



HEMISFAIR 68

SPANISH PAVILION

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Situated at the cross roads between Europe and Africa, and between the East and the West, Spain realized, from ancient times, the advantages of being the bridge and highway linking diverse regions of the earth. Her soil, having been populated from the earliest eras of human existence, the people of this «finis terrae» showed very early signs of culture in the manifold projections of their creative effort, both industrial and artistic, in which are apparent not only the genius of their creators, but also the influences of other peoples, which they assimilated, thus producing a peculiar and characteristic style. It may be said, then, that Spain has always been at the confluence of differing cultures and civilizations.

The prehistoric inhabitants of the Peninsula, the early exponents of pure art—as evidenced by the Caves of Altamira and Alpera—also established societies which, within their primitive limitations, had attained a certain degree of evolution, which may be appreciated in the cities they built, of which there exist magnificent examples, such as Tartessos and Ullastret.

Even these ancient cities bear witness of foreign influence, a distinct oriental flavor being noticeable in the culture of Tartessos. Soon these influences asserted themselves with clarity with the presence of the Phenicians and Greeks, who made a decisive impact on hispanic culture, both in urban centers, like Ampurias and Cartago Nova, and in works of art, like the handsome, mysterious head of the «Dama de Elche» and various ceramics of the period.

But the essential event that was to leave an indelible mark on hispanic culture was the appearance of the Romans on the Iberian Peninsula. Determined by the strategic response of Rome to Carthage, the presence of the Romans symbolized the transition of the prehistoric world to the world of History and Culture. As opposed to ancient tribal dispersion, Rome represented unity, Law and the concept of the State, as well as the exercise of the intellect. And so profound and rapid was the assimilation of Roman culture that Hispania was soon dotted with cities—Tarraco, Mérida, Italica—and the nuclei of future urban centers, linked together by a vast network of roads and systems of communication, and adorned with great public projects and artistic monuments—the Aqueduct of Segovia, the Arch of Bará, etc. The Empire also underwent an operation of provincialization, and the most western of these provinces began to supply the metropolis, from the first century of our era, with Emperors like Trajan and intellectual figures like Seneca, Quintilian and Martial.

With Roman culture came Christianity, which was soon spread among the Hispano-Roman population by the preaching of St. James the Greater and St. Paul, whose physical presence on hispanic soil has long been traditionally recognized.

The hispanic political unity represented by the Romans was broken by that great historical movement known as the invasion of the Barbarians. This brought new elements of culture to Spain, which were not only assimilated, but were transcended, so to speak, by the Hispano-Roman culture. With the restoration of political and religious unity by Leovigildo and Recaredo, Visigoth Spain began to demonstrate her creative power with a characteristic art, particularly in architecture, with churches like San Juan de Baños and

Santa Comba de Bande, in miniatures and in gold and silver work, like the treasure of Guarrazar.

Visigoth Spain was also exposed directly to Eastern Mediterranean culture by the arrival of the Byzantines. But this oriental influence was already fully assimilated by that great figure of culture of those times, St. Isidore, the living bridge between East and West and the cultural link between Roman antiquity and the modern age.

The invasion of Spain by the Arabs brought yet another new and important element to the culture that had been forged by Spain. So decisive was this Arab element that a Spanish historian affirms that the Spanish national entity surged forth at this time in a stand, of profoundly religious origin, against the Moslem infidel. Let us not take sides in the controversy created by this statement, but it is evident that the eight hundred years of Arab activity on Spanish soil exercised a deep and abiding influence on the vital manifestation of things Spanish. Irrefutable testimony of this is Umayyad, Mozarabic, Taifa, Almoravide, Almohades, Nasrid and Mudejar art, not to mention achievements in the realms of human thought, like Theology, Science and Literature. Nor should it be forgotten that the Arabs brought to Spain and, through Spain, to the rest of Europe technical advancements such as paper and gunpowder.

