

motifs and forms which came to characterize his work. Cano's major building, the church of the Convento del Angel, was destroyed in the Napoleonic wars, but there is good reason to believe that the church of the Magdalen in the same city follows the design of the Angel Custodio church rather closely. The façade of Granada Cathedral was not completed until long after Cano's lifetime, and the building had to be adapted to Silóe's foundations. But in spite of the originality of Cano's design which impressed his contemporaries, today it seems quiet indeed for Baroque but Spanish in such features as the triumphal arch disposition of the façade and Cano in many of the details of ornament.

Cano's artistic affiliations are of considerable interest for they include a period of study under Pacheco with Velázquez as friend and fellow pupil, while his sculpture seems to prove a close association with Martínez Montañés. Several of Cano's pupils and followers had a certain importance, such as the architect Sebastián de Herrera Barnuevo, the sculptors Pedro de Mena and José de Mora, and the painters Juan de Sevilla, Bocanegra and José Risueño.

The book's scholarly equipment is complete and well arranged. The bibliography and footnotes must include all known references. The catalogue gives a full description of each authentic work. There are grouped under altars and ecclesiastical objects; paintings (mostly religious, including the portraits); sculpture; paintings by Cano's followers; references to lost paintings; attributions (both in painting and sculpture); and prints after Cano. The chronology of documents furnishes the necessary confirmation and those connected with his sojourn in the cathedral of Granada especially add a convincingly human touch. The convenience of the indices makes research a pleasure.

Dr. Wethey has been at no small pains to determine what actually was Cano's authentic signature, and photographs of all known genuine examples plus a com-

parison with some which are not so, should make unconsidered attributions a thing of the past. The generous illustrations have been expertly photographed, many by Mrs. Wethey, and no doubt it was wise to adhere to a scheme of black and white. This welcome study is a very considerable contribution to the growing number of scholarly monographs in the field of Spanish art.

WALTER W. S. COOK
New York University

Alma Reed, *Orozco*, viii + 308 pp., 32 ill., New York: Oxford University Press, 1956. \$6.00.

This book contains indispensable source material towards a definitive biography of José Clemente Orozco. There is no one more qualified than Alma Reed to cover Orozco's long sojourn (1928-1934) in the United States. Besides, it is good reading and the story rings true from the author's first meeting with the artist in his tiny New York studio, to their adieu at the Chicago Terminal as he returned to Mexico.

Orozco emerges clearly out of such unassuming and expert reportage, but as a man constrained and caged by the unfamiliar, and on the whole inimical, milieu. At first, poor and puzzled, the artist could bear rather well, due to similar past brushes with loneliness, the incomprehension of his art, and occasional hunger. Later on, when he was accepted as a master, other distractions came his way that were the irksome price he had to pay for his American fame: there were dealers keen at horse-trading, potential patrons to be humored, occasional speeches, and worst of all in his estimation, the taming and tipping of uniformed doormen. As he rose to acclaim, Orozco stored enough fuel of resentment to power throughout the rest of his life many a bitter masterpiece.

Within this already strange milieu, passing strange must have seemed to him his well-wishers. "Little angel"—his nickname for the author—was one of a chapel

of dedicated ladies, shod in open sandals and clad in hand-woven linens of Grecian cut. Delphi, famed home of antique mysteries, remained for them the *omphalos*, or naval, of the world. The members' pantheon was a crowded one, what with Jesus and Buddha, Mithra and Walt Whitman, Gandhi and Zoroaster. To put Orozco at ease, the Mexican Quetzalcoatl was courteously assimilated. The painter was "baptized" a Greek—with a new name: *Pauselenos*—and fitted with a crown of live laurels. When I visited him in his tiny Chelsea apartment I noticed the dried-up wreath, but the artist was not loquacious about it.

Delphic ideals notwithstanding, Alma Reed proved a determined and tireless executive in behalf of the master, who was both too retiring and too explosive for sustained and sound human contacts. The goal she set forth for him was success as a New Yorker envisions it. This success would be measured in terms of newspaper clippings—two, three, or four, columns wide—of strategic hangings in group shows, of successful lobbying for museum representation. Substantial private collectors would be hunted and captured, and, of course, a Hearst paper sued for defamation. Indeed, moves as tough as these were needed to crash art circles practically synonymous with the art market.

The frank and detailed retelling of this tactical campaign paradoxically makes a story free of meanness or selfishness. It proved to be a heroic effort against odds, that blends well with the heroism of Orozco's themes and style. What hallowed this practical endeavour, besides the generous motive, is that its story is not one of unalloyed success. Some of the deep drama of Mexico, with Orozco as the catalyser, infused, despite the hopes of his benefactress, this otherwise typically American adventure.

