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“WE MEXICAS WENT EVERYWHERE IN THAT LAND”: THE MEXICAN INDIAN  
DIASPORA IN THE GREATER SOUTHWEST, 1540-1680

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Camilla Townsend

And approved by

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“We Mexicas Went Everywhere in That Land:” The Mexican Indian Diaspora in the  
Greater Southwest, 1540-1680

by TRAVIS JEFFRES

Dissertation Director:  
Camilla Townsend

Beginning with Hernando Cortés’s capture of Aztec Tenochtitlan in 1521, legions of “Indian conquistadors” from Mexico joined Spanish military campaigns throughout Mesoamerica in the sixteenth century. Scholarship appearing in the last decade has revealed the awesome scope of this participation—involving hundreds of thousands of Indian allies—and cast critical light on their motivations and experiences.

Nevertheless this work has remained restricted to central Mexico and areas south, while the region known as the Greater Southwest, encompassing northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest, has been largely ignored. This dissertation traces the movements of Indians from central Mexico, especially Nahuas, into this region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and charts their experiences as diasporic peoples under colonialism using sources they wrote in their own language (Nahuatl). Their activities as laborers, soldiers, settlers, and agents of acculturation largely enabled colonial expansion in the region. However their exploits are too frequently cast as contributions to an overarching Spanish colonial project. This

dissertation seeks to uncover underlying indigenous agendas and reveal what colonial service meant for native participants. Nahuatl sources demonstrate that activities typically portrayed as contributions to Spanish colonial causes reflected indigenous attempts to wrest land, privileges, and rights to self-governance from the colonial regime. Overall the project urges us to reconsider the extent to which colonial expansion into the early U.S.-Mexico borderlands was European. It also asks whether we have, by relying on European sources to write histories of nation-states, elided native peoples from key American stories and distorted the history of a transnational region vitally important to both Mexico and the United States today.



## Acknowledgements

If I had known before I started this dissertation what would be required to complete it, I might not have written it. In the end I'm glad I did, but it would not have been possible without the aid of many people. First I must thank the mentors who kindled my interests and guided my efforts. At Hartwick College, Mieko Nishida and Mike Woost saw my potential, convinced me of it, and encouraged me to pursue a PhD. I thank them for mentoring me during those formative years, and more importantly for challenging me to strive for lofty heights. At Rutgers, Cami Townsend introduced me to borderlands and Nahuatl and advocated for me even though I'm sure I made her job more difficult on more than one occasion. I am forever grateful for the guidance she has offered over these many years. I could not have reached this point without it. For her sake, I hope the juice was worth the squeeze. I am grateful as well to Paul Clemens, who supported my candidacy at critical stages, and to Lilia Fernández, who graciously agreed to take on this project and who helped to improve it in fundamental ways. I would also like to thank Al Howard, a model educator and a wonderful human being.

I am grateful to the New Mexico Office of the State Historian in Santa Fe for providing a History Scholar award that helped to fund archival investigations and gave me an opportunity to present my work to the public. I would like to thank the State Historian, Rick Hendricks, for sharing his vast stores of knowledge and for helping me with Spanish paleography. Thanks also to the Assistant State Historian Rob Martínez for his assistance. At the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, I would like to thank the best archivist a historian could ask for, Emily

Brock. She not only provided me with important research materials, but she also became my wife. I will never forget the day I walked into those archives and saw you, and if nothing else ever came of this project, it would have been worth it just to meet you.

The expertise of staff members at the Center for Southwest Research in Albuquerque facilitated my initial investigations into Spanish colonialism in Mexico and the U.S. Southwest. Chris Geherin provided welcome comic and alimentary relief from the toil of archival research, while conversations with Samuel Sisneros helped me to understand—to the extent that an Anglo outsider is able—the unique heritage and traditions that define New Mexico and make its people who they are. At the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Michelle Maxwell agreed to share essential documents electronically, sparing me a trip to Oklahoma when funds were low and time was tight.

I thank the Board of Directors of the Americas Research Network for providing a fellowship that funded archival research in Mexico essential to this dissertation. The nature of the fellowship encouraged me to think hard about my project's contributions to transnationalism. It is my hope that it provides a useful model for how transnational collaboration might be effected not only in historical scholarship but in everyday life. Equally important were the cultural experiences I gained and the relationships I formed—and strengthened—during my time in Mexico. I not only visited its archives but drank deeply of its culture (and OK, some pulque and mezcal, too), experienced the unquestioning hospitality of its people,

and let its history and traditions infuse my soul. For many reasons, I will never forget my time there.

The staff at the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City deserves special praise for somehow managing to make research at a former prison highly enjoyable. I am especially grateful to the cheerful staff in galería cuatro, who handled my many halting questions with patience and professionalism. I would especially like to acknowledge Luis Fernando Tolentino, whose friendly demeanor and upbeat attitude made research more enjoyable and productive. Also in Mexico City, I would like to thank Ethelia Ruíz Medrano and Guilhem Olivier. Ethelia graciously agreed to serve as my scholar-liaison during my research fellowship in Mexico and provided practical advice and much-needed direction regarding research in Mexico City archives. She and Guilhem shared volumes from their extensive personal libraries, not to mention food from their table, and Ethelia also generously shared research files. For their assistance and for their hospitality, I am sincerely grateful.

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My work has benefitted from exchanges with many people. My thanks to the participants of the 2016 UC-Davis Graduate History Conference and the 2016 annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory in Nashville, especially Dana Leibsohn and Stuart M. McManus. Thanks also to Mark G. Hanna, Danna A. Levin Rojo, Leslie S. Offutt, Tatiana Seijas, and Dana Velasco Murillo for their contributions to the panel, “New Perspectives on the Ethnohistory of the Spanish Borderlands,” presented at the 2018 annual meeting of the American Historical Society in Washington, D.C. I am especially grateful to Leslie for the helpful feedback she provided on a version of chapter 5 in her capacity as commentator, and to Dana for making the panel possible. I would also like to recognize the editors at *Ethnohistory*, as well as the anonymous reviewers, who provided invaluable feedback on a version of chapter 3 that is forthcoming with the journal. I thank *Ethnohistory* and Duke University Press for allowing me to reproduce portions of it here. At one stage or another my thinking has been shaped by more informal conversations with Leslie Offutt, Dana Velasco Murillo, Susan Deeds, Ida Altman, Sean McEnroe, John Sullivan, Cynthia Radding, Cordelia Snow, Enrique Lamadrid, and José Antonio Esquibel. José graciously shared research notes and helped me to discover the world of the AGN in Albuquerque and the Inquisition in Santa Fe. All helped to make this an infinitely better work. Any errors are mine alone.

Members of the History Department at Colgate University welcomed me among their ranks during the final year of write-up, providing me with a space to work, time to write, and valuable teaching experience. Thank you to Rob Nemes,

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To my wife, Emily, thank you for staying by my side throughout this long journey, for the support you have offered over the years, and most importantly for your patience, love, and understanding. With this chapter now closed, I look forward to writing the remainder of our story together.

This dissertation is about experience, and I believe that experience is a powerful teacher and effective motor of change. My own experiences in Mexico and the Southwest convinced me that colonialism's legacies are alive and well. People in both places continue to grapple with systemic inequality and struggle to meet basic needs. I hope that this dissertation helps to promote understanding and encourages people to search for common ground. Everett, the story behind your name is a powerful reminder that the world is an unequal, even unjust, place. But your name also symbolizes hope. This dissertation is dedicated to you, and to the hope that we can learn from the injustices of the past, and not perpetuate them.

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## Abbreviations

AGI – Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain

AMS – Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, Saltillo, Coahuila

AGN – Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City

BL – Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

BNAH – Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City

CSWR – Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

*DHSLP* - Primo Feliciano Velázquez, ed. *Colección de documentos para la historia de San Luis Potosí*, vol. 1 (San Luis Potosí, 1897).

GM, HM – Gilcrease Museum (Tulsa, OK), Hispanic Manuscripts

MSS – Manuscript Series

*NMHR* – *New Mexico Historical Review*

PARES – Portal de Archivos Españoles (pares.mcu.es)

PS – Photostat

TS - Typescript

## INTRODUCTION

European colonialism, more than any process or event before, set people in motion, and in many ways the modern Western world has been shaped—even defined—by colonial-era diasporas. Beginning in the 1400s, Europeans ventured out into the Atlantic, encountering the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and the Americas. The Portuguese inaugurated the Atlantic Slave Trade and were soon joined by other European nations. Together they combined to enslave and ship 12.5 million Africans to the Americas in the largest forced migration in human history.<sup>1</sup> “Disenclavement” and the Columbian Exchange inaugurated an era defined by the unprecedented movement and transfer of peoples, pathogens, and things, while New-World conquests killed and displaced untold numbers of Native Americans.<sup>2</sup> Epidemic disease killed native people in astounding numbers, literally

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<sup>1</sup> “Assessing the Slave Trade: Estimates,” (web page), Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, Emory University, accessed July 2, 2018, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates>.

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent overview of global exploration, with much relevant material on European expansion into the Atlantic and the Americas, see Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006). The seminal text for the Columbian Exchange is Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972). For a timely—and biting—critique of Crosby and the “exchange myth,” see Bill Bigelow, “Two Myths Are Not Better than One,” *Monthly Review* (July-August 1992), 28-48. On the African slave trade, see Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1972); Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999); Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1996).

For dislocation, migration, and diaspora in response to Euroamerican colonialism, see Ann M. Wightman, *Indigenous Migration and Social Change: The*

emptying much of the land for European settlement. Through the implementation of forced labor regimes such as *mita* in Peru and *encomienda* in the Caribbean and New Spain (as colonial Mexico was known), Spaniards worked natives to exhaustion—if not to death—rendering those who survived more susceptible to epidemics.<sup>3</sup> These extractive systems also disrupted labor and harvest cycles, destabilizing native communities and ways of life. Capitalism—specifically the opening of new markets that dramatically altered the meanings of New World plants, animals, and

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*forasteros of Cuzco, 1570-1720* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1990); Sami Lakomäki, *Gathering Together: The Shawnee People through Diaspora and Nationhood* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2014); David J. Robinson, ed., *Migration in Colonial Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990); Michael M. Swann, *Migrants in the Mexican North: Mobility, Economy, and Society in a Colonial World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989); Stephen Warren, *The Worlds the Shawnees Made: Migration and Violence in Early America* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2014); Gregory D. Smithers, *The Cherokee Diaspora: An Indigenous History of Migration, Resettlement, and Identity* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2015); Gregory D. Smithers and Brooke N. Newman, eds., *Native Diasporas: Indigenous Identities and Settler Colonialism in the Americas* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> On *encomienda*, see Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), 58-81; Leslie Byrd Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain: The Beginning of Spanish Mexico* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1950). *Mita* is discussed in Steven J. Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenges of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1640* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 84-88, 138-39.

On the impact of Old World diseases on the indigenous peoples of the Americas, see David Noble Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998). For an accessible general discussion of the contentious debates concerning pre-Columbian and post-contact Amerindian population figures, see Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations on the Americas before Columbus* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 10-12. For specific works, see Michael R. Haines and Richard H. Steckel, *A Population History of North America* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000); Woodrow Borah and Sherburne F. Cook, *Essays in Population History: Mexico and the Caribbean*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), and *Conquest and Population: A Demographic Approach to Mexican History* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1969).

products—transformed subsistence strategies and modes of economic production and intensified and gave new meanings to indigenous patterns of warfare.<sup>4</sup>

After the capture of Tenochtitlan by Hernando Cortés and the fall of the Aztec Empire in 1521, much of Mexico was quickly placed under Spanish control. By 1530, the mighty Tarascan state of what is now Michoacán had capitulated to Spanish authority. The modern Mexican states of Nayarit, Colima, and Jalisco were laid waste by the depredations of Nuño de Guzman in the early 1530s, leading to the establishment of the kingdom of Nueva Galicia. To the south, the culturally advanced Mixtecs and Zapotecs were placed under Spanish dominion during the conquest of Oaxaca, and the Maya kingdoms of Yucatán, Guatemala, and Honduras were conquered in a series of ventures beginning in the 1520s and lasting into the 1540s (though the entirety of the Maya area would not be subjugated until the late seventeenth century).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For the impact of capitalism and European trade on Native peoples, see Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press 2002); Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," *William and Mary Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (Oct. 1983): 528-559, esp. 539-544; Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999); Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln and London: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> On the incorporation of the Tarascan state into the Spanish imperium, see J. Benedict Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán: The Spanish Domination of the Tarascan Kingdom in Western Mexico, 1521-1530* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1985). An excellent overview of Nuño de Guzmán's brutal campaign through western Mexico in the early 1530s may be found in Ida Altman, *War for Mexico's West: Indians and Spaniards in New Galicia, 1524-1550* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2010). For the conquest of the Mixtecs and Zapotecs of Oaxaca, see John K. Chance, *The Conquest of the Sierra: Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Oaxaca* (Tempe: Arizona State Univ., 1989), chap. 2; Yanna Yannakakis, "The Indios Conquistadores of Oaxaca's Sierra Norte: From Indian Conquerors to Local Indians,"

Mexico's diverse native communities adopted a number of strategies to cope with the cataclysms of conquest. Many sought to curry favor with their new overlords by serving them, and in the decades immediately following the defeat of the Aztecs, tens of thousands of native allies (and possibly hundreds of thousands) joined the Spanish in wars of conquest throughout Mexico, Central America, and beyond.<sup>6</sup> Others, in response to the fragmentation of communities wrought by epidemics and forced labor, chose to uproot and move to areas where Spaniards were fewer and economic opportunities beckoned (or both). On New Spain's northern frontier, these two responses to colonialism converged. Hoping to earn cash wages and commissions as frontier soldiers, thousands of Mesoamericans voluntarily migrated to the northern frontier to conquer, to colonize, and to labor. A smaller but still significant number went in varying states of unfreedom.<sup>7</sup>

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in *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica*, ed. Laura E. Matthew and Michel R. Oudijk (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 227-253. For sixteenth-century conquests in the Maya region, see Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987); Matthew Restall, *Maya Conquistador* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 3-28; John F. Chuchiak IV, "Forgotten Allies: The Origins and Roles of Native Mesoamerican Auxiliaries and Indios Conquistadores in the Conquest of Yucatan, 1526-1550," in *Indian Conquistadors*, ed. Matthew and Oudijk, 175-226.

<sup>6</sup> Michel R. Oudijk and Matthew Restall, "Mesoamerican Conquistadors in the Sixteenth Century," in *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica*, ed. Laura E. Matthew and Michel R. Oudijk (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 28-63. See also the many other excellent essays in *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> For indigenous migration in response to colonialism in the Andes, see Wightman, *Indigenous Migration and Social Change*; Karen Viera Powers, *Andean Journeys: Migration, Ethnogenesis, and the State in Colonial Quito* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1985); Thierry Saignes, "Indian Migration and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century Charcas" in *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*, ed. Brooke Larson and Olivia Harris, with Enrique Tandeter (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1995), 167-195. For migration to the silver mining communities in northern New Spain, see P. J.

Spaniards pushing north from the Valley of Mexico in the sixteenth century found no wealthy, powerful empires to overthrow and exploit—only hostile nomads known collectively as Chichimecs.<sup>8</sup> When, in the 1540s, the frontier was found to be rich in silver (the mines at Zacatecas in north-central Mexico, discovered in 1546, were among the New World's most prolific), settlement exploded virtually overnight and with it demand for laborers to work the mines. However Chichimecs made poor candidates for coerced labor, both because their populations were much smaller

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Bakewell, "Zacatecas: An Economic and Social Outline of a Silver Mining District, 1547-1700," in *Provinces of Early Mexico: Variants of Spanish American Regional Evolution*, ed. Ida Altman and James Lockhart (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1976), 203-04; Michael M. Swann, "Migration, Mobility, and the Mining Towns of Colonial Northern Mexico" in Robinson, ed., *Migration in Colonial Spanish America*, 149-52; Dana Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians in a Silver City: Zacatecas, Mexico, 1546-1810* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2016), 50-51.

<sup>8</sup> While the name has endured, the Spanish term *chichimeca* (from the Nahuatl exonym *chichimecatl*) does not refer to any specific ethnic group. Spaniards, following the Nahuas, applied it indiscriminately to non-agricultural northern tribes, and especially to the independent, indomitable peoples of Mexico's northern central plateau and sierras. While Nahuas claimed Chichimeca ancestry in the distant past (being themselves descendants of migrants from the north), over time the term developed a pejorative valence connoting a state of barbarism and benightedness they had surpassed long ago. Spaniards used it exclusively in this sense. Here it refers primarily to the Guachichiles, Pames, Guamares, and Zacatecos. The most important ethnographic sources pertaining to these peoples come from Spaniards who fought or missionized among them in the sixteenth century. See Gonzalo de Las Casas, "Noticia de los chichimecas y justicia de la guerra que se les ha hecho por los españoles," in *Quellen zur Kulturgeschichte des präkolumbischen Amerika*, ed. Hermann Trimborn (Stuttgart: Strecker und Schörder Verlag, 1936, reprint, New York, Johnson Reprint Corp., 1986), 123-183; Fray Guillermo de Santa María, *Guerra de los Chichimecas (México, 1575-Zirosto, 1580)*, ed., Alberto Carrillo Cázares, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Guadalajara, Michoacán, and San Luis Potosí, Mexico: Universidad de Guadalajara; El Colegio de Michoacán; and El Colegio de San Luis, 1999). See also Charlotte M. Gradie, "Discovering the Chichimecas," *The Americas* 51, no. 1 (July 1994): 67-88; Paul Kirchoff, "The Hunter-Gathering People of North Mexico," in *The North Mexican Frontier: Readings in Archaeology, Ethnohistory, and Archaeology* (Carbondale: South Illinois Univ. Press, 1971), 200-209; and Ruth Behar, "The Visions of a Guachichil Witch in 1599: A Window on the Subjugation of Mexico's Hunter-Gatherers" *Ethnohistory* 34 (Spring 1987): 115-138.

than sedentary peoples like the Aztecs and on account of their mobile settlement patterns. They also violently resisted incursions into their territory, and the frontier soon spiraled into a warzone. The ensuing conflict, known as the Chichimec War, raged intermittently for decades, from 1550 to 1590. Despite the wealth the frontier mining communities produced (many more lucrative silver mines were discovered in the north in the 1550s and 1560s), money and manpower to fight the war were perennially short. Indigenous Mesoamericans stepped in to shore up the militarily vulnerable frontier and supply its mines, refineries, and ranches with much-needed labor. They represented the pioneering wave of a much larger native diaspora into northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest the size and influence of which has been greatly underappreciated, if not overlooked.<sup>9</sup>

### **Focus, Scope & Argument**

The chapters that follow explore the migration of natives from Mexico to New Spain's northern frontier—the region that would come to be known as the U.S.-Mexico borderlands—and their experiences as diasporic peoples under colonialism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These peoples, mostly Nahuatl speakers from Central Mexico, but also Purépechas, Otomís, and others, ventured north

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<sup>9</sup> The authoritative study on Spanish expansion into northern Mexico during the sixteenth century and the Chichimec War remains Philip Wayne Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver: The Northward Advance of New Spain, 1550-1600* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1952, reprinted as *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver: North America's First Frontier War*, Tempe: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1975), but see also Alberto Carrillo Cázeres, *El debate sobre la guerra chichimeca, 1531-1583: derecho y política en la Nueva España*, 2 vols (Zamora, Michoacán and San Luis Potosí: El Colegio de Michoacán and El Colegio de San Luís, 2000).

primarily as voluntary migrants fleeing epidemic disease and economic hardship. However some were impressed into military and exploratory excursions and settlement ventures, while others contracted with Spaniards or were hoodwinked into serving them as soldiers, auxiliaries, and servants.

