

the ways in which the volume might have benefited from increased participation by historians. The author informs us that the children sacrificed to the rain god Tlaloc “all . . . presented metabolic and dental disease related to acute dietary deficiencies” (p. 191). However, she is not ready to conclude that this is evidence of their having been taken from distressed rural communities as prisoners in time of war; she wonders if it simply means that they were chosen as victims because Tlaloc was the patron of a disease that they happened to have. If she were to consult the historical record, she would find that there is ample documentary evidence for the first interpretation and none for the second. However, it is, I suppose, inevitable that a historian reading this book will decide that it needs more history. The editors Scherer and Verano might reasonably counter that they did as much as was practicable in including us all.

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*“Strange Lands and Different Peoples”*: *Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Guatemala*.

By W. GEORGE LOVELL and CHRISTOPHER H. LUTZ with WENDY KRAMER and WILLIAM R. SWEZEY. Civilization of the American Indian Series. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. Maps. Appendix. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. xix, 339 pp. Cloth, \$45.00.

*“Strange Lands and Different Peoples”* centers on the sixteenth-century history of what is now the nation-state of Guatemala. It consists of 4 main sections followed by a 40-table appendix of statistical data. Parts 1 to 3 provide a chronological overview of Guatemalan history from 1522 to 1550; part 4 reconstructs three centuries of indigenous population history from 1520 to 1812. The volume is a timely and useful state-of-the-field overview. The past two decades have seen a renaissance in research on “colonial Guatemala.” Sources thought lost have been rediscovered (*encomienda* grant documents and tribute records, the second and third volumes of the capital’s *cabildo* minutes), and unexpected new sources have come to light (the Lienzo de Quauhquechollan, a pictorial Tlaxcalan conquest account). The interdisciplinary team of authors (W. George Lovell, a geographer; Christopher H. Lutz and Wendy Kramer, historians; and William R. Swezey, an archaeologist) do a fine job of conveying their field’s dynamism, as well as laying out scholarly disagreements over the interpretation of the historical record. Indeed, the instability of the archive—both for good and ill—is a subtle theme throughout. In addition to noting the recovery of new sources, the authors lament that previously known documents have been recently stolen (p. 300); Lovell’s description of consulting papers damaged by a 1920s fire in Seville’s Archivo General de Indias (AGI) (“When opened, the smell and appearance of what lay inside drew the attention of even the most self-absorbed researchers. . . . Bits of them disintegrated at the turn of a page, history disappearing after being recorded one last time” [p. 233]) exists alongside fascinating critiques of the AGI’s project to digitize its collections and make them available online in a free, open-access format (pp. 244, 299–300).

As a guide to this project's themes and concerns, consider the volume's title. By "colonial Guatemala," the authors mean the region encompassed by today's nation-state—as distinguished from the much-larger region that was the Audiencia de Guatemala. Indeed, the authors often note when their historical sources, overflowing the boundaries of today's nation-state, must be trimmed (pp. 22, 185, 232, 246, 249). As the introduction explains, all four authors began their research in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and all were affected by the terrible civil war that soon followed. A key argument, then, is that sixteenth-century history was an original sin that festered into twentieth-century violence. (The role of a century-plus of political independence in this apocalyptic time line is not outlined.) The authors continually link this past to the present moment, as when they claim that "their antagonism [Spaniards and Indians in colonial Guatemala] was at its most visceral in the violent confrontations of the second quarter of the sixteenth century but surfaced, long thereafter, in mutual feelings of suspicion, resentment, and mistrust, still apparent among the country's inhabitants today" (p. xiv). Likewise, they assert that "corruption, impunity, deceit and subterfuge, ruthless exploitation, intimidation by terror, and blatant disregard of the rule of law, hallmarks of Guatemala today, have in Pedro de Alvarado a fertile progenitor" (p. 251).

