



Companion to Empire: A Genealogy of the Written Word in Spain and New Spain, C.550 - 1550. (Foro Hispanico)

David Rojinsky

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This volume traces a genealogy of the varied conceptions and functions of alphabetic writing in Hispanic cultures of the pre-modern and early colonial periods. The historical junctures selected are those at which the written word (in grammatical, historical and legal discourse) assumed increased ideological importance for bolstering different kinds of 'imperial' power. In effect, *Companion to Empire* posits a constellation of historical scenarios, rather than a singular mythical origin in which the alliance between writing and imperium might be discerned. The corpus of primary texts considered in the volume derives from works by foundational figures in the history of pre-modern language theories (Isidore of Seville, Alfonso X the Wise, Antonio de Nebrija) and from those identified with the early transatlantic expansion of alphabetic writing (Peter Martyr D'Anghiera, Bernardino de Sahagún, Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán). By reading these canonical texts against the grain, the author avoids the totalizing gesture of histories of the language, and instead focuses upon the relationship between prestige written languages, the creation of a 'literate mentality' and the need to consolidate imperium on both sides of the Atlantic. *Companion to Empire* will thus be of interest to those adopting a 'post-philological' approach to Hispanic Studies, as well as those interested in medieval and transatlantic imperium studies.

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