One sour note: it is a sad commentary on Olmec research that most of the artifacts illustrated in the book are housed in private collections, and many are of uncertain or unknown provenance. It is encouraging that these objects have at least been scientifically recorded and photographed, but unfortunately this becomes an unintentional positive sanction of looting and illicit antiquities trafficking.

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WILLIAM R. FOWLER, JR.


_The Imperial Osages_ is the distillation of a prodigious amount of research, primarily by Abraham Nasatir, who has translated documents relating to Spanish Louisiana from depositories throughout the Western world. Although an unduplicable contribution, it is nevertheless somewhat anticlimactic. Over the decades, Nasatir has published several articles on the subject and provided an overview in his _Borderland in Retreat_. Thus scholars will find few new interpretations amidst the abundance of detail substantiating points previously made. Nonspecialists may be overwhelmed by the book's incident-by-incident, year-by-year recapitulation of Spanish-Osage contacts.

Despite its title, the book does not seek to explain Osage actions. The authors fail to stress that the Indians' seemingly contradictory behavior toward the different Spanish outposts they encountered was entirely logical from their viewpoint. With St. Louis they maintained friendship since this was their source of trade goods, including firearms. Against the inhabitants of Arkansas Post, who often invaded their lands to hunt and trap, they periodically resorted to hostilities—more often to rob than to kill. But at Natchitoches, the Osages were inveterate raiders. The Caddos along the Red River were their source for horses—as essential to their way of life as guns.

Lacking the manpower for punitive war, the Spaniards relied upon diplomacy. Withholding trade, demanding hostages, and threatening to arm hostile tribes were their chief means of coercion. But since Osage trade was more important than that at Arkansas Post or Natchitoches and they were needed to thwart the English, decisive steps could never be taken. Consequently a pattern of raids, threats, and promises repeated itself year after year.

It is the virtue of _The Imperial Osages_ that it documents this pattern in painstaking detail. It is its weakness that Nasatir has earlier published a brief synopsis of its findings.

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CHARLES KENNER


The scope and implications of this book belie its brevity. In less than one hundred pages, Enrique Tandeter and Nathan Wachtel present, in tables and graphs, wage and price data that cover almost a century and a half, extracted from the accounts of a Franciscan monastery in Potosí. Fully cognizant of the limitations and problems inherent in such series, they divide the products by their origin and range of exchange (i.e., transoceanic, inter-regional, intraregional, and local), discern short- and long-term trends, and relate these to climatic, demographic, and political factors, not unlike the earlier efforts of Enrique Flo-