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The Business of Conquest. Empire, Love, and Law in the Atlantic World, by Nicole D. Legnani. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020. 282 pages.

In *The Business of Conquest*, Nicole Legnani outlines the links and contradictions between *caritas* (Christian love) and *cupiditas* (the desire for things) during the Imperial Spanish dominion. Legnani wants to show how the Spanish Empire advocated its monetary objectives through Catholic discourses. Legnani's main purpose, I consider, is to propose an economic account of the conquest and its historical connotations, concentrating on concrete laws, events, and publications to stress the lucrative roots of Spanish assaults in the New World. Furthermore, Legnani problematizes the meaning of conquest by placing it in the context of censorship, as Spanish sovereigns attempting to camouflage the harmful repercussions of their travels forbade the use of the word "conquest". The simple question suggested by Legnani, "What is a conquest?," re-addresses the discussions on the Atlantic World toward the monetary concerns of the conquest, indigenous slavery, and the Christian faith's expansion in new geographies.

The first chapter reviews the economic systems followed by the Spanish Empire to promote conquests and colonization. Remarkably, Legnani compares the Spanish and Portuguese principles for regulating travels and capital investment. For example, the Portuguese crown "had contributed labor to the enterprise and had sponsored the voyages in full" (39). As a result, the monarchy controlled the absolute usufruct and benefits in the discovered territories. By contrast, Spain financed explorations only in a minimal proportion. This arrangement explains the uniqueness of the Spaniard's rule and colonization. First, merchants and bankers helped to organize the travels of many conquerors. Second, the invaders required dominion over lands and indigenous inhabitants as compensation for their expeditions. Third, even if invaders respected the Spanish Monarch as the supreme sovereign, he had a reduced jurisdiction over the new territories. Legnani reminds us how Father José de Acosta regretted the fact that Spain did not adopt the Portuguese model to increase their political and economic power. What is fascinating in this chapter is the detailed report of the Spanish economic mechanism, which ends up being a prototype of contemporary capitalism. Merchants, bankers, and an array of lenders supplied resources to the conquest's explorations through loans and various financial support. It explains, according to Legnani, why Father Las Casas cannot accuse any specific person in his allegations against the conquest.

In the second chapter, the author delves into Spanish control over the bodies of indigenous populations. Here Legnani highlights the severe conflicts between pursuing financial gains and caring for the new native Christians. Mapping a diversity of Imperial laws, this section tries to explain the uncertainties of Spanish Kings based

on Christian guilt and the necessity for money. The sovereign encouraged Christendom's expansion in foreign territories according to the Pope's clauses in the Treaty of Tordesillas. Nevertheless, exploiting neophytes was crucial in reinforcing the imperial economy and the policies of retribution. Without a doubt, the (in)famous *Requerimiento* expresses with more clarity these contradictions. In sum, the *Requerimiento* was a fundamental text to promote land dispossessions. Spanish emissaries read the document to recognize the Spanish Empire's power over native territories and bodies. However, such a calling for submission also reflected a wish to protect the new Christians. The *Requerimiento* was a military performance to impose European sovereignty, but also promised love, charity, and evangelization for those who accepted the new regime without hostilities. Moreover, the rhetoric of legislations such as the Laws of Burgos in 1512, the contracts between Fernando II and Pedrarias (1513), Charles V and Francisco Pizarro (1526), the New Laws of 1542, and the Ordenanzas of 1573, shows us, despite their historical particularities, that "the indigenous are approached as 'friends' but treated as enemies" (101). Here the enemy is the native that confronts the imperial power and defends their territory against the invaders.

The works of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés and Father Las Casas are the principal topics in the third chapter. Legnani highlights that *Glaribalte*, the only novel written by Oviedo, must be read in line with the colonial interest of its author, who tried to erase during his career his role as slave brander. Legnani's analysis of one of Las Casas's excerpts is notable because of the exhaustive comprehension of a brief text and its implication. In short, Las Casas describes a plague of rabbits on the island of Madeira to explain how conquerors destroyed native ecosystems. In this section, the author employs and clarifies her conceptions of metaphor and synecdoche. In an insightful passage, Legnani asserts, "If I may rephrase the opening play on supplement and being from Derrida's *Beast and The Sovereign* (2009), the rabbits is/and (est/et) the sovereign and/is (et/est) also the capitalist" (133). Furthermore, Legnani recognizes the trope of the rabbit as a symbol of Columbus's extractivist activities on this island, transforming natural resources into capitalist commodities.

Las Casas becomes a sort of hinge in the following chapters. In fact, Las Casas' works help to connect the coming discussions about evangelization and indigenous agency. In chapter four, Legnani compares the writings of Las Casas and José de Acosta to explain the contrasts between the denunciation of the conquest's sacrilegious acts and the admiration for the conqueror's enterprise. Texts such as *Doce Dudas* and *De Thesauris* highlight Las Casas's aims to demonstrate the Spanish Empire's debt to indigenous peoples because of the land's usurpation. Both treatises, Legnani points out, reveal Las Casas's discursive transition from irony to rage against Spanish rulers. In outstanding lines, the author observes: "Las Ca-

Las Casas's *Doce Dudas* (1564) asserted that the damage done to the Indies was irredeemable and that Spain's monarchs and its people would be forever damned unless they retreated from the Americas" (145). Confronting such position-taking, José de Acosta manifested a genuine admiration for the conqueror's activities. In other words, "Acosta admired the cupiditas of the conquistadors and wished that missionaries would be similarly motivated by the promise of spiritual profit (i.e., Christian neophytes) in the Indies" (156). Furthermore, as Legnani argues, Acosta promoted the sacking of indigenous tombs as a campaign for extirpating idolatries.

In the last chapter, Las Casas is also a capital figure. In this significant section, Lascasian discourse motivates the Andean indigenous authorities for self-government. Confronted with the so-called encomenderos who demanded the perpetuity of his possessions, the Andean curacas proposed a generous economic offer to Philip II to gain control over their ancestral territories. In the curacas' negotiations we can perceive a wish to re-establish traditional indigenous customs. In many aspects, it is a remarkable chapter because of its resonances with contemporary claims for native auto-determination across the Americas, connecting curacas' past attempts with present-day claims for indigenous empowerment. Moreover, Legnani perceives how the efforts for indigenous land control reflect hierarchical tensions between members of indigenous nobility and ordinary Indians into the Peruvian context. Finally, the author notes how the clergy tolerated native practices of marriage or another type of sexual alliances to preserve economic tributes based on the work/exploitation of native subjects.

The Business of Conquest helps us understand the rebellions of encomenderos in Peru. Considering the lack of imperial authority, the conquerors felt free to organize insurrections in the name of more economic compensation. In this context, Legnani's work offers us a new lens to comprehend the efforts of intellectuals such as Polo Ondegardo and Juan de Matienzo to reinforce the Spanish domination over Andean geographies. Both Ondegardo and Matienzo's postulates reflected the tension between *caritas* and *cupiditas*, between the interests for evangelization and a plan for improving the tax retributions in the Peruvian colonies. In sum, this book allows us to perceive how economic interests guided the colonization of indigenous territories and bodies, evidencing the indiscernibility between Christian love and the conquest's ambitions. Furthermore, as I noted above, Legnani's last chapter proposes new insights to understand the frictions and negotiations between Spanish authorities and indigenous nobles, highlighting two different conceptions of political sovereignty and economic power in the Peruvian 16th century.

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