

Transformations in Urban Geography: The Yucatan Peninsula during the 16th Century

The conquest did not involve only a great political change: the very idea of political power changed, passing from a personal to a territorial one. The distribution of population and settlements on the ground had to adapt to the mentality imported by Europeans and to their new needs. The fulcrums of power mutated in many different ways; some towns arose as new fulcra while the ancient capitals were losing their political power. Through a re-reading of the early colonial documents aided by the use of a Geographic Information System, the talk will analyse the territorial processes occurred in Yucatan after the Spanish conquest, focusing specifically on the most important centres in Yucatan before and after the arrival of the Spanish, underlying how the situation changed and on which towns the new colonial order was based, depending on geographical, topographical, administrative and symbolic factors. Particular attention will be paid to show how it was taken advantage of the pre-Hispanic situation, through a complex and multifaceted diachronic view.

Keywords: Yucatan; territory; Spanish conquer; settlement pattern; Postclassic Maya