

book, which presents a two-fold view—before and after the Spanish conquest—of transportation in New Spain in the sixteenth century.

Through the question of conveyance, however, the book presents the whole functioning of pre-Cortesian society and the subsequent colonial world. The first part, which deals with Aztec society, attempts to show how the latter managed to achieve a specific urban model in relation to the constraints of demography, productivity, and transportation. Reconsidering theories concerning tribute, warfare, trade, and the calendar, the author provides us with a general explanation of the Aztec empire. This empire, he assumes, was hegemonic rather than territorial, insofar as its aim was one of political domination over centers. Set in a lake country affording the possibility of conveyance by means of canoes, Tenochtitlán could exploit a large productive area. Beyond the perimeter of that center, the city had at its disposal two ways of exploiting the regions—trade and tribute—choosing one or the other according to the types of transportation favored to carry the goods to the hinterland. Consequently, the economic domination of Tenochtitlán spread in a circular fashion around that city.

The Spanish conquest introduced new means of travel (e.g., mules, carts, and roads), each of which was adapted to a certain type of topography. The consequence of this was the development of various commercial coexisting channels, some developed by Indians and others by Spaniards. In this connection, Hassig provides us with a very original analysis of Indian trade which survived in the sixteenth century, in the very pores of colonial society. He depicts early conflicts between towns concerning the periodicity of marketplaces. He also expounds astonishing views concerning the monetarization of the tribute paid to the Spanish crown, suggesting that this monetarization can be explained in part by the new means of conveyance. Finally, he shows that, putting an end to the circular model of Aztec expansion, the first century of Spanish colonization brought about the geographical fragmentation of New Spain and its subsequent regionalization. One cannot fail to appreciate that this book shows that the question of transportation, too often forgotten, can explain many developments of pre-Columbian and colonial Mexico.

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The Mixtecs in Ancient and Colonial Times. By RONALD SPORES. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiv, 263. Cloth. \$27.50.

This work expands and develops, with new information, findings discussed in the same author's earlier work, *The Mixtec Kings and Their People* (1967). Spores has published in considerable depth on the archaeology and history of the Mixteca region of western Oaxaca, with particular reference to its most populous and pro-

ductive zone, the Mixteca Alta. Although he pays substantial attention here to the pre-Columbian period, several chapters assess Mixtec relations with the Hispanic population during the colonial period. He frequently uses sources from regional archives in Oaxaca, from the Mexican National Archives, and from the Archive of the Indies in Seville. The maps are useful and the illustrations welcome. This book forms another part of the growing literature on the Oaxaca region.

The author describes his work as a “regional ethnohistory of the Mixteca Alta . . .” (p. 3), and begins with a discussion of the early settlement of the region, the development of agriculture and trade, and the emergence of an urban and stratified civilization. Particularly helpful are his remarks concerning the relationship between the Mixteca and the Valley of Oaxaca, on the one hand, and that between the region and Puebla and central Mexico, on the other. Further, Spores contributes to the discussion on the question of the population of the region at the time of the Spanish conquest. In this respect, he proposes that the population of the Valley of Nochixtlán, on the eve of the conquest, might well have been about 50,000. This encourages him to view the estimates presented by Sherburne F. Cook and Woodrow W. Borah (*The Population of the Mixteca Alta, 1520–1960*, 1968), who suggest a total of 700,000 for the region, as perhaps “somewhat exaggerated.” As a “more realistic estimate” (p. 96), Spores argues for a population of between 250,000 and 300,000 for the Mixteca Alta in 1520.

Historians concerned with how the social organization of Mexico altered from the pre-Columbian to the colonial period will derive benefit here from Spores’s analysis of Mixtec social stratification before and after the establishment of Spanish rule, particularly where ownership of land and distribution of labor are concerned. He stresses that, despite the great impact of the Spanish presence, “traditional patterns of social intercourse among native populations were not seriously altered” (p. 120). Labor-intensive agriculture or mining were not central aspects of the Mixteca economy in the colonial period, and no large-scale relocation of indigenous labor to plantations or haciendas occurred. The flexibility of colonial institutions helped to prevent outright rebellion or deterioration of group relations between Europeans and Indians. Conflicts tended to be horizontal, rather than between socially stratified groups. Finally, after a discussion of the impact of Christianity and a chapter on crime, Spores argues that the colonial experience helped to preserve many aspects of traditional Mixtec society, rather than the contrary.

The book’s weaknesses may lie in its scant attention to Hispanic commercial activities in the region and in its tendency to peter out by the time it reaches the latter half of the eighteenth century. Reference to the introduction of the intendant system, with its district subdelegations, is peremptory. In addition, no intimation at all is given as to how the Mixteca population might have behaved during the wars of independence, when Morelos’s forces arrived in the area.