

a Frenchman, has organized his descriptions according to Câmara's present statuses and involvements. We see him at work in his diocese as pastor and ecclesiastic, in his public appearances on behalf of justice and peace, and Câmara as poet and observer of humanity. By juxtaposing these various facets of the archbishop's life, the author is able to point to certain puzzles in his make-up, e.g., the apparent contradiction between Câmara the public radical and Câmara the patient and obedient ecclesiastic. Câmara states: "Any desire of Rome is a command for me."

There are several important themes in the book, one being Câmara's commitment to nonviolence as a means of revolutionary change. Unlike many Christian revolutionaries, Câmara abjures violence, preferring to emphasize moral pressures, education, and public speaking. Another theme, general to the Christian revolutionaries, is the problem of translating lofty ideals into definite norms of action. The author observes: "Dom Helder keeps on speaking out in public, but his vision has not really taken the form of a program." A third theme, emerging in the autobiography of the Epilogue, is the way in which a priest's career, and thus the life of the Church, is interwoven with political life and governmental structures. Though none of these themes is pulled out and cohesively explicated, they are there for the reading.

Perhaps one theme that should have been included in the book is the significance of Dom Helder's style for redefining the role of the bishop. By virtue of the Church's recent teachings, the proclamations of Medellín, and the symbolic position of Catholicism in Latin America, contemporary bishops fall under a special responsibility to articulate ethical norms and to bring the prestige of their office to the side of nonviolent change. Helder Câmara, though pushed aside by the violent left and despised by the far right, seems to be trying to build such a role for the Catholic bishop, and many of us hope that his efforts are not in vain.

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BACKGROUND

Historia de España: Edad media. By LUIS SUÁREZ FERNÁNDEZ. Madrid, 1970. Editorial Gredos. Bibliography. Pp. 729. Cloth.

Over the last twenty years, Luis Suárez Fernández, *catedrático* at Valladolid, has established himself as one of the foremost historians

of Spain's later Middle Ages, particularly the Trastámara period in Castile. His forte is political and diplomatic history, served up in narrative style with occasional excursions into the areas of society and economics. This book contains no surprises for those familiar with his earlier works. Suárez begins with the Muslim invasion and concludes some eight hundred years and seven hundred pages later with the death of Isabel *la Católica*. In the main, the book is an excessively detailed political narrative, happily interrupted by several excellent chapters dealing with the peninsula's social, institutional, and economic structure at various periods. Portugal too receives adequate coverage.

The final third of the book, the mid-fourteenth to the early sixteenth century, will be the most interesting to Latin Americanists. In this period the vigorous Trastámara kings coordinated drives for internal unification and external expansion. But to do this the early Trastámaras (Enrique II, Juan I, and Enrique III in Castile and Fernando de Antequera in Aragón) had to placate the high nobility to secure its support. As a result, the Castilian nobles became the economic arbiters of the realm by controlling the production and export of raw wool. They even attempted to force on the kings a constitutional sharing of powers. Their bid for governmental control led them to minor and serious insurrections in the fifteenth century. Only with great difficulty could Fernando and Isabel subdue the great nobles, allowing them to retain their economic monopoly and thereby to stifle industrial development in the newly united Spain. Suárez is best in this part of the book and admirably describes the international policies of the *Reyes Católicos* as they directed Spain's moves toward Europe, Africa, and the Atlantic.

This is the first scholarly, one-volume work in a long time to deal with the Spanish Middle Ages as an entity. Suárez has drawn together the work of numerous specialists—acknowledged in a lengthy annotated bibliography—and his own research to produce a useful summary of the field. The political history could have been compressed and the economic sections expanded, but the volume deserves a place in the working library of any scholar interested in the medieval development of Spain and the impact that development had on the genesis of imperial Spain. Finally, long-suffering Hispanists will appreciate a well printed and beautifully bound book from a Spanish publisher.

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