

**PAPERS OF THE PEABODY MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND
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UNIVERSITY. VOL. VII. HISTORY OF THE
SPANISH CONQUEST OF YUCATAN AND
OF THE ITZAS**

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Vol. VII. History of the Spanish Conquest of Yucatan and of the Itzas by Philip Ainsworth
Means

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PHILIP AINSWORTH MEANS

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HISTORY OF THE SPANISH CONQUEST OF YUCATAN AND OF THE ITZAS

BY

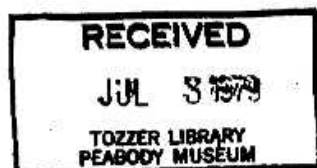
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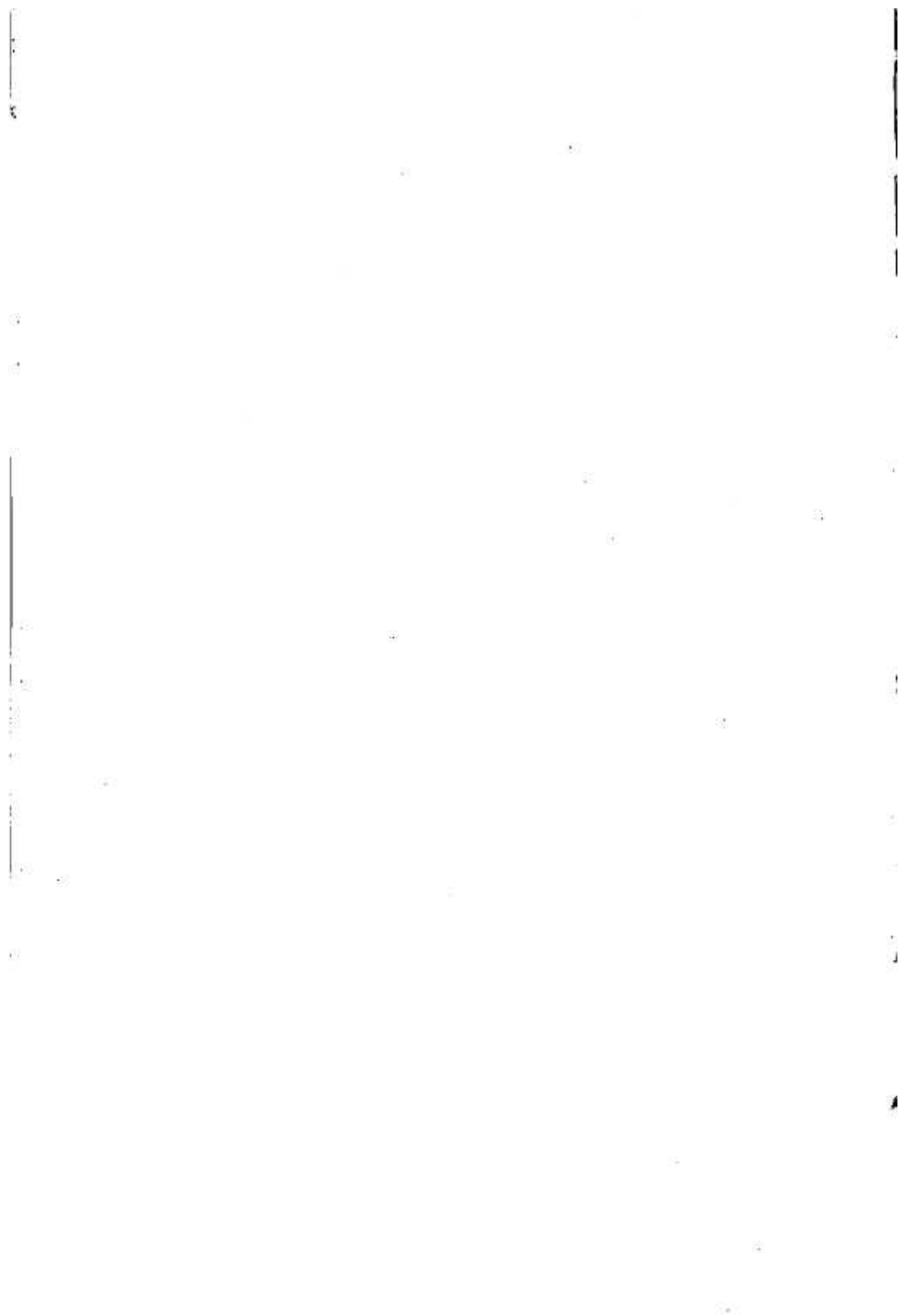
NOTE

THIS Paper is the result of work carried on by Mr. Means as a graduate student in the Division of Anthropology during the years 1915-1917. It consists mainly of translations of early Spanish books and manuscripts.

It is gratifying to note that this is the first publication by the Museum based upon the large collection of photographic reproductions of early manuscripts from Mexico and Central America brought together by Professor W. E. Gates of Point Loma, California, and presented to the Museum by Mr. Charles P. Bowditch. Among these manuscripts is Avendaño's account of his journey to Peten, the greater part of which is included in the present paper. The original of this manuscript is in the British Museum. Cano's account of a trip to Guatemala is also given here. This manuscript is in the Brinton Collection at the University of Pennsylvania. It is through the kindness of Dr. George B. Gordon, Director of that Museum, and of Miss Adela C. Breton, who copied the manuscript, that it is possible to publish it at this time. The Avendaño and the Cano manuscripts were translated by Mr. Bowditch and Señor G. Rivera.

