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Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl and His Legacy

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Don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl is one of the most controversial and provocative Mexican chroniclers from the colonial period. A descendant of both the famous Prehispanic poet-king Nezahualcoyotl and Hernán Cortés's ally Cortés Ixtlilxochitl, he penned chronicles that rewrote Prehispanic and colonial history. Traditionally known as a Europeanized historian of Tetzcoco, he wrote prolifically, producing documents covering various aspects of pre- and postconquest history, religion, and literature.

His seventeenth-century writings have had a lasting effect on the understanding of Mexican culture and history from the colonial period to the present. But because Alva Ixtlilxochitl frequently used Tetzcocan oral traditions and pictorial codices of his ancestors' heroic achievements, scholars have long said that his writings exhibit a Tetzcocan bias that distorts representations and understandings of Prehispanic Mexican history and culture.

Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl and His Legacy is a collection of essays providing deeper perspective on the life, work, and legacy of Alva Ixtlilxochitl. The contributors revise and broaden previous understandings of Alva Ixtlilxochitl's racial and cultural identity, including his method of transcribing pictorial texts, his treatment of gender, and his influence on Mexican nationalism. Chapter authors coming from the fields of anthropology, history, linguistics, and literature offer valuable new perspectives on the complexities of Alva Ixtlilxochitl's life and his contributions to the history and scholarship of Mexico.

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