

## TWO APPROACHES TO PERUVIAN HISTORY

*MEN OF CAJAMARCA: A SOCIAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF THE FIRST CONQUERORS OF PERU.* By JAMES LOCKHART. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972, Pp. 496. \$12.00.)

*CONQUEST AND AGRARIAN CHANGE: THE EMERGENCE OF THE HACIENDA SYSTEM ON THE PERUVIAN COAST.* By ROBERT G. KEITH. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976. Pp. 176. \$17.50.)

I had difficulty writing this review and, rather than disguise my problems and discomforts in circumlocutions, subordinate clauses, and the passive voice, I might as well begin with them. As a young scholar, I could not escape the problem of setting an appropriate tone: I wished neither to take the pose of anointed authority conventionally assumed by reviewers nor to play the ambitious newcomer, determined to climb to the top over the exhausted reputations of her elders. At the same time, I did not take up the volumes under consideration without rather clear dispositions. Correcting freshman exams seemed more inviting than wading through 470 pages on the lives of the 168 Europeans who deceived and murdered the Inca emperor Atahualpa at Cajamarca. A slim volume analyzing the emergence of commercial agriculture on the Peruvian coast, on the other hand, seemed more promising.

But while Robert G. Keith's book was not, as it turned out, without its disappointments, the *Men of Cajamarca* was, predictably, certainly more interesting than freshman exams, invoking two distinct approaches to collective biography. In the first section of his study, James Lockhart adopts a social scientific methodology to analyze patterns of age, regional origin, rank, profession, and previous experience in the Indies. In the second, following the tradition of studies of historical celebrities, he provides intimate details about the backgrounds, conquest experiences, subsequent careers, and personal lives in brief, separate biographies of each of the 168. This second part, of more than three hundred pages, is necessarily uneven, since Lockhart's sources are more generously laden with data on the Pizarros, Sotos, and Benalcazars than on the unknown trumpeters and lowly footmen who accompanied them. But this does not weaken the refreshing effect of a probably unique attempt to provide the reader with sufficient data to evaluate the analysis in the book's first section.

The central thesis of that analysis, recurring throughout the first section, is that "conqueror and settler were of the same type" (p. 18), even that "conqueror and settler, conquest and settlement are the same" (p. 109). Throughout the course of this single, unified process, moreover, "no truly essential elements of Spanish culture are being lost, not even the subtleties" (p. 109). Essential to our understanding of the process, finally, is the argument that, far from the illiterate, ruffian band of professional soldiers portrayed in many histories of the conquest,

the men of Cajamarca were representative of a wide spectrum of Spanish society. In what is perhaps the strongest part of the book, Lockhart analyzes literacy levels, occupations, and origins, social and geographical. This analysis reveals that virtually all major regions were represented in the group, as well as a broad range of occupations, from clerks and notaries to tailors, from entrepreneurs to carpenters, coopers and trumpeters, with a preponderance of marginal hidalgos and skilled plebians.

The book then examines the internal organization of the conquering band, the distribution of their loot, and their subsequent careers. Their responses to their various degrees of success is especially revealing, showing that, their protestations of dedication to God and the glory of Spain notwithstanding, their motivations were reassuringly materialistic. After reaping the initial harvest, both the most successful and the least remained in the Indies; the former to become part of the new ruling class, and the latter to continue their quest for gold and power. But perhaps the majority, for whom Cajamarca added both honor and influence to an already respectable social status in Spain, returned to the motherland for a life of comfort and prestige.

Lockhart has given us, then, a clear picture of the individuals who dominated a pivotal moment in world history. The conclusions he draws from that picture, furthermore, are characterized by a very persuasive internal coherence. Nonetheless, his selection of data and the ways in which he handles them raise some important questions both of methodology and interpretation. For instance, he goes into considerable detail regarding his method of interpreting the relationship between social origin and literacy, without even a rough estimate of the extent of literacy in Spain at that time. Without at least such an estimate, the reader has no way to judge whether the conquerors were average or extraordinary. A somewhat more complex example involves the regional backgrounds of the conquerors and the hostilities and small civil wars engendered by regional loyalties. Some delineation of the cultural differences between, say, an Extremaduran and an Andalusian might have gone far toward a more precise understanding of the significance of these conflicts.

More importantly, the major themes in *The Men of Cajamarca* are sometimes assumed without substantiation, or even in flat contradiction to its own data. Lockhart asserts, for instance, that the conquerors "represented every social position . . . and between [sic] them practiced all the major callings and crafts" (p. 41). Yet his analysis shows that if that had been true, Spain would have been without a nobility to lead it or a peasantry to feed it, for none of the 168 was from either group. Even if all major groups had been included, furthermore, it does not follow that the invaders were representative of Spanish society, as Lockhart implies. Noah might have chosen two of each animal, but that did not make his ark representative of a world in which there were many more ants than lions.

