

Nachtigall, Horst: *West-Tarasken; Beiträge zur Archäologie, Ethnologie und Akkulturation eines westmexikanischen Volkes*. (Marburger Studien zur Völkerkunde 10). 310 Seiten, 6 Farbphotos, 137 Schwarzweißphotos, 2 Karten. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag 1992.

Although many studies have been written on villages near Lake Pátzcuaro and the centre of the Meseta Purhépecha, few investigators have tried to describe the life in villages in the west of the mentioned Meseta. Horst Nachtigall, German ethnologist, who has worked in Morocco, Columbia, Argentina, Peru, Guatemala and Mexico, gives us a description of the village of Tarecuato, located in the west of the actual Purhépecha territory, although the title of his publication, *Beiträge zur Archäologie, Ethnologie und Akkulturation eines westmexikanischen Volkes*, suggests a survey of the whole western region.

In the first chapters of his study, the author tries to inform us on the entire Purhépecha region and gives us a brief impression of the archaeological sites of Tarecuato, Jacona, Zacapu, Las Iglesias, Ihuatzio, Pátzcuaro, Tzintzuntzan, Santa Ana and Tingambato, and also summarizes the history of the Museo Regional Michoacano, in Morelia. Reading these first pages one can easily observe that Nachtigall has not made a thorough study of the literature on the history of the area; for example, the author mentions the site of Tingambato and states that no published archaeological investigation has been performed there, thus ignoring the important work of Piña Chan, *Exploraciones arqueológicas en Tingambato Michoacán*, 1982. Before he begins with his main subject, Tarecuato, the author also pays attention to the demography of the Purhépecha region and the radiostation XEPUR in Cherán.

After his incoherent introduction to the area (chapters 1-9) Nachtigall takes us to the actual village of Tarecuato and describes the daily life in great detail; the church, founded by the Danish Father Jacob Daciano, the water and electricity system (chapter 10), the houses (chapter 11), dress (chapter 12), handicrafts (chapter 13), traditional and modern agriculture (chapters 14 and 15), the market (chapter 16), family organization (chapter 17), stages in life (chapter 18), political organization (chapter 19), legal system (chapter 20), social organization (chapter 21), religious organization (chapter 22), religious feasts (chapter 23), national feastdays (chapter 24), public health system (chapter 26) and educational facilities (chapter 27).

In the résumé of his study (chapter 28) Horst Nachtigall describes Tarecuato as a village of developments in which a rapid modernization occurs mainly in agriculture – e.g. fertilizers, credit facilities, machinery, education and public health, while changes in the political, social and religious system are at a much more slower level. The cult of the saints remains very important, without the local priest being able to participate in this system. Nachtigall also stresses the problem of the Tarecuatenses who have worked in the United States; they do not want to participate any longer in the cargo system but instead rather like to accumulate personal wealth, leading the author to think that in the (near?) future groups or associations will accomplish the different cargos, while psychologists and psychiatrists will take over the function of the saints, taking care of the spiritual needs of the people. Most remarkable is that the author states that the Purhépecha people do not consider themselves to be united into one ethnic group but rather feel Mexican. Obviously the author has never heard of the Purhépecha New Year ceremony on the first of February, each time in another village, and other regional ceremonies in which the Purhépecha express that they are one group with their own identity.

Horst Nachtigall's investigation is a nicely illustrated but expensive monograph on the actual village of Tarecuato. Although the description of the village is very interesting and deserves a translation into Spanish, the author has shown not to have studied intensively the history of the village. Extensive archival studies are absent. Furthermore he has not made a thorough