

COLONIAL AND INDEPENDENCE PERIODS

La ruta de Balboa y el descubrimiento del Océano Pacífico. By ÁNGEL RUBIO. México, 1965. Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia. Illustrations. Notes. Appendices. Pp. xv, 133. Paper. \$1.50.

During four hours on the morning of Tuesday, September 27, 1513, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa climbed a 1235-foot hill called *Urrucallala* (8°30' N., 78°10' W.). Silent, upon this peak in Darién, a European viewed the Pacific Ocean for the first time from an American coast. Moments later the Discoverer was joined by his twenty-seven Spanish companions and his Indian retinue.

The subject of this monograph is the reconstructed route of Balboa from Santa María de la Antigua del Darién to Aclá (both on the Caribbean side of the Isthmus of Panama), across the narrow neck to Mount Urrucallala, and thence to the gulf called San Miguel. This route was carefully reconstructed in 1954 by an expedition led by ex-King Leopold of Belgium. Rubio participated in that venture, served as the party's geographic consultant, and faithfully relates its findings in this report. The author methodically considers the natural setting of Darién, the protagonist (Balboa), and the route itself. The study is intense, scholarly, scientific, poetic, and exceedingly well documented. The bibliography is quite complete, and the primary sources are evaluated with care in separate portions of an appendix.

The late Ángel Rubio was probably the authority best qualified to undertake this bit of historico-geographic research; twelve pages of vitae in Appendix IV attest to this claim. After taking degrees at the University of Seville and serving the University of Barcelona as a Professor of Geography, Rubio came to Panama in 1937 and devoted the next twenty-five years to geographic research there. But as this work indicates, Rubio was more than a geographer, for his roots were deep in history. Not only did he earn university degrees in that field, he literally "grew up" in the *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville, where his father was an official.

This monograph is more than a definitive study of an event that occurred in time and space; it is a memorial to a truly great scholar, teacher, and individual. Published three years after Rubio's death, the study is prefaced with a tribute to Don Ángel written by a former student. An appendix composed by a colleague from the University of Panama offers further insights on Rubio the man, the teacher, the investigator. This reviewer came to know Rubio the same year that he climbed anew Balboa's peak in Darién and counted him as a warm

and dear friend until his passing. He was a scholar's scholar, who, though trained in history, practiced geography and roamed the wide breadth of all the social sciences with equal feeling and respect.

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Recuerdo de Vasco de Quiroga. By SILVIO ZAVALA. México, 1965. Editorial Porrúa. Illustrations. Appendices. Index. Pp. 215. Paper. \$80.00 (Mex.).

The opportunity for a fresh start in human institutions is something that has fascinated thinkers for a long time. Usually the fresh start has had to be taken in imagination only, as Plato did for his *Republic*. But the discovery of the New World provided man with an apparent opportunity to build his institutions anew and gave rise to Utopias as varied as those of John Elliot and of Joseph Smith.

Probably the first and certainly one of the most fascinating of these Utopias was put into practice by the sixteenth-century Spanish judge Vasco de Quiroga who, influenced by the dreams of Sir Thomas More, found among the Indians that "equality, simplicity, goodness, obedience, humility . . . , and disregard and scorn for everything superfluous" (p. 105) which would make them apt for a Utopian rule free from the ugly tarnish that the centuries had put upon the Old World. In this book Silvio Zavala, the first to perceive and to demonstrate the connection between More and Quiroga, has gathered together six of his writings on the subject. They range in date from his study "La 'Utopia' de Tomás Moro en la Nueva España," first published in 1937, to "Nuevas notas en torno de Vasco de Quiroga," which appeared in 1965.

Zavala's early studies demonstrated the origin of Quiroga's ideas in More's *Utopia*, and this demonstration has stood the test of time. But in thirty years American and European scholars have uncovered much information about Quiroga and his pueblo-hospitals. Hence the earlier essays are somewhat dated. Impatient readers are advised to begin with the last essay, which skillfully summarizes the state of Quiroga scholarship, and then turn to earlier contributions. Throughout Zavala remains primarily interested in the origins of Quiroga's ideas and in his connections with the Spanish humanists. He has little to say on the actual operation and vicissitudes of Quiroga's communities, and on these subjects the reader must consult the work of Father Fintan B. Warren.

The book contains interesting illustrations, additional bibliography,