The analysis ranges geographically from New Spain's near north—encompassing the area a few hundred miles north-northwest of the Valley of Mexico and now belonging to the Mexican states of Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Querétaro, and Zacatecas—through the central corridor containing the Camino Real (or “royal road”) on to New Mexico, with a brief detour into what is now northeastern Mexico and the state of Coahuila. It begins with Spaniards' and allied Indians' earliest forays into the North in the 1540s and 1550s and ends with the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, when a coalition of indigenous tribes from New Mexico and its environs temporarily expelled their oppressors from the province, largely ending its occupation by Indians from Central Mexico.

One of this dissertation's primary arguments is that indigenous migration, labor, and military service were the cornerstones of New Spain's northward advance and central to colonial expansion and development in the Greater Southwest. Indian population centers on the frontier provided pools of labor and military strength that enabled colonial leaders to wage wars, push the boundaries of colonial settlement, and establish lucrative economic enterprises. Allied Indian settlement also laid the foundation for the missionary enterprise in northern New Spain. For the mission to be established, wars had to be waged, enemies defeated, and peace negotiated. In those processes Indians were all-important. Thus, Spanish



settlement and military ventures, economic enterprises, and even missionary efforts all had roots in Indian migrations and settlements established in the sixteenth century.

That indigenous migration, labor, and service laid the foundation for colonial development in the Greater Southwest breaks with the standard narrative of Spanish expansion in the region. And while this important fact should not be overlooked—indeed, much will be said here in support of this argument—there is also more at stake. Too often native actions are interpreted as contributions to European colonial agendas. This project, on the other hand, maintains that casting indigenous decisions and actions as contributions to the establishment of colonialism—a system concerned with the political domination, economic exploitation, and spiritual and cultural destruction of native peoples—would serve only to ratify those objectives and perpetuate the system’s legacies.<sup>10</sup> This would mute indigenous perspectives rather than illuminate them. Therefore uncovering indigenous agendas, which entails situating native actions within their appropriate cultural contexts, is a primary concern here.

### **Sources and Methodology**

This project is an exercise in ethnohistory—a methodology melding the ethnographic sensibilities of the cultural anthropologist with the synchronic perspective of the historian in order to understand indigenous culture change over

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<sup>10</sup> For a masterful critique of modern native-white relations and their origins in the colonial past, see Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*, reprint, with new preface, (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1988).

time. More specifically it deploys a particular method pioneered in the field of colonial Mesoamerican ethnohistory known as the “New Philology,” a mode of historical inquiry based on extensive investigation of indigenous-language texts. In recent decades, Mesoamerican ethnohistory has distinguished itself as a subfield apart, partly because of its scholarly innovation and excellence (it has been written that, of the many subfields of Mexican history, “none have superseded colonial ethnohistory over the long term in the steady distinction of its scholarship”), but also because Mexico’s indigenous peoples developed writing.<sup>11</sup> By this I mean the visual depiction of ideas and/or speech by methods that extend beyond pictographic representation (pictography can be a component of a writing system but by itself is typically not considered writing).<sup>12</sup> In the colonial period, Mesoamericans also produced alphabetic texts—that is, documents written in indigenous languages but transliterated using the introduced Roman alphabet, and they did so centuries

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<sup>11</sup> John E. Kicza, “Recent Books on Ethnohistory and Ethnic Relations in Colonial Mexico,” *Latin American Research Review* 30, no. 3 (1995), 239-253, quoted in Matthew Restall, “A History of the New Philology and the New Philology in History,” *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 1 (2003), 113.

<sup>12</sup> There is a strident debate over the exact criteria that define writing and literacy—a debate that is especially fraught in colonial studies because of the extent to which literacy and writing were used as tools of conquest and colonial domination. More conservative estimations of what constitutes writing stipulate that a given system must reproduce speech. According to some invoking this stricter definition, Mesoamerican forms of notation, with the exception of perhaps the Maya system, are incomplete writing systems. Elizabeth Hill Boone advocates for a more capacious definition—i.e., one that includes the Mesoamerican forms among the pantheon of “complete” writing systems capable of conveying the entire universe of human thought. Boone makes the astute observation that, since the Mixtec and Aztec systems were “semasiographic” (conveying information through signs that do not represent speech) and did not require knowledge of a particular language, they were uniquely suited to Mesoamerica—a region characterized by extreme linguistic diversity. See Boone, *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2000), 4, 28-63.

before other Native Americans. Mesoamericans, furthermore, produced these in much greater quantities, and therefore the largest archives of Native American texts from the colonial period exist in Mesoamerican languages.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to reading Spanish documents across the grain in order to glean indigenous perspectives, this project relies substantially on texts written in Nahuatl—a Uto-Aztecan language spoken by the Aztecs and their neighbors and still spoken by an estimated 1.5 million people in Mexico and Central America.<sup>14</sup> Mesoamerica is one of only a few places on earth where writing developed independently. From pre-colonial times the indigenous *tlacuilo* (scribe) produced breathtaking painted books, or codices, in which he—scribes were invariably male—encoded political, historical, and ritualistic information.<sup>15</sup> Most of these were destroyed during the conquest and in subsequent campaigns to extirpate native ‘idolatry.’ Nevertheless, indigenous literacy endured, thanks in part to European missionaries interested in understanding native culture and religion in order to

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<sup>13</sup> Substantial corpuses of alphabetic documents were recorded in Nahuatl, Mixtec, Otomí, various Maya tongues, Zapotec, and other Mesoamerican languages. For many, examples date as far back as the sixteenth century. Native Americans North of Mexico also wrote using Roman letters, though typically later. For instance there are extant texts in Cherokee and several Algonquian languages, including Ojibwe, but most of these were produced during the nineteenth century.

<sup>14</sup> The estimate of 1.5 million Nahuatl speakers in Mexico is taken from “Censo de Población y Vivienda, 2010,” Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, <http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/temas/lengua/>, accessed 14 May 2018.

<sup>15</sup> On Nahua literacy in both pre-Columbian and colonial contexts, see Matthew Restall, “Heirs to the Hieroglyphs: Indigenous Writing in Colonial Mesoamerica” *The Americas* 54, no. 2 (Oct. 1997), 239-267; Hanns J. Prem, “Aztec Writing,” in *Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians*, vol. 5, *Epigraphy*, ed. Victoria Reifler Bricker (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1992), 53-69; Frances Karttunen, “Nahua Literacy,” in *The Inca and Aztec States, 1400-1800: Anthropology and History*, ed. George A. Collier, Renato I. Rosaldo, and John D. Wirth (New York: Academic Press, 1982), 395-417.

more effectively convert their subjects. These clerics, especially Franciscans, trained young male novitiates to write using Roman letters, and alphabetic writing (as distinguished from the hieroglyphic writing of pre-Columbian times) spread rapidly. This owed in part to its obvious similarities to a preexisting form of record keeping, but surely a great deal of its appeal owed to the opportunities it afforded native subjects to communicate with colonial officials and advocate for their communities.<sup>16</sup>

By the mid sixteenth century, alphabetic writing had not only supplanted pictographic/hieroglyphic recording keeping but had also become “self-perpetuating,” meaning that native scribes preserved the tradition by passing the technology on to others.<sup>17</sup> Within a few decades of the conquest of Mexico, virtually every indigenous community had its own scribe. This process was facilitated by the Spaniards’ insistence that native communities organize a *cabildo*, or European-style town council, a central feature of which was the notary, or *escribano*.<sup>18</sup>

If the pre-colonial *tlacuilo* was a religious specialists and steward of esoteric knowledge, the indigenous *escribano* was a civil servant tasked with producing official, public documents on his community’s behalf. Therefore the majority of documents produced by indigenous peoples in colonial Spanish America are notarial documents, also known as “mundane texts”—land documents, bills of sale, receipts,

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<sup>16</sup> Restall, “Heirs to the Hieroglyphs,” 261, 266.

<sup>17</sup> James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1992), 342.

<sup>18</sup> For a thorough overview of the process by which alphabetic writing was introduced to and spread throughout colonial Mexico, see Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 330-45. See also Restall, “Heirs to the Hieroglyphs,” 248-252.

inventories, municipal government records, and especially testaments. And while much important work has been done on the sources collected and produced by elite indigenous intellectuals (whose familiarity with the Spanish colonial regime placed them in good position to deposit their writings in its archives),<sup>19</sup> it is believed that the majority of documents produced by natives in New Spain are testaments.<sup>20</sup> This dissertation draws extensively on mundane texts in Nahuatl, but it also incorporates sources belonging to other genres of Nahuatl writing, including annals or yearly chronicles, European-style narratives of services rendered to the Crown, proclamations, etc. In total the dissertation draws on hundreds of Nahuatl texts culled from archives across the United States and Mexico.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> There is a large and growing literature on indigenous intellectuals and their roles in knowledge production and dissemination in colonial Latin America. For a classic treatment of a renowned (and prolific) indigenous intellectual, see Rolena Adorno, *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2000). For more recent work, see Amber Brian, *Alva Ixtlilxochitl's Native Archive and the Circulation of Knowledge in Colonial Mexico* (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 2016); Kelly S. McDonough, *The Learned Ones: Nahua Intellectuals in Postconquest Mexico* (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona, 2014); Gabriela Ramos and Yanna Yannakakis, *Indigenous Intellectuals: Knowledge, Power, and Colonial Culture in Mexico and the Andes* (Durham and London: Duke Univ. Press, 2014).

<sup>20</sup> For mundane texts, see Rebecca Horn and James Lockhart, "Mundane Documents in Nahuatl," in *Sources and Methods for the Study of Postconquest Mesoamerican Ethnohistory Provisional Version*, ed. James Lockhart, Lisa Sousa, and Stephanie Wood (Eugene, OR: Wired Humanities Projects, University of Oregon, 2007), <http://whp.uoregon.edu/Lockhart/HornLockhart.pdf> (accessed July 3, 2017); see also Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, chap. 8.

<sup>21</sup> The principal archives visited for this dissertation were, in order of importance: Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City); Archivo Municipal de Saltillo (Coahuila); Bancroft Library (Berkeley, CA); University of New Mexico's Center for Southwest Research (Albuquerque); Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Mexico City). Materials from the Archivo General de Indias (Seville, Spain) were accessed electronically via the Portal de Archivos Españoles ([pares.mcu.es](http://pares.mcu.es)). I also obtained important documents electronically from the Gilcrease Museum (Tulsa, OK) with the assistance of Michelle Maxwell.

Nahuatl sources allow us unprecedented glimpses into the lives of Native Americans displaced by colonialism. They provide poignant insight into their plight, their longings and desires, their triumphs and tribulations, and they also help to illuminate the circumstances of colonial subalterns. Moreover, they afford critical opportunities to negate colonialism's inherent teleology. In the sixteenth century, it was far from foreordained that the Spanish would establish hegemony over what is now Mexico—let alone much of Latin America. Indeed, many native peoples took advantage of the power vacuum created by the fall of the Aztecs to reassert political agency and reclaim territory the Triple Alliance had taken from them.<sup>22</sup> Only in hindsight does it appear that Spaniards conquered Mexico with ease and subordinated all of its native peoples unilaterally. In reality, during the sixteenth century much opportunity existed for negotiation, and the political landscape—and where native peoples fit within it—was far from definitively determined.<sup>23</sup> Nahuatl

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<sup>22</sup> For instance, the Otomís, a Mesoamerican people of the central Valley marginalized by the ascendant Aztecs, capitalized on the Spanish conquest to reassert claims to areas formerly contested or conquered by the defeated Aztec Triple Alliance. Shortly after the fall of Tenochtitlan, Otomís led by the Connín (also known as don Fernando de Tapia) scrambled to lay claim to Querétaro and Xilotepec, north of Mexico's central valley. To bolster their claims, many allied with the Spanish, becoming indigenous conquistadors hoping to win land and protections through military service. This process is expertly summarized in John Tutino, *Making a New World: Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2011), 71-77. See also David Wright, *Conquistadores otomíes en la Guerra Chichimeca* (Querétaro, Mexico: Dirección de Patrimonio Cultural; Secretaría de Cultura y Bienestar Social; Gobierno del Estado de Querétaro, 1988).

<sup>23</sup> Negotiation as a defining feature of European colonialism in the Americas is the hallmark of a vast literature known as "New Conquest history." Illustrative examples include Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples*; White, *The Middle Ground*; James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and the Neighbors from the Era of European Contact through Removal* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989); Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois*

sources reveal that indigenous people participated in colonial processes to wrest advantages from the empire, to lay claim to lands as yet unconquered, and to settle pre-colonial scores. Spaniards often failed to recognize these activities as attempts to advance indigenous interests, and even when they did, it was in their interest to suppress them. Thus it is often only by accessing documents in indigenous languages that a more complete picture emerges.

## Historiography

### Mesoamerican Ethnohistory and the “New Philology”

The New Philology’s concern with indigenous-language documents reflects the central tenet, going back to Franz Boas, that culture is inextricably tied to language.<sup>24</sup> However, for a variety of reasons, not all peoples may be studied using materials they produced in their own languages. Out of necessity, much of the New Philology scholarship has focused geographically on the “core” regions of Spanish settlement, where Spanish missionary efforts were most vigorous and where most colonial texts in indigenous languages were produced. While the overwhelming majority of extant colonial Nahuatl texts were produced in Central Mexico, there was also a substantial number produced in Guatemala and in southern, western, and northern Mexico, either by Nahuas in diaspora or by other native people whose

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*League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1992); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2008). See also Ethelia Ruiz Medrano and Susan Kellogg, eds., *Negotiation within Domination: New Spain’s Indian Pueblos Confront the Spanish State* (Boulder: Univ. Press of Colorado, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Matthew Restall, “A History of the New Philology and the New Philology in History,” *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 1 (2003), 113-34.

colonial experiences placed them in close contact with Nahuatl, which was used as an indigenous lingua franca in sixteenth-century New Spain.<sup>25</sup>

Scholars have begun to discover and tap into Nahuatl archives outside of central Mexico and in the process have made important contributions to our understanding of colonial alliances, migrations, and identities; the creation and protection of indigenous communities; the politics of social memory; and the uses of the past.<sup>26</sup> However no book-length project pertaining to Nahuas in the north of New Spain has drawn extensively on Nahuatl records, despite the existence of a rather large archive of such documents created by natives who formed part of that diaspora (and their descendants).

This archive is the remnant of a formal colonization of the northern frontier by Nahuatl-speaking Tlaxcalans (explored in detail in chapter three) and was produced by the *cabildo* at San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, in what is now Saltillo, Coahuila. Leslie S. Offutt is the first U.S. scholar to study these texts and bring the archive to light, and this dissertation hopes to build on her trailblazing and seminal work.<sup>27</sup> Texts from this archive provide an intimate glimpse into the daily lives of

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<sup>25</sup> For an excellent study drawing on Nahuatl materials produced by central Mexican natives in diaspora in Guatemala, see Laura E. Matthew, *Memories of Conquest: Becoming Mexicano in Colonial Guatemala* (Chapel Hill and London: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2012). For innovative work using Nahuatl materials from the northern frontier (Coahuila, Mexico), see Leslie S. Offutt, "Levels of Acculturation in Northeastern New Spain: San Esteban Testaments of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 22, 409-443.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Matthew, *Memories of Conquest*; Offutt, "Levels of Acculturation."

<sup>27</sup> See Offutt, "The Nahuatl Testaments of San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala (Saltillo)," in *Sources and Methods for the Study of Postconquest Mesoamerican Ethnohistory, Provisional Version*, ed. James Lockhart, Lisa Sousa, and Stephanie Wood (Eugene: Univ. of Oregon's Wired Humanities Project, 2007).



native people in diaspora in New Spain's northern borderlands and form the basis of chapter four. The dissertation also draws on a range of Nahuatl documentation from other archives. These texts represent the earliest produced indigenous materials pertaining to the Greater Southwest. In many cases they are the only sources affording the historian access to the thoughts and perspectives of native peoples whose activities have been overshadowed by those of Spaniards and even those of more "visible" native people—indigenous intellectuals—whose positions in the colonial regime made them likelier candidates to produce sources that would wind up in its archives. As a whole, these more "mundane" indigenous materials contribute to an evocative and previously unseen portrait of dislocation, diaspora, and social life in the north of New Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their study presents an unprecedented opportunity to approach the history of Mexico, the United States, and their borderlands from an entirely new perspective.

