

## THE EVOLUTION OF AZTEC SOCIETY

THE EUROPEANS WHO ARRIVED IN AMERICA IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY discovered two large empires: those of the Incas and the Aztecs. Of these they studied the former much more intensively than the latter, which had rather less striking characteristics and appeared to contain the most contradictory elements. At all events, while we possess detailed descriptions by Spanish chroniclers of Inca society, they have left us no coherent treatment of the social organisation of the Aztecs, which has to be pieced together from various sources. These are of five types. There are *first*, Indian pictograph manuscripts. Though most of them were destroyed at the time of conquest, some were reproduced by Indian scribes for their new lords, since they contained data of economic importance. Chief among these is the *Codex Mendoza* which lists the tribute of the Aztecs' subject peoples. *Second*, there are the writings of the conquistadors, important in spite of their superficiality, since they alone among Europeans saw the Aztec empire in its prime. Cortez' letters and Bernal Diaz' memoirs are the most valuable. *Thirdly*, we have the Spanish chroniclers, mainly monks and administrators who studied the history and religion of the Aztecs and incidentally also their social organisation: Sahagûn, Durán, Zurita, Motolinía, Mendieta and others. *Fourth*, there are the post-conquest Indian historians, younger sons of Indian nobles, educated by Spanish monks, who wrote about the history of their people. Ixtlilxochitl and Tezozomoc are the most important. *Lastly*, we have various as yet inadequately exploited documents, such as petitions by Indian villages to the Spanish crown, legal disputes about land between Indian nobles, Spanish conquistadors and Indian villages, and the like.<sup>1</sup> It is the object of this essay to survey the evolution of Aztec society as it has been pieced together from these various sources.

The Aztecs arrived late in the area of Central American high civilisation. More than fifteen hundred years before their arrival this region had known civilisations such as those of the Olmecs on the East coast of Mexico, of the Maya in the South, and the religious culture of Teotihuacan in the central highlands. About the tenth century these civilisations collapsed, and northern conquerors, the Toltecs, occupied large tracts of Central America. Their history is unknown except for some traditions strongly infused with myths. They appear to have dominated quite large regions, but three centuries after their arrival they become a prey to internal conflicts. They were unable to withstand the pressure of the barbarian peoples from

the North — unlike the Central Americans mainly hunters and food-gatherers, with only a minority of primitive agriculturalists — and these overran a large part of Central America. The Aztecs were one of these conquering peoples.

The beginnings of their history are still surrounded by myth, and not greatly relevant to our purpose. At all events they seem to have been chiefly hunters and food-gatherers, though not without knowledge of agriculture.<sup>2</sup> They took part in the destruction of the Toltec capital of Tula and subsequently settled in the highland valley of Mexico. After prolonged difficulties — they were subjugated by other peoples, forced to work for them, and only liberated themselves after some time — they settled on an island in the lake of Texcoco in the Mexico valley and founded the township of Tenochtitlan.<sup>3</sup>

At this stage their social organisation appears still to have been entirely that of a democratic kinship society (*Gentilgesellschaft*). They were divided into *calpullis*, originally four in number. The word signifies: great house. The precise nature of these *calpullis* remains in dispute. Some take them for exogamous clans,<sup>4</sup> some for endogamous ones,<sup>5</sup> a third group for clans in process of dissolution.<sup>6</sup> (But there is no evidence of *calpulli* exogamy or marriage prohibitions. On the contrary, the chronicler Durán observes that marriages within a *calpulli* were frequent.<sup>7</sup>) Without entering this debate further, we may observe the following: the *calpullis* were communities whose members regarded each other as relatives in some sense. The Spanish chroniclers sometimes called them “lineages”<sup>8</sup> and their leaders “elder kinsmen”.<sup>9</sup> An old legend about the origin of the *calpullis* shows that this kinship relation was vague even in the minds of the Aztecs. After the foundation of Tenochtitlan, it runs, Huitzilopochtli, the war-god of the Aztecs, told the priests: “Tell the Mexican assemblage that their chiefs should divide them, according to their relationship to one another or according to whether they are friends or allies, into four principal *barrios* (Spanish city districts i.e. *calpullis*)”.<sup>10</sup>

