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### Lockhart, James, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries*

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the trend these days. He manages to achieve the difficult task of presenting a general survey and an engaging narrative of specific events. This is because he has an encyclopedic understanding of how each episode unfolded in the grand scheme of things. For readers new to the subject, or those seeking specialized information, *The French Thorn* has equal value. It, along with *Spanish Sea* (the first book of the trilogy), will have a lifespan rivalling the classic works of Bolton.

Jack Jackson  
Austin, Texas

*The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries.* By James Lockhart. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992. xv + 650 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$60.00 cloth.)

The adjective which most quickly comes to mind in describing James Lockhart's new work is "fascinating." Lockhart has produced a volume of original research, analysis, and synthesis which will stand as a classic in our understanding of interactions between the Nahuas and the Spanish in Central Mexico immediately following the conquest up through the late colonial period. The insights are exceptionally fresh largely as the result of the sources on which he has chosen to concentrate: documents that exist in alphabetic Nahuatl, a writing system that was taught to the native population by Spanish ecclesiastics. The bulk of these were produced between the 1540-1550 period, just a few years after the conquest, and the late eighteenth century. Lockhart has even been able to use these records to delve back into the preconquest era, as well as the period immediately after contact. The language itself becomes an important vehicle for assessing the way in which the interactive culture evolved and the rate at which that happened.

The insights revealed are impressive. Topics Lockhart approaches are land and political organization, the household, social structure, material culture, and religion. The last three chapters are closely interrelated, exploring language, ways of writing, and forms of expression. Chapter by chapter he makes a strong case for his theses, illustrating with copious documentary material. When the evidence is overwhelming, he says so; when it is tentative, he is scrupulous in so acknowledging.

Lockhart stresses the fact that the interaction between the two cultures was by no means always characterized by conflict; on the contrary, similarities between them obscured differences and permitted them to exist side by side

with major cultural survivals within the Nahua world. He shows that Spanish ecclesiastics and government officials had "stepped into a situation already made for them....The extent of their success depended precisely upon the acceptance and retention of indigenous elements and patterns that in many respects were strikingly close to those of Europe" (p. 4). He has vividly described this process as one of "double mistaken identity," in which each side understood "a given form or concept" as one with which it was already familiar and continued to use in accord with its own tradition (p. 445). In this way, Nahua institutions initially could continue to exist in a "superficially Hispanic guise," leading eventually to forms that could not be securely identified as belonging to either culture but which the Nahuas could claim as their own (p. 446). Lockhart emphasizes that after the first twenty years of interaction, the Nahuas did not actively resist the Spanish, and in this way differed considerably from the Andeans. He further insists, however, that the decision to incorporate or reject some Spanish form or concept was by no means conscious. Rather, if that form were too distinct from Nahua usage, it would not be seen as useful and therefore would be less likely to be adopted.

Lockhart sees three distinct stages in Nahua post-conquest development: an initial stage, 1519 to about 1545, during which much of Nahua existence changed very little; a second of about one hundred years, roughly 1545-1645, in which Spanish forms began to be added on to continuing indigenous patterns; and the following period, which in some respects extends into the present, in which Spanish frameworks amalgamate with the Nahua, intermingling the two traditions. He traces these stages carefully with regard to the topics mentioned above, developing a strong case for his point of view.

As the author acknowledges, he draws on not only his extensive primary research, but also on that of such fine scholars as Robert Haskett, S.L. Cline, Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Rebecca Horn, and he uses and advances interpretive breakthroughs by Charles Gibson and William Taylor. All of these scholars and others share in the important advances that Lockhart is able to make in this book. The work of synthesis is his alone, however, and it is a superb effort. He has made the Nahua side of the colonial interaction with the Spanish available and intelligible to modern readers.

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