Abstract

After the Spanish conquered the Mesoamerican high plateau, they were in a difficult position to achieve the evangelization and political control of the native population scattered over mountains or canyons. In order to gather all these settlements, the Spanish Crown decided to lay out orthogonal planned towns on flat areas, not far from the old steeper settlements. This process is known as Congregación. The new towns not only changed the relationship of the native communities with their ancient urban pattern, but also with the landscape they had originally selected. On this paper we analyze, from a geographical point of view, the resulting spaces from this process and the new relationship between landscape and Indian towns. We propose too that in spite of the territorial modifications and the demographic redistribution, the colonial pueblo de indios took up some important continuities from pre-hispanic times.

Keywords

New Spain, 16th Century, indian settlements, Congregation, urban pattern, landscape.