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The Voyage of the Armada: The Spanish Story

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public school education. And there is no mistaking that fact as one peruses the contents of *Battle for the West*. Deliberately or inadvertently he has sprinkled asides throughout the book that not only focus the reader's attention on items of special importance but also reveal to the reader much about the intellectual makeup of Ernie Bradford.

The story of the Spartans at Thermopylae, for example, was a heroic one in the author's youth but since then it has diminished in grandeur, "perhaps because their military outlook and stubborn courage have made them unattractive to a hedonistic society." For Bradford the possession and display of courage is that which vouchsafes individual character and integrity. But for the Spartan attributes of courage and heroism Xerxes might have succeeded in his aims—and if that had happened where would the "modern humanitarians" be today?

Battle for the West provides a fascinating approach to the character of Spartans and Athenians, to the prospect of a Persian-Carthaginian hegemony over the lands of the Mediterranean, and to those sterling qualities that contributed to Greek victory and the succeeding golden ages of Hellenism and the Hellenistic world. It also affords the reader the opportunity to survey these events from the vantage of what is becoming an almost alien educational perspective. On both counts this is a book that merits high marks.

The events chronicled in *Battle for the West* took place almost 2,500 years ago. Yet, as Bradford demonstrates, their historical importance and exemplary value are timeless. This is a book to be relished not just once but at frequent intervals.

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Howarth, David. *The Voyage of the Armada: The Spanish Story*. New York: Viking Press, 1981. 256pp. \$13.95

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 has long been recognized as a signal date in naval history. For some historians it has marked the first important naval battle between sailing men of war; for others, it was the battle which laid the foundation of the future British Empire by endowing England with the prestige Spain lost.

In the popular English language literature certainly this last aspect dominates. The heroic tale focuses on Sir Francis Drake, Lord Howard, Sir John Hawkins and Queen Elizabeth. The Duke of Medina Sidonia, the Spanish commander, remains a dull-headed landsman doomed to defeat by England's wily seadogs. With this popular image in mind, David Howarth's plan to examine the Spanish side of the story is a worthy one.

Howarth has written his volume with a wide audience in mind. His prose is lucid, graceful and witty, and he is able to explain in simple terms the complexities of 16th-century naval technology. Howarth narrates a fast paced and lively story which can seriously be recommended to young students and the general reader.

While admiring the clarity and effectiveness of the writing, the professional student of naval history will have some serious reservations concerning Howarth's interpretations and the extent of his source material. As a popular book, it is not footnoted, so the reader must divine the sources from the tone of the text, remarks in the preface and a "note on sources." From these it seems clear that Howarth has based his study on the printed sources and not attempted to do primary research. This is certainly a reasonable approach given the scope of material available.

In terms of published documents, the author has relied primarily on Duro, *La*

Armada Invencible (1885) and used in addition, Captain Cuellar's *Letter* (1895), Philip II's correspondence in J.L. Motley, *History of the Netherlands* (1860) and the additional letters edited by George Naish in *The Naval Miscellany* (Navy Records Society, 1952). The English documents have come largely from J.K. Laughton, *State Papers relating to The Defeat of the Armada* (Navy Records Society, 1894 reprinted 1981) and the *Calendar of State Papers relating to Ireland* (vol. iv, 1885). To these sources, he has added data deduced from the underwater archaeology on the Spanish wrecks off the Irish coast.

In terms of secondary works, Howarth has placed his story in the same, broad historical picture painted by Garrett Mattingly, *The Armada* (1959) and based the English perspective on Julian Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy* (1898), although he disagrees with Corbett over some tactical points. Howarth's information on ordnance comes from Michael Lewis, *Armada Guns* (1942-43) while J.A. Froude, *The Spanish Story of the Armada* (1892) seems to have provided his basic focus.

The sources which Howarth has used are fine, as far as they go, but they tend to be the older sources and he has by no means exhausted the materials readily available in English. In terms of published documents, three series in the *Calendar of State Papers*, Domestic, Foreign and Venetian, provide extensive and valuable materials which could have illuminated the Spanish side further. In addition, P. Ubaldini's contemporary report, translated and published in 1590 is useful, while several stray documents are to be found in the publications of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, in particular, the *Salisbury MSS*, pt. iii, and the *15th Report*, pt. v. Most recently, however, Stephen Usherwood has illustrated both sides of the story with his

well arranged and useful selection of documents, *The Great Enterprise* (Folio Society, 1978).

The most serious fault lies in Howarth's failure to consult recent scholarship relating to the reign of Philip II. Since the Spanish outlook is the basis of the study, Howarth could have made a much more valuable contribution by bringing together the new perspectives and making plain the results of detailed scholarship. Among the important publications which should have been used are I.A.A. Thompson on the appointment of Medina Sidonia and the workings of the Spanish Council of War (*English Historical Review*, 1967 and 1969). Geoffrey Parker's work on *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road* (1972), *Philip II* (1978), and *Spain and the Netherlands* (1979) would have put the Spanish issues in better perspective. Howarth's harsh view of Philip might have been greatly modified if he had read Peter Pierson, *Philip II of Spain* (1975) and dipped into some of the relevant studies mentioned in the excellent bibliographical essay at the end of that volume.

None of these suggestions would have been overtaxing or unrealistic for a popular writer to undertake and they do not presuppose that a writer of that sort should become an academic researcher. The absence of this additional work has created an inaccurate and curiously prejudiced picture of the Spanish side of the Armada story. It would seem that the author has produced exactly what he hoped to avoid, an English view of the Spanish, rather than a Spanish view of the Armada in 1588. This is most unfortunate since it could have easily been avoided by using recent publications in English.