Orozco was a muralist. In Mexico, he had freely spread of his heart and his gall on eighteenth century patio walls framed in noble arcades, tiered high, and scaled generously, as if awaiting since they were

built the heroic lime-skin of the future frescos. Orozco conceived his work on a scale, and of an orchestral complexity, that could hardly fit the Procrustean bed: dealers' velvet-lined walls, collectors' panelled rooms, museums' storage racks. Alma Reed could not quite turn the tide of Northern indifference. The best informed among the men she approached conceived of murals as watered versions of the pale renderings of Puvis de Chavannes. Orozco's noisy frescos would not do.

As with Gauguin and Van Gogh, the villains of this play were art connoisseurs. Astonishingly, its heroes were College Presidents and Professors who proffered walls, braving incensed trustees, aroused local societies, and the resulting adverse publicity. It seems that Orozco was left quite free to paint what he pleased. That no money was forthcoming as a fee for these gigantic chores was hardly worth a second thought. Again seated on a scaffold, again in coveralls spattered with lime, at last out of reach of dealers and salons, the Mexican felt sane again.

This story of Orozco in the United States is the heart of the book. To live up to its inclusive title, its scope extends over the full biographical span, from birth to death, but these added chapters may be afterthoughts. They lack the authentic fire with which Alma Reed testifies about events in which she was an active participant. In Orozco's own view, his stay in the United States was perhaps little more than an awkward, if prolonged, interlude. In the book, the change of pace and interest queers the all-over balance. The reader is left with the idea that, neglected at home, the master found refuge and fame in a foreign land. Facts are otherwise: a first extensive appreciation and praise of Orozco was published by José Juan Tablada in 1913. In 1923, he successfully climaxed a campaign to give walls to Orozco, in itself a tale fully as exciting as the one Alma Reed tells so feelingly.

Who could blame the author for being confused with the marches and counter-

marches, the frays between top dogs and underdogs that churned throughout the Revolution? When she mentions "the Zapata epoch, when the artists and other followers of Obregon abandoned Mexico City for Orizaba," only a well-informed reader will make out that Orozco left with the troops sent to fight Zapata. The painter of the famous picture, "Zapatistas," now in the Museum of Modern Art, and of the equally formidable "Zapata"—that Alma Reed extolls as the heroic portrait of a hero—contacted his models only as they were brought in daily as prisoners, and shot. The author states that these pictures are "an eloquent reaffirmation of Orozco's revolutionary convictions." What is meant as straightforward praise remains probably true, in the sense that strain, and stress, and turmoil, were the main motors of Orozco's inspiration, and thus a justification *per se* of the Revolution.

Similar simplifications are attempted on the religious plane. Even in his lustiest anti-clerical days, filled with the sport of priest-baiting and church-sacking, Orozco never pretended to moral or philosophical originality. When the free-thinking plebs he had fought for came on top and launched a religious persecution, the painter, in a typically bold turn-about, frescoed pious incidents from the life of Saint Francis. Alma Reed extolls the pagan martyrdom of Prometheus as a supreme achievement, but the Christian martyrdoms, that Orozco painted towards the last, and his noble Crucifixions, are silently bypassed.

Thus it comes as a total surprise to the reader that Don Luis Maria Martinez, famed archbishop of Mexico, would choose Orozco as his official portraitist. The stairs of the studio were many and high, and for seven sittings the aged ecclesiastic climbed them, well knowing that the painter was neither an apple-polisher nor a brush-licker. The last commission,

that death left unfinished, was for a monumental church crucifix. Either these clerical patrons—as did Father Couturier in France—prized genius over faith, or else and more probably, being themselves Mexican, they allowed for tantrums between a child and his mother, be it his Mother the Church.

In Mexico, even a word can hold complex inuendoes. *El Atoron*, the name of a *pulqueria*, does not mean "a holdup." It has a double meaning, a device dear to Mexican popular wit, and, as well, to the Indian sense of caution. *Atorarse* means to fill up on good food, to stuff oneself. It also means to choke, as one chokes on a bone, and perhaps chokes to death. *El Atoron* being a place where one, or both, of these things may happen, the client has been briefed on all eventualities.

The reader who wishes to study Orozco's stylistic evolution from the sixteen plates at hand should be aware of some loose dating in the captions. Otherwise, the stylistic chasm between "House of Tears," correctly dated 1915, and "The Wounded," dated here as of 1916, will prove sorely puzzling. Not one year, but a decade, separates the evanescent tints of the early watercolor from the aggressive value contrasts of the field-hospital scene. In the *College Art Journal*, IX, 1949-50, pp. 148-157, I published the exhaustive documentation that is the key to this stylistic puzzle: none of the wash-drawings of the Revolution are contemporary with the events they depict. They were conceived after the first frescos were painted, which explains the monumental emphasis. The series was begun in September 1926, and finished at the end of 1928, when Orozco, in his small flat on West 23rd Street, washed a few replicas of earlier motifs to please New York patrons.

JEAN CHARLOT
University of Hawaii