### Borderlands

The perspective sought here is decidedly "bottom-up." This entails seeking indigenous points of view on colonial diasporas but also approaching the history of North America from the "bottom" of the North American map—i.e. Mexico—"up" to

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<http://whp.uoregon.edu/Lockhart/index.html>, accessed 22 May 2018; "Levels of Acculturation;" "Indian Texts in a Spanish Context: The Nahuatl Wills of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala," in *Translating Latin America: Culture as Text*, ed. William Luis & Julio Rodríguez-Luis (Binghamton, N.Y.: Center for Research in Translation, State Univ. of New York), 153–163; "Women's Voices from the Frontier: San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala in the Late Eighteenth Century," in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, ed. Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 273–289.

the United States. In so doing this project builds on more than a century of borderlands historiography. The “father” of the study of North American borderlands, Herbert Bolton, was concerned with giving Spain a seat at the table, so to speak, in the history of the United States. He and his disciples saw U.S. histories as Anglocentric and set out to prove that long before Frederick Jackson Turner proposed the significance of the westward-moving frontier, there was an earlier, Hispanic, one that progressed north from Mexico and into the American Southwest and Southeast. While this was a revelation at the time, the “Boltonians” were only partially correct in characterizing the Greater Southwest and the U.S. Southeast as “Spanish borderlands.”<sup>28</sup> As we shall see, some of the first forays into the former region were executed not by Europeans but by Indians from Mexico—some under Spanish auspices, others not. And, at least initially, it appears that Spanish-allied natives outnumbered Spaniards on “America’s first frontier.”<sup>29</sup>

The borderlands concept has expanded both geographically and interpretatively. It now refers not only to particular places—heterogeneous ethnic spaces defined by fluidity and cultural hybridity and syncretism—but also to a specific method, namely a decentered approach that looks to the edges of or even

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<sup>28</sup> Herbert Eugene Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1921); John Francis Bannon, ed., *Bolton and the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1964). Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1974). The following quote from Bannon succinctly summarizes this body of work’s goal: “The American story need no longer be an unrelieved, and in that measure, an unhistorical, Anglo epic.” *Bolton and the Spanish Borderlands*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Philip Wayne Powell was perhaps the first to refer to the region in this way. See *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver: North America’s First Frontier War* (Tempe: Arizona State Univ. Press, 1975); *Mexico’s Miguel Caldera: The Taming of America’s First Frontier, 1548-1597* (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1977); “Peacemaking on North America’s First Frontier,” *The Americas* 16, no. 3 (Jan. 1960): 221-250.

beyond empires and nation-states to explore the lives, experiences, and influences of marginalized peoples, especially Native Americans.<sup>30</sup> This dissertation builds on recent borderlands scholarship in this vein. Works such as Brian DeLay's *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* and Pekka Hämäläinen's *Comanche Empire* explore how powerful indigenous groups (Apaches and Comanches, respectively) not only resisted conquest and colonial containment but actually expanded outwards from the Southwest and Great Plains regions into Mexico.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, this work charts indigenous involvement in processes of conquest and expansion in the opposite direction—that is, from Mexico into territory now belonging to the United States. To be sure, migration and the influence of peoples from Mexico on regions now belonging to the United States are hallmarks of Borderlands and especially Chicana/o literatures.<sup>32</sup> However, this work is too

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<sup>30</sup> On Borderlands, see David J. Weber, "Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 1 (Feb. 1986), 66-81; Stephen Aron and Jeremy Adelman, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June 1999): 814-841.

<sup>31</sup> Pekka Hämäläinen explores how the *Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2008) expanded from its homelands in New Mexico and Texas to "colonize" much of northern Mexico, while Brian DeLay's *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2008) demonstrates how systematic Apache raids effectively depopulated the same region.

<sup>32</sup> Antonia I. Castañeda, "'Que se pudieran defender (So You Could Defend Yourselves)': Chicanas, Regional History, and National Discourses," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 22, no. 3(2001): 116-142; Danna A. Levin Rojo, *Return to Aztlan: Indians, Spaniards, and the Invention of Nuevo México* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2014); Oscar J. Martínez, ed., *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1996); Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: Univ. of Indiana Press, 1999). Castañeda's exploration of coerced Chicana/o migration and diaspora posits that regional histories—e.g. histories of "the Southwest"—reify modern state boundaries and validate the processes of conquest and dispossession

often restricted to the nineteenth century and after.<sup>33</sup> In contrast, the present work contributes to the literature both by charting underexplored movements of indigenous peoples not typically included in Borderlands narratives and by revising the timeline by which we have traditionally understood south-to-north migrations into present-day northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest. It thus breaks new ground at the same time that it provides essential historical context for Borderlands and Chicana/o studies covering the later centuries.

### Spanish Expansion into the Greater Southwest

Earlier scholarship pertaining to the expansion of Spain into what are now northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest emphasized the importance of powerful individuals or religious, secular, and military institutions. François Chevalier's famed *Land and Society in Colonial Mexico: The Great Hacienda* (originally published in 1952 as *La formation des grand domaines aux Mexique*) examined the colony's spread from the vantage point of land tenure. In the sixteenth- and especially the seventeenth-century north, elite colonials developed "grand estates" (haciendas) and concentrated their power through landholding, stockraising, and a seigneurial style of labor control premised on Indian debt peonage. A more institutional approach has examined the Catholic mission and the presidio (military fort) as motors driving

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that have contributed to the historical invisibility of Chicanas/os and other subaltern groups.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Castañeda, *"Que se pudieran defender;"* Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005); George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican-American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995).

colonial expansion.<sup>34</sup> Others have emphasized the importance of silver mining and associated warfare to development in the region.<sup>35</sup>

Only relatively recently has this framework been expanded to incorporate the voices and experiences of native peoples. Pioneering studies have reconsidered the missions not as institutions of unmitigated acculturation and uncontested domination but as sites where native peoples developed novel responses to the social trauma of epidemics and conquest, in the process refashioning their cultures, societies, and identities.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, studies of the silver frontier have gravitated away from technical analyses of mining techniques and economics and now envision these sites as contested spaces where Europeans, Africans, and native peoples

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<sup>34</sup> Robert H. Jackson, *Missions and the Frontiers of Spanish America: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Environmental, Political, and Socio-cultural Variations on the Missions in the Río de la Plata Region and on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Scottsdale, AZ: Pentacle Press, 2005); Jackson, *From Savages to Subjects: Missions in the History of the American Southwest* (Armonck, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2000); Jackson, *The Spanish Missions of Baja California* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991); Jackson, *Indian Population Decline: The Missions of Northwestern New Spain, 1687-1840* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1995); Peter Masten Dunne, *Pioneer Jesuits in Northern Mexico* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1944); Herbert Eugene Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish American Colonies," in David J. Weber, ed., *New Spain's Far Northern Frontier: Essays on Spain in the American West, 1540-1821* (University of New Mexico Press, 1979), 51-65; Odie B. Faulk, "The Presidio: Fortress or Farce?" in *ibid.*, 69-76.

<sup>35</sup> P. J. Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society in Colonial Mexico: Zacatecas, 1546-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1971), 54-60; D. A. Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1971); Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*.

<sup>36</sup> Susan M. Deeds, *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians and Spaniards in Nueva Vizcaya* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2003); Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1800-1850* (Durham and London: Duke Univ. Press, 1997).

comingled and developed enduring polyglot communities.<sup>37</sup> Recent studies exploring economic development in the region recognize the importance of the indigenous who labored in the mines, refineries, and ranches as well as in the burgeoning transport industry that supplied them.<sup>38</sup>

Despite these advances, the indigenous influence on the frontier and their roles in colonial expansion in the north remains tangential to the master (European) narrative. With recent publications and reorientations in the historiography, these peoples' lives and experiences are slowly coming into focus. However the full scope of their involvement in New Spain's northward advance remains to be firmly established.<sup>39</sup>

#### "Indian Conquistadors" and Indigenous Agents of Colonialism

One of colonialism's most troubling features—and one that has been underestimated in accounting for its spread—is the extent to which native peoples,

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<sup>37</sup> Dana Velasco Murillo, "Laboring above Ground: Indigenous Women in New Spain's Silver Mining District, Zacatecas, Mexico, 1620-1770," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 93, no. 1 (Feb. 2013): 3-32; Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians*; Laurent Corbeil, "Identities in Motion: The Creation of a Plural Indio Society in Early San Luis Potosí, New Spain, 1591-1630." PhD diss., McGill Univ., 2014.

<sup>38</sup> Tutino, *Making a New World*, locates the seedbed of North American capitalism in the fertile region north of the Valley of Mexico known as the Bajío—a space that was conquered and colonized by allied Mesoamericans seeking privileges and protection under Spanish colonialism. On the transport industry, see chap. 1, herein, as well as José Adrián Barragán Álvarez, "The Feet of Commerce: Mule-trains and Transportation in Eighteenth Century New Spain," PhD diss., Univ. of Texas, Austin, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> For recent scholarship explicitly focused on indigenous identities and experiences on the northern frontier, see Dana Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians*; Velasco Murillo, "For the Last Time, Once and For All: Indians, Violence, and Local Authority in the Colonial City, Zacatecas, Mexico, 1627-1628," *Ethnohistory* 63, no. 1 (Jan. 2016): 47-79; Velasco Murillo, "Laboring above Ground;" Velasco Murillo, "The Creation of Indigenous Leadership in a Spanish Town: Zacatecas, Mexico, 1609-1752" *Ethnohistory* 56, no. 4 (2009): 669-698;" Corbeil, "Identities in Motion."

sometimes willingly, but often unwittingly, operated as its agents. This could take several forms. Many indigenous chose to join forces with Europeans, both to vanquish long-time enemies and to achieve favorable positions under colonial regimes, only to be later subordinated by their erstwhile allies as soon as the latter gained the upper hand in numbers and strength. In Mexico, Nahuas, Purépechas, Mixtecs, and many other ethnic groups joined the Spaniards in sixteenth-century conquests throughout Mesoamerica. Several thousand Tlaxcalans (a Nahuatl-speaking people and one of the Aztecs' most bitter enemies) accompanied Cortés to the Aztec capital of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, and as many as 30,000 participated in its final siege. Beginning with the 1524 invasion of Guatemala by Pedro de Alvarado and lasting into the 1540s, thousands of Nahuas and other Mesoamericans assisted in the conquest of the Maya kingdoms of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Many of these stayed on as permanent colonizers, and some traveled on subsequent campaigns as far south as Nicaragua and even the Andes, many never to return.<sup>40</sup> Indigenous allies were also heavily involved in the conquest of the Maya kingdoms of Yucatán.<sup>41</sup> Nuño de Guzman, the ruthless conqueror of western Mexico, marched thousands of indigenous auxiliaries into battle, some of them in chains.<sup>42</sup> All told, this massive contribution of willing allies and coerced auxiliaries solidified Spanish dominion throughout much of Mexico and Central America. Capturing their indispensability, it has been said that "no major conquest, either before or after

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<sup>40</sup> Laura E. Matthew, "Whose Conquest? Nahua, Zapoteca, and Mixteca Allies in the Conquest of Central America," in *Indian Conquistadors*, ed. Matthew and Oudijk, 102-26; Oudijk and Restall, "Mesoamerican Conquistadors," 32, 36-37.

<sup>41</sup> Chuchiak IV, "Forgotten Allies."

<sup>42</sup> Altman, *War for Mexico's West*, 28, 30.

1540, took place successfully without the aid and service of indigenous allies.”<sup>43</sup> As a consequence of this participation, Spanish colonialism spread rapidly over the land.

Indigenous peoples also transmitted the trauma of colonialism to their neighbors north of the modern U.S.-Mexico border, although often less directly. In the Great Basin, trade with colonial New Mexico enabled mounted warfare and intensified indigenous patterns of slave raiding. For many of the region’s natives, therefore, colonialism first arrived by means of “other Indian people” in what Ned Blackhawk has memorably dubbed “the displacement of violence.”<sup>44</sup> Access to horses escaped from New Spain and traded from New Mexico allowed equestrian Utes to dominate “pedestrian” neighbors like the Paiutes and Shoshones. Hoping to maintain their monopoly over their newfound fount of power, Utes lashed out preemptively and aggressively, devastating weaker neighbors who lacked access to these potent new military tools and technologies.<sup>45</sup>

Native allies also acted as agents of colonialism in New Mexico itself. Though it is seldom mentioned, some 1,400 allies from central and western Mexico formed

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<sup>43</sup> Chuchiak IV, “Forgotten Allies,” 180.

<sup>44</sup> Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006), 7; Blackhawk, “The Displacement of Violence: Ute Diplomacy and the Making of New Mexico’s Eighteenth-Century Northern Borderlands,” *Ethnohistory* 54, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 723-755.

<sup>45</sup> Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*; Jared Farmer, *On Zion’s Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge and London: Harvard Univ. Press, 2008), 30-35, quote 32. As Farmer astutely notes, ethnic identities among Great Basin peoples were incredibly fluid, and the reification of markers like Ute and Shoshone reflected economic transformations rather than cultural difference. For instance, despite their common language, Utes were distinguished from Paiutes because the former owned horses and enslaved the latter, who lacked them. Farmer, *On Zion’s Mount*, 31-32.



an overwhelming majority on the first European exploratory expedition headed by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado (1540-1542), and they served primarily in combat roles.<sup>46</sup> European and allied Indian penetration of New Mexico also accelerated existing patterns of captive-taking there. As James F. Brooks has shown, shared notions of honor, masculinity, bondage, and redemption among the Spanish and various Indian peoples of the Southwest and southern Great Plains led to the elaboration of a far-flung regional slave-trading network that sent untold numbers of indigenous into bondage among Spaniards and other native groups.<sup>47</sup>

Similar processes played out in what is now the American Southeast. Beginning in the 1670s, English traders from the colony of Carolina encouraged Indians surrounding Charles Town to enslave and sell their neighbors to Englishmen in exchange for guns. According to anthropologist Robbie Ethridge, this fueled the rise of “militaristic slaving societies” that devastated the region. These cycles of slave raiding and warfare sent shockwaves reverberating throughout the South, creating “shatter zones” defined by slave raiding, warfare, and refugeeism. A particularly tragic example of the cannibalistic devastation this phenomenon wrought is the Westo, a southern Piedmont people who initially benefitted by capturing and selling their indigenous neighbors to English Carolinians. When they had outlived their usefulness, however, the English encouraged other indigenous

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<sup>46</sup> Richard Flint, *No Settlement, No Conquest: A History of the Coronado Entrada* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2008), 58.

<sup>47</sup> James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2002).

groups to enslave Westos, and untold numbers were rounded up sold into bondage in the West Indies.<sup>48</sup>

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the roles and exploits of Indian conquistadors and native auxiliaries and also the extent to which Native peoples acted as vectors of colonial violence. Examining the Greater Southwest during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it forges a middle ground between the “Indian Conquistador” literature pertaining mostly to sixteenth-century central Mexico and Central America, on the one hand, and scholarly conversations surrounding Indian auxiliaries in the Southwest, which have centered on the Spanish reliance on Pueblo auxiliaries in New Mexico. Comparatively little has been said concerning the space in between these two geographic and conceptual realms—namely the central role that allied Indians from Mexico played in Spain’s conquest and colonization of the Greater Southwest.

### Indigenous Diasporas

Perhaps one of the most difficult historical phenomena to elucidate using traditional means is the colonial-era diaspora of subordinate peoples like Native Americans.

Many of these people were non-literate and left few written records. They also occupied marginalized social positions. Colonial officials seldom bothered to ask the

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<sup>48</sup> Alan Galloway, *Indian Slave Trade*, 40-69; Robbie Ethridge, “Creating the Shatter Zone: Indian Slave Traders and the Collapse of the Southeastern Chiefdoms,” in *Light on the Path: The Anthropology and History of the Southeastern Indians*, ed. Thomas J. Pluckhahn and Robbie Ethridge (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 2006), 207-218. Galloway observes that despite their “greater military power,” the Westos were “unable to overcome the Carolinians’ ability to unite Indian peoples against them” (pp. 68-69).

opinions of their subjects and even less frequently wrote those opinions down. Moreover, it was often the case that colonized peoples were fleeing epidemics, warfare, or other colonial catastrophes and were therefore moving *away* from Europeans who could observe and record their actions.

In rare instances, scholars have been able to overcome these difficulties. For instance, in a famous analogy, Richard White charted the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) “hammer blows” that fragmented the Hurons like so many shards of glass and sent them fleeing westward, where Jesuit missionaries were positioned perfectly to act as the “glue” to recompose the fragments into new social forms characteristic of the “the middle ground.” As a byproduct of their desire to bring the gospel to “pagans” of the Great Lakes, the Jesuits recorded the movements and experiences of a shattered people fleeing a ruthless enemy driven in part by market forces introduced by European colonialism (the trade in beaver pelts). More recently, scholars piecing together fragmentary documentary trails have traced—against all odds—the incessant movements of the Shawnees, diasporic people par excellence who navigated the convulsive shockwaves of European colonialism by embracing migration.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, new scholarship in indigenous slavery studies, and the recent “global turn” in Native American history has gone far in illuminating the extent to which colonialism scattered native peoples across the Americas, the Atlantic, and even the globe.<sup>50</sup> Because much of this activity—especially slaving—was illicit,

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<sup>49</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes, 1640-1815* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991); Lakomäki, *Gathering Together*.

<sup>50</sup> For indigenous slavery studies, see Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale Univ.

documentary traces are faint, and these continental and global diasporas are enigmatic.<sup>51</sup> Thus reconstructing their lives is an infinitely difficult task. Nevertheless the incorporation of indigenous-language texts lessens the load considerably and makes the task less daunting and more productive. The Nahuatl texts relied upon here provide first-hand access to the experiences of diasporic peoples under colonialism and thus provide us with an entirely new perspective on

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Press, 2002); Alan Galloway, ed., *Indian Slavery in Colonial America* (Lincoln, NE: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2009); Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016); Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2012); Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indios* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014); Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010). Recent scholarship incorporating Native Americans into global frameworks includes Nancy Van Deusen, *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Durham, NC and London: Duke Univ. Press, 2015); Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2015).

<sup>51</sup> Reséndez, *The Other Slavery* provides an excellent, accessible overview of Indigenous slavery, with much relevant discussion pertaining to diaspora. For a succinct discussion of how the illicit practice of slaving persisted in Spanish America despite the 1542 prohibition contained within the New Laws, see Reséndez's "An Early Abolitionist Crusade," *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (Jan. 2017), 19-40. In *The Indian Slave Trade*, Alan Galloway pieced together fragments to uncover thousands of Southeastern natives sold into slavery in the British West Indies. The Puritans' wars in New England also contributed to the scattering of Indigenous Americans across the globe. For instance in *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 170, Jill Lepore cites a tantalizing snippet of evidence indicating that Indian slaves shipped out of New England on the heels of King Philip's War were sent to Africa. More recently, Linford D. Fisher has uncovered evidence that, at the tail end of the same conflict, "Indian surrenderers" were sold into slavery in the West Indies. This was common enough that a neologism developed to describe the sordid practice: contemporaries referred to it as being "barbadosed." See Fisher, "'Why Shall Wee Have Peace to Bee Made Slaves:' Indian Surrenderers During and After King Philip's War," *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (Jan. 2017): 91-114.

how colonial subalterns navigated the perils of a world that was being remade before their very eyes.

### Chapter Outline

Part I, comprising the first three chapters, traces indigenous migration to New Spain's near north in the second half of the sixteenth century and tracks the experiences of native migrants as they became itinerant wage laborers, agents of colonial expansion, and arbiters of peace. The first chapter charts the mass migration of central Mexican Indians to New Spain's northern frontier beginning in the mid sixteenth century. Between 1550 and 1600, central Mexico's Indians experienced recurrent epidemics that drastically diminished the population and, from a colonial perspective, the labor supply. Demands on Indian labor were stepped up at this time to compensate for population loss, placing acute strain on indigenous communities. *Encomienda*—the granting of rights to indigenous labor to European colonists—developed first in the Caribbean as a way to reward private agents for their contributions to augmenting the royal patrimony. The system was transferred to New Spain (Cortés and his senior officers received sizeable *encomiendas* for their conquest of the Aztecs) where it endured for several decades before eventually being scaled back in favor of *repartimiento*—a draft labor system that in theory was meant to ease the strain on indigenous communities by rotating responsibilities among different segments of the community. In reality, *repartimiento* was no less oppressive than the system it replaced, and indigenous communities struggled to make quotas and feed their families.

