

ness elite are able to permeate the policy-making process, sometimes in contradictory directions, but with the end result that in the Peruvian context, market reforms led to enhanced business influence, and to outcomes not at all in line with free-market theory. At the same time the increasing elements of autocratic and personalistic political management are brought vividly to light. The tax narrative is particularly interesting for this, documenting how an initially good administrative reform was effectively undermined by Vladimiro Montesinos. (Quite fascinating, as Arce quotes Sally Bowen and Jane Holligan as showing in *The Imperfect Spy: The Many Lives of Vladimiro Montesinos* [2003], is the fact that it is a group of courageous tax administration officials who eventually blow the whistle on Montesinos.)

The analysis is solid and well documented. However, one cannot help but wish for more reflection on *why* the lack of contestation from wider society is so total. An anonymous reviewer is credited with the insight that lack of an institutionalized base of support for Fujimori was possibly responsible for his growing and eventually disastrous dependence upon Montesinos. This would merit further analysis. The presentation is also not entirely smooth. For example, new issues such as the political manipulation of GDP figures are suddenly raised in the final three pages, without the possibility of adequate discussion at that point. But the level of research is impressive and the story is well and convincingly told. This is a useful addition to any bibliography on market reforms in Latin America and a significant contribution to our understanding of the political economy of Peru.

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#### RELIGION/RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

- \* *Histories of Infamy: Francisco López de Gómara and the Ethics of Spanish Imperialism.* By Cristián A. Roa-de-la-Carrera. Translated by Scott Sessions. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005. Pp. xvii, 264. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$40.00 cloth.

Of the early Spanish chroniclers of the conquest of America, Francisco López de Gómara is perhaps among the least studied. As an unwavering supporter of Spanish Imperialism and an unabashed partisan of Hernán Cortés, Gómara has received short shrift from current scholars interested in the *crónicas*. Perhaps as a result of what appears to be straightforward dogmatism, Gómara's *Historia general* did not acquire the same allure that similar texts did during the explosion of colonial studies leading up to and resulting from the 1992 quincentenary. Cristián Roa-de-la-Carrera's book makes an important contribution to the study of colonial Latin American literature by helping to fill this gap, integrating close study of Gómara's work into current debates about the tradition of renaissance historical writing about the Americas.

The book is divided into four chapters, each focusing on what the author identifies as the central problems Gómara faced in writing and, perhaps more importantly, promoting his *Historia general* during the sixteenth century. The author begins by detailing the way Gómara adapted the genre of historical writing, and why it is that his work was so poorly received during its time. He asserts that it is precisely the apparent contradiction between Gómara's triumphalist account and its rejection by the establishment in Spain and ultimate censorship that makes the *Historia general* such a revealing object of study. Chapter 2 explores the way the chronicler integrates New World anthropological and cultural categories with Christian tradition. Chapter 3 examines how Gómara's colonizing vision was subtended by economic metaphors even in its understanding of cultural categories. These discussions are brought together in the final section, which further addresses the text's negotiation of contemporary political theoretical debates over the legality of Spanish imperial domination. These are key trajectories to specialists in sixteenth-century Latin American history and culture, and it is this structure that makes Roa-de-la-Carrera's book so illuminating. By locating Gómara's *Historia general* within the framework of the existing scholarly debate surrounding writers like Bartolomé de las Casas, the author successfully makes a case for the importance of Gómara's project to the study of the crónicas as a whole, as well as to the way that historical writing was crucial in the development of imperial ideology.

Offering his readers a sense of where Gómara's text sits within the tradition, Roa-de-la-Carrera fleshes out a broader argument about Spanish imperialism in the sixteenth century and the ethical debates that proved to be of paramount importance to intellectuals and writers in both the peninsula and the New World. Rather than reducing these debates to the paradigmatic encounter at Salamanca of 1550 between Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, he reinforces the various outlets of and voices in this crucial discussion that captured the attention of jurists, theologians and court officials during the first fifty years of conquest. Indeed, if the complexity of Spanish imperialism during these crucial decades lies precisely in the opacity of its ideology and in the contradictions it embodied, then "Gómara's lack of success is a revealing example of the conditions undermining discourses of domination" (p. 18).

Perhaps one angle that would benefit from future development is an expansion of Gómara as the subject of a monographic study into a more inter-disciplinary, multi-author consideration of works like the *Historia general*. Roa-de-la-Carrera does a good job of establishing this writer's centrality to sixteenth-century studies; one hopes his future work develops the constellation of authors who work best with Gómara in wider-ranging analyses. This work complements recent publications on las Casas and Oviedo, situating the chroniclers within a coherent and sustained intellectual debate, and is of particular interest to specialists in the field and those with thematic interest in the study of empire and the Atlantic world.

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