The *calpullis* owned the land, and made it available to their members. The members owned what they harvested from the land, and could pass their plot to their heirs, but neither sell nor lease it. Whoever failed, without good reason, to cultivate his plot for two years, or left the *calpulli*, lost all claim to the land. Excess land was distributed among landless or poor members of the *calpulli*.<sup>11</sup> Its headman was the *calpullec* who was elected by the totality of the members, but had always to be chosen from the same family. When the Aztecs came to Tenochtitlan, the entire territory was divided among the members of *calpullis*.<sup>12</sup>

The most important decisions in the life of the tribe were taken by a Council composed of the representatives of the *calpullis*.<sup>13</sup> According to legend a priest was the first head of the tribe, but later his place was taken by chiefs, whose authority was in all probability very limited. Zurita thus describes conditions among the Matlatzinca, a people whose social organisation shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards was very similar to the original social organisation of the Aztecs: “. . . and they treated their men and vassals so well, that they were always called, according to their age, fathers, brothers and sons and each one desired to be better than his predecessor, for if one became a tyrant, there was a law that he should be deposed, even if he were the chief ruler . . . and replaced by another, and those who gave me this report declared, that they had witnessed such a deposition, of one who had ruled badly and done harm to his subordinates”.<sup>14</sup>

Such, briefly outlined, was the social organisation of the Aztecs at the time of their settlement in the Mexico valley. However, their life there soon led to profound modifications.

The high valley of Mexico contained a network of lakes, and thus occupied a special position in contemporary Central America, much of which was acutely short of rivers or other means of irrigation. Hence over large regions agriculture was dependent on the vagaries of the country's climate, and remained at a very primitive level. The system of cultivation in the greater part of Central America was that of the so-called *milpa* (the Aztec word for field). The land was cleared by burning, fertilised with ash, and then cultivated continuously for one to three years, after which it lay fallow for eight to ten.<sup>15</sup> It is evident that this system permitted only a feeble density of population. The situation in the high valley of Mexico was very different. The lake-system made elaborate irrigation possible both near the shores and on the lakes themselves, where *chinampas* or artificial islands were constructed. Rafts were built from branches, tree-roots and shrubs, covered with soil from the lake-bottom, and fertilised with decaying waterplants, mud, and the excrement of bats and probably also of humans.<sup>16</sup> Rather advanced agricultural techniques such as those of seed-beds and transplanting were also known.<sup>17</sup> Consequently productivity was extraordinarily high. There were two or three harvests in the year.<sup>18</sup> Naturally therefore the valley supported a population of a density several times that elsewhere.

The high valley had another major advantage. Central American transport was still very primitive, since neither draught animals, the

wheel or the cart were known, and mountain or jungle made things even more difficult. In the valley, however, the lake-system facilitated communications among the inhabitants. It is obvious, therefore, that the growth of a numerous population and its concentration in a single political territory was more rapidly achieved here than in the remainder of Central America. But the inhabitants of the valley were not merely politically united. The strategic advantages of their home, more than six thousand feet high and difficult of access, gave them considerable military superiority over the rest of Central America, and necessarily led them to undertake campaigns of conquest outside; especially when we consider the attraction of such products of the lowlands as cotton and cocoa, which could not be cultivated in the high valley.

As early as the fourteenth century one of the high tribes, the Atzacapotzalco, succeeded in subjugating the other tribes. Both threats and the offered shares in the loot, persuaded them to participate in the campaigns of conquest. Among the most zealous mercenaries of the Atzacapotzalco were the Aztecs. There was hardly a campaign in which they took no part, hardly a war in which they did not fight.<sup>19</sup> This warlike existence led to profound modifications of their life and social organisation. War became the focus of their existence. An Aztec chieftain is reported as follows in a chronicle: "Are not war and victory . . . the true profession of the Mexicans, and is it not worth more to win victory, even through a thousand perils, than to sit at home and work like a woman?"<sup>20</sup>