In addition to labor demand, there was also increased pressure on native lands at this time. As the Spanish population increased, so too did pressure on indigenous territory. Incidents of squatting, forced sale, and theft permeate the historical record at this time. Spanish encroachment onto Indian lands, increased labor demand, and the fragmentation of communities wrought by epidemics encouraged absenteeism and outmigration to burgeoning colonial cities and to the frontier, where natives could dodge labor drafts or take advantage of tribute exemptions and other economic incentives.

The discovery of silver on the frontier provided a natural outlet for indigenous migrants seeking relief from deteriorating conditions at home. The massively productive silver mines of Zacatecas were opened in 1546. Guanajuato followed in 1553, and several smaller, yet significant, strikes were made in the 1560s in the new kingdom of Nueva Vizcaya (roughly corresponding to modern Chihuahua). These settlements exploded, and many became majority-Indian as laborers poured in to exploit wage-earning opportunities and to escape miserable conditions in the center. The influx of Spaniards and Mesoamerican laborers provoked the ire of local indigenous groups—Chichimecs—who lashed out against the intruders, provoking a frontier war that raged for nearly half a century and consumed a large number of lives, both Spanish and Indian.

The second chapter explores the role that this movement of indigenous Mesoamericans played in sparking and fanning the flames of the Chichimec War. Traditionally the conflict has been interpreted as an incredibly costly one in terms of Spanish pesos and lives, but in fact it was allied Mesoamericans who suffered most

dearly over the war's four decades. Native Americans settled on the mining frontier were the victims of Chichimec raids, and Mesoamerican militia recruited to fight the war's battle suffered large numbers of casualties. All told, the Chichimec War killed thousands of allied Indians, compared to only a few hundred Spaniards. Yet little has been written about the plight of these so-called *indios amigos*. Using Nahuatl and Spanish records, chapter two plumbs the experiences of frontier soldiers, settlers, and allies whose sacrifices during the Chichimec War have yet to be acknowledged.

The Chichimec War dragged on for decades before a pivotal policy shift led to a fragile peace beginning in the late 1580s. Administrators abandoned total war in favor of diplomacy and stepped up missionary and settlement efforts, including the relocation of nearly 1,000 Tlaxcalans from central Mexico to strategic colonies along the Chichimec frontier. The Tlaxcalan colonies stabilized the frontier and helped to secure peace in the north. Many of these settlements outlived their original purpose and spawned additional "spin-off colonies" over the course of the seventeenth century that advanced the colonial frontier farther still. The Tlaxcalans have been lionized for their contributions to New Spain's expansion into the early U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Nevertheless a comprehensive evaluation of what this resettlement meant for Tlaxcalans has yet to appear. Evaluating a range of Nahuatl texts, the third chapter seeks to capture the meaning of the Tlaxcalan resettlement of 1591 from the perspective of its participants. When we look to the indigenous sources—rather than relying on Spanish texts concerned with promoting colonial agendas—a different picture of the exodus emerges. The Tlaxcalan migration was a forced

resettlement that strained indigenous families and contributed to the fragmentation of communities ongoing during the sixteenth century in response to colonialism.

If the number of central Mexican Indians involved in the conquest and colonization of the Greater Southwest has yet to be fully acknowledged, the geographical extent of this diaspora has been underappreciated as well. Part II shifts focus to the far north, to the Coahuila-Texas border region and to New Mexico in the southwestern United States. The analytical focus shifts as well. The final two chapters offer case studies pertaining not to movement and migration but to what happened when indigenous migrants planted roots anew on the frontier. As a result of the resettlement explored in chapter three, in 1591 Tlaxcalans established a formal settlement at Saltillo, Coahuila (which lies a mere 150 miles from the Texas border). Indians from central Mexico also formed a substantial and vital part of the colonization effort to New Mexico beginning in 1598. To be sure, these settlements have not been entirely overlooked. Indeed, the Tlaxcalan colonies in the north have been the subjects of dissertations and monographs unto themselves. Yet none has drawn comprehensively on indigenous-language materials, despite the existence of a large archive of Nahuatl sources from one of the principal Tlaxcalan colonies. Similarly, the Mexican Indian component of the Spanish colonization of New Mexico has yet to be excavated systematically.

The penultimate chapter offers a social history of the Tlaxcalan community at San Esteban Yancuic Tlaxcallan, or San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala as it was known to Spaniards. It draws extensively on records of the Tlaxcalan cabildo, or municipal council, established there shortly after seventy-one Tlaxcalan families



were settled next to the neighboring Spanish *villa* (incorporated town) of Saltillo in the summer of 1591. The Nahuatl corpus is extensive, and virtually every type of notarial document (i.e. testaments, deeds and other land documents, inventories, election documents, proclamations, petitions, civil and criminal complaints, etc.) is represented, with hundreds of pages of manuscript. Hundreds, if not thousands, of additional pages pertaining to San Esteban and its Indian residents are preserved in Spanish.

These records offer an intimate glimpse into the social lives of “Indian conquistadors,” settlers, and colonists at a remote frontier outpost. They not only provide critical details concerning how native allies defended the frontier from marauding *indios bárbaros* (“barbarian,” or enemy Indians) but also offer fascinating insights into how indigenous migrants reconstructed their communities and reinstituted the prevailing cultural, social, and political structures of their Nahua homelands. At San Esteban, literate males with prominent social ties and experience in governance wrested power from humbler Tlaxcalans and took advantage of Spanish institutions to bolster their own prestige and political might, in the process fashioning elite, ruling-class identities that could be passed on to their progeny.

The final chapter offers another case study from the far north—the Spanish kingdom of Nuevo México, established in 1598—though much different from that explored in chapter four. Contrary to local lore and even some scholarly conjecture, there was no formal colonization of central Mexican Indians in Spanish New Mexico. Nonetheless there was a substantial Mesoamerican presence there, as Spanish

soldiers incorporated indigenous servants—mostly women—and craftsmen into expeditions to New Mexico. These indigenous men and women lacked the corporate institutions and legal protections of their counterparts in frontier Indian communities like San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, and therefore no notarial or other native texts survive from New Mexico. Nevertheless records do exist to document their presence and trace their influence on the colony's development. The Holy Office of the Inquisition, brought to New Mexico in 1626, investigated a number of cases of witchcraft and sorcery in the capital of Santa Fe. These cases often involved Indians, and many of them are described as Nahuas. The Inquisition files provide a vivid portrait of the lives of native subalterns in early New Mexico who, owing to political strife in the colony and internecine feuds among its Spanish residents, are all but invisible in administrative records.

Despite the subordinate positions they occupied in the colony, Nahua men and women exerted considerable influence on early Santa Fe, both socially and economically. Nahua women were reported to be employed as healers, and some overcame their servile positions and married into Spanish society. Others made important contributions to the community's economic vitality and thus enhanced the colony's viability. There is evidence to suggest that Spaniards were wary of the blurring of boundaries between higher status *indios mexicanos* (i.e. Nahuas) on the one hand, and Pueblo Indians and indigenous slaves on the other. With the coming of the Inquisition, Spanish settlers in Santa Fe could avail themselves of a new juridical mechanism with which to subordinate upstart *indios* like the Nahuas, who previously enjoyed a higher status because of their history as Spanish allies.

In documenting the experiences of Nahuas and other natives in diaspora in the Greater Southwest, this project indexes the social positions of subaltern peoples under colonialism and records their varying responses to it. It also charts a general trend in New Spain whereby myriad distinct indigenous peoples, many of whom at some point provided critical aid to the Spanish, were collapsed into an undifferentiated assemblage of *indios*—the Spanish legal designation for the Americas’ indigenous peoples over which they enjoyed dominion. In the first several decades following the conquest, Spain was preoccupied with solidifying political control in the Valley of Mexico and in securing victories elsewhere. Native allies were crucial to both processes. Amerindians occupied various points along a sliding social scale ranging from the allied Tlaxcalan “conquistadors”—whom the Spanish never conquered and who considered themselves the Spaniards’ allies and equals—to those vanquished through military conquest and political subordination. A move to abrogate Indian allies’ privileges and effect their transformation from Indian Conquistadors to *indios* was already taking place by the end of the sixteenth century. By the end of the time period under discussion here, the process would be all but complete, with devastating consequences for native peoples across Spanish America and beyond.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> This process was most pronounced in the core regions of colonial settlement. On the frontiers, where the colonial influence was more tenuous and depended to a large extent on the services of indigenous settler-soldiers, native allies and their descendants were much more likely to retain the types of privileges that the sixteenth-century “Indian conquistadors” enjoyed—and for much longer. The best examples of this are the Tlaxcalans of the northern frontier colonies established in 1591. Even as late as the eighteenth century, descendants of these original colonists maintained a privileged legal status as “pure Tlaxcalans” and successfully defended claims to rights and privileges bestowed by the colonial

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regime at the end of the sixteenth century. In fact, the colony of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala in Coahuila was able to maintain itself as a distinct corporate entity into the early post-independence years. For the Tlaxcalan colonies of the north generally, see Sean F. McEnroe, *From Colony to Nationhood in Mexico: Laying the Foundations, 1560-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012). For San Esteban in particular, see Leslie Scott Offutt, "'Puro tlaxcalteca?' Ethnic Integrity and Consciousness in Late-Seventeenth Century Northern New Spain" *The Americas* 75, no. 1 (Jan. 2018): 27-46, and chap. 3, herein.

## **PART I. DIASPORA**

In the sixteenth century, colonial expansion and economic development produced a range of opportunities for the beleaguered indigenous subjects of central New Spain—as colonial Mexico was then known—but these came with a heavy price. On the northern frontier, silver mining provided the impetus for expansion and also opened the deserts of the north to Indian settlement from the south. Migration to the silver frontier offered a number of wage earning opportunities in addition to respite from the burdens of tribute obligations and coerced labor in the core region of Spanish settlement, the Valley of Mexico. Native communities there were experiencing demographic collapse, the product of a series of devastating epidemics beginning about mid-century, exacerbating social turmoil caused by Spanish colonialism's demands for Indian tribute and labor.

This conjuncture of deteriorating social conditions at home and the lure of opportunity abroad contributed to a veritable diaspora, a mass migration of thousands of indigenous people from central Mexico to the northern frontier, where, after 1546, a series of significant silver strikes created a tremendous demand for indigenous labor virtually overnight. (Since the northern mines were located in sparsely populated deserts, where the local indigenous populations were nomadic or seminomadic, Indian laborers came from more densely settled regions.) Silver bonanzas spurred the development of a number of industries employing Indians in large numbers, and free Indian laborers were heavily engaged in the mining and refining of silver as well as the transport and sale of goods and equipment. The

number of potential wage earning opportunities and other perquisites offered by the frontier was unprecedented and highly attractive in light of conditions in regions of heaviest Spanish settlement. Yet, as Indians migrated to the frontier by the thousands and contributed to its development and expansion, they also provoked the aggressions of northern peoples known as Chichimecs, into whose lands Spaniards and allied Indian soldiers and settlers were advancing. Native Americans from central New Spain came to bear the brunt of their aggressions and, as agents of Spanish colonialism, became the primary targets and recipients of frontier violence, culminating in the deaths of thousands of Indian migrants. Thus was colonialism's double bind: in escaping the oppressive weight of colonialism in the center, native migrants exposed themselves to new threats on the frontier. In the process, they would suffer immensely at the hands of Spain's northern enemies.

Through their migration, indigenous peoples from central Mexico were primary agents in sparking the Chichimec War. They would also be crucial in bringing it to a close. In the 1580s and 1590s, Spanish officials abandoned a policy of total war and embraced a more diplomatic approach to the Chichimec problem in the north. This "peace by purchase" involved diplomacy and generous gifts of clothing and food, alongside missionary efforts aimed at encouraging Chichimecs to congregate in towns and embrace a sedentary lifestyle. Part and parcel of this initiative was the relocation of sedentary Indians to live side by side with Chichimecs and teach them the ways of civilized life. This strategy spawned the relocation of nearly 1,000 Tlaxcalans to colonies scattered across the Chichimec frontier in 1591. The resettlement was the anchor that secured the peace that had

settled over the frontier in the preceding decade. However its significance for the indigenous migrants has not received adequate treatment. This section, therefore, will treat indigenous migrants' experiences not only in war but as forgers of peace as well.

CHAPTER 1. SILVER LININGS: COLONIALISM, MINING, AND INDIGENOUS MIGRATION  
TO NEW SPAIN'S NORTHERN FRONTIER, 1550-1600

In the primordial past the Mexica—one of many peoples later known as Aztecs<sup>53</sup>—emerged from beneath the earth at *chicomoztoc*, “place of seven caves,” and undertook an epic migration from a northerly realm known as Aztlan in search of a new homeland. The journey took many years and was defined by hardship and setbacks. Many died along the way, and the migrants had to abandon several of the places they settled because their patron god, Huitzilopochtli—who had mandated their odyssey—deemed the sites inadequate. Finally, from the shores of Lake Texcoco, in the Valley of Mexico, the Mexica (pronounced meh-SHE-cah) beheld an eagle sitting atop a cactus, devouring a snake. It was only then that they realized that this was the vision their god had foretold—this was the place where they were to establish their new home.

That vision, as retold by Mexica historians centuries later, captured the birth of the city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital, situated atop a marshy island in the western portion of the lake, and symbolized its people’s transformation from a wandering band into a mighty imperial power. Elite scribes recorded their epic

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<sup>53</sup> Mexica refers to a distinct group of Nahuatl-speaking natives who migrated to the Valley of Mexico from somewhere to the north several centuries before European contact. Aztec refers typically to members of the political configuration known as the Aztec empire or the Aztec Triple Alliance led by the three *altepeme* or ethnic states of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan. The term Aztec is used sparingly here, and it should be borne in mind that this appellation had little significance to indigenous people—or to Spaniards, for that matter—in the colonial period. Nahuas identified by their *altepetl*, just as Mixtecs identified by their *ñuu* and Yucatec Mayas by their *cah*. The Aztec empire was a loosely constructed political arrangement and membership had little impact on its constituents’ identities.



journey from Aztlan to Mexico-Tenochtitlan in beautiful painted books, and migration and struggle became written into the Aztecs' cosmos and fundamental to their very sense of themselves.<sup>54</sup>

The Mexica arrived in the Valley of Mexico sometime around AD 1250. By the fifteenth century they had transformed themselves from marginalized newcomers to the region's unequivocal overlords. In 1428 they joined forces with two other city-states to form the Triple Alliance and in so doing became the rulers of a mighty empire that stretched from the northern frontiers of Mesoamerican civilization south to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in southern Mexico.<sup>55</sup> With a firm, yet flexible style of rule—vanquished enemies who agreed to accept Aztec authority were permitted to keep their religion and even maintain elements of self rule, but those who refused were brutally killed and sacrificed—the Aztecs incorporated much of the central portion of Mexico into their empire. At their height, they lorded over and commanded tribute from millions of subjects.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> This peregrination is depicted in many colonial sources, including the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* and the *Codex Boturini*, a pictographic manuscript believed to have been created between 1530 and 1541 but which adheres to the pre-Columbian manuscript style. For secondary treatments of ancient Mexica and other Nahua migrations from Aztlan/Chicomoztoc to the Valley of Mexico, see Elizabeth Hill Boone, *The Aztec World* (Montreal: St. Remy Press, 1994), 29-43; Levin Rojo, *Return to Aztlan*, 108-32.

<sup>55</sup> For an overview of the Mexica's transformation from marginalized newcomer to imperial power, see Charles Gibson, *Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1964), 19-20. The dates of AD 1250 and 1428 are from Mann, *1491*, 129, 131.

<sup>56</sup> Informative overviews of the Aztecs include Frances F. Berdan, *The Aztecs of Central Mexico: An Imperial Society*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage, 2005); Michael Ernest Smith, *The Aztecs* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Richard F. Townsend, *The Aztecs* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009).

But their reign was short lived. In 1519 Hernando Cortés, a young Spanish upstart with visions of grandeur and pretensions to power, struck out on his own to conquer what he had heard was a rich mainland empire headed by a powerful ruler known as Moctezuma. Defying his superior, the governor of Cuba (who had authorized his captain to explore, but not to conquer), Cortés set out to topple this wealthy empire—a gamble that he hoped would pay such enormous dividends that it could only be met with reward. On his journey inland from the coast, Cortés shrewdly recruited many native allies, Indians bitter towards Moctezuma and hostile towards his militant and aggressive empire. Together with this native army, Cortés’s men—who never numbered more than 500—entered Tenochtitlan and eventually captured the Aztec emperor. But even with the imprisonment of their leader, seemingly a crushing blow, the Aztecs did not relent, and they coordinated to expel the Spanish and their allies from the city during the infamous Noche Triste. The Spaniards responded in turn, regrouping outside the capital city and subjecting it to a lengthy siege. Eventually, beset by smallpox and surrounded by an army of Spaniards and tens of thousands of indigenous allies, the defenders capitulated and the city fell in August of 1521, ending the Aztecs’ reign and inaugurating a new, colonial era.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Literature on the 1519-1521 conquest of Mexico by Hernando Cortés is vast. For some of the best scholarship, see Inga Clendinnen, “‘Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty’: Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico,” *Representations* 33 (Winter 1991): 65-100; Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003); Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin’s Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2006); Camilla Townsend, “Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico,” *American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (June 2003): 659-687.

When the Spaniards established themselves as the Valley's new rulers, they brought with them many pathogens lethal to Native Americans, who lacked immunities. Smallpox was especially deadly. The conquerors also brought with them from the Caribbean an institution known as *encomienda*, a system of labor control granting worthy conquistadors rights to Indians' labor as a reward for their services to the Spanish Crown.<sup>58</sup> In principle, the system was a benevolent one. On the surface, Spaniards were granted control over certain Indians' labor but were also responsible for their edification and salvation. (*Encomendar* means "to entrust," and under *encomienda* Indians would be 'entrusted' to individual Spaniards, for whom they would work, and in return the Indians would receive instruction in the Catholic faith.) Indians in *encomienda* were put to work providing tribute to the *encomenderos*, but many of these overseers abused their power and overworked their charges.<sup>59</sup> In fact the system has been called "the most openly exploitative of all modes of [Spanish] contact with Indians," and "a source of terror for native peoples."<sup>60</sup> This brutal and corrupt system was eventually phased out in favor of *repartimiento*. Although meant to alleviate some of the strain on indigenous communities by rotating labor requirement among different segments of the population, *repartimiento* was nevertheless an extractive system that disrupted indigenous labor regimes and destabilized native communities and families.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> On *encomienda*, see Gibson, *Aztecs under Spanish Rule*, 58-97.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 58-59.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>61</sup> On *repartimiento* generally, see ibid., 224-36. For its effects on communities and families, see Haskett, "Our Suffering with the Taxco Tribute."

