A Political History of Spanish

The Making of a Language

Spanish is spoken as a first language by almost 400 million people in approximately sixty countries, and has been the subject of numerous political processes and debates since it began to spread globally from Iberia in the fifteenth century. *A Political History of Spanish* brings together a team of experts to analyze the metalinguistic origins of Spanish and evaluate it as a discursively constructed artifact – that is to say, as a language which contains traces of the society in which it is produced, and of the discursive traditions that are often involved and invoked in its creation.

This is a comprehensive and provocative new work which takes a fresh look at Spanish from specific political and historical perspectives, combining the traditional chronological organization of linguistic history and spatial categories such as Iberia, Latin America, and the US, whilst simultaneously identifying the limits of these organizational principles.

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José del Valle
Emblem of the Tongue and Sword
Dos armas son la lengua y el espada
Que si las governamos cual conviene
Anda nuestra persona bien guardada
Y mil provechos su buen uso tiene.
Pero cualquiera de ellas desmandada
Como de la cordura se enagene
En el loco y sandio causa muerte
Y en el cuerdo y sagaz trueca la suerte

“The sword and the tongue are two weapons
that, if we handle them as we should,
will ensure our security
and bring us great advantage.
But, if either escapes our control,
as if robbed of all good sense,
it will bring death to lunatics and fools
and ill fortune to the wise and sane.”
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