Furthermore Pizarro, of course, was no Noah, and his ships carried, perforce, no women. Thus neither women nor the occupations in which they engaged were represented. And insofar as the diversity of Pizarro's companions is used to validate the thesis that no essential elements of Spanish society were

lost, then one must conclude that Lockhart does not consider women or their callings and crafts to be essential. The precise meaning of this thesis, part and parcel of the recurrent assertion that conquest and settlement were one, is further obscured when Lockhart mentions, almost in passing, that in matters of family life and day-to-day manners the men of Cajamarca "were quite violently deviant from the general Spanish social ideals which were to be manifest in the Peru of the 1530s and 1540s" (p. 25). In short, Lockhart seems to confuse continuity (which is beyond dispute) with identity. For if the immigration had followed the pattern begun by the conquerors, Spanish Peru would have been a society with no women or children or families, with virtually no royal officials, and with a population turnover of 50 percent.

Nevertheless, despite these flaws, the substantial body of information it presents and the reputation of its author ensures the *Men of Cajamarca* a solid position in Peruvian social historiography. This volume is a new contribution to the historical sociological study of early Peru begun by Lockhart in *Spanish Peru* and thus supplements that earlier attempt to humanize our vision of the colony. The importance of this approach is unquestionable, representing as it did an initial step in the building of a social historical tradition for this field.

Keith's work is representative of what might be viewed as a second step in that same process. Whereas the first step, Lockhart's step, so to speak, utilized sociological methodology, Keith invokes the anthropological tradition. While Lockhart helps to familiarize us with the individuals and types who colonized Peru, Keith investigates the development of an important part of the socio-economic system they created, tracing the changes in coastal agrarian organization from pre-Columbian society through the consolidation of large-scale commercial agriculture. Using Karl Wittfogel's concept of "hydraulic" civilizations, he explains the relationship between the distinctive traits of the pre-Inca system and its dependence on irrigation, and compares it to analogous systems elsewhere in the world, providing an important breadth of perspective to his analysis. He argues persuasively that hydraulic societies are necessarily highly centralized and vulnerable to economic warfare, and thus explains a great deal about the Inca conquest and its socioeconomic consequences.

One of those consequences was that the Spanish conquerors found, in their turn, a people who were accustomed to the appropriation of surplus goods and labor by a relatively distant authority, which was the central function of the *encomienda*. This simple extraction from indigenous communities was viable, however, only so long as the European population remained small in proportion to that of those whose labor supported it. Keith shows that with the rise in the numbers of colonists and the concurrent drastic reduction of the colonized population, the *encomienda* had to give way to systems of Spanish-controlled, commercial agriculture. These systems began, then, as an attempt by impoverished *encomenderos* and aspiring newcomers "to establish new income-producing enterprises which were not so dependent on Indian society" (p. 130) and which could feed the rising Spanish urban population. Most of Keith's book is an exploration of the various forms of commercial agriculture that developed with variations in labor, markets, and soil from region to region.

*Chacras*, which Keith characterizes as small haciendas, predominated around the urban centers, provisioning the populace and exploiting the profitable markets. Along the southern coast, similar institutions arose organized around vineyards and dependent on local and export traffic in wine. Keith demonstrates that these chacras were the only small agricultural enterprises to survive into the early seventeenth century, for they alone produced high profit per hectare without large outlay of capital. In other regions, chacras were never much more than subsistence farms that were swallowed up by larger estates. In some valleys, where entrepreneurs had sufficient capital for initial investment, sugar plantations dependent on slave labor arose to provision the colonial market. In others, like Piura and Lambayeque, the ranch, with its low operating expenses and minimal labor requirements, predominated. Other areas, particularly in the highlands or where the local indigenous population remained dense, spawned the manorial haciendas. Despite the impressive size of these, Keith reminds the reader that such extensive holdings held none of the splendor associated with the modern hacienda. They "should probably be seen, as a form of consumption," he tells us, "rather than a type of investment" (p. 111). The manorial hacienda, then, should be viewed in fact as an almost marginal type, as a refuge for capital in black economic times.