The warriors became the most important and respected persons in Tenochtitlan. Their very appearance reflected this honour. Only those who had distinguished themselves in war were allowed to wear cotton garments, or gold and silver ornaments, to drink cocoa or to possess houses beyond a certain size.<sup>21</sup> The bravest warriors enjoyed special honours. They were made into Tequihuas, who formed a special military community. "The hair of the Tequihuas was shaved" says Pomar, "and they were given a certain decoration made of feathers to mark their honour, and henceforth they enjoyed various privileges. Above all, they could now occupy a post as captain, officer or other official of the government".<sup>22</sup> These warriors formed an aristocracy of service, whose importance in society tended to grow, and who slowly pushed the older stratum of *Calpulli* headman out of the leadership of the Aztec tribe. In their references to the tribal council the chroniclers no longer speak of the *calpulli* leaders, but rather of the braves. It is difficult to discover how far this stratum had freed itself from the direct

production of foodstuffs, but part of them seem to have lived and fed at the court of the ruler.<sup>23</sup> Probably the majority continued to till their plots as before, within the framework of the *calpullis*. The rights of the warriors lapsed with their death, and were not heritable. It should be emphasised that their power was far from unlimited, the most important questions being decided by assemblies of the people.<sup>24</sup>

Another institution emerged at the same time as the warrior aristocracy. The former chieftain became the supreme ruler and general, and his power increased with every year. However, it remained limited by several things: by the assembly of the people, the supreme council, and by a sort of proxy ruler called Cihuacoatl ("snake-woman"), with far-reaching powers of his own.<sup>25</sup> The ruler was elected by the people, but had to come from a particular family.<sup>26</sup>

A series of events in the first part of the fifteenth century decisively contributed to further rapid changes. In 1427 the ruler of Atzcapotzalco, Tezozomoc, died, and the Aztecs, together with two other formerly subject tribes, the Texcoco and the Tlacopan, used the occasion to revolt. In 1430 this triple alliance gained power in the high valley of Mexico, took over the outside regions controlled by Atzcapotzalco, and undertook further great campaigns of conquest.<sup>27</sup> Ninety years later, when the Spaniards landed in Mexico, the Aztecs and their allies ruled over the greater part of Central America, with a population estimated at from eight to nine millions.<sup>28</sup>

Tribute from all parts of Central America flooded into Tenochtitlan. Fortunately we know the precise amount of this tribute for the year before the Spanish conquest, for the Spaniards had these data recorded with great care. Though a full statement cannot here be given, some extracts will provide an idea of the importance of this tribute. In general it seems to have been used for three purposes: (1) outlays on war (equipment, rewards for warriors, etc.); (2) maintenance of ruler and court; (3) social expenditures (help for the poor, stockpiles for famines, etc.). In the last phase expenditures under item (2) seem to have become larger.<sup>29</sup>

Summary of Motecuçoma's annual tribute collected from three hundred and seventy-one towns:<sup>30</sup>

War dresses .....	625
Feathers, handfuls of .....	33,680
Mantles of cotton or fibre .....	123,400
Men's loin cloths .....	8,000
Women's tunics and skirts .....	11,200
Maize, bins of .....	28

Beans, bins of .....	21
Sage, bins of .....	21
Purslane, bins of .....	18
Cotton, bales of .....	4,400
Canes, spears .....	32,000
Copal, unrefined packets .....	64,000
Paper, maguey, reams of .....	32,000
Lime, loads of .....	16,000
Gold disks .....	60
Gold dust, bowls of .....	60

An example may illustrate these quantities. Cook has calculated the contents of a "bin" at 600,000 kg., and estimates the mean daily consumption of the Old-Mexican inhabitants at 400 g. of maize, beans and other foodstuffs, or 146 kg. per annum.<sup>31</sup> The 88 bins of bulk foodstuffs delivered thus amount to 52,800,000 kg., or enough to maintain 361,641 men at the estimated mean consumption for a year.

