



*Slides: "Mérida - Ciudad Romana."* (Babbitt Film Specialties P. O. Box 10, Park Forest, Ill. 60466), 1970. 35 mm, color, glass-mounted, 3.75 ips tape narrated in Spanish with musical background; 20 slides in series; intermediate to advanced Spanish, history, archaeology, architecture, social studies; includes printed script, supplementary reading unit in Spanish entitled "Los deportes en la España romana." Also includes a Teacher Guidebook including suggestions for use of the teaching unit, questions for discussion and various tests (true-false, vocabulary and idioms, completion); \$15.75.

These twenty slides take the viewers into Mérida, Spain; for a tour of the Roman ruins there: bridge, arch of triumph, aqueduct, circus, amphitheatre, theater, temple, statues, garden, and baths. At the same time the narration reconstructs the events and activities of which Roman life was composed some 2,000 years ago. The photography is outstanding and the taped narration provides an excellent opportunity to practice oral comprehension of native Spanish. The teacher is encouraged to reproduce the script so that each student can read the text while hearing it. This unit is, therefore, suitable for varying abilities provided that the teacher takes advantage of the teaching material provided with the unit. The written text reviews the use of object pronouns, subjunctive as well as other verb tenses, idioms and vocabulary. There is an English translation of some idioms and vocabulary in the margin of the line on which it is used, thereby facilitating grammar review and oral comprehension of the unit.

Numerous discussion questions are suggested to provide oral conversation. These could also be used to provide writing practice. Reading skills are developed in the optional one-page reading unit. The distributor sends a tape of the narration and printed text, tests, etc. at least one week ahead of the actual booking date so that the teacher can prepare the class early if work on audio comprehension is desired. This entire unit can be rented, rather than purchased, for only \$7.50.

The Merick unit was employed with a Spanish 102 class composed of 24 students in their 17th week of college Spanish at Monmouth College, a small liberal arts college located in Monmouth, Illinois.

## Materials Review

This college requires three terms (30 weeks) of a foreign language for graduation.

I ran copies of the text so that each student could follow the written word as he listened to the tape. After listening the first time, students read through a page of true-false questions which I expected them to be able to answer after hearing the tape again. However, before beginning the tape the second time they were permitted to ask for a translation covering difficult parts of the script or the questions. This could not be permitted with a more advanced group.

On the following day, the slides were shown along with the tape but no printed text was used by the students. Afterwards the class was asked oral questions on an individual basis covering the content of the presentation. They answered in Spanish. The concluding class activity consisted of "free" questions or observations among the viewers.

Babbitt Film Specialties supplies a teaching unit where all work is already done for the teacher. One simply decides how many days he wishes to devote to the unit and then runs copies of the sheets provided by the publisher which carry out the performance objectives that the teacher has decided upon. In this case, my prime goal was to bring the class into contact with a native speaker whom they had not previously heard and to instill confidence in the students that they can understand a stranger speaking his native tongue, Spanish. Secondary goals included practicing Spanish conversation and reviewing the influence of Rome on Spanish culture. The Mérida Slide Service is undoubtedly one of the best buys available to fulfill these goals. It would have taken hours and hours of work to prepare and present a similar teaching unit. My chief regret is that I could not spend more class time on the unit.

*Mrs. Barbara Watson, Monmouth College  
Dept. of Modern Languages  
Monmouth College  
Monmouth, Illinois*

*Film: Saltillo de Fiesta.* Babbitt Film Specialities (P. O. Box 10, Park Forest, Illinois, 60466), 1965; (16 mm., color, Spanish narration, 12 minutes; late elementary to average intermediate; includes script with suggestions for use, supplementary reading, testing program; sale, \$180; rental, \$12.50 per week.)

### *General Content*

Introduction: Quiet music introduces the film's major topics: Saltillo, city famous for its serapes; Christmas traditions and customs;

the festival of the patron saint, El Santo Cristo de la Capilla; and bullfighting, starring Alfredo Leal.

Saltillo: we see the city of Saltillo, situated in a valley surrounded by mountains, with the state capital of Coahuila and the Cathedral facing each other across the Plaza de Armas; Victoria Street; an entrance to the city market; "La Favorita", serape factory; carding and washing of wool; the dyed wool; weaving and brushing; and the finished wool serape.

Christmas: life-size Wise Men, with red-choir-robed angels singing nearby; a skeleton, representing the death of the Old Year, pursuing the New Year; bargaining for toys at the market; Santa Claus; the selling of moss for nativity scenes and the arranging of figures in the scene; breaking of a piñata in the patio, followed by sparklers, noise-makers and refreshments.

La Fiesta del Santo Cristo: preparations, setting up stalls and booths in the Plaza; dancing of the Matachines, representing struggle between good and evil.

Bullfight: entrance of Alfredo Leal in *traje de luces* followed by his *cuadrilla*; all of bullfight except killing of bull. Concludes with Alfredo Leal's acknowledging acclaim of spectators.

### Relevance

The valley-surrounded-by-mountains setting is typical of hundreds of Mexican towns. The city's fame derives from the serapes, especially the artisans' designs and weaves and their skill in the gradation and mutation of shades and colors. In spite of its brevity, the film allows time to observe the weaving of a central design.

The Christmas scenes acknowledge the foreign element, Santa Claus, but show that the Mexican does not surrender the traditional religious and social facets of the observance.

La Fiesta del Santo Cristo is a combination of religion, superstition and commercialism. While masses are being said in the chapel and in the cathedral, people also take time to watch the stern-faced Matachines in their colorful costumes and to visit the booths where they may spend their hard-earned pesos for corn-on-the-cob with hot sauce, chances on a package of cigarettes, imitation jewelry, or other merchandise.

