

Known particularly for his works on the conquest and the early colonial period of Mexican history (*In the Footsteps of Cortés; The Century After Cortés*), Fernando Benítez in this work examines the Mexican Indian population as a whole. It is a disorganized book on a variety of features of native life, including some summary history, an account of the author's visit to the Tarahumara, material on ancient Mixtec and Zapotec civilizations, and a series of recorded conversations with modern Indians. A second volume will treat native hallucinatory drugs.

What gives this miscellany its unity is the frank spirit of *indigenismo* that characterizes Benítez' point of view. Suppression and neglect of Indian peoples receive repeated comment and denunciation in the historical sections, and the Indian of the twentieth century is understood essentially as the victim of systematic coercion and deceit. Whites and mestizos, usurpers of land, and callous or indifferent political authorities are the villains here, and ample evidence is provided from Benítez' personal experience to demonstrate that classic forms of exploitation continue to the present. Words of praise, also based upon the author's experience, are addressed to the agents of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista and the Secretaría de Educación. These make up a "pequeño ejército del bosque" engaged in educating, protecting, and bringing their anthropological training to the support of the indigenous peoples.

The short personal narratives by Indians, which make up an important portion of the book, exemplify the themes of grinding poverty, political subordination, and helplessness. The whole is a personal and unscientific but very humane and persuasive treatment. The illustrations are principally of modern Indian life in different parts of the Republic.

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The Prehistory of the Tehuacán Valley. Vol. I: *Environment and Subsistence*. Vol. II: *The Non-Ceramic Artifacts*. By RICHARD S. MACNEISH *et al.* Edited by DOUGLAS S. BYERS. Austin, 1967. University of Texas Press. Illustrations. Maps. Tables. Figures. Notes. Bibliographies. Indices. Pp. viii, 331; xiii, 258. \$27.50.

These two volumes are the first in what is surely a landmark in the history of New World archaeology. Not so very long ago Old World archaeologists were able to say that nothing was known of the transition to settled life in the New World or of a so-called "Neolithic

Revolution." As far as America north of the Andes is concerned, all this has been changed almost singlehandedly by Richard S. MacNeish, working first in the state of Tamaulipas in northeastern Mexico, then in Chiapas near the Maya area, and finally in the dry Tehuacán Valley of southern Puebla. It is now virtually certain that between 7000 and 1500 B.C. most of the major food plants of Mesoamerica were domesticated and a form of settled life achieved, most probably in different localities within the uplands of central and northern Mexico, with the domestication of the great staple, corn, taking place in the Puebla region not long after 5,000 B.C.

In this search for what Robert J. Braidwood has called the "Great Transition," the Tehuacán excavations have been crucial. From 1960 to 1964 MacNeish led a project which was truly multidisciplinary, including not only a group of qualified archaeologists, but also specialists in botany, zoology, palynology, and even the study of human coprolites. In his words, the immediate objective was to establish "an uninterrupted archaeological column spanning the time between the first human occupation of the valley and the Spanish Conquest," while the ultimate objective was "the discovery of processes and causes leading to the rise of primary civilization." Both these objectives were achieved with outstanding success, but to most students of New World archaeology the real significance of the Tehuacán work was that it threw entirely new light on the processes and causes leading to the adoption of settled life. Possibly only for the Near East do we now have such a clear picture of that very long stage—spanning several millennia—during which man gradually came to produce rather than merely gather his own food.

That prehistoric archaeology has come a long way in recent years is well shown by the ecological studies contained in the first volume. Both Kent Flannery in his study of animal remains and C. Earle Smith in his analysis of plant materials have gone beyond the simple identifications presented by earlier Mesoamerican reports to relate these data to the Tehuacán environment as it is and was; in this, they have broken down the region into smaller microenvironments in which different food resources would have been available to ancient groups of Indians at different times of the year. The net result of these investigations is that the so-called "food-producing revolution" can be seen to have taken place in a context not very different from that of the historic peoples of the Great Basin, who systematically exploited the energy available in specific "niches" in an annual pattern of migration.

The addition of a simple corn-beans-squash agriculture to this scene hardly changed the picture at all, for as Mangelsdorf, MacNeish, and Galinat show, it was not until Formative times (after 1500 B.C.) that maize, at least, had been improved to the point where it could provide significantly more energy than some of the wild plants available as food to the early Tehuacán people.

Volume Two will principally interest practicing archaeologists. It is, however, an outstanding contribution to the study of pre-Columbian material culture in Mesoamerica. For instance, in most Mexican and Central American excavations perishable items like baskets, cordage, textiles, sandals, and mats are absent; here the dry Tehuacán caves have preserved excellent specimens, which are subjected to a very professional analysis. Nevertheless, in the total context of civilized Mesoamerica, the Tehuacán culture was a backwater, and the caves were used for shelter by poorer peoples and from time to time as burial areas. Thus the Classic and Post-Classic textiles recovered must be an extremely poor sample of the great weaving arts that were once practiced by the Mexican highlanders. But for even that we must be grateful.

Everyone interested in the American Indian, in Mesoamerica, and in the prehistory of the New World should own these beautifully edited and illustrated volumes—not just to decorate a bookshelf but to read and use. The subsequent volumes in the series (to cover ceramics, chronology, and excavations) are eagerly awaited.

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Reports of the Norwegian Archaeological Expedition to Easter Island and the East Pacific. Vol. II: *Miscellaneous Papers*. Edited by THOR HEYERDAHL and EDWIN N. FERDON, JR. Stockholm, 1965. Forum Publishing House. Illustrations. Maps. Tables. Figures. Notes. Appendices. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xi, 512. \$15.00. (Distributed in U.S. by Rand McNally, Chicago.)

Archaeological expeditions are supposed to gather their data first and then try to arrive at theories to explain their discoveries. Thor Heyerdahl, however, first developed his theory of Peruvian and Northwest Coast Indian penetration into Polynesia, then attempted to prove its feasibility in his famous Kon-Tiki voyage of 1950, and finally set forth the confused proof in his *American Indians in the Pacific* (1952). Only later did he assemble an international team of archaeol-