Nineteen feral and

seven domestic species were identified from the ruins. Some of these were identified to subspecies. One wonders about the advisability of attempting to identify such fragmentary material to subspecies.

Part two, the main portion of the report, is devoted to "some explicit practical suggestions and diagrams by the aid of which, and a skeleton of each of the animals involved, the archaeologist can identify the great bulk of the bones he finds." This is part of a laudable attempt to relieve the professional mammalogist of some of the burden of routine identification thrust upon him by archaeologists, ecologists, and others. Since the bones of most species, such as the porcupine and jackrabbit that are encountered by the archaeologist, are easy to identify by comparison with known materials, prime attention is given to the more difficult groups. Two such groups were studied. The first includes the deer, the pronghorn, the sheep, and the goat. The last two are treated as one because their bones, other than the skulls, are largely indistinguishable. The second group is composed of the bison and the cow. Not all of the post-cranial skeleton is treated. In general those portions, such as ribs, the shafts of the long bones, and the smaller carpals and tarsals, that are difficult for the non-specialist to identify, are omitted.

In spite of the obvious diversity of the living individuals, the differences in the post-cranial skeletons are not trenchant. The characters suggested for use are those found most significant in a comparative study of from three to twelve skeletons of each type. The characters are well chosen, but for the most part are expressed in relative terms as larger, deeper, etc. Since the differences are largely those of degree rather than of kind, the value of the work would have been enhanced by the inclusion of actual and proportional measurements, even though the ranges of these may meet or overlap, and the series are understandably small.

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