

colony. To the British the case represented a challenge to their ideal notions of imperial authority, English justice, and civic order. Demerara planters did not share those notions. "The system of authority characteristic of the slave system required the humiliation of the slaves; Smith spoke of their dignity. It postulated the slaves' dependence; he encouraged their autonomy. It aimed at destroying their leaders; he gave them power. It worked to destroy group solidarity, to prevent the formation of networks of social cooperation; Smith gave them a community of brethren. Instead of fear, he gave them hope. By behaving the way he did, Smith challenged the myth of the benevolent master and the contented slaves, validated slaves' dreams of freedom, and legitimized their rebellion. In the eyes of the colonists he was guilty. He had broken the rules of propriety and had to be punished" (p. 291).

Among the outstanding achievements of this work is its common accessibility to specialists across a variety of disciplines as well as the general public. Eminently readable and solidly researched, this work deftly explores the multifaceted links between individuals and groups, colony and metropolis, and divergent views of the world. Above all it illustrates how language, meaning, and intention became tragically confusing obstacles in a situation in which everyone was a stranger in a strange land.

FRANKLIN W. KNIGHT
Johns Hopkins University

ROBERT H. JACKSON. *Indian Population Decline: The Missions of Northwestern New Spain, 1687-1840*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 1994. Pp. xii, 229. \$29.95.

Robert H. Jackson is to be congratulated for producing a monograph that makes two important contributions to our knowledge of the native colonial experience in Spanish America. First, by focusing on territory only of peripheral significance in the overall scheme of empire, Jackson helps fill a gap in a historiography still dominated by studies of Central Mexico and Peru. Second, by moving beyond attributing native population decline following contact and conquest to disease alone, he furnishes a more sophisticated analysis of part of the demographic collapse that, in all likelihood, caused the greatest destruction of lives in human history.

In spatial terms, Jackson's definition of northwestern New Spain embraces three different regions, each of them displaying distinct features of culture and environment: the Pimería Alta of northern Sonora and southern Arizona, borderlands in colonial times as much as today, and Alta and Baja California. The missions that were founded in all three regions receive systematic treatment that sees their variable demographic history take on nuance, and at times assume elaborate complexity, under Jackson's microscopic lens.

Four chapters form the core of the book. Chapter 1 charts the rise and fall of the mission project, which began in 1687 with the Jesuit incursion into northern Pima territory led by Eusebio Kino and ended with secularization at the hands of the Mexican state in 1840. Jackson seems to be persuaded by the argument of Daniel Reff that the Black Robes were accepted by native communities in the first place because their presence "offered a point of reference for reorganization" (p. 16) following devastating depopulation and social upheaval in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although stability may have been hoped for, no such thing materialized. Jackson establishes that viable, sustainable life in the missions was simply not possible, for Indian numbers were not maintained by natural increase but by repeated forays into the hills to capture and congregate new converts.

Chapter 2 charts the vicissitudes of mission existence, characterized above all by chronic endemic sickness that ensured high infant and child mortality and low life expectancy; women and children, especially, could not expect to live long. Jackson spells it out quite unequivocally: "Increased mortality," he asserts, "and not the inability of women to bear children was the primary cause for the demographic collapse" (p. 17) throughout northwestern New Spain. Coming to grips with the biological and non-biological factors responsible for increased mortality is the focus of chapter 3. Here Jackson breaks new ground. While acknowledging "the importance of disease as a cause of high mortality" (p. 126), Jackson makes a convincing case for alternate explanations, especially with regard to "the quality of life" in the missions of Alta California, considered "the worst-case scenario of the three mission groupings studied" (p. 142). A poor diet, lack of proper sanitation, forced segregation of the sexes in damp, overcrowded dormitories, corporal punishment, and zealous exploitation of labor took a heavy toll on the native population. Not surprisingly, Indians in Alta California saw flight and fugitivism as their best chance of survival, an observation made by Sherburne F. Cook some years ago. Chapter 4 makes some interesting comparative connections, with Jackson evaluating the demographic experience of native communities in northwestern New Spain in the light of what has been documented for parts of Peru, Western Europe, and the Philippines.

This book will appeal to a broad constituency, in particular borderlands specialists, colonial Latin Americanists, and historical demographers who like their subject soaked in statistical data.

W. GEORGE LOVELL
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario

OAKAH L. JONES, JR. *Guatemala in the Spanish Colonial Period*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 1994. Pp. xxi, 344. \$38.95.