



# Histories of Infamy: Francisco López de Gómara and the Ethics of Spanish Imperialism

*Cristián A. Roa-de-la-Carrera*

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"Roa-de-la-Carrera convincingly shows that Gómara, as well as other historians in the period, cannot easily ignore nor erase the contradictions of the Spanish colonial project."

- **Luis Fernando Restrepo, University of Arkansas**

"In an eloquent and thorough exegesis, Roa-de-la-Carrera reveals how and why López de Gómara, having written the best of all possible books in exultation of Spanish imperialism, nevertheless failed to convince the readers of his time."

- **Susan Schroeder, Tulane University**

In *Histories of Infamy*, Cristián Roa-de-la-Carrera explores Francisco López de Gómara's (1511-ca.1559) attempt to ethically reconcile Spain's civilizing mission with the conquistadors' abuse and exploitation of Native peoples.

The most widely read account of the conquest in its time, Gómara's *Historia general de las Indias y Conquista de México* rationalized the conquistadors' crimes as unavoidable evils in the task of bringing "civilization" to the New World. Through an elaborate defense of Spanish imperialism, Gómara aimed to convince his readers of the merits of the conquest, regardless of the devastation it had wrought upon Spain's new subjects. Despite his efforts, Gómara's apologist text quickly fell into disrepute and became ammunition for Spain's critics. Evaluating the effectiveness of ideologies of colonization, Roa-de-la-Carrera's analysis will appeal to scholars in colonial studies and readers interested in the history of the Americas.

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