A need to explain the civil war also explains the volume's focus on "Spaniards and Indians." The authors do not, "save for essential details necessary to [their] objectives in chapter 4 . . . deal with the presence of blacks and the emergence of *castas*, or mixed-blood populations" (p. xvii). The treatment of Spaniards versus Indians, in turn, is quite distinct. Understanding indigenous perspectives and revealing how indigenous ways of viewing the world can illuminate the historical record—explaining why the Kaqchikels allied with Alvarado, or rethinking the social boundaries within European-orchestrated *encomiendas* (pp. 35, 45, 77, 96, 250)—are constant goals, and ones with which I am in total agreement. In contrast, the worldviews of sixteenth-century Spaniards are left murky. The language used to refer to Europeans in Guatemala is overall quite hostile: "rapacious" (pp. 74, 140, 143), "greed" (pp. 8, 146), "excesses" (pp. 154, 160), "abuse" (pp. 210, 221, 222, 231). But these characterizations only demonize; they do not explain. In a strange inversion of one strand in early modern *relaciones* (yet an inversion with precedents in Bartolomé de Las Casas), we find that the Europeans in the Americas were the true barbarians, without culture, without civilization. At best, they are evaluated according to an unjust/just binary. But even European officials whom the authors characterize as sympathetic to indigenous people, attempting to impose justice, are judged wanting in their efforts (pp. 170, 222).

On the one hand, this bad cowboy / good Indian dichotomy is hardly surprising. Such an approach to Latin American history is long established among academics writing in solidarity with the *república de indios* half of the still-binarized scholarly landscape of the New World's past. But stranger things were afoot, of which we catch a glimpse in chapter 7, "Alvarado, Espinar, and the Booty of Huehuetenango." Based on a vicious court case over the control of an *encomienda*, the chapter's first paragraph describes how the "lowly" *encomendero* Juan de Espinar set indigenous houses on fire, "forcing former occupants to abandon their homes and take up residence closer to the central reach of his

*encomienda*” (p. 129). But 15 pages later, a curious detail emerges: Espinar “acted, we reckon, in tandem with the lords of Huehuetenango and perhaps also with the lords of the burned towns themselves” (p. 144). Why the authors think this—do indigenous lords testify in the court case, and if so, what do they say?—is not specified. This is a problem for the chapter overall: the careful step-by-step documentation found elsewhere in the volume, the reading of indigenous voices against European ones, is not present here. The authors admit that they don’t really understand why indigenous nobles would burn the houses of their subjects and suggest that the subjects too might have actually wanted to resettle (pp. 146–47). If such an indigenous-European collaboration had been brokered, it brings into question the interpretation of Espinar’s conflagration as a simply “self-serving act” (p. 144). Court cases are notoriously complex documents to interpret, but here, in the book’s spatially central chapter, we glimpse a different kind of early modern Latin American history.

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*Return to Aztlan: Indians, Spaniards, and the Invention of Nuevo México.*

By DANNA A. LEVIN ROJO. Latin American and Caribbean Arts and Culture.

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. Plates. Maps. Figures. Notes.

Bibliography. Index. xii, 307 pp. Cloth, \$34.95.

In a scholarly convergence of historiography and anthropology, Danna Levin Rojo’s study has achieved what both disciplines have fallen short of: a more profound understanding of the collaboration of Spaniards and Mesoamerican Indians that enabled the conquest and settlement of northern New Spain. She demonstrates that Nuevo México—the vast northern realm, contiguous but not equivalent with the modern state—had to be jointly invented as a “transcultural object of desire” before it could actually be located and colonized (p. 176).

Sixteenth-century documents make only scant and passing mention of the participation of legions of indigenous warriors and settlers in colonial projects. So historians have largely avoided speculation on what could have possibly motivated these natives. And the exotic and mythical qualities of postconquest codices such as the Lienzo de Tlaxcala have frustrated anthropologists in assessing their historicity. Levin Rojo offers a comprehensive, encyclopedic survey of documents and codices to ground her central argument—that Nahua origin and migration stories were prime intercultural motivators for colonial expansion north of the Valley of Mexico.

The “return to Aztlán” is the major theme of the collaborative Indo-Hispanic project. A deluxe collection of color plates and maps supplements the arguments, but one in particular recapitulates the central thesis. A leaf of the Códice de Tlatelolco (plate 15) illustrates Nahua participation in the Mixtón War and the 1540 expedition of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado to Cibola. Colorfully costumed and well-armed Tlatelolca warriors tower over detailed but diminutive, black-and-white mounted Spanish knights and