

dominion over the New World and its native inhabitants. Then there was harsh criticism by Bernal Díaz, whose ire was aroused by Gómara's eulogy of Cortés. Lastly, there was disparagement by Antonio de Solís and Juan Bautista Muñoz and later historians. Simpson points out that Bernal Díaz' and Gómara's accounts of the conquest are fundamentally parallel, despite controversy and criticism, and that the only basic difference between the two histories is in literary style.

Gómara's narrative covers the entire span of Cortés' life and the exploration and conquest of outlying areas of New Spain as well as the overthrow of the Aztec Empire. His subject is epic and he conceives and writes of it accordingly with a sense of mission and destiny. His account of the conquest is clear-cut and his portraiture and characterization of Cortés reflect the understanding he developed through his close association with the conqueror.

In order to keep the book in proper perspective about the life of Cortés Simpson has omitted from his translation chapters of the *Historia* which deal with Aztec society and religion which Gómara repeated from Motolinia's work. Scenes from the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* are most appropriately used as illustrations. Simpson preserves and projects the spirit of Gómara's style and period in his translation, and in making this important biography of Cortés and account of the conquest of Mexico available in English, he has performed a very valuable service for all interested in history, and literature as well.

Alexandria, Virginia

ROBERT S. CHAMBERLAIN

The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule. By CHARLES GIBSON. Stanford, 1964. Stanford University Press. Map. Illustrations. Tables. Glossary. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 657. \$12.50.

Working from a massive base of archival and printed sources, Professor Gibson has explored in depth the changes that took place in Aztec culture in the three centuries between the Conquest and Independence. The approach throughout is marked by detachment and realism. Gibson's point of departure is always the concrete datum, the documentary evidence of actual Spanish and Indian practice; he is quick to recognize the "hollow ring" of some Spanish legislation and its statements of good intent; he shrewdly notes that some legislation did not precede but followed after the conditions which it purported to create. Gibson's method is subtle and sophisticated; he moves freely among the social sciences to call on the aid

of such sisters of history as anthropology and sociology to assist in the explanation of complex phenomena.

Successive chapters survey the decisive elements of the story: the geographic setting (the Valley of Mexico), tribal arrangements in 1519, *encomienda* and *corregimiento*, tribute, labor, land, agriculture, production and exchange, and Indian life in Mexico City. A masterful conclusion brings together Gibson's principal findings. It opens with the measured judgment that "the Black Legend provides a gross but essentially accurate interpretation of relations between Spaniards and Indians. . . . The substantive content of the Black Legend asserts that the Indians were exploited by the Spaniards, and in empirical fact they were." Tribute, labor, and land were the principal avenues of exploitation of the Indian. Of the three, Spanish usurpation of land had the most serious consequences for Indian society. "The hacienda combined its essential control of land with secondary controls over labor and tribute, and the result was the most comprehensive institution yet devised for Spanish mastery and Indian subordination." By the late colonial period the hacienda and its ethos had gained mastery not only over the mind of the master class but over that of the Indians as well; the Indians had come to regard existing conditions as normal and might even have regarded as an act of benevolence the hacendado's permission to settle on land that had been usurped from their forebears. In addition to the major techniques of exploitation (tribute, labor, and land), the Indian community was beset by other demands (such as ecclesiastical fees) that were "designed to extract from its economy the increment remaining beyond minimum subsistence." Amid the general shipwreck of Aztec social organization, the Indian pueblo showed the greatest power of survival; aided by the *cofradía* and the fiesta, the Indian community "survived in spite of manifold and severe stresses." What Indian creativity developed from the contact of the two cultures appeared in the early stages of the process, largely as a result of the benevolent attitudes of the early regular clergy, but this modest cultural florescence did not proceed very far. "The civilization became infused with Hispanic traits at many points, but it retained an essential Indian character, partly through the conviction of its members, partly because it was depressed to a social status so low that it was given no opportunities for change." Gibson ends his conclusion on a somber note. "One of the earliest and most persistent individual responses was drink. If our sources may be believed, few peoples in the whole of history were more prone to drunkenness than the Indians of the Spanish colony."

