"LA VIDA HISTÓRICA" DE JOSÉ LUIS ROMERO

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As Luis Alberto Romero, editor of this volume, tells his readers, in La vida histórica they will find gathered all the essays in which José Luis Romero explored "problems of history and its knowledge and, in more general terms, the complex link between man and his past." These contributions were written between 1936 and 1976, by a historian who was not satisfied with being the first in Latin America to face successfully the specific challenges of studying medieval history from such an eccentric base. Thus, he also offered significant contributions to the Latin American field, among them a deservedly successful presentation of the history of political ideas in his own Argentina, and an immensely suggestive and original exploration of the course of Latin American history in his masterly Latinoamérica, las ciudades y las ideas. These reflect the workings of a mind that, while always receptive to a quickly changing intellectual landscape (e.g., showing an interest in the issues of the history of culture in the ´40S, and 20 years later exploring the problematic link between history and the social sciences), kept true to the basic intuitions that informed his powerful reconstructions of historical processes.

Central among those intuitions was the conviction that the proper subject of history was human activity and not its products; i.e., to paraphrase Wilhelm von Humboldt's dictum on language, history is not about ergon but about energeia. One can see here how the reverberations of this approach underlie Romero's subtle investigations of the most diverse subjects, from the methodology of historical research to the place of history in the encyclopedia of sciences. Beyond offering revealing clues to the work of a first-rate Latin American historian, this collection also offers intellectual inspiration to all those interested in the historian's craft.