The strengths of *Conquest and Agrarian Change* are numerous. Keith is skillful in showing how the interlocking pressures of demographic change, irrigation, tradition, and economic interest transformed agrarian systems along the Peruvian coast. And the nature of patterns that emerge are sharply clarified through consistent comparison with other regions in the Indies and elsewhere. His sections on the beginnings of commercial agriculture are particularly valuable, for while historians have come to agree that there was no institutional connection between the *encomienda* and the hacienda, they have had only a vague perception of the nature of the change from one to the other, and thus of the process that created the bases of colonial Peruvian society. Thus Keith's work on the development of the chacra, and how it did and did not fulfill the needs of the developing colony, provides a vital link in our understanding of colonial socioeconomic development.

The major weakness of this slim volume is thrown into relief by one of its major strengths. In his analyses of demographic data, Keith shows that the small social systems, the "part societies" he is interested in, cannot be understood divorced from one another or from the society as a whole. In other respects he shows a similar understanding, but fails to follow through on it. He tells us, to be sure, that he is "less concerned with broad trends of social and economic change on the coast than with local patterns of change and how they varied from valley to valley" (p. 4). But he also shows, for instance, that the development of the agricultural systems depended on changes in the local and international marketing systems, and thus that there is a need for at least a speculative analysis of those changes. And as he mentioned the dependence of plantations on slavery, and of manorial haciendas on dense indigenous populations, a section on the organization of labor would make his picture much more complete. And finally, when he talks about the export of wine from chacras on

the southern coast and of the "inhospitable economic climate" in which the manorial hacienda arose, I felt lost without at least some brief discussion of the larger economic picture of the colony and the world to which it was linked. Without this picture, the social system that Keith analyzes is deprived of its material context and therefore of much of its meaning.

Yet, I also had the feeling that Keith's failure to show the reader how the social system analyzed was connected with the indigenous social system, the colonial marketing system, and the world economic system, is not a product of his lack of knowledge but of his diffidence in presenting the knowledge he has. What he has given us demonstrates a breadth of erudition uncommon in an academic world of excessive specialization, and he should be more willing to risk sharing his learning. I believe this diffidence reflects the phase we have reached in the development of the historiography of colonial Peru. Whatever criticism we may make of either of these volumes must be qualified by the fact that scarcely a decade ago neither of them would have seemed possible. It was Lockhart's *Spanish Peru* (1968) that broke away from the older, narrative tradition and rendered it virtually obsolete. The *Men of Cajamarca* is essentially a micro-study, an intensive application of the same method used in the earlier work, contributing further to the establishment of a tradition that seeks a vision of the people who made and experienced the history we study.

Keith characterizes methods such as Lockhart's as "sociological" and poses as an alternative an "anthropological" approach, which concentrates on the socioeconomic systems within which human beings live. In fact, Keith's approach, so long as it maintains an eye for the human, subsumes the sociological method and constitutes an advance in the tradition that *Spanish Peru* began. Both stages in this development share (though not in the same degree) a common weakness, a tendency to search so assiduously for patterns and consistencies that contradictions and complexities are lost and reduced to lowest common denominators. This tendency is especially evident in the sociological method, which gives us a depiction of trends and patterns that is graphic and convincing but bears a questionable relationship to historical reality. On the other hand, Keith's method is, to be sure, a progressive development, but retreats, through its narrow focus on "part societies," from the attempt to grasp the totality of the historic moment.

The conventional wisdom of the profession would seem to hold such an attempt impossible. Beginning in graduate school, we are inexorably channeled into very limited specializations, encouraged to concentrate on one very modest chunk, geographical and chronological, of reality. Further, we tend to examine our postage-stamp territories through single methodological lenses. Reading side-by-side the two studies under review here must make us aware of both the range of approaches available and the dangers of confining ourselves to only one. Otherwise, complexity will inevitably be reduced to a simplification that, while pretty, is nonetheless distorting. We try to put our little pieces together, if at all, like a jigsaw puzzle, or at best a huge photomural. But history is more like a holograph, a multidimensional image whose constituent parts are constantly shifting as we grow in our understanding of the process that they record.

That growth will require nothing less than synthesis, the continuous introduction and testing of hypotheses that can serve, like early roadmaps of newly discovered continents, as guidelines for research and theory until they can be refined and replaced in their turn. Such a process of totalization and retotalization will seem hopelessly ambitious, but all it requires is first, that we draw upon one another's work; second, that we be willing to risk speculation upon what we know, in full knowledge that others may disprove those speculations with embarrassing ease; and third, that we accept mistakes, our own and others', with the understanding that error is an inevitable element in the search for truth. In short, we must recognize that ours must be a collective enterprise, in practice as well as in theory. That recognition achieved, criticism will be neither destructive nor presumptuous, for we will have developed a comprehensive methodology that is neither "sociological" nor "anthropological," nor anything else, except historical.

ELINOR C. BURKETT  
*Frostburg State College*