This book is rich in thought-provoking statements and ideas. Gibson's discussion of the role of debt peonage in colonial labor relations is particularly intriguing. He suggests that the evidence for the Valley of Mexico, at least, controverts the conventional view that debt peonage was the principal hold of the hacienda over its workers in late colonial times. This evidence points to only a limited role for debt servitude in the Valley, with less than half of the workers on haciendas affected and the total indebtedness slight. Gibson cites a Spanish report of 1788 which complains that Indian workers were demanding advances of forty and eighty pesos instead of the legal limit of five pesos; in case of refusal they would desert and move to another hacienda where conditions were more attractive. Gibson observes that this novel emphasis "assumes relative freedom among the workers, whose objective was not to escape but to enlarge the indebtedness." He suggests that in the Valley, in late colonial times, "the hacienda offered an acceptable livelihood to Indians who had lost their lands." With characteristic caution, he adds that his explanation is conjectural and awaits further demonstration.

A work of such large scope inevitably invites dissent on particular points. In discussing the catastrophic decline of Indian population in the colonial period, Gibson identifies himself with the currently prevailing view that epidemic disease rather than Spanish mistreatment was the paramount cause of this decline. I am inclined to reverse the order of importance of these factors and to stress the causal relationship between the mistreatment and the terrible mortality associated with the epidemics. There is some statistical evidence for this point of view. A study of Borah and Cook (not cited by Gibson), concludes that in the decades 1550-1570, which fell between the great epidemics of 1544-1546 and 1575-1579, "the population of New Spain was diminishing at a rate of 2 to 4 per cent a year, and that such decrease indicates a relatively high rate of decrease caused by factors other than the great epidemics." They suggest that "factors of importance were endemic diseases, social dislocation, increasing demands upon the Indian population for labor, and deterioration in nutrition." This interpretation closely conforms to that presented by the very knowledgeable and observant Spanish official Alonso de Zorita in his classic *Brief and Summary Relation of the Lords of New Spain*. In general, it seems to this reviewer unrealistic to discuss the impact of disease, endemic or epidemic, upon the Indians without taking serious account of the factor of weakened resistance resulting from excessive toil, malnutrition, alcoholism, and the subtler

traumas caused by severe social disorganization and the loss of ancient tribal purposes that gave meaning to Indian life.

In Gibson's chapter on religion occurs the debatable statement that the Franciscan Bishop Juan de Zumárraga "undertook to apply Erasmian humanism to the American mission." I find the use of the word "Erasmian" misleading. Here Gibson appears to be influenced by Marcel Bataillon, whose *Erasmus y España* calls attention to the Erasmian stress on simplicity and evangelism in Zumárraga's writings and to Zumárraga's actual borrowings from Erasmus' *Enquirdion*. However, José Miranda has effectively demonstrated that Zumárraga's use of Erasmus was opportunistic and selective, that the affinities between them were coincidental, and that on major issues, such as the worship of the saints and the adoration of images, they were far apart. The fiercely intolerant Zumárraga, burner of heretics, could hardly have approved Erasmus' view that such pagans as Cicero and Socrates were more deserving of the title of saint than many a Christian canonized by the Pope!

My dissents from some of Gibson's positions do not diminish this book's immense value: it is a milestone in Mexican colonial studies comparable in importance with the work of Chevalier on the Mexican landed estate of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The text is usefully supplemented by six appendices presenting data on encomiendas, relations between district capitals (*cabeceras*) and subordinate towns (*sujetos*), political jurisdictions, epidemics, agricultural conditions, and population figures. There is a comprehensive glossary, although the definitions of such Nahuatl terms as *mayerque*, *pilli*, *tecuhitli* are not as full and precise as they could be. An ample bibliography of manuscript and printed materials used in the preparation of this book will prove helpful to future researchers.

Northern Illinois University

BENJAMIN KEEN

Land and Society in Colonial Mexico: The Great Hacienda. By FRANÇOIS CHEVALIER. Translated by ALVIN EUSTIS. Edited, with a Foreword, by LESLEY BYRD SIMPSON. Berkeley, 1963. University of California Press. Illustrations. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Pp. 334. \$8.50.

François Chevalier's *La formation des grandes domaines au Mexique: terre et société aux XVI^e-XVII^e siècles* holds an honored place as a standard treatment of high merit, a status achieved immediately upon its initial publication (Paris, 1952). It was earlier translated into Spanish (México, 1956). It now is rendered into English by