

*Filosofía de la conquista.* By SILVIO ZAVALA. (Colección Tierra Firme, 27.) (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1947. Pp. 163. Paper.)

In this succinct interpretive study, Sr. Zavala provides us with a valuable synthesis of the philosophy under which Spain established and maintained her sway over the New World. As Zavala makes clear, this deep, intricate philosophy was a product of pure thought and the exigencies of the practical situation which arose from the conquest and occupation of the New World. It involved such fundamental problems as the nature of man, the varying degrees and status of individuals and groups within mankind as a whole, the title by which Spain acquired and held the New World, the type of government which should be established in the Indies, the duties and obligations of Christian rulers, and the relationship of the Spaniards, whether the sovereign, officials, the clergy, or private citizens, to the natives. All-embracing problems of this basic nature were, of course, subjects of thought and speculation from ancient times and were anything but new to the Spaniards when the Americas were discovered. Nor, as Zavala points out, was the relationship of Christian Spaniard to non-Christian conquered people a new problem for Spaniards, in view of the centuries of the *Reconquista* and the subjugation of the Guanches of the Canary Islands. The Spaniards, then, already had a firm basis, practical as well as speculative, upon which to carry political thought forward when the discovery, conquest, and occupation of the Indies took place. Christian duty, conscience, and practical circumstances demanded that Spain formulate a more comprehensive philosophy than ever before as a theoretical basis on which to rest her control of the vast new lands of the Indies and the multitude of natives, heathen, of strange race and unaccustomed ways of life, who inhabited them. ". . . Spain did not find an empty continent," writes Señor Zavala: "For this reason her action had to be political, action taken in relation to other human beings grouped together in society, whether migratory tribes . . . or more highly developed states such as the Aztec or Inca. Consequently, it is readily understood that the colonization of America should give origin to an abundant volume of political literature directed toward elucidating the following problems: What are the titles which can justify the relationship of the Europeans to the native peoples? How should the recently discovered people be governed?"

Señor Zavala weaves European and specifically Spanish thought together with that which arose among Spaniards in the New World into his synthesis, skillfully showing opposing trends and influences from the period of discovery to that of independence. After summarizing

basic tenets of European and Spanish schools of thought until the discovery of America, Zavala discusses the opposing philosophies of the nature of man and just government brought forth in the controversies of the sixteenth century regarding possession of the New World and the status of the natives, with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda an outstanding advocate of the doctrine of the inherent inequality of man, and Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomé de las Casas brilliant champions of the doctrine of liberty, through to the triumph of the principle of liberty and its final enshrinement in the Laws of the Indies. Then, proceeding beyond, in a very important section of his treatise, Zavala carries the evolution of political thought concerning the Indies and their peoples further, and develops the effects produced by the Age of Enlightenment, until at the end of the colonial period, with the forward movement of civilization and the social and political complexity which had arisen in the colonies with the growth of creole and mestizo elements, a truly liberal, equalitarian political theory at length emerged, a doctrine which projected itself forward in the bodies politic of the nations which rose out of the final disintegration of the Spanish empire.

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*Historia colonial de la América Española.* Tomo primero, *Los viajes de Colón.* By ALFONSO TORO. (Mexico City: Editorial Patria, S. A., 1946. Pp. 472. Maps, illustrations, facsimiles. Paper.)

The first volume of Licenciado Toro's history of colonial Spanish America compels the reviewer to say several unfavorable things, though with regrets, because the work as a whole is better than the sum of its parts. It has been conceived on an ambitious scale, being no less than a survey of European culture, with special emphasis on navigation, from the time of the Phoenicians to the completion of Columbus's voyages. This would have been a stiff undertaking for the greatest scholar of our times, which Toro, despite his many abilities, is not. It would have required the consultation and advice of specialists in the various historical fields represented here. Either the specialists were not available or Sr. Toro did not use them. He has proceeded bravely alone and has well merited what success he has achieved. But there are many errors of fact and several major misunderstandings.

As one example, in his lengthy sketch of the decline of the Byzantine empire, Toro out-Gibbons Gibbon in the severity of his indictments. He has the unfortunate empire begin its thousand-year history in a state of decay and continue to one of downright putrefaction. From his picture, no reader could help wondering how the empire lasted a