Tenochtitlan thus achieved a splendour and wealth which impressed even the Spaniards greatly. Thus Cortez wrote about his first impression of the city to the King of Spain: "The great and wealthy city, named Tenochtitlan, lies in midst of the great salt lake. It is as large as Seville or Cordoba . . . The city has numerous squares, on which there are perpetual markets of foodstuffs and various commodities. The main square in the centre of the city, twice as great as that of Salamanca, is surrounded by colonnades . . . Tenochtitlan has many beautiful palaces, and this because all the nobles of the country, who are subject to Moctezuma, possess their own houses in the capital and live there for part of the year. In addition many wealthy burghers have very fine, splendid and large houses, with wonderful flower-gardens on the ground and on the flat roofs".<sup>32</sup>

The evolution of Aztec society now proceeded very rapidly. The more its power was consolidated, the less the warrior nobility was willing to submit to the people's assembly. On the eve of the conquest of Atzacapotzalco, so the chronicles tell, a decisive assembly took place. A dispute arose there between the leaders and the warrior nobility on one hand, the commons on the other. The nobility favoured battle, the commons were afraid and favoured subjection. Opinions clashed, and a sort of pact was concluded. The leaders declared to the commons: "If we fail, we will give ourselves into your hands, so that you may eat our flesh and be avenged upon us". And the commons replied: "If you succeed, we pledge ourselves to serve you, and pay you tribute, and be your dependents,

to build your houses, and to serve you as veritable lords, to put our sons, brothers and nieces at your disposal, to carry your baggage and arms when you go to war, to serve you wherever you go, and finally to sell our goods and persons for your service forever".<sup>33</sup> It does not greatly matter whether or not things actually happened in this precise form. What matters is, that Aztec tradition knows one moment, when the warrior nobility took over power and eliminated the people's assembly.

This revolution of the old tribal order was soon followed by another. The aristocracy demanded its own land, to be cultivated on its behalf. After the conquest of Atzacapotzalco it took over a large part of the newly subjugated territory: "After the Crown had received lands, the first to whom land was given was Tlacaellé, leader in this fight, who received ten *suertes* of land, all in Atzacapotzalco . . . All other important leaders received two *suertes* of land. The common people, which had behaved in a frightened and cowardly manner, and had promised to serve the lords and victors . . . received no land at all".<sup>34</sup> Tradition was not wholly broken: each *calpulli* received one *suerte*, i.e. half as much as a noble. The ground thus distributed was tilled by the common people for the nobles. Thus the economic foundations of an aristocracy were laid. One major step remained to be taken: to establish rights of inheritance over this land. However, inheritance conflicted both with the tradition of the original gentile society and that of the era of the service aristocracy, in which every honour had to be justified by military achievement. A compromise was thus found: "When one of these nobles died, the supreme rulers transferred his titles to him, who had gained it by merit . . . and the son did not inherit, unless the supreme ruler nominated him as heir. And the supreme rulers always made efforts to prefer the sons to others, if they deserved it".<sup>35</sup> The heritability of titles and of the lands which depended on them was thus guaranteed.

The nobility also extended its claims in other fields. The domination over such large territories as the Aztecs ruled, required the creation of a sizeable stratum of administrators. Though most of the conquered peoples were left their chieftains and institutions, *calpixques*, i.e. tribute collectors, were sent everywhere.<sup>36</sup> These received lands and estates in the territories for which they were responsible. Garrisons were also sent into some frontier regions, where they were maintained by the native populations.<sup>37</sup> In the high valley of Mexico and its environs, however, a regular administrative apparatus of the Aztecs and their allies appears to have existed.

Judges, administrators, tribute collectors, were appointed for each locality. This body of civil servants was supplemented by a steadily growing number of officials in Tenochtitlan itself.<sup>38</sup>

Originally all these posts were distributed according to the same principle as all other honours among the Aztecs, i.e. according to military achievement. However, the nobility now desired to monopolise them, and attempted to do so in various ways. (1) Camouflaged heredity, as discussed above, was partially introduced. As we have seen, the formula "the supreme rulers always made efforts to prefer the sons to others, if they deserved it" applied to the title of *Tecuhtli*, which belonged to nobles active as administrators of subject localities and receiving land in them.<sup>39</sup> (2) Certain posts were reserved for the pupils of the *Calmeacadas*, a school for the children of nobles.<sup>40</sup> (While all young men of the people received an almost exclusively military education in the "bachelor house" (*telpochcalli*), the children of the nobility were educated in the temple schools (*calmecae*.) (3) It is reported from Texcoco, one of the cities of the triple alliance, that the nobles had reserved a proportion of the posts for themselves.<sup>41</sup> Probably this was also temporarily the case in Tenochtitlan.