Last but not least, we see in action Alfredo Leal who is in 1972 one of the outstanding bullfighters currently in Spain. Only one bull is fought but we are shown all but one of the steps in an encounter. The producer thoughtfully omits the killing of the bull.

From the foregoing, we realize that even the minimal use of "Saltillo de Fiesta", which would be simply the showing of the film,

## Materials Review

has cultural value. But it is much more than a cultural item because of the material that accompanies it.

One month in advance, the producer sends the teacher two mimeographed booklets. One of these includes: (1) the script (about 800 words) with lines numbered and marginal vocabulary notes, divided into three parts: (a) Saltillo and the serape, (b) Christmas, (c) the Fiesta del Santo Cristo and the bullfight. (2) A glossary of bullfighting terms; and (3) optional reading units: Los Nacimientos, Las Posadas Tradicionales and Los Reyes Magos.

The second booklet is a teacher-student guidebook and includes: (1) suggestions for use of film, script and other material; (2) a total of 29 questions that correspond, in Parts I, II and III, to the script, glossary and optional reading mentioned above; (3) Para charlar, including ten questions or suggestions to encourage conversation; (4) para identificar, with twenty items to identify; (5) twenty-five questions for a multiple-choice test.

A word about the script is in order. There are two typographical errors in the marginal notes: "pursued" is spelled "persued" and "died" is spelled "died."

The vocabulary fits the topics treated and is applicable to other subjects as well. The syntax is generally excellent. Most of the verb forms are in the present tense indicative because the script is primarily descriptive. The impersonal reflexive (*se tiende*, p. 1.26) is appropriately and successfully used to avoid the use of true passive, a practice of Spanish not usually accepted by English-speaking Americans; the use of present progressive emphasizes the actions depicted (*están cantando*, p. 12, 1.10 and *van colocando*, p. 3, 1.1). There are two present subjunctive forms. Awareness of these structural items may be a factor in determining the level at which you use the film.

### *Classroom Application*

Our own experience shows that, although seeing the film and hearing the narration before they see the script awakens a natural and healthy curiosity, most of our students experience a deep sense of frustration because they cannot understand all that is being said. consequently, our preference is to study the script and the questions for a week — five class hours — before seeing the film. At the same time, a tape of the film's sound track is heard in the classroom and in the language laboratory. We also show our own postcards, snapshots and serapes from Saltillo. This involves listening, speaking and reading in preparation for the film.

## Materials Review

After all, a person who is going to travel or visit in another country is better prepared to appreciate it if he learns about the country and if he is somewhat acquainted with and knows a language that is not native to him.

When the students see the film, they are entirely free of script and of exercises, but they are filled to the brim with knowledge and expectation. Having learned what they are to expect and having listened to the tape, they confirm their confidence as they enjoy the film accompanied by the narration. And they enjoy talking about it!

Classes vary and so do textbooks: two years ago, with the texts we were using, our elementary (second-quarter) students could not appreciate the wealth of material offered. With our current text (Wolfe: *Curso básico de español* New York: Macmillan Co. 1971), I believe they do.

Last, but not least, we have used the film during one week in the third quarter class to supplement a text that did not offer enough material for the course.

In conclusion, this writer is acquainted with Saltillo and considers that the material presented in *Saltillo de Fiesta* is authentic and the coloring excellent.

Lucy Ann Nesbett  
West Georgia College  
Carrollton, Georgia

*Chichicastenango*, Babbitt Film Specialties. (P. O. Box 10, Park Forest, Illinois, 60466); 35 mm. color, 3.75 ips., narration in Spanish, 19 slides in series; elementary, intermediate level, includes printed text, supplementary material, suggestions for use and exercises; sale, \$15.00; rental, \$7.50 per week.

This series of slides shows the famous city of Chichicastenango in the highlands of Guatemala. Various aspects of Indian life are shown: dress, religion, market-products, food. The camera also catches facial expressions which reflect the hard life of the Indian. In the last few slides we are introduced to Pepe and his burro. His tranquil trip from Chichicastenango to his home two hours away leads us to an appreciation of his lifestyle, his pride and even his resignation. The series closes with a quote from José Santos Chocano:

“dueño, yo siempre de mí mismo  
y superior al bien y al mal,  
digo, encogiéndome de hombros;  
Así será”

There is music in the background and the volume rises between each slide making the presentation not only restful, but also very easy

## Materials Review

to follow. The supplementary material is very thorough and complete. The tape and accompanying materials are sent in advance of the film giving the teacher time for preparation. The presentation runs for about ten minutes. The script has been carefully prepared and all difficult words and phrases are explained in the margins.

A student who has completed one semester of college Spanish should be able to follow it rather easily. If time permits, it lends itself to deeper study and can be incorporated into a unit on Guatemala if the teacher so desires. The program is especially valuable as a teaching aid because the presentation can be enjoyed by students with a limited knowledge of Spanish, yet the content material is sufficient for development of oral and written skills of more advanced students.

At Northeastern Illinois University we have found the series very useful. We have presented it many times to elementary classes in the language laboratory. Our procedure is for the student to listen to the tape with the script and then see the movie. This is followed by a short True/False quiz and then discussion on the spot of the answers in Spanish.

We recommend this presentation highly because it is informative, pleasant and short. The current interest the students have in the life of the Indian serves as motivation for them to understand not only the words but the ideas. Its greatest advantage is that it can be explored on several levels of complexity.

*Mrs. V. Najera*  
*Assistant Professor of Spanish*  
*Northeastern Illinois University*  
*Chicago, Illinois*