The stress that labor drafts placed on indigenous communities was most severe when coinciding with virgin soil epidemics, which struck with alarming frequency in the second half of the sixteenth century. Epidemics of smallpox and other unknown diseases (which Nahuas referred to as *cocoliztli*, “sickness”) struck first during the siege of Tenochtitlan in the summer of 1521 and recurred frequently throughout the century—including particularly virulent plagues in 1545-1548 and 1577—leading to demographic collapse. Spanish labor demands were seldom adjusted for this population loss, meaning there were fewer native laborers to reach quotas that had been established based on higher population estimates. This placed tremendous stress on indigenous communities, which not only had to meet tribute obligations but their own subsistence requirements as well, all with fewer individuals and less time and energy to devote to planting and harvesting. Frequently this strain was exacerbated by drought and frost, which led to famines. With crucial labor being diverted away from indigenous communities and individuals succumbing to disease at unprecedented rates, the very fabric of indigenous society was being torn asunder.<sup>62</sup>

In response to these stressors, native people from central Mexico once again engaged in a series of migrations, just as their ancestors had in the distant past. They fled communities destroyed by disease and absconded with their children in order to shirk repartimiento duty. Some disappeared into the teeming multitudes of

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<sup>62</sup> For indigenous mistreatment under Spanish-imposed labor regimes, especially *encomienda*, see Gibson, *Aztecs under Spanish Rule*, 76-80; Silvio Zavala, *La encomienda indiana* (Madrid, 1935); Simpson, *Encomienda in New Spain*. On epidemics and demographic collapse, see Cook, *Born to Die*; Borah and Cook, *Essays in Population History*. For frost and drought, see Gibson, *Aztecs under Spanish Rule*, 315-16.

the burgeoning colonial cities. Many others fled to New Spain's northern frontier, where itinerant laborers found tribute and labor draft exemptions as well as wage-earning potential working in silver mines, factories, and refineries.<sup>63</sup>

Silver mined from New Spain and South America (in addition to the gold and other booty plundered from the defeated Aztecs, Tarascans, and Incas) enabled a Spanish golden age. The luminous metal flooded global markets and helped Spain to reach a level of global preeminence it would not relinquish until the eighteenth century. Native labor underwrote this success, and the hardship, exploitation, and deaths that went with mining work have been well documented. Yet our understanding of the extent of indigenous migrations precipitated by mining booms, and the circumstances and experiences of the migrants themselves, remains incomplete.<sup>64</sup>

This chapter traces the initial phases of the diaspora of natives from Mexico into the Greater Southwest, a process that began with the voluntary migration of

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<sup>63</sup> On the avoidance of tribute obligations and draft labor through migration, see Susan M. Deeds, "Rural Work in Nueva Vizcaya: Forms of Labor Coercion on the Periphery," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 69, no. 3 (August 1989), 438; Robert Haskett, "'Our Suffering with the Taxco Tribute:' Involuntary Mine Labor and Indigenous Society in Central New Spain" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 71, no. 3 (Aug. 1991), 459; Dana Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians in a Silver City: Zacatecas, Mexico, 1546-1810* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2016), 37-38.

<sup>64</sup> For the experiences of indigenous peoples involved in mining operations in New Spain and South America, see P. J. Bakewell, *Miners of the Red Mountain: Indian Labor in Potosí, 1545-1650* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1984); Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 124-28; Velasco Murillo, "Laboring above Ground;" Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples*. Indigenous migration has received increased attention of late. Nevertheless much remains to be learned in terms of the number of people involved, their specific movements, and especially their particular motivations and experiences. See Corbeil, "Identities in Motion;" Wightman, *Indigenous Migration and Social Change*; Swann, "Migration, Mobility, and the Mining Towns;" Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians*; Velasco Murillo, "Creation of Indigenous Leadership."

indigenous laborers to the silver mines of northern New Spain beginning in the mid sixteenth century. It begins with an overview of silver mining in early New Spain, with emphasis on the northern frontier, where important strikes led to a permanent presence of indigenous laborers. Next it assesses the conditions within indigenous communities that informed individuals' decisions to relocate, highlighting the roles of epidemic disease as well as exploitation and mistreatment at the hands of Spaniards. The economic draw of the frontier is also an important consideration when mapping the contours of the northern diaspora, and so particular attention will be paid to the wage-earning potential of silver mining and its ancillary industries, in which Indian laborers predominated. Ultimately this chapter will show how deteriorating conditions in the center conjoined with new opportunities on the frontier to precipitate mass indigenous migration. In the next chapter, we will explore how natives attempting to escape the clutches of colonialism through migration unwittingly precipitated a frontier war and, as with colonialism itself, became the primary recipients of its violence.

### **Silver Mining in Early New Spain**

For approximately the first two decades of the colony's existence, New Spain's most substantial and consistent revenue stream came in the form of plunder wrested from the defeated Aztec Empire and the Tarascan state to its west. (Upon assay, Spaniards would be miffed to discover that their booty consisted primarily of copper-gold and copper-silver alloys, which they disparaged as *oro de baja ley* and

*plata baja*).<sup>65</sup> Thereafter, however, the mining of precious metals using Indian labor became the colony's *raison d'être*. By the 1540s, several substantial mines (Zumpango, Sultepec, Taxco, Zacualpa, and Temascaltepec) were discovered and worked within the former territory of the Tarascan and Aztec states using Indians as slave labor.<sup>66</sup> This practice was outlawed with the New Laws of 1542<sup>67</sup> but continued until the mid-1550s, after which point the use of Indian slaves in central Mexican mines ceased virtually entirely.<sup>68</sup> Quota-based tribute labor imposed via *encomienda* became prominent from the 1540s to the early 1550s, but eventually, due to demographic collapse and increased competition over access to Indian labor, this system faded in favor of *repartimiento*.<sup>69</sup> About mid-century, the central Mexican mines were overshadowed by the discovery of numerous productive strikes in the north. As a consequence, the focus of colonial mining was redirected, with significant consequences for central and western Mexico's indigenous peoples.

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<sup>65</sup> Robert C. West, "Aboriginal Metallurgy and Metalworking in Spanish America: A Brief Overview" in *In Quest of Mineral Wealth: Aboriginal and Colonial Mining and Metallurgy in Spanish America*, ed. Alan K. Craig and Robert C. West (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1994), 10.

<sup>66</sup> West, "Early Silver Mining," 122-23.

<sup>67</sup> The New Laws of 1542 were implemented partially in response to the reform efforts of individuals like the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas, a tireless advocate for Native Americans who abhorred their treatment under Spanish colonialism. The statutes unilaterally prohibited Indian slavery, but the system endured across the empire in various guises. See Andrés Reséndez, "An Early Abolitionist Crusade," *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (Jan. 2017): 20.

<sup>68</sup> Haskett, "Our Suffering," 453.

<sup>69</sup> For *encomienda* and *repartimiento* in New Spain, see Gibson, *Aztecs under Spanish Rule*, chap. 4.

## Mining Shifts North

“The movement of people to the mining centers of northern Mexico...was neither controlled nor was it monitored.”<sup>70</sup>

- Michael M. Swann

The 1546 discovery of silver at Zacatecas, located 380 miles northwest of Mexico City, and at multiple locations along the northwestern frontier after 1562, put indigenous populations on the move. The mines of central New Spain continued to draw a steady supply of indigenous laborers from various regions of Mexico.<sup>71</sup> The northern mines, however, being more numerous and in some cases more productive, contributed more to indigenous population movement than perhaps any other source. Largely this was the result of a rash of silver strikes beginning in the middle decades of the sixteenth century and lasting into the seventeenth. Zacatecas was the largest and most important, but numerous smaller strikes were made in the ensuing quarter century.<sup>72</sup> Except for Zacatecas, which lay within the territory of Nueva Galicia, all belonged to the new political district of Nueva Vizcaya, carved out from the former's marchlands in the sixteenth century by the Basque Francisco de

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<sup>70</sup> Swann, “Migration, Mobility, and the Mining Towns,” 145.

<sup>71</sup> Haskett, “Our Suffering,” 450, 459-60.

<sup>72</sup> San Martín (ca. 1555), Chalchihuites (1556), Sombrerete (ca. 1558), Avino (ca. 1558), Fresnillo (ca. 1556), Indé (1567), Guanaceví (pre-1600), Mazapil (1568), Nieves (1574), Santa Bárbara (1567) and Charcas (1564) had all been established by century's end. See Robert C. West, *The Mining Community in Northern New Spain: The Parral Mining District* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1949), 6, 10; Peter Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982); P. J. Bakewell, “Zacatecas: An Economic and Social Outline of a Silver Mining District, 1547-1700” in *Provinces of Early Mexico: Variants of Spanish American Regional Evolution*, ed. James Lockhart and Ida Altman (Los Angeles: Univ. of California, Los Angeles, 1976), 199.



Ibarra and other enterprising explorer-miners.<sup>73</sup> Unlike Taxco, which enjoyed a privileged position in the core region and received a steady supply of encomienda and then repartimiento labor from nearby places like Cuernavaca, the northern mining region lay beyond the zone settled by large populations of sedentary indigenous farmers.<sup>74</sup> As a consequence, systems of coerced indigenous labor were impractical. To fill the labor demand, throngs of voluntary, free indigenous laborers, mostly from the Nahuatl-speaking regions of the Central Valley and from Michoacán to its west, flocked to the northern districts in search of opportunity.<sup>75</sup>

#### A Permanent Indigenous Presence in the North

The scale of migration waxed and waned over time and in accordance with the volatility of the mining economy. Some mines, such as Zacatecas and Parral (1631), were consistent producers over centuries. Others were merely ephemeral encampments that attracted a few transient miners and laborers and soon petered out.<sup>76</sup> As a consequence, indigenous laborers were constantly relocating. They departed when mines dried up or were destroyed by hostile Indians and moved to

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<sup>73</sup> J. Lloyd Meacham, *Francisco de Ibarra and Nueva Vizcaya* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968 [1927]).

<sup>74</sup> Haskett, "Our Suffering."

<sup>75</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*.

<sup>76</sup> West suggests that the mines of San Juan, established shortly after the *entrada* of Francisco de Ibarra (initiated in 1562), dried up or were destroyed by Chichimecs shortly after their founding. Fledgling Avino was nearly wiped out by Chichimecs in 1562, but Captain Pedro de Ahumada Samano and his legion of indigenous soldiers arrived in time to forestall its destruction. West, *Mining Community in Northern New Spain*, 10. San Lucas was another short-lived mining camp, and there were probably others that have disappeared from the historical record. See Gerhard, *North Frontier*, 235.

new strikes or camps that were enjoying productive upswings.<sup>77</sup> Nonetheless, the sheer size of some of the more productive veins (like at Zacatecas), and the frequency with which new ones were discovered, engendered a permanent presence of indigenous laborers in northern mines. In 1597 there were 415 indigenous laborers at Guanajuato, a mining city located at the western edge of a broad, fertile valley northwest of Mexico City, but only twenty-nine Spaniards (and forty-two African slaves). Zacatecas counted 1,014 indigenous laborers, 130 slaves, and thirty-four Spaniards.<sup>78</sup> Zacatecas required such a steady and significant supply of labor that indigenous *barrios* (Spanish for neighborhood, but meaning indigenous communities specifically) formed outside the city.<sup>79</sup> By 1609, two indigenous *pueblos*—autonomous indigenous communities with their own *cabildos*—had formed.<sup>80</sup> Dana Velasco Murillo has pointed out how, in Zacatecas, “native people consistently outnumbered the Spanish population,” and this was still true in 1608, when a report estimated there to be 1,500 Spaniards and 3,000 Indians living in the city.<sup>81</sup> Peter Bakewell has suggested that the Indian population in the entire Zacatecas mining district (including that city and the smaller mining towns of San Martín, Chalchihuites, Avino, Sombrerete, Fresnillo, Mazapil, Nieves, and Charcas) may have reached 5,000 at some point during the seventeenth century. An even

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<sup>77</sup> Swann, “Migration, Mobility, and the Mining Towns,” 145.

<sup>78</sup> Tutino, *Making a New World*, 95.

<sup>79</sup> Zacatecas had been elevated to the status of *ciudad* (city) by 1586.

<sup>80</sup> Dana Velasco Murillo, “Laboring above Ground,” 5-6.

<sup>81</sup> Dana Velasco Murillo, “Urban Indians in a Silver City: Zacatecas, Mexico, 1546-1806” PhD Diss., Univ. of California, Los Angeles, 2009, 3; Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 58.

higher figure is not unreasonable, however, considering the transience of the labor force and the numerous workers engaged in cultivation, transport, and trade.<sup>82</sup>

### **The Contours of Diaspora: Identities and Motivations**

The indigenous workers who streamed into the northern mines and the communities that sprang up in support of them beginning in the 1550s and 1560s were a heterogeneous lot, but there are some commonalities. Nearly all came from the south and west—mostly from regions formerly belonging to the Aztec and Tarascan states. These were sedentary, agricultural peoples only a generation removed from the conquests of their respective territories by the Spanish. Purépechas (also known as Tarascans) came from Michoacán and Otomís from Xilotepec and Querétaro.<sup>83</sup> Mexicas, Tlaxcalans, Cholulans, Huexotzincas, and Texcocans poured in from the Nahuatl-speaking regions.<sup>84</sup> It was thus an ethnically diverse population representing a large geographical area. As a consequence, it is difficult to say with certainty what drew particular individuals or groups of people to the northern mines. Nevertheless some patterns emerge.

Beginning in the 1560s, entire indigenous communities contracted with the Spanish colonial government to settle on the frontier in exchange for special privileges, and these large-scale movements generated considerable indigenous

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<sup>82</sup> Bakewell, "An Economic and Social Outline," 214.

<sup>83</sup> Tutino, *Making a New World*, 75-76.

<sup>84</sup> Velasco Murillo, "Urban Indians in a Silver City," 58.

commentary.<sup>85</sup> This phase of the diaspora and its native sources will be addressed in the ensuing chapters. However, for the earlier period covered here, little indigenous testimony survives that bears directly on individuals' or family groups' decisions to relocate (though native sources speak to other themes, such as frontier violence and warfare, the subject of chapter two). Nonetheless, it is possible to reconstruct the migrants' social milieus in an attempt to delineate various push and pull factors. Taken as an aggregate, these establish the circumstances under which we know Indians did migrate. From this context we can deduce the economic and social conditions that conjoined to produce circumstances conducive to outmigration and thus trace the contours of diaspora.

For one, the onerous demands of *repartimiento* strained indigenous communities and encouraged outmigration. As Robert Haskett has observed, some *repartimiento* laborers fled their homes in the Cuernavaca region of central New Spain in order to evade tribute obligations and seek opportunities elsewhere.<sup>86</sup> This phenomenon was not restricted to the Cuernavaca region, as one frustrated Spaniard commented in 1589 that in order to avoid *repartimiento* labor, central

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<sup>85</sup> For instance, indigenous chroniclers recorded how over 1,000 Tlaxcalans left to establish colonies on the frontier in 1591, and one of the largest collections of Nahuatl wills, over 290, comes from one of those colonies, San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala. See, for example, Juan Buenaventura Zapata y Mendoza, *Historia cronológica de la Noble Ciudad de Tlaxcala*, ed. and trans. Luis Reyes García y Andrea Martínez Baracs (Tlaxcala, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala and Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1995); Domingo San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *Codex Chimalpahin*. Vol. 3, *Annals of His Time*, ed. and trans. James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doris Namala (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 37.

<sup>86</sup> Haskett, "Our Suffering," 459.

Mexico's Indians "become vagabonds in other parts."<sup>87</sup> When increased labor quotas combined with a rapid and catastrophic decline in the Indian population (as occurred between the mid-sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries), the effect on native communities was particularly profound.<sup>88</sup> A poignant document from Huexotzingo, near modern Puebla in central Mexico, illustrates the fallout that resulted from demographic collapse coupled with rising labor demand. Tributaries there were required through *repartimiento* to supply twenty loads of hay for the citizens of the burgeoning Spanish city of Puebla, but they were unable to provide them, on account of "the natives being sick with the *cocolistle* that is going around among them." What is more, the work reportedly required in excess of 400 laborers, and "in order to complete the repartimiento," it explains, "young boys and sick men go, many of whom come to die..." As in native communities throughout New Spain, high mortality among males (due to overwork and disease) deprived Huejotzinco of vital agricultural labor needed for subsistence. When the men (and increasingly, boys) of Huejotzinco were called upon to perform repartimiento, essential agricultural labor was diverted and critical agricultural cycles interrupted. Those taken away to perform draft labor, the petition explained, "have not finished sowing their fields, and so they [the harvests] are lost."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> "A las justicias de los pueblos a donde se hubieren ido los naturales de Ocuila, por no acudir al servicio personal, para que los obliguen a pagar tributo," 1589, CSWR, MSS 867, box 4, folder 133, p. 1 (TS of AGN, Ramo de Indios, vol. 4, expediente 60, folio 17v).

<sup>88</sup> For population decline and increases in agricultural *repartimiento* quota percentages, see Gibson, *Aztecs under Spanish Rule*, 141, 231-2.

<sup>89</sup> "Para que el gouernador de la ciudad de tlaxcala ynforme sobre el çacate que la ciudad de gue[jot]xingo [da] a la ciudad de los angeles," 29 Nov. 1589, CSWR MSS 867, box 4, folder 141, p. 1 (TS of AGN, Indios, vol. 4, exp. 122). Clearly, Indian

As indigenous populations flat lined, Spanish numbers were on the rise, placing additional stress on native communities and their land and resources. This was evident in 1592, in Tlaxcala, when it was observed that “many Spaniards and other persons who live in the province work the natives’ lands, without having bought nor having any right to them...” Encroaching Spaniards also attempted to force the sale of Tlaxcalan lands, a pattern that was common elsewhere as well.<sup>90</sup>

The specter of being sentenced or beguiled into toiling in the *obrajes*, workshops specializing in the production of woolen cloth, placed an additional burden on native communities.<sup>91</sup> Technically, obrajes were only to employ convicts condemned by senior judges, but unscrupulous owners surreptitiously negotiated contracts with individual Indians. Both systems were rife with abuse and exploitation, and labor demand conspired with jurists’ venality to ensure a steady

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communities had much to gain from inflating death tolls due to disease and exaggerating claims of hardship and suffering under repartimiento. Nevertheless, the petitioners’ claims are representative of trends known to be occurring throughout central Mexico at the time. Even if specific figures must be taken with a grain of salt, they nonetheless reflect a broader pattern of demographic collapse, economic exploitation, and social strain in Indian communities during the second half of the sixteenth century.