So long as the conquests proceeded rapidly, and the number of available posts therefore exceeded that of the nobility, these measures suffice to ensure its access to the most important posts without wholly excluding the aristocracy of service. Indeed, even under Moctezuma I (1440-69) attempts were still made to recruit new blood into the nobility. Thus his proxy is reported to have told the king: "You must invite the soldiers of the second class into your palaces, those who have earned only lesser rewards. After the generals have selected them, they are to be granted the right to wear the badges, decorations and jewels which are the privilege of the highest nobility. Their children shall be regarded as nobles . . . Out of this order of knighthood shall the nobility be renewed . . . Moctezuma promised to regard them and their children as nobles for ever". However, when under Moctezuma II (1502-1520) conquests took place more slowly, while the number of nobles increased correspondingly fast — in contrast to the commons they were allowed to take several wives — a sort of coup d'état was organised. The Codex Ramirez describes this as follows:

"A few days after he was elected, the king began to show his aristocratic leanings. He first rearranged and readjusted his royal household. To do this (efficiently) he first had an old man called to him, a person who had been his (private) priest, and disclosed his



thoughts to him privately, speaking as follows: 'You undoubtedly know, my father, that I have decided that all those who wait upon me shall be knights and the sons of princes and lords.<sup>42</sup> Not only those who are to help me in my household but all who have any positions of importance throughout my kingdom are to be such. I am very much perturbed at the thought that all the previous kings permitted themselves to be served in such matters by people of low birth. For this reason I have decided to deprive all those of low birth of whatever office they happen to hold and to have my household and my kingdom served only by people of good birth, by such as are without any mixture of low blood.'<sup>43</sup>

These measures were carried out and numerous former dignitaries killed.<sup>44</sup>

The reinforcement of the nobility's position was accompanied by an increase in the power of the supreme ruler, who had closely linked his fortunes with theirs. This is most clearly described by the chronicler Acosta: "From all this we may see that the ruler used not to have absolute power, and ruled more like a duke or consul than like a king, though in later times . . . the power of the rulers increased, until it took tyrannical forms, as was the case with the last rulers".<sup>45</sup> Compared to the ruler, the *Cihuacoatl* dropped increasingly out of importance, until by the time of the Spanish conquest he no longer played a significant part. The council also lost more and more of its power to the ruler.

The changes briefly sketched above laid the foundations of a class society among the Aztecs.

In the last period of Aztec rule there also arose new classes, whose main function was to minister to the needs of the new ruling stratum, the craftsmen, merchants and slaves.

The craftsmen were almost exclusively producers of luxury goods for the nobility — feather-workers, gold and silversmiths, etc. — for in the primitive state of Aztec technique the population manufactured its most important capital and consumption goods at home.<sup>46</sup> The merchants traded mainly in luxury goods, their main function being to bring lowland products such as cotton, cocoa, the plumes of certain birds, etc., into the high valley. In return they exported raw materials such as salt and lake-produce, manufactured goods, and products gathered in tribute. There was as yet no money, but certain commodities, such as cocoa beans, functioned as currency. This trade was supported by such measures of the Aztec state as the obligation to trade with Aztec merchants, to bring goods to market on certain days, and the like. In the final years of Aztec rule the importance of the trade in the high valley had risen to the point at

which the social position of the merchants approached that of the nobles. They received some of the same honours, and were invited to the most important consultations. They had also won the right of inheritance.<sup>47</sup>

Slavery existed among the Aztecs, but was feebly developed. Criminals and debtors were enslaved, but prisoners-of-war were without exception sacrificed to the gods.<sup>48</sup> Slaves were chiefly used as domestic servants and porters, but rarely in agriculture or the building trades. There are two reasons for this. First, the greater part of the soil still belonged to the *calpullis*, who could not use slaves, since each plot of land was designed to maintain only one family. Second, work on private lands and on the buildings of Tenochtitlan were carried out by the compulsory labour of members of *calpullis*, above all those of the subject peoples. Their labour was much cheaper than that of slaves, since there was no need to feed them all the year through, and indeed they found their own food. Hence the greater part of prisoners-of-war could not have been employed as slaves, and there was no economic reason to prevent their execution.

