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978-0-521-18980-4 - Ancient Road Networks and Settlement Hierarchies in the New World

Edited by Charles D. Trombold

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NEW WORLD

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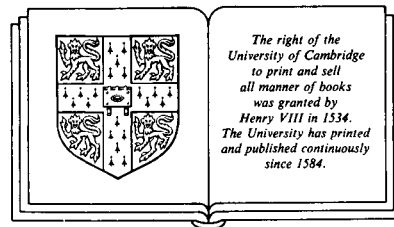
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CHARLES D. TROMBOLD



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Editor's preface

This volume is the culmination of several distinct stages. Early in my studies of the northern Mesoamerican frontier I realized the importance of La Quemada, its settlement system and the causeways associated with it. This was mostly due to the influence of J. Charles and Ellen Abbott Kelley who at the time provided a lively forum for discussing many aspects of north-central and western Mexican archaeology. My initial fieldwork there in 1974 generated an anticipated number of questions. Some of these were fairly straightforward such as, in a complex society without draft animals or wheeled vehicles and few natural impediments to ordinary foot traffic, why was so much labor invested in causeways? Since the answer was not immediately evident, one solution might be to tackle the question on a cross-cultural basis. At the time I knew, though in retrospect rather dimly, that a small handful of researchers was involved in related studies in other areas. Thus with suggestions and encouragement from Karen Bruhns, Jane Stone, Jim Judge and David Browman, a symposium was organized for the 81st annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association to be held in Washington, DC.

Many papers presented at that symposium, entitled *Prehispanic Transport Networks in the New World*, now form the core of the present volume. The symposium was organized in three sections according to geographical area. The first focused on the Greater Southwest with primary emphasis on recent research in the Chaco Canyon region. Contributors to this section included Peter Dunham, Natalie Pattison, Chris Kincaid, Thomas Windes, Fred Nials, John Stein, Joan Mathien, Daniel Reff, Carroll Riley, and Joni Manson. The second section took account of recent Mesoamerican research and included myself, Shirley Gorenstein, Helen

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Pollard, Robert Santley, Kenneth Hirth, and William Folan. The South American section included Colleen Beck, Dwight Wallace, Linda Spickard, and Patricia Lyon with Kathy Schreiber and John Hyslop as discussants. Cross-cutting the regional topics were considerations of discovery and verification procedures, survey strategies, uses of ethnohistorical accounts, and theoretical issues such as the extent to which roads could be used as an index of sociopolitical complexity.

The present volume is organized into three categories: Theoretical Considerations, Methodology, and Regional Studies. Although these categories are not mutually exclusive, the chapters within each category are meant to illustrate particular points. Hyslop's observations on South American roads, for example, are also appropriate for many other areas of the New World. Likewise, Beck's presentation is essentially regional in scope, yet her description of cross-cutting relationships is important for understanding relative chronology in any region with overlapping cultural landscape features. The remote-sensing papers by Sever and Wagner, and Sheets and Sever, give considerable information on Chacoan and Costa Rican routes as well as their cultural contexts. Their major importance in terms of methodology, however, lies in describing the uses of remote sensing in two vastly different physical settings.

Many chapters under the Regional Studies heading deal with theoretical issues, discovery, survey, the interpretive issues as well as new regional findings. Chapters in this category are intended to elucidate various sub-areas as well. Within the Greater Southwest, for example, Mathien discusses not only the history and present status of research in the Chaco Canyon region, but other portions of the Southwest such as Casas Grandes in Chihuahua and areas of California and Arizona. While Mathien provides a detailed overview, Windes focuses on particular aspects of description and analyses in the Chaco region. Contrasted with this is the chapter by Riley and Manson who use ethnohistoric data to reconstruct and interpret routes associated with the protohistoric statelets of Sonora. One important aspect of their paper is that "trade routes" may be visually identifiable in some cases. The Mesoamerican chapters likewise contain new information ranging over a wide geographic area, extending from the Chalchihuites cultural tradition of central northwestern Mexico to the Northern Maya of the Yucatan peninsula. These include many key cultural areas such as the Basin of Mexico (Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlan), the Tarascan heartland, Xochicalco and Coba. The South American portion is structured to describe three different geo-

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graphical situations where roads assumed considerable importance. The chapter by Denevan not only includes areas of Amazon basin and *Llanos* areas of Venezuela, but reviews early accounts of roads encountered in the Caribbean areas. Schreiber on the other hand discusses the history of Andean roads and their association with highly developed polities while Wallace focuses on a specific coastal port-of-trade situation with a view to their symbolic importance.

The studies contained in this volume are primarily meant to be representative. In this sense they are intended to bring an awareness to the scientific and lay community that formal routes exist in substantial numbers and that they can be used as a valuable research tool. The chapters presented here, then, are intended to show what progress has been made to date, and hopefully provide guidelines and impetus for future studies.

I would like to express my gratitude to Karen Bruhns, with whom I first discussed the possibility of organizing the symposium and who subsequently assisted in recruiting various participants, and to Jane Stone and Jim Judge for suggesting various participants for the South American and the Southwestern sections respectively.

Also important were George Gumerman and especially David Browman for their encouragement and suggestions throughout the symposium and publication stages. Finally, my gratitude to Harry William Henry III for his editorial comments.