<sup>90</sup> “Al gobernador de Tlaxcala, a fin de que ordene que ninguna persona labre las tierras de los naturales de Tlaxcala...,” 15 Sept. 1592, AGN, Indios, vol. 6, pt. 2, exp. 750, f. 177v.

<sup>91</sup> Don Juan Buenaventura Zapata y Mendoza, the seventeenth-century Tlaxcalan annalist, demonstrates that the obraje was essentially an extension of the Spanish colonial penal system, noting an occasion upon which high-ranking officials (*tlatoque*) from Tlaxcala were rounded up and thrown into one of these workshops: “The judge Juan de Morcilia...took the *tlatoque* prisoner; they threw the governor and the *alcalde mayor*, Tomás, in an obraje.” Luis Reyes García and Andrea Martínez Baracs, ed. and trans., *Historia cronológica de la Noble Ciudad de Tlaxcala. Transcripción paleográfica, traducción, presentación y notas*. (Tlaxcala, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala and Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1995), 216-17. The editors translate the Nahuatl into Spanish; the English translation here is my own.

supply of Indian workers in these colonial-era sweatshops, despite continuous formal and public outcry against them. The labor was notoriously grueling, workers were often locked inside and forbidden to leave, and conditions were so abject that contemporaries considered those working inside to be slaves in all but name.<sup>92</sup> Given its burdensome labor demands, harsh conditions, and the corruptibility of the system regulating it, the obraje represented yet another symbol of the deterioration of social life in the Indian towns during a period that saw significant migration to the frontier region.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, infrastructure developed and commercial activities expanded in New Spain, creating a highly mobile society. This increased traffic placed certain Indian towns in a position to profit from the many *pasajeros*, or travelers, passing through, but it also exposed them to harassment, exploitation, and abuse. On the one hand, native towns situated near highways benefited from the flow of people and goods, especially by obtaining licenses to operate inns and slaughterhouses provisioning wayfarers with shelter, meat, and grain. On the other hand, travelers often overstayed their welcome (prompting a viceregal ban on sojourns exceeding three days), allowed their livestock to graze in natives' *milli*, or crop fields, and caused other vexations.<sup>93</sup> Thousands of head of livestock could pass through a well-traveled town in a single day and as many as a

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<sup>92</sup> Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1964), 243-46. James Lockhart (*The Nahuas*, p. 198) suggests that the Spanish *obraje* was a leading factor in the decline of indigenous weaving—a staple of the prehispanic indigenous household economy—providing yet further evidence of the cultural and economic decay that Spanish colonialism wrought among New Spain's indigenous peoples.

<sup>93</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 26-28.

hundred mule trains.<sup>94</sup> In 1580, for instance, natives from Atitalaquia, Tlaxcala, complained about the number of “travelers and livestock” continually passing through their territory. They decried the “many annoyances and mistreatment” they suffered on account of the travelers “taking their goods and other things forcibly and against their will at lower prices and without payment.” They also fulminated against the travelers’ habit of “entering in their homes, forcing them out and stealing,” which caused them particular offense according to the complaint.<sup>95</sup>

Heavily trafficked Indian towns often suffered in another way, one that reflected the fledgling nature of New Spain’s sixteenth-century transport system and its reliance on Indian labor. Towns were frequently called upon to furnish *tlamemes*, or human burden-bearers, leading to complaints of abuse and exploitation at the hands of travelers. The *tlameme* (seen frequently in Spanish documents as *tameme*, from the Nahuatl singular *tlamamah*, “someone who bears a load; porter”) predated the Spanish conquest.<sup>96</sup> In a world without wheeled vehicles or draft animals, they were the primary means of transporting goods and tribute across a sprawling empire. Under Spanish rule, the development of the highway system and the proliferation of beasts of burden would eventually make the *tlameme* largely

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<sup>94</sup> Gibson, *Aztecs under Spanish Rule*, 361.

<sup>95</sup> CSWR, MSS 867, box 2, folder 32 (PS of AGN, General de Parte, vol. 2, no. 944): *los pasajeros e ganados Españoles mestizos negros mulatos que ocurren al dicho pueblo e su comarca les hazen muchas molestias y malos tratamientos tamandoles los bastimentos y otras cosas que tienen forciblemente e contra su voluntad, a menos precio y a otros sing [sic] paga y entrandoles en sus casas aselos sacar y tomar de que reciben agravio...*

<sup>96</sup> Francis Karttunen, *An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 280.



obsolete.<sup>97</sup> However in the sixteenth century they were ubiquitous, and both Spaniards and other Indians frequently hired them as cheaper alternatives to the mule train or wagon. From an early point, efforts were made to curb Spaniards' exploitation of *tlamemes*, but like many ordinances and reforms restricting Spaniards' access to Indian labor, these often fell on deaf ears.<sup>98</sup> Reports of Indian towns being forced to provide *tlamemes* to travelers were still reaching the Mexican *Audiencia*, or high court, in the late sixteenth century. In 1590, for instance, native residents of San Juan Teotihuacán—situated in the shadow of the still-standing Pyramid of the Sun—informed the viceroy that their pueblo was “so frequently traveled through” (*tan pasajero*) they were “often compelled to send Indian bearers to many places”—a demand that caused them “much annoyance”.<sup>99</sup>

Central Mexican indigenous communities in the second half of the sixteenth century were beset by disease, subjected to intensifying demands on their labor, and vulnerable to the various impositions and demands of a Spanish population that was rising as fast as their own was falling. In light of these circumstances, the decisions of those who chose to try their lot elsewhere become more intelligible.

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<sup>97</sup> Ross Hassig, “One Hundred Years of Servitude: *Tlamemes* in Early New Spain” in *Supplement to The Handbook of Middle American Indians*, Vol. 4, *Ethnohistory*, ed. Victoria Reifler Bricker and Ronald Spores (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1986): 134-146.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> “A pedimiento de los de san Ju<sup>o</sup> teutiguacan,” AGN, Indios, vol. 3, exp. 112, ff. 26v-27r: *los yndios principales y naturales de ese dho Pu<sup>o</sup>. me hiço rrelacion que por ser el dho su Pu<sup>o</sup>. tan pasajero son muy de hordenario compelidos a dar yndios tamemes para muchas partes en lo qual rreciuen mucha // bexacion*. For Indian villages along commercial routes being compelled to provide *tlamemes*, see Hassig, “*Tlamemes* in Early New Spain,” 144.

### Silver Linings: Wage Labor and Indigenous Migration

Conditions for Central Mexico's indigenous peoples were certainly declining during this period, but even disease epidemics, increasing Spanish demand on native labor, and intensifying incidences of Indian exploitation and abuse cannot account entirely for the migration. One must also consider that the sixteenth-century frontier offered a number of economic opportunities that central Mexico could not match.

Preeminent among them was the ability to earn a wage working in mining or in one of its many associated industries, all of which depended heavily, if not primarily, on Indian labor. The development of free wage labor was peculiar to the north, and this is particularly anomalous when viewed in light of central Mexico's reliance on forced labor regimes like *repartimiento*. But the situation in the northern mining district was different than in the core region. It lay beyond the zone of settled agricultural Indians and in the lands of nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples who, on account of their mobility and transience, made poor candidates for *repartimiento*.<sup>100</sup> That system was therefore virtually unknown, though occasionally central Mexican Indians laboring in northern mines fell victim to other forms of coercion, such as debt peonage. (Indian slavery, more prominent in the sixteenth than in the seventeenth century, was reserved primarily for nomadic Indians captured in war.)<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> For free wage labor in the northern mining district, see Swann, "Migration, Mobility, and the Mining Towns," 149; Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 124-25; Velasco Murillo, "Laboring above Ground," 5; West, *Mining Community in Northern New Spain*, 48.

<sup>101</sup> West, *Mining Community in Northern New Spain*, 51, 48; Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 126, 122.

The free labor system appears to have been contractual, whereby an Indian would perform an agreed-upon amount of labor (known as the *tequío* in Spanish, but derived from the Nahuatl *tequitl*, “labor,” “quota”) in exchange for payment in cash or kind. The latter consisted of food, housing, and, most importantly as far as the worker was concerned, a satchel of ore known as *pepena* (also from Nahuatl: *pehpena*, “pick,” “gather,” “select”), which he could smelt down or sell as a supplement to his wages.<sup>102</sup> This was clearly a highly desirable fringe benefit, and in conjunction with cash payments, must have been powerful incentive for would-be migrants.

If natives laboring below ground were entitled to a supplement of ore via the *pepena*, particularly fortunate (and enterprising) native individuals were granted the rights to entire mines. In 1593 the viceroy of New Spain, Luis de Velasco, responded to a request that he had received from Tlaxcalan Indians settled at the frontier colony of Chalchihuites, and who were interested in registering and working mines in the area. (The settlement’s name, from the Nahuatl *chalchihuitl* meaning “precious green stone; turquoise,” may indicate the types of minerals mined in the region.)<sup>103</sup> Velasco’s magnanimous reply granted to the petitioners the right “to discover, take possession of, and register mines at any time according to and in the manner in which Spaniards can.”<sup>104</sup> What is more, he extended the

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<sup>102</sup> Bakewell, *Zacatecas*, 124-25; Karttunen, *Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl*, 233, 190.

<sup>103</sup> Karttunen, *Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl*, 45.

<sup>104</sup> “Se concede permiso a los indios tlaxcaltecas, que se poblaren en las provincias chichimecas, para descubrir, tomar, y registrar minas beneficiándolas y guardando la ordenanza,” 19 May 1593, AGN, Indios, vol. 6, pt. 1, exp. 522, ff. 139r-140v: doy permiso a los yndios tlaxcaltecos que estuviesen poblados o se poblaren

prerogative to include any Tlaxcalans who should settle “in the said Chichimec provinces” in the future, providing an incentive to those reluctant to move north.<sup>105</sup> Though the Tlaxcalans were somewhat exceptional—they received preferential treatment for their indispensable aid to Cortés in defeating the Aztecs and their assistance in pacifying the northern Chichimecs—they were not the only Indians to have owned stakes in mines. As Velasco Murillo has discovered, an indigenous couple living in Zacatecas owned, along with two Spaniards, a silver mine outside the city known as Los Remedios. As to whether this kind of arrangements was common in Zacatecas one can only speculate. Tragically, what must have been a large corpus of Nahuatl documents pertaining to that city and its indigenous inhabitants has been lost or destroyed.<sup>106</sup> Nonetheless, opportunities to earn a wage in mining, to smelt one’s own supply of silver, and possibly even to own a mine clearly functioned as powerful incentives for indigenous populations already weary of Spanish oppression in the center.

### **Native Labor and Mining’s Ancillary Industries**

The explosion in mining activity in the north during the second half of the sixteenth century triggered the development of several ancillary industries that drew

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en las dichas provincias de chichimecas para que puedan en ellas descubrir tomar y registrar en qualquiera tiempo minas y beneficiarlas segun y de la manera que los españoles las pueden...

<sup>105</sup> It is ambiguous whether Velasco’s order pertained only to those settled at Chalchihuites or extended to all Tlaxcalans on the frontier, but the language hints at the latter.

<sup>106</sup> Velasco Murillo, “Laboring above Ground,” 11-12. For the disappearance of what must have once been a voluminous Nahuatl documentary corpus generated in colonial-era Zacatecas, see *ibid.*, 8, and note 12.

indigenous laborers in large numbers and further contributed to northward migration and settlement of the frontier. The logistical demands of the mining economy led to the establishment of agricultural and demographic hinterlands that provided meat, grain, raw materials, and labor to northern mines.<sup>107</sup> In addition to labor, there was a conspicuous need for grain. Since Spaniards were primarily occupied in mining (being *mineros*, meaning not mine laborers but rather owners of an ore refinery), and since many mining communities were situated in arid, agriculturally unproductive regions, grain had to be imported—often from afar. As of 1635, eighty percent of Zacatecas’s wheat, for instance, came from Querétaro, located nearly 200 miles to the southeast in a richly fertile basin known as the Bajío.<sup>108</sup> Likewise, productive agricultural regions in Michoacán became suppliers of grain to northern mines.<sup>109</sup> By 1550, these had been linked to the Camino Real, or royal highway, allowing grain to reach Zacatecas and other mining regions in the north. Zacatecas also imported grain, though in smaller quantities, from nearby areas such as Jerez and from more northerly districts like Saltillo, the Súcil valley, and Poanas. Likewise, Sombrerete, a mining community at the extreme northwest of the frontier, also imported grain from Súcil and Poanas.<sup>110</sup>

Natives originally from central and western Mexico were often involved in cultivating, harvesting, processing, and transporting this grain. In the agricultural

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<sup>107</sup> Swann, “Migration, Mobility, and the Mining Towns” 144-45.

<sup>108</sup> Tutino, *Making a New World*, 94-95. Technically, Querétaro did not have its beginnings as an agricultural hinterland serving Zacatecas, though it would reach its sixteenth-century productive and commercial zenith in this capacity. It was first founded by agricultural Otomí Indians and a few Franciscans beginning in the 1540s and had become a republic by 1550.

<sup>109</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 18-19.

<sup>110</sup> Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 54-60.

basin of the Bajío, Otomís and other Indians from central Mexico were engaged in cultivation, especially around Querétaro.<sup>111</sup> By the turn of the seventeenth century, Querétaro had developed a sophisticated economy employing a majority, mostly voluntary, Indian workforce in several trades, including cultivation, transportation, and trade—all focused around and stimulated by the mining economy.<sup>112</sup> The gathering and transport of salt, an essential element in ore refining, was also an important subsidiary industry employing indigenous labor.<sup>113</sup> The same was true of charcoal, that ancient combustible that provided the high degree of heat necessary for refining ore. The *carbonero*, or charcoal maker, was largely responsible for the deforestation that depleted wood supplies around northern mines, particularly Zacatecas, and consequently strained local ecology and indigenous populations.<sup>114</sup> He also readily employed native labor in his *hacienda de carbón*, or charcoal factory, which became a fixture in all northern mines and represented another wage-earning opportunity for the growing transient Indian workforce that the mining economy and its ancillary industries employed on the frontier. According to Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert and David Schechter, two indigenous parishes in the valley of San Luis Potosí (Tlaxcalan-dominated Mexquitic, and San Miguel, where Tarascans predominated) were dedicated entirely to the manufacture of charcoal, with

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 60-61.

<sup>112</sup> Tutino, *Making a New World*, 108-12.

<sup>113</sup> West, *Mining Community in Northern New Spain*, 36-38. This industry may have given rise to the Spanish name for the *Salineros* Indians.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 39, 43.

residents appearing in documents as *yndios carboneros*, “Indian charcoal-makers.”<sup>115</sup>

### The Transport Industry

In addition to considerable amounts of labor and food, the northern mines required a continuous stream—no, torrent—of supplies: equipment and tools, firewood and timber, quicksilver and lead. Also, refined silver had to make its way safely to the stamping mills for verification of payment of the *quinto*, or royal fifth, and on to the coast for shipment to Spain. This called into being a complex system of overland transport that, while essentially relegating the *tlameme* to the margins, opened the door for a new class of indigenous laborer—the professional, wage-earning mule-team driver (*arriero*) and carter (*carretero*).<sup>116</sup> With societies rent apart by plague and beset by the heavy-handed Spaniard, with communities in disarray, the transport industry beckoned to the natives of central Mexico.

The first major components of the transportation network that would integrate the northern mines, their supportive hinterlands, and the capital and port cities into a coherent economic system were the highways, and indigenous labor was their linchpin. The strike at Zacatecas was so significant that, within only about a decade, new roads had been constructed connecting productive agricultural regions (such as those in Michoacán and around Querétaro) to the northern silver

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<sup>115</sup> Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert and David Schecter, “The Environmental Dynamics of a Colonial Fuel-Rush: Silver Mining and Deforestation in New Spain, 1522-1810,” *Environmental History* 15, no. 1 (Jan. 2010): 109.

<sup>116</sup> For the marginalization of the *tlameme* and its eventual replacement by other forms of transport, see Hassig, “Tlamemes in Early New Spain.”

oases, and rudimentary ones had been improved.<sup>117</sup> Much of this was done using Indian labor, at least some of it compensated.<sup>118</sup>

The next stage drew on Iberian antecedents but involved innovations that were specific to New Spain and its particular geography, demography, and newfound economic arrangement. These were the increased reliance on the mule train (*recua*) and its driver and the shift from the lighter two-wheeled Spanish cart (*carreta*) to a heavier, reinforced, four-wheeled version known as the *carro*—not entirely unlike the covered wagons of the nineteenth-century American West. The long distances between the mines, their sources of supplies, and Veracruz rendered *tlameme* labor inadequate and impractical (though there are reports of *tlamemes* being used in Zacatecas during the initial decade following the bonanza).<sup>119</sup> The mule train was capable of hauling essentials such as grain and some heavier items, but the *carro* was more effective at transporting cumbersome and ponderous cargo like mining machinery, lead, and refined silver (it could haul up to two tons).<sup>120</sup> It was also more sturdily constructed and therefore provided better protection against Indian raids, a ubiquitous problem on the northern frontier. It was typically pulled by a team of mules rather than oxen, owing to the former's swiftness and on account

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<sup>117</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 17-22.

<sup>118</sup> Traditionally, road construction and maintenance was performed via *repartimiento*. At least some of the labor for the northern roads, however, appears to have been compensated. Powell, *Soldier, Indians, and Silver*, 21. Cf. Gibson, *Aztecs under Spanish Rule*, 387.

<sup>119</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 24.

<sup>120</sup> Max L. Moorhead, *New Mexico's Royal Road: Trade and Travel on the Chihuahua Trail* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 33.



of the dangers involved in traversing the isolated stretches of highway through hostile Indian country between northern mines like Zacatecas and central Mexico.<sup>121</sup>

Ownership of a freighting line, particularly one employing the sturdier *carros* that dominated the northern routes, required considerable capital investment and seems to have been restricted to Spaniards.<sup>122</sup> The workaday operations of the transport industry, however, were dominated by Indian and *mestizo* (individuals of mixed native and European descent) wage laborers.<sup>123</sup> Given the circumstances in central Mexico during the second half of the sixteenth century, discussed above, the lure of this type of work must have been strong. This was so because freighting provided the opportunity to escape, or at least temporarily avoid, tribute and labor obligations in the core while simultaneously earning cash income. It also provided an avenue to wealth over and above the compensation given for the labor of transporting goods, as evidence suggests that many *arrieros* and *carreteros* moonlighted as merchants in the places they visited. After all, the peripatetic nature of the work lent itself naturally to this sort of activity.<sup>124</sup>

Indians became involved in transporting goods between the central regions and the frontier beginning soon after the Zacatecas strike in 1546 and by the end of

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<sup>121</sup> David R. Ringrose, "Carting in the Hispanic World: An Example of Divergent Development" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 50, no. 1 (Feb. 1970): 38; Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 21-22; Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 24-6; West, *Mining Community in Northern New Spain*, 85-87.