We may sum up. The most important characteristics of Aztec social evolution appear to be the following:

(1) Aztec society had evolved into a class society with a hereditary nobility, owning land (which was cultivated by dependent peasants), and occupying the leading positions in the state.

(2) This evolution into class society took place mainly at the expense of foreign subject peoples. Hence among the Aztecs themselves, strong relics of former social systems could survive. Thus a large part of the land remained in the hands of the *calpullis*.

(3) So far as I know the evolution of a relatively developed social order on the basis of so primitive a material base as that of the Aztecs, has no parallel in the old world. For the Aztecs knew neither animal husbandry nor the plough (they used digging sticks), nor metal tools, using gold, silver and copper only for ornament. I think this anomaly is largely due to the character of the basic American cereal, maize, which shows high productivity even with low or primitive cultivation. The Maya expert Morley has calculated that the most primitive form of Central American agriculture, the system of clearing land by fire, enabled a family of five to produce in one hundred and ninety days twice what it required for subsistence.<sup>49</sup> The remainder of its time was free for non-agricultural activities. The far more advanced agricultural system of the Aztecs naturally was even more productive.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The chief sources are: J. de Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias* (Madrid 1792); Annales de *Chimalpahin* Quauhtlehuauitzin, in *Sixième et Septième Relations, publiées et traduites par Remi Simeon* (Paris 1889); ed. and trans. J. Cooper Clarke, *Codex Mendoza* (London 1938); Hernan Cortes, *Briefe an Karl V* (Leipzig 1918); Mariano Cuevas, *Documentos ineditos del siglo XVI* (Mexico 1914); Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (Mexico 1928); Diego Durán, *Historia de los Indios de Nueva España* (Mexico 1867-80); J. Garcia Icazbalceta, *Collección de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico* (Mexico 1858-66), and *Nueva Collección de Documentos* (Mexico 1886); F. Lopez de Gomara, *Historia General de las Indias* (Madrid 1749); Herrera y Tordesillas, *Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos* (Madrid 1601-61); Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, *Obras Historicas* (Mexico 1891-2); Fray Geronimo Mendieta, *Historia Ecclesiastica Indiana* (Mexico 1870); Toribio de Benavente Motolinia, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España* (Barcelona 1914); Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* (Madrid 1851-5); F. Paso y Troncoso, *Epistolario de Nueva España*, 2 vols. (Mexico 1939-42); Juan Bautista Pomar, *Relacion de Tezcoco* (Mexico 1941); Paul Radin, *The Sources and Authenticity of the History of the Ancient Mexicans* (Berkeley 1920); H. de Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages, Relations et Memoires* (Paris 1838); Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc, *Histoire Mexicaine* (Paris 1838); Juan de Torquemada, *La Monarquía Indiana* (Madrid 1723); Alfonso de Zurita, *Breve y Sumaria Relacion de los Senores de la Nueva España* (Mexico 1941); Fray Bernardino Sahagún, *Historia General de las Cosas de la Nueva España*, (Mexico 1829).

<sup>2</sup> Jimenez Moreno, *Sintesis de la Historia Precolonial del Valle de Mexico*, in *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropologicos* (1954-5), pp. 219-37; F. Katz, *Die sozialoekonomischen Verhaeltnisse bei den Azteken im 15. u. 16. Jh.* (*Ethnographisch-Archaeologische Forschungen*, Heft 3, Teil 2, Berlin 1956).

<sup>3</sup> Jimenez Moreno, *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> A. F. Bandelier, On the social organisation and mode of government of the ancient Mexicans, in *Twelfth Annual Report of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology* (Cambridge Mass. 1880), 619 ff.

<sup>5</sup> A. Monzon, *El Calpulli en la Organización Social de los Tenochca* (Mexico 1949), 90.

<sup>6</sup> D. L. Olson, *Clan and Moiety in Native America* (Berkeley 1931).