The Arab invasion brought about the political fragmentation of the Peninsula, for in an effort to combat this invasion, various nuclei of Christian **reconquistadores** formed in the north of Spain. These groups maintained close relations with one another, although not always peaceful, and showed early signs, as in the case of Alfonso, the Emperor, of a definite tendency towards national unity. But the most important cultural phenomenon of this period, on the Christian front was the Road to Santiago, through which Spain maintained constant and direct contact with the rest of Christendom. And so, the Romanesque and the Gothic came into being, with specifically Spanish characteristics in their various architectural, sculptural and pictorial forms, as well as in the literary, for Spain has the unique distinction of possessing three languages derived from Latin—Galician, Catalan and Castilian—which spread throughout the world as the Spanish language.

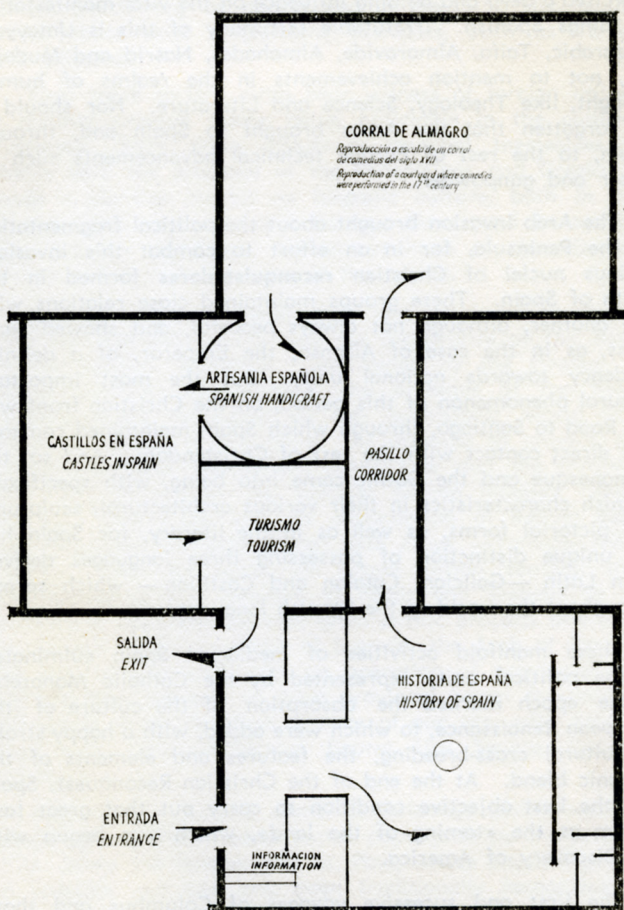
These manifold activities of mediaeval Spain culminated in the political unity represented by the Catholic Monarchs, whose epoch marked the absorption of the culture of the European Renaissance, to which were added, with a happy stroke of cultural cross-breeding, the features and elements of the hispanic blend. At the end of the Christian Reconquest, Spain had the best objective condition to carry out that great task known as the «taming of the land», which was begun with the Discovery of America.

The first and successive voyages of Columbus and those that followed led to the almost total occupation of what was soon called the New World, and which, in cultural terms, was the greatest enterprise in history. Reduced to its essential lines, it may be divided into three historical operations—the founding of churches, the creation of a culture, and the forging of nations. And it is worthy of note that, in this three-part plan, Spain did not repeat herself in a mere prolongation, but achieved a true continuation, that is to say, a renewal and an extension of her own cultural pattern in

a gigantic creative effort, which brought new horizons to European Humanism.

In an operation that was both mediaeval and typically modern, Spain brought culture to America and, in so doing, inculcated a greater measure of humanity upon the indigenous peoples. The contributions made to religion, to the juridical and institutional system, to social life, to letters and the arts, and to science constitute the fundamental aspect of this great task.

Mr. Connally, the Governor of Texas, and the Commissioner of Hemisfair 68, during his pre-inaugural visit to the Spanish Pavilion, which presents the events in the history of Spain that led to the discovery and civilization of America, made a remark that can readily be understood: «You did more than find us, you created us.»



HEMISFAIR, 68 PLAN OF THE SPANISH PAVILION PLANO DEL PABELLON ESPAÑOL

Imprenta del Ministerio de Información y Turismo. Avenida del Generalísimo, 39. Madrid

Depósito legal: M. 5.968 - 1968.