<sup>122</sup> Ringrose, "Carting in the Hispanic World," 39.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*; *ibid.*, 39n42; Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 24-25; Hassig, "Tlamehes in Early New Spain," 144, describes Indians as engaged in transportation generally, and working as *arrieros* specifically; Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 21, notes that the *arriero* was frequently Indian or *mestizo*.

<sup>124</sup> Velasco Murillo, "Urban Indians in a Silver City," 58. Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 21.

the century were involved in distributing goods and people throughout northern New Spain. Indian-led mule trains, for instance, transported grain from Michoacán and Guadalajara to Zacatecas, and New Spain's first viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza, ordered improvements made to the roads to facilitate this commerce (the increased productivity that would result from providing miners with steady access to the agricultural bounty of Michoacán was not lost on him).<sup>125</sup> In fact, Native Americans had become so ubiquitous in the frontier transport industry that, after the colony of Nuevo México was founded in 1598, they began to serve in the caravans serving that distant outpost's missions and mines. This integral labor served to distribute goods and facilitate travel—Indian and Spanish—throughout New Spain. However, like other economic pursuits of the frontier, this form of labor came with its own hazards.

Most of the records providing details of labor performed by Indians in the caravans and its remuneration come from the early seventeenth century, not the sixteenth. However, by this time caravan routes and the contracts for Indian laborers serving on them had become so standardized that the documents clearly reflect patterns developed earlier. Moreover, caravans traveling to New Mexico were the same that served Zacatecas in the sixteenth-century, and they continued to do so in the seventeenth, that city being an important stopping point on the Camino Real before continuing north. In fact, caravans going to New Mexico in the seventeenth century always traveled through Zacatecas and were usually detained

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<sup>125</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 24.

there for considerable periods of time while offloading mining and other supplies.<sup>126</sup> Thus, the seventeenth-century caravans to New Mexico plied a well-established route, and did so according to logistical precedents governing labor and compensation established much earlier.<sup>127</sup> Therefore, the nature of Indian labor in the caravan fleets as reflected in seventeenth-century records provide a reasonably accurate portrait of sixteenth-century labor conditions.

For Indian laborers willing to abandon their homes and loved ones for considerable lengths of time and chance being waylaid by hostile Chichimecs along the roads, working the caravans could offer substantial benefits. Indian laborers often received an advance on their salary, which was quite high compared to other paid work (like extracting ore or manufacturing charcoal) and undoubtedly preferable to performing uncompensated tribute or draft labor for a Spanish overseer back home. Each of the fifty-one Indians (thirty-five males and sixteen females) who went to New Mexico “serving in the *carros* of his majesty” in 1630, for instance, received “a year’s advance.”<sup>128</sup> And when a group of native laborers was tasked with bringing sixteen wagons and their mules from Zacatecas to Mexico City so they could be sold, an undertaking that took thirty-one days, twelve received half of their eight-peso-per-month salary up front in Zacatecas, receiving the other four

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<sup>126</sup> A financial document translated in France V. Scholes, “The Supply Service of the New Mexican Missions in the Seventeenth Century,” *The New Mexico Historical Review* 5 (no. 4): 93-115, allows for “One peso per day for the time that the caravan will be detained in Zacatecas,—at the least, two weeks.” See p. 105.

<sup>127</sup> Scholes, “The Supply Service.”

<sup>128</sup> CSWR, MSS 841, box 8, folder 58 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 720); CSWR, MSS 841, vol. 60 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 729, pliego 173).

pesos once the job was done (the remaining four did not receive an advance and were paid in full upon returning to Mexico City, since they resided there).<sup>129</sup>

On top of their salary, those working in the caravans were provided clothing and food. Since the colonial government subsidized the caravans' operation, the royal budget included funds for the "food and salaries of the Indians."<sup>130</sup> Juan de Real, a *mayordomo* (chief custodian or steward) in charge of a fleet of carros, received funds from the treasury in 1628 for the "maintenance" of forty-one Indians "from the moment of their enlistment as *carreteros* until the day of their departure to New Mexico."<sup>131</sup> The noun *manutención* is ambiguous and it is unclear whether it refers to the cost of food, lodging, clothing, or some combination of the three, but it appears that at the very least Indians expected that they would have their basic needs taken care of when working in the *carros*. In 1609, the Spaniard Francisco Sanchez de Campos was commissioned to freight goods from Mexico City to Zacatecas, and then on to New Mexico. Among the caravan's cargo were barrels of gunpowder, saddles, iron, wine, vinegar, and, for the six Indian laborers who went along, six coats, twelve shirts, six sombreros, and twelve pairs of shoes.<sup>132</sup> Similarly,

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<sup>129</sup> A Alejo Hernández, español mayordomo de quince carros, y a dieciséis carreteros indios, se le paga su salario de treinta y un días, CSWR MSS 841, box 8, folder 58, pp. 243-44 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 720).

<sup>130</sup> "Statement of the Costs of the Wagons," cited and translated in Scholes, "The Supply Service," 105.

<sup>131</sup> CSWR, MSS 841 box 8, folder 66 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 729).

<sup>132</sup> CSWR, MSS 841, box 8, folder 50, pp. 102-06 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 712).

Indians accompanying friars on their journeys to distant missions via the carros were entitled to receive “suits of clothing, with shoes and shirts.”<sup>133</sup>

Spanish records fastidiously record the amounts Indians were paid but only rarely mention the specific work performed.<sup>134</sup> Sources refer obscurely to “travaxo” (*trabajo*), i.e. work that was—or remained to be—done. Later records refer to the Indian laborers themselves as *carreteros yndios*, “Indian carters” and perfunctorily note how they “went with [the wagons] for their service.”<sup>135</sup> For instance in 1600, Bernabé de las Casas received royal funds to cover the salaries—eighty pesos for eight months of service, or ten pesos per month—of “the Indian carters who are going on the excursion” to New Mexico.<sup>136</sup> Each of the fifteen Indians that led the wagons to that colony sixteen years later received 120 pesos salary in the same capacity.<sup>137</sup>

These generic descriptions provide little insight into the actual labor performed, but occasional glimpses do emerge from the documentary record, if reticently. For example, certain documents list payments for *yndios chirrioneros*. In one sense, *chirrionero* means simply “carter” (*chirrión* refers to a heavy, two-

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<sup>133</sup> France V. Scholes, “The Supply Service of the New Mexican Missions in the Seventeenth Century,” part 1, *New Mexico Historical Review* 5, no. 1 (Jan. 1930), 102.

<sup>134</sup> In a study of mule trains and their drivers in New Spain, José Adrián Barragán-Álvarez also notes the paucity of data concerning the specific work carters performed. “The Feet of Commerce: Mule-trains and Transportation in Eighteenth Century New Spain,” (PhD diss., Univ. of Texas, Austin, 2013), 43.

<sup>135</sup> CSWR, MSS 841, box 8 folder 63, p. 296 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 726); CSWR MSS841 box 8, folder 60, p. 259 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 723).

<sup>136</sup> CSWR, MSS 841 box 9, folder 15 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 842A).

<sup>137</sup> CSWR, MSS841 box 9, folder 17 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 845B).

wheeled cart and *chirrionero* to its driver).<sup>138</sup> However, since the *chirrionero* was also responsible for guiding and controlling the mules that pulled the carros (*chirrionar* means “to whip, lash”), this usage may refer to the more specific task of directing and overseeing beasts of burden. Indians were also frequently tasked with guarding the carts and their cargo, as well as protecting the mules. In one instance, treasury funds were disbursed to pay for the “Indians who were guarding...the carts and their mules.” Another group of “*carreteros indios*” was likewise paid for “eleven months guarding the mules.”<sup>139</sup> In general, it seems that Indians were often charged with directing and looking after the livestock associated with the wagon trains. When sixteen wagons traveled from Zacatecas to Mexico City in 1618, for example, a like number of Indians went conducting them, “one for each wagon, plus another to bring the mules” (an additional team of mules was often brought along, in the event that any were lost or died along the route).<sup>140</sup>

As with all economic affairs in New Spain, caravan labor was designated along gendered lines, with Indian men and women being commissioned for and executing different tasks. Women were paid for services in the caravans in 1628 and in 1630, but their labor is not specified. However, it can be assumed that they did not work as mule drivers. In 1616, nineteen Indians drove a caravan of fifteen

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<sup>138</sup> Barragán-Álvarez, “Mule-trains and Transportation in New Spain,” 46n55: “The term *chirronero* applies to the drivers of a *chirrión* –a heavy, two wheeled cart –otherwise known as a *carro*; another, more common term for these drivers – derived from *carro* –is *carretero*, or carter.”

<sup>139</sup> CSWR, MSS 841, box 8, folder 65 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 728); CSWR MSS 841 box 8, folder 63, p. 296 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 726).

<sup>140</sup> CSWR, MSS841, box 8, folder 58, p. 243 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 721). For additional mules in the service of the wagon trains, see Scholes, “The Supply Service of the New Mexican Missions,” part 1, 108.

wagons to New Mexico. The document differentiates between the fifteen “*yndios chirrioneros*” (presumably all men) and the “four Indian women who also went in order to prepare their food.” They were also paid differently, with the drivers receiving a total of 1,800 pesos (120 each), while the Indian women received only twenty pesos apiece.<sup>141</sup>

By the end of the sixteenth century, Native Americans from central Mexico were established as part and parcel of the burgeoning overland supply trade serving the northern missions and mines, contributing to the distribution of indigenous peoples across New Spain’s sprawling northern frontier. That they were involved in moving people, goods, and materials to New Spain’s northernmost colony, New Mexico, is a testament to their pervasiveness as laborers in the transport industry serving the north. Their labor aided the development of an increasingly sophisticated transportation network linking vast reaches of Mexico’s north with the colonial capital, which in turn facilitated additional migration and movement by indigenous peoples. Native Americans’ economic activities, particularly their participation in the development of the transport industry, helped to open the north for additional Spanish and indigenous settlement. The consequences of that expansion for Amerindians, as we shall see, were profound.

## Conclusion

Service in the mule trains and caravans was just one of many wage-earning opportunities that the silver mining industry had to offer. As we have seen, from the

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<sup>141</sup> CSWR, MSS 841, box 9, folder 17 (PS of AGI, Contaduría, leg. 845B).

practice of extracting ore from the earth to transporting the provisions that sustained the mining towns, Native Americans were heavily involved in all aspects of the development of New Spain's new economic order in the north. However, despite the remunerative opportunities afforded by the expansion of silver mining and the possibility of avoiding tribute responsibilities back home, the northern diaspora presented new challenges for Indian migrants. The northern deserts were home to thousands of hostile Chichimecs who were becoming increasingly incensed at the invasion of their homelands. Their ire came to be directed not at the engineers of the advance—Spaniards—but rather at the indigenous settlers and laborers that executed it, as the latter were far more numerous. As we shall see, traveling and plying the roads exposed native wayfarers to a violent storm brewing in the north—one that would not be calmed so long as the mines boomed and the roads groaned with the heavy traffic of commerce and empire.



CHAPTER 2. FRONTIER WARFARE AND INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE IN NEW SPAIN'S  
NORTHERN BORDERLANDS, 1550-1590

Before the conquest, Mexico's northern borderland was a no man's land separating seminomadic Chichimecs of the deserts and sierras from the densely populated farming regions of the central valley and west. Both the Aztec empire and the Tarascan state had tried to incorporate the border region and its peoples into their state-building projects but met only with failure.<sup>142</sup> The frontier remained a transition zone into the early colonial period, until the discovery of numerous productive silver mines renewed efforts to penetrate the north. The subsequent deluge of silver miners, cattle ranchers, and laborers triggered the aggressions of the local indigenous and initiated a violent struggle over the northern borderlands that would last four decades.<sup>143</sup>

That struggle, known as the Chichimec War, was a disruptive series of attacks on settlements, mining operations, and caravans on New Spain's north-northwest frontier occurring between 1550 and about 1590. For the most part the violence was characterized by scattered ambushes on pack trains and caravans carrying silver and supplies between the northern mines, the capital, and other settled regions of New Spain. But at times thousands of warriors coordinated to carry out devastating offensives against the frontier's fledgling mining towns as well as its

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<sup>142</sup> Tutino, *Making a New World*, 32, 68-70.

<sup>143</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*.

cattle ranches and haciendas.<sup>144</sup> At least some of the militants may have been inspired by neighbors to the west in Nueva Galicia, where between 1540 and 1542, charismatic leaders inspired a millenarian uprising against Spaniards known as the Mixton War. For the most part, though, the conflict was a response to the explosion of mining activity at places like Zacatecas (named for the indigenous people the city displaced) and the flood of miners and laborers that came with it.<sup>145</sup>

For most of the second half of the century, the Chichimec War was the foremost obstacle to colonial expansion in the north. For decades the conflagration raged on, consuming thousands of lives and innumerable pesos, frustrating miners and missionaries alike, and defying the best efforts of colonial policy makers. Paradoxically, though, it also represented an opportunity for conquered and displaced indigenous peoples from central Mexico to regain lost status and privileges and enter the emerging market economy that northern expansion engendered.<sup>146</sup> If previous historians have suggested that the Chichimec War impeded New Spain's geographic expansion and limited opportunities for Spaniards, this chapter, by contrast, will demonstrate how northern warfare *drove*

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<sup>144</sup> An example of this occurred in 1561, when several thousand Guachichiles and Zacatecos joined forces with intent to exterminate the invaders and drive them from their lands. See "Información acerca de la rebelión de los indios zacatecos y guachichiles a pedimiento de Pedro de Ahumada Samano, 1562" in Santiago Montoto, *Colección de documentos ineditos para la historia de Ibero-América*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Editorial Ibero-africano-americana, 1927), 237-358.

<sup>145</sup> On the Chichimec War generally, see Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*. For a valuable compilation of relevant documentary sources with an excellent introduction, see Carillo Cázares, ed., *El debate sobre la Guerra Chichimeca*.

<sup>146</sup> For an innovative argument portraying New Spain's near north as the crucible of capitalism in the Americas, see Tutino, *Making a New World*.

colonial expansion by creating opportunities for indigenous migrants.<sup>147</sup> At the same time it will assess the consequences of pursuing those opportunities, as Native Americans who rushed to fill the void caused by frontier violence also fell victim to it in startling numbers. Indian laborers settled on the frontier, we will see, suffered the greater part of the Chichimec War's fury.<sup>148</sup> This was partly so because they represented a large share of the frontier population (perhaps even a majority), but also because the work they engaged in and the settlements they founded placed them in closer proximity to Chichimecs than their European counterparts.

Despite its dangers, the Chichimec frontier was an auspicious setting for indigenous groups seeking to assert individual and social legitimacy denied them in the colony's core. The viceroyalty of New Spain was struggling to suppress a frontier uprising at the same time that it labored to consolidate control over an increasingly heterogeneous population in the center, creating a propitious atmosphere for the expression of indigenous interests.<sup>149</sup> On the frontier, indigenous migrants found

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<sup>147</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*.

<sup>148</sup> Compared to Spaniards, that is. A thorough accounting of the cost of the conflict from so-called Chichimecs' perspectives is long overdue. After all, they were the ones to have their territory invaded, denuded, and destroyed; they were the ones chased down, killed, and sold into slavery for a period of four decades. Traces of the war's impact on Chichimecs can be glimpsed in Behar, "Visions of a Guachichil Witch," and Studnicki-Gizbert and Schechter, "Silver Mining and Deforestation in New Spain:" 94-119. See also Las Casas, "Noticia de los Chichimecas," and Santa María, *Guerra de los Chichimecas*. Currently Dana Velasco Murillo is at work on a book-length project that assesses the Chichimec peace process of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries from the perspectives of the region's autochthonous peoples.

<sup>149</sup> Camilla Townsend, "The View from San Juan del Rio: Mexican Indigenous Annals and the History of the Wider World," *Medieval History Journal* 14, no. 2 (2011), notes how in the 1530s, "Spaniards still often felt embarrassingly dependent on the indigenous peoples whose cities they now claimed as their own" (p. 3). For another arena where the administration struggled to impose order over an Indian

productive spaces where individual freedoms and corporate sovereignty could be negotiated, and where more beneficial and protective social contracts could be worked out.<sup>150</sup> These opportunities came with a price, however. Relocating to the frontier exposed Indians to a rising tide of violent opposition provoked in part by their own encroachments into the territories of independent northern peoples. What is more, after Indian migrants had absorbed the war's initial shock and the violence waned, Spanish migration to the frontier rebounded and efforts to exploit Indian labor and claim frontier territory were reinvigorated. This led to conflicts and indignation on the part of Indians who had shed their blood to lay claim to and protect new homelands in the north and who now saw them being overrun anew by avaricious Spaniards.

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population that was constantly battling for legal rights, economic benefits, and political legitimization, see Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples*.

<sup>150</sup> Beginning in the 1550s, natives contracted with the viceregal government to relocate to the northern frontier in exchange for tribute exemptions and land grants, the privilege to bear arms and ride horses (typically restricted to Spaniards), and rights as *vecinos*, or property-owning citizens with stakes in municipal governments. Around 1,000 Otomís received tribute exemptions to settle at the Indian buffer town of San Miguel in 1560, for instance, and Nahuas were granted corporate rights in exchange for their help in founding Nombre de Dios, in Durango, a few years later. Most famously, as part of a formal arrangement with viceroy Luis de Velasco the younger, over 900 Tlaxcalans received significant concessions to found five colonies along the Chichimec frontier in 1591. For the Otomí colonization, see "lo que V. s.<sup>a</sup> en nonbre de su mag<sup>tt</sup> conçede a los yndios de xilotepeque...", 29 May 1560, AGN, Mercedes, vol. 5, ff. 45r-46r. See also Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1952), 183; Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 70. For Nombre de Dios, see the document pertaining to the settlement's foundation in AGN, Mercedes, vol. 6, ff. 269v-270r; and "Autos de pedimiento de los Vecinos de Nombre de Dios...", AGN, Tierras, vol. 1458, exp. 15, ff. 1r-31r; and R. H. Barlow and George T. Smisor, ed. and trans., *Nombre de Dios, Durango: Two Documents in Náhuatl concerning its Foundation* (Sacramento, CA: House of Tlaloc, 1943). For the Tlaxcalan resettlement of 1591 see chap. 3, herein.

