

that theoretical work will be advanced.

The last point concerns Salmon's definite distinction between philosophical and substantive aspects of inquiry, and her singularly weak effort at establishing the ultimate relevance of philosophy to archaeology (p. 181-182). It is indeed essential to distinguish between the rational reconstructions of analytical philosophy and the actual processes of substantive inquiry which they represent, and this is unquestionably a trap into which archaeologists have fallen. After reading Salmon's chapter on theory building, however, it is difficult to accept her view that philosophical solutions do not affect the "dirt" archaeologist (p. ix), although philosophy may perhaps help archaeologists in developing analytical skills and critical abilities (p.181). If nothing else, surely her own discussion has offered a clear philosophical mandate for the untidy, sometimes intuitive, sometimes methodical and systematic, backward-and-forward physical and mental process which beings about the development of archaeological knowledge.

In conclusion, two final points seem to demand attention. The first is a word in protest at the liberal peppering of typographical and grammatical errors which have been allowed to remain in the text, and at the use of a single type of brackets for all parenthetical purposes. The errors are, in general, only irritating, but the failure to differentiate between a simple parenthetical statement and an interpolation by the author in a quoted passage, for example, is at best inconvenient and may be misleading.

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H.R. HARVEY and H.J. PREM, Explorations in Ethnohistory: Indians of Central Mexico in the Sixteenth Century. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1984. 312pp. \$35.00 (Hard). ISBN 0-8263-0712-4.

Reviewed by Elizabeth Baquedano

The aim of this well edited collection of papers is to summarise current trends in Mesoamerican ethnohistorical research.

The introduction to the book by Harvey and Prem is an excellent review of what has been labelled 'Ethnohistory', as well as a general summary of research carried out for the past four and a half centuries.

Most papers concentrate on analysis and interpretation of documentary evidence, including mainly the slim corpus of early written records and the understanding of the etymology of native texts. Of the eleven essays, three are concerned with land tenure. These are 'Aspects of Land Tenure in Ancient Mexico', Land Tenure and Land Inheritance in Late Sixteenth Century Culhuacan' and 'Household Organization on the Texcocan Heartland', respectively by Harvey, Cline and Offner. The other papers are as follows: 'Some problems of Sources', by Woodrow Borah, 'Royal Marriages in Ancient Mexico', by Pedro Carrasco, 'Mexican Pictorial Cadastral Registers' by Barbara J. Williams, 'Rotational Labor and Urban Development in Prehispanic Tetzoco' by Frederic Hicks, 'Agricultural Implements in Mesoamerica' by Teresa Rojas Rabiela, 'Mexican Toponyms as a Source in Regional Ethnohistory' by Ursula Dyckerhoff, 'The Impact of Spanish Conquest on the Development of the Cultural Landscape in Tlaxcala, Mexico' by Wolfgang Trautmann, and 'Early Spanish Colonization and Indians in the Valley of Atlixco, Puebla' by Hans J. Prem.

Borah's paper raises the point of forgery prevalent in documents, and of all the different ways that Mexican ethnohistory has been in the hands of scholars. Not enough importance has been given to the quoting, borrowing or copying of texts. Borah insists that progress in Mexican ethnohistory will only be achieved under a strict methodical examination of historical accounts, whether Mexican or Spanish.

Harvey's useful paper stresses the deficiencies and problems often encountered in the available descriptions of land-tenure in the sixteenth century, by using the evidence of the locality of Tepetlaoztoc as a case study. He shows that land-tenure systems were more flexible than those ever described by Zorita. It is also clear from Harvey's studies that there were several ways in which Macehualtin (commoners) could obtain property, but what seems to be most important is that the basic rules in land-tenure patterns go back to Pre-conquest times with little change to the present.

Carrasco's paper on Royal Marriages, is as usual, a careful and systematic analysis of marriage alliances among the consanguinal ruling dynasties of ancient Central Mexico. Kingship organization left room for considerable flexibility in adapting to changing political and economic enterprises over time.

One often reads that technology in Pre-Hispanic Mexico was primi-

tive and inadequate. For this reason Rojas' paper is worth noting, as she demonstrates how ill-founded those statements are. Tool technology for agriculture was uncomplicated and hand tools predominated. While it was not terribly sophisticated, it is quite evident from the scale of achievement of Mexican civilisation itself that the agricultural technology was sufficiently varied and adaptive. Rojas' research is based on information from pictorial and written records, where she found a predominance of hand tools over those where the feet were used. The Spanish chroniclers often characterised agricultural tools under the generic terms of coa and uicli, ignoring the basic differences in the agricultural tool repertoire. She notably contributes to a study that has lacked a serious and methodological approach.

Even if some of the papers included in this book are to a degree conventional in their approach to native and documentary evidence, there is presented for the first time a greater variety of methods and techniques for interpreting and reconstructing the areas of the Valley of Mexico and the Puebla-Tlaxcala region in both late Pre-Hispanic and early Post-conquest times.

Taken as a whole, the book is a most useful review and a valuable contribution to the study of Mexican ethnohistory.

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