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Xalisco, la voz de un pueblo en el siglo XVI. Edited by Thomas Calvo. (México: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social y Centro de Estudios de México y Centroamérica, 1993. 213 pp. Map, notes. Price not available.)

In editing these documents produced by the elders of the large town of Xalisco, in the region of Nayarit, Thomas Calvo confronts one of the most difficult questions that colonialists face: how to interpret these arcane legal materials so as to understand the life of an Indian community. The accurate interpretation of these materials is complex because the words of the Tecuel-speaking people of Xalisco were translated into Nahuatl (which is also reproduced here), and encased in the formalities demanded by the Spanish legal system.

The leading role of Xalisco can be measured by the fact that the town came to give its name to the entire region. Town elders, and probably also the Franciscan friars, produced these documents during the last three decades of the sixteenth century, in an effort to halt the relative debilitation of Xalisco in relation to its neighbors.

Calvo has provided us with his ideas on reading these repetitious petitions, accounts, and the presentation of witnesses about five different matters: the boundaries between Xalisco and its dependencies and those of the town of modern Sentispac, the location and personnel of a Franciscan convent, depredations of the *encomendero*, Cristóbal de Oñate, the illegal activities of a second-generation non-Nahuatl speaking *cacique*, and accounts of the community's funds. Publication of this intelligently and thoroughly annotated collection of manuscripts was inspired by their recent discovery in the Biblioteca Pública de Jalisco. The decision to publish this edition was made

due to their fragility and because they are the only examples that we possess from western Mexico of this kind of legal document.

An introduction to each section presents Calvo's interpretation of these documents. One telling point is the careful study of surnames. He observes the continued appearance of Indian surnames until the latest documents, concluding that men continued tenaciously to use their Indian names in the face of Franciscan opposition. The study of surnames also assesses a change in the composition of the *cacique* elite, or group of Indian nobility, by the end of the century. An effort to describe social changes is evident in an analysis of when people are given permission to use the term "don"—an index of the increasing or decreasing importance of the leaders of the town. An alternative reading might indicate scribal carelessness or more complex relationships among the people of the town.

The lengthiest and earliest group of documents in the series deals with the *encomienda*. These documents relate an all too familiar story of the brutality of the early *encomenderos*. As there are no dates, the editor assumes that the Christian calendrical computations had not yet been adopted by the Indian community. Documents can be dated from the names of the conquistadors who populate the petitions. This section gives us the most concrete economic information, detailing additional work in fields required after the delivery of tribute. Men and women were obliged to work with promises of payment that was never received. As well as maize and beans, Xalisco residents had to supply fish and shellfish from the coast, *mantas* (shawls or blankets), pottery, *metates* (grinding stones), *comales* (clay dishes for cooking tortillas), honey, firewood, and fodder, as well as labor in the gold mines and on cacao plantations. The longest series of documents recount the internal struggles of the community. The editor teases from these formulaic legal documents the drama of the conflict between a *cacique* who never learned the Spanish-introduced language of Nahuatl and the new elites who emerged from colonization. This collection of documents is filled with new insights into the process of acculturation, religious transformation, and the sixteenth-century history of western Mexico. This bilingual edition is also a tribute to a skilled translator and to the recent expanding knowledge of regional varieties of Nahuatl.

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