CHARLES C. WILLOUGHBY

Director



INTRODUCTION

IN the library of the Peabody Museum of Harvard University there is an invaluable collection of photographs of old manuscripts relating to Middle America. These photographs, made by Professor William E. Gates of Point Loma, California, were given to the Peabody Museum by Charles P. Bowditch, Esq., of Boston. One of the volumes contains a photographic reproduction of an original manuscript entitled *Relación de las dos Entradas que hizé a Peten Ytza*. The author, Fray Andrés de Avendaño y Loyola, of the Order of Saint Francis, will receive much of our attention later. Fortunately Mr. Bowditch and Sr. Guillermo Rivera have deciphered and translated the crabbed old text, so that we have at hand an account of the subjection of the Itzas of Tayasal, or Peten Itza, which is not only invaluable as being the work of an eyewitness of that subjection, but which also is filled with a rare charm. It was largely with a view to bringing this old manuscript to the attention of students that Mr. Bowditch and Dr. Tozzer asked me to work it up into a study of the Itzas of Tayasal. At the same time we must not neglect to notice here the translation, made by Mr. Bowditch and Sr. Rivera, of another inedited work on the same subject. I refer to the account by Fray Alonso Cano, which will be of great use to us later.

Though Avendaño and Cano are, so to speak, the prime reasons for the writing of this study, they have been supplemented in no inconsiderable degree by two other early Spanish writers on the history of Yucatan and its people, Diego Cogoludo and Juan de Villagutierre y Sotomayor. A few comments on the works of these two authors will later prove useful to the reader.

Though Villagutierre's Spanish style is far superior to that of such writers as Fernando Montesinos and Antonio de la

Calancha, it is, nevertheless, atrocious. Although he wrote about 1700, Villagutierre's style is excessively archaic; his grammatical construction can hardly be called construction at all, so formless and ambiguous is it. Villagutierre never hesitates to write several long sentences without a single main verb between them, nor does he often refrain from going on and on for a page or so without using a period. In the use of capitals he is most whimsical; usually he has them when they are called for, but he has many that are out of place as well.

The style of Cogolludo, on the other hand, is very good, and that, be it noted, despite the fact that Cogolludo wrote prior to 1688. One remarks with considerable surprise that in several cases Villagutierre and Cogolludo use almost the same words. For example, in speaking of the visit which Cortes made to the island of Tayasal, Cogolludo says: ". . . y aun la ida de Cortes se tuvo por *osadia*, y *demasiada confianza*. . . ." Villagutierre, in the same connection says: ". . . *que lo tenian a grandissima temeridad*, y *osadia*, y *por demasiada confianza*. . . ." This is an interesting point, and perhaps it is significant that Cogolludo's book was published in 1688, whereas that of Villagutierre was not brought out until 1701. It is to be noted that Cogolludo, the earlier writer, uses only two epithets, and that Villagutierre, the later writer, uses the same two, plus a new one of his own. I know of two other cases where equally close and significant similarity exists between the two. It is possible, then, that Villagutierre copied (not to say plagiarized) the work of Cogolludo without giving credit for it. But the important point for us in this matter does not concern the personal integrity of Villagutierre. Rather does the importance of the matter lie in this: if Villagutierre was acquainted with the history of Yucatan by Cogolludo to such a degree that he frequently borrowed whole phrases from it, he must have had a very good reason for diverging widely now and again from the version of events given by Cogolludo. Such a reason could only be supplied by the fact that Villagutierre possessed information which he regarded as superior to and more official than that of Cogolludo. Therefore, since in several instances (as in his account of the events leading up to the visit of Cortes to

Tayasal) Villagutierre occasionally departs from the footsteps of Cogolludo, we may safely assume that he was at once more critical and better informed than the latter, whom, however, he valued enough to be willing to draw from his work much of his information and even some of his phraseology.

The virtues and defects of Avendaño and of Cano are less subtle; so much so, indeed, that it would be absurd to attempt a criticism of them here. The reader will have ample opportunity to see their qualities for himself in the body of the book.

A word as to the method adopted in translating is in order. In the various passages taken from Cogolludo and Villagutierre I have preserved the spelling and capitalization of proper names that appear in the text. All passages from Avendaño and Cano are from the translations made by Mr. Bowditch and Sr. Rivera.

All the other works used are so well known that comment on them is superfluous.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Bowditch and to Dr. Tozzer, both of whom have spent much time and thought in going over the manuscript of this work. Among the others who have shown me kindness and courtesy during the preparation of this study are Mr. Putnam of the Library of Congress; Dr. George Byron Gordon of the University Museum, Philadelphia; Professor Holmes of the United States National Museum; Dr. Edward Luther Stevenson of the Hispanic Society of America, New York; and, lastly, my mother, Mrs. James Means. These and others have generously given me much of their time and information.

PHILIP AINSWORTH MEANS

February 23, 1917