<sup>7</sup> Durán, vol. I, 228.

<sup>8</sup> Zurita, 87.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, 90.

<sup>10</sup> Codex Ramirez, in *Radin*, 81.

<sup>11</sup> Zurita, 88.

<sup>12</sup> Durán, 42, Zurita, 87.

<sup>13</sup> Durán I, 53.

<sup>14</sup> Zurita, 199.

<sup>15</sup> P. Armillas, Notas relativas a sistemas de cultivo en Meso-America, in *Anales del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (Mexico 1949).

<sup>16</sup> P. Armillas, Las chinampas de Mexico, in *Cuadernos Americanos* 2 (1950).

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Gomara, cap 215; P. Armillas, *Tecnología, Formaciones socio-economicas y religion en Meso-America*, in *The Civilizations of Ancient America* (Chicago 1951).

<sup>19</sup> Jimenez Moreno, *loc. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Tezozomoc, I, 196.

<sup>21</sup> Durán I, 216; Tezozomoc I, 381; Ixtlilxochitl II, 187 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Pomar, 38.

<sup>23</sup> Bernal Diaz, 247, Sahagún II, 301, Cortes, 147.

- <sup>24</sup> Mendieta, 128; Durán, 175.  
<sup>25</sup> Durán I, 215; Radin, 112.  
<sup>26</sup> Sahagún II, 318; Durán I, 124.  
<sup>27</sup> Jiménez Moreno, *loc. cit.*  
<sup>28</sup> S. F. Cook and L. B. Simpson, *The Population of Central Mexico in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley 1948), 26-7.  
<sup>29</sup> Katz, *op. cit.*, 82-106.  
<sup>30</sup> *Codex Mendoza*.  
<sup>31</sup> Cook and Simpson, *op. cit.*, 39.  
<sup>32</sup> Cortes, 139 f.  
<sup>33</sup> Durán, 75.  
<sup>34</sup> Durán I, 97.  
<sup>35</sup> Zurita, 86.  
<sup>36</sup> Zurita, 89.  
<sup>37</sup> Durán I, 364.  
<sup>38</sup> Durán I, 323; Ternaux-Compans, vol. X, 229.  
<sup>39</sup> Zurita, 86.  
<sup>40</sup> Sahagún II, 313.  
<sup>41</sup> Ixtlilxochitl, I, 326, II, 174.  
<sup>42</sup> This feudal terminology is characteristic of both the Spanish and the post-conquest Indian chronicles. The Spaniards could not imagine any other relations but the feudal ones. The Indian chroniclers, who came from the highest class of the Indians, were concerned to show that their ancestors occupied positions analogous to those of Spanish feudal lords.  
<sup>43</sup> in Radin, 120.  
<sup>44</sup> Durán I, 419-21.  
<sup>45</sup> Acosta VI, 441.  
<sup>46</sup> Zurita, 129; cf. Katz, *op. cit.*, 50-6.  
<sup>47</sup> Sahagún II, 347; Durán II, 125. See also Saignes Miguel Acosta, *Los Pochteca* (Mexico 1945), Katz, *op. cit.*, 57-81, J. Soustelle, *La vie quotidienne des Azteques à la veille de la conquête espagnole* (Paris 1956).  
<sup>48</sup> Motolinia, in García Icazbalceta (1858), 272. A full treatment in C. Bosch García, *La esclavitud prehispanica entre los Aztecas* (Mexico 1944).  
<sup>49</sup> Morley, *The Ancient Maya*, (Stanford 1946), 177.

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## WAR IN FEUDAL SOCIETY

*Most discussions by English historians about warfare in feudal societies have concentrated on the institutional aspect of military mobilisation (military service and land tenure). This has overshadowed the problem of the function of warfare in these societies. What social and economic tensions peculiar to medieval society led to war? What contribution did war make to the development of productive techniques? To what extent was war responsible for economic and social crisis? How important was the preparation for and the conduct of war in the shaping of social and political institutions?*

*PAST AND PRESENT proposes to initiate a discussion on these topics on Thursday, 10 July 1958, in London.*

*For further details write to R. H. Hilton, Department of History, University of Birmingham.*