What follows is an interpretation of the Chichimec War and colonial expansion in the north in the second half of the sixteenth century from the perspective of indigenous people who fought and settled on the frontier and became, in one form or another, victims of violence and exploitation. Sources indicate that thousands of Indian migrants met untimely ends in the north, dwarfing the number of Spanish casualties. Yet the literature on New Spain's northward advance has been primarily concerned with silver mining, cattle ranching, and institutions like the mission and presidio, ignoring the indigenous migrants whose service and labor enabled and sustained these institutions and enterprises.<sup>151</sup> Primarily this chapter is an attempt to recover and assess the historical experiences of indigenous settlers, soldiers, and laborers as they confronted the Chichimec threat head-on in the sixteenth century and attempted to blaze new paths during a time when Spanish expansion in the north was faltering. Ultimately, it argues, in creating new lives on the frontier, Indian migrants suffered intense violence and grisly deaths at the hands of Chichimecs and, when the threat waned, came face to face with familiar forms of exploitation and abuse as their Spanish 'allies' moved north into the spaces they had cleared.

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<sup>151</sup> Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*; Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution;" Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico*; François Chevalier, *Land and Society in Colonial Mexico: The Great Hacienda*, trans. Alvin Eustis (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1963); Dunne, *Pioneer Jesuits*; Faulk, "The Presidio;" Jackson, *Missions in the History of the American Southwest*; Jackson, *Missions and the Frontiers*; Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*.

## I. Indian Migrants and Chichimec Violence

Perhaps the most surprising element emerging from the war's sources is the numerous references to violence committed by Chichimecs against other Indians. This reveals two critical points that have gone unrecognized to date. First, as with many conflicts in colonial Spanish America, Indian allies outnumbered European soldiers; and second, on account of the large population of relocated Indians on the frontier, native migrants, merchants, and militiamen assumed the lion's share of casualties in the Chichimec War.<sup>152</sup> Indians involved in the freighting of goods and the transport of silver via wagons, mule trains, and carts often fell victim to Chichimec ambushes along the roads. Similarly, the raiders who so frequently surprised sleepy, isolated frontier settlements were less likely to victimize the Spanish owner of a mine than the Indians who toiled in them, harvested the grain and baked the bread that sustained them, and labored in the charcoal plants that fueled them. Therefore the argument that indigenous migration in the north offered opportunity as well as respite from colonial exploitation must be tempered with the fact that the migrants' experiences were defined in large part by extraordinary violence.

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<sup>152</sup> One of the most substantial revisions to colonial Latin American historiography in the past fifteen years has been the recognition of the overwhelming importance of indigenous allies in European conquests. John F. Chuchiak IV, an important contributor of the new consensus, aptly summarizes it thus: "No major conquest in the Americas, either before or after 1540, took place successfully without the aid and service of indigenous allies." "Forgotten Allies: The Origins and Roles of Native Mesoamerican Auxiliaries and Indios Conquistadores in the Conquest of Yucatan, 1526-1550" in *Indian Conquistadors: Indian allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica*, ed. Laura E. Matthew and Michel R. Oudijk (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press), 180.

The first unsettling echoes heralding the onset of the Chichimec War came in the form of reports describing violence along the roads linking the northern silver districts to the capital. The conflict's official beginning came in the form of an ambush on a wagon train that killed a large number of Purépechas (Tarascans) from Michoacán.<sup>153</sup> Owing to the great distances separating the major silver mining centers and the capital (Zacatecas, for instance, lay 380 miles from Mexico City), the wagon caravans and mule trains that supplied the former with foodstuffs and supplies and the latter with refined silver were exceedingly vulnerable to raids. This was especially true in the earlier stages of the Chichimec War, before anguished cries from the frontier prompted mandates stipulating that wagon trains go accompanied by military guard, and before morbid reports of the slaying and mutilation of frontier soldiers and settlers prompted an all-out "war of fire and blood" aimed at stemming the tide of Chichimec depredations through attrition and enslavement.<sup>154</sup> Thus, much of the early Chichimec War was colored by violence against exposed caravans freighting goods and silver, and as we saw in chapter one, the individuals engaged in this kind of commerce were often indigenous.

Many native laborers fell victim to Chichimec violence while carrying out their duties as merchants and traders, or simply while traveling the roads that precariously linked the sprawling, largely untamed Chichimec frontier to central

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<sup>153</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 29.

<sup>154</sup> *Guerra a fuego y a sangre* signified total war. The policy characterized the devastating expedition of Nuño de Guzmán into Nueva Galicia and was applied during the early stages of the Chichimec War. See Altman, *War for Mexico's West* and Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*. See also Philip Wayne Powell, "Spanish Warfare against the Chichimecas in the 1570's," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 24, no. 4 (Nov. 1944): 580-604.

and western New Spain. In an early report from the frontier, soldier and miner Baltasar Bañuelos observed that Chichimecs had been ambushing caravans and pack trains, looting their cargo, and killing the oxen, mules, and horses, along with “the people that ride in them,” he said, including “many Spaniards, Indians, and blacks.”<sup>155</sup> Bernardo Pérez, a miner and ten-year resident of Zacatecas, claimed that he often traveled the roads and had personally witnessed the Chichimecs’ depredations and cruelties. He described how they “robbed many caravans of wagons, carts, and mule trains that come loaded with foodstuffs and goods, and they have killed a great number of Spaniards and peaceful Indian merchants: Mexicas and Tarascans, Tonaltecas and Cazcanes, as well as many blacks.”<sup>156</sup> Gutierre de Segura reported that he had made numerous investigations into the killings of Spaniards and Indians at the hands of Chichimecs.<sup>157</sup> Another witness described the principal roads leading south from Sombrerete, a small mining community to the northwest, to Nueva Galicia and Michoacán as “full of hostile Chichimec raiders” who waylay and murder people along the roads, including “mule drivers and Indians who come with foodstuffs.” It was “a great shame the large number of people who have been killed and continue to be killed each day,” he added somberly.<sup>158</sup> He was

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<sup>155</sup> “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de Documentos*, 298.

<sup>156</sup> Testimony of Bernardo Pérez, forming part of “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 333: *se han rrobado muchas quadrillas de carros e carretas e harrias que venian cargadas de bastimentos e mercaderias e an muerto mucha cantidad despañoles e de yndios mercaderes de paz mexicanos e tarascos tonaltecas e cazcanes e muchos negros.*

<sup>157</sup> Acuña, René, ed., *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 10, *Nueva Galicia* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1988), 250.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*: *cuajados de indios chichimecos de guerra, salteadores, que muy a menudo matan a muchas personas, así de las q[ue] van a Guadalupe, como [a]*



not the only one to be alarmed by the frequency of the attacks on the roads, however. Another eyewitness claimed that “there is no month, week, nor even day in which Spaniards and other people are not killed and robbed of what they carry.”<sup>159</sup> By “other people” this man referred to all non-Spaniards, including Africans and *mestizos*, but also of course to “the very great many Indians,” as characterized by another witness, who made a living carting goods and foodstuffs to the mines but who had stopped making the trip out of fear of violence.<sup>160</sup> Juan Vázquez de Ulloa, *alcalde mayor* (local magistrate) of the mines of San Martín, was more specific when he explained that the majority of the victims were “Mexican and Tarascan Indians from among the friendly Christian merchants and wayfarers.”<sup>161</sup>

New Spain’s top officials seem to have had knowledge of the increasing danger along the highways as early as 1560, as in that year viceroy Luis de Velasco the elder exhorted the *alcalde mayor* of Xilotepec (located 75 miles northwest of Mexico City) to serve as an escort for wagons heading through his jurisdiction in an effort to deter roving Chichimecs and safeguard valuable silver making its way to the capital. However, official efforts seem to have done little to stem the tide of killings and robberies along the highways, as nearly twenty years later another viceroy, Martín Enríquez, mandated that wagons travel in groups of two (and the

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*arrieros e indios q[ue] vienen con bastimentos, que [e]s muy gradísima lástima la mucha cantidad de personas que han muerto y matan de cada día.*

<sup>159</sup> René Acuña, ed., *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 9, Michoacán (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1987), 224-25: *que no hay mes, ni semana, ni aun día [en] que no hay[a] españoles y otras gentes muerta, y robado lo q[u]e llevaban.*

<sup>160</sup> Acuña, *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 10, 250-51.

<sup>161</sup> Testimony of Juan Vázquez de Ulloa, forming part of “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 268.

smaller, more vulnerable *carretas*, in threes) and be accompanied by armed guard, so as to afford better protection against mauraders.<sup>162</sup> In a 1577 report to the king, Enríquez adumbrated the violence that had become a part of daily life for frontier men and women, and especially for its large population of Indian laborers: “for many years the Chichimec Indians, Guachichiles, Guamares, and other nations... have made many robberies, murders, and ambushes against Spaniards as well as friendly Indians, and [caused] other excessive damages.”<sup>163</sup> When he wrote those words, the Chichimec conflagration in the north had already spanned a generation and consumed thousands of lives, mostly Indian.

Lightly guarded caravans loaded with items such as food, weapons, and clothing were favorite targets for opportunistic plunderers, but Chichimecs also frequently directed attacks against frontier settlements and mining camps, haciendas (where ore was refined and converted to silver), cattle ranches, charcoal factories, and farms. Like the caravans, these were distant from the capital, undermanned, and highly exposed. Also like the caravans, they incorporated Indian laborers who were subjected to escalating Chichimec violence. Indian migrants suffered not only on account of their large populations relative to Spaniards, but also because of the spatial organization of the frontier mining economy. Since many

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<sup>162</sup> “Facultad e[tc.] gr<sup>mo</sup> mercado para la entrada de la tierra adentro de los chichimecas a rreçebir los carros q tienen la plata de su mag<sup>tt</sup>,” 26 Oct. 1560, AGN Mercedes, vol. 5, f. 135v. A TS of this document is available at BL, MSS MA-1, cont. 7, fold. 742; “Par[a] q los duenos de carros y carretas y arrias que ban a sacatecas y guanajuato con cada quadrilla vayan y enbien dos hombres adrecados con armas y cauallos p<sup>a</sup> ayuda a su defensa,” 9 Oct., 1578, AGN, Ordenanzas, tomo 2, exp. 242, f. 218v. TS available at BL, MSS MA-1, cont. 7, folder 834.

<sup>163</sup> CSWR, MSS 841, box 3, folder 5 (PS of Carta de la Audiencia de México al rey Felipe II, 19 Oct. 1577, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de México, leg. 69).

settlements sprang up spontaneously with the discovery of a silver lode, their organization tended to follow a particular pattern—one that served the need and followed the logic of the silver economy. Naturally, the towns grew up around the strikes, so that Spaniards owning stake in a mine could live close to and effectively exploit a given vein. Situated on the outskirts of the towns but close by were the *haciendas de minas* (refineries or smelting plants) where laborers, mostly Indian, crushed the ore and mixed it with water and mercury, converting it to silver in a process known as amalgamation.<sup>164</sup> Beyond the *haciendas* lay the charcoal and bread factories, manned by Indian workers, the livestock *estancias*, tended by native shepherds, and finally the farms, tilled by indigenous yeomen. In essence, by the combination of how mining labor was organized and Spanish notions of social hierarchy, mining camps developed a fortified nucleus of Spaniards surrounded by insulating layers of native, *mestizo*, and African laborers, with the effect that Indians—owing to their larger numbers—suffered the lion’s share of casualties in the Chichimec War.<sup>165</sup>

Exposed on the peripheries of the mining camps, the *haciendas* and especially the *estancias*, with their numerous head of livestock, were often the focus

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<sup>164</sup> Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 124 (“Indians...made up the largest and most useful part of the labour force”). For the amalgamation process in the *haciendas*, see *ibid.*, 136-41.

<sup>165</sup> Zacatecas provides the best data on population figures. In 1572 there were “300 vecinos (miners and merchants) in the *vicaría* of Zacatecas, and 1,500 Indians normally resident; also a number of transient natives and merchants.” Between 1602 and 1605 there were still only “about 300 [Spanish] vecinos” compared to “about 1,500 Indians in *cuadrillas* [labor gangs].” Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 268 (Appendix II). It was also noted that, at times when *pepenas* were richest, there were upwards of 2,000 Indian laborers in Zacatecas. *Ibid.*, 127-28.

of Chichimec attacks and raids. As we have already seen, migrant indigenous laborers from the south formed a significant proportion of the workforce in these essential support industries and as such became the primary objects of Chichimec violence. The ranches and farms surrounding Zacatecas were hit particularly hard in the initial phase of the uprising. That city was undoubtedly targeted owing to its location in the middle of Zacatecos Indian territory, but also because its alarming growth rate (transforming from mining camp to city in the course of just two decades) so brazenly signaled trespass and invasion. Prompted by the slaying of a religious, fray Juan de Tapia, Gonzalo de Avila set out from Zacatecas to aid others in danger and discovered that Chichimecs had burned haciendas and crop fields (*sementeras*) belonging to Diego de Ibarra and killed his nephew and *mayordomo*, along with “many Indians.” (That Avila cited this area’s name as “tepezala,” Nahuatl for “between the mountains/hills,” provides a good indication that Nahuatl-speaking laborers from central Mexico predominated there.)<sup>166</sup> He also claimed that Chichimecs had murdered Antón Sanchez and Alonso Hernandez and burned their haciendas and fields, located some distance outside the city, killing in the process “many people [including] Spaniards, Indians, and blacks” before destroying additional haciendas closer to Zacatecas itself. In the wake of the destruction, according to Avila, “no estancias or fields remained in the area of these mines [Zacatecas] that were not burned and destroyed.” To the northwest, the haciendas and fields around the mines of San Martín suffered a similar fate.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Tepetl* (mountain, hill) plus *-tzalan* (between, among).

<sup>167</sup> Testimony of Gonzalo de Avila, forming part of “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 263.

The indiscriminate slaying across racial lines indicates that Chichimec violence was directed against interlopers in general, not just Spaniards. Nevertheless, the attacks do not seem to have been solely retributive in nature. As with the robbery of caravan supplies, the raiding of livestock from *estancias* indicates that the attacks served a practical function as well, namely the acquisition of food and possibly mounts. Nonetheless, killings often accompanied these raids, and many times the victims were the Indian laborers who cared for and guarded animals or who worked in other industries serving the mines. In the area of San Martín, for example, it was reported that the Zacatecas “kill the Indians that go laboring about, and carry off the livestock.”<sup>168</sup> Similarly, the small mining community of Chalchihuites was subjected to repeated raids on livestock by Zacatecos Indians from the mountains of San Andrés, located a short distance from the camp. As Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert and David Schecter have astutely observed, the mining boom in northern New Spain led to large-scale deforestation that destabilized the fragile ecosystem on which Chichimecs depended for food.<sup>169</sup> Very likely these livestock raids reflected the desperate gambits of people who were starving.

In addition to devastating *estancias* and capturing livestock, Chichimecs disrupted the workaday operations of the mining industry by terrorizing its heavily indigenous workforce. Chichimecs assaulted the refining mills and charcoal factories and killed laborers as they went to work in the mines, as they transported ore from

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<sup>168</sup> Acuña, ed., *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 10, 243: *les matan a los yndios que andan en las labores y les llevan los ganados*.

<sup>169</sup> Studnicki-Gizbert and Schecter, “Silver Mining and Deforestation in New Spain,” 108, 111-12.

the mines to the refineries, and as they went to fetch the firewood that fueled them. The raids became so intense at Chalchihuites, according to reports, that laborers were too afraid to go make charcoal or work the mines. If they did, “two or three armed men had to go on their horses in order to guard the Indians who go to mine the metal,” one witness explained.<sup>170</sup> To the northeast, at *ingenios* (workshops where ore was washed, melted, and refined) serving the mines of Mazapil, it was reported that “each day [Chichimecs] kill a great number of Spaniards, mestizos, and Indians.”<sup>171</sup>

Even when the mines and refining mills were not exposed to direct attack, their production suffered indirectly on account of shortages of wood, charcoal, and food. In Zacatecas, for instance, Chichimec hostilities cut off access to a nearby mountain where timber abounded and killed “a great number of Indians who are in the service of collecting wood and making charcoal.” (Highlighting the disparity in frontier populations—and death tolls—the observer noted that Chichimecs also killed “a few Spaniards who were with them.”)<sup>172</sup> Another witness claimed that laborers working at estancias and bread factories in the valley of Poanas were in danger of Chichimec attack, impeding the production of food.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Acuña, *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 10, 252: *han de ir dos o tres hombres armados en sus caballos para guarda de los indios q[ue] van a sacar el metal.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>172</sup> Testimony of Bernardo Pérez, forming part of “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 333: *los dichos yndios an tenido ynpedido el monte destas dichas minas donde se hazia el carvon e leña para las fundiciones y an muerto en el mucha cantidad de yndios del servicio de la madera e carvon e algunos españoles que estaban con ellos.*

<sup>173</sup> Acuña, *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 10, 260.

Frontier settlements such as San Martín, Avino, and Zacatecas were vulnerable owing to their extreme distance from the core region of New Spain, but even those situated closer to the capital were within the Chichimec's arc of destruction, demonstrating both the extensive range of their raids as well as the urgency and severity of the conflict at large. Particularly vulnerable were the smaller settlements of Indian migrants that formed as appendages of larger frontier communities, such as those that developed in the environs of the heavily Otomí districts of Querétaro and Xilotepec. Natives fleeing exploitation in the center—or, in the case of the Otomís, seeking to gain from the Aztecs' collapse by expanding into new territories in the north—found arable lands on the outskirts of major frontier population centers like Xilotepec, Querétaro, and Guanajuato. But as a consequence they also more frequently incurred the Chichimecs' wrath. In 1576, viceroy Enríquez encouraged the Indian inhabitants of five separate "pobleçuelos," or very small settlements, to retreat to the safety of the city of Querétaro after he received word that Chichimecs had "killed a certain number of Indians" in the area.<sup>174</sup> Ten years later, the viceroy observed that there were still many frontier settlements with "ten, twenty, or thirty Indians, and even smaller," which made easy targets for Chichimecs, who "burn [the settlements] and kill their Indians."<sup>175</sup> Word of Indian slayings around Xilotepec were reaching the Audiencia as early as 1556. In that

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<sup>174</sup> "Liçençia a los yndios de çinco pobleçuelos para q se pueblen e congreguen en el valle de mascala...", 10 April 1576, AGN, General de Parte, tomo 1, exp. 883, ff. 164v, 165v [Archidoc]. There is a TS of this document available in BL, MSS MA-1, cont. 4, folder 412. *muerto cierta cantidad de los yndios*

<sup>175</sup> Carta del Virrey Marques de Villamanrique a Su Magestad en su Real Consejo de Indias, 15 Nov. 1586, BL, MSS Z-E1, cont. 33, fold. 2957, p. 7 (TS of AGI, Patronato, leg. 24).

year, indigenous leaders informed the viceroy that Chichimec raiders had been terrorizing the area for the past four years and had killed 300 Indians in that span, including sixty-five in one particularly devastating raid in which the attackers also reportedly burned the church. An unspecified quantity of the Indians slain came from the smaller pueblo of Xalpa outside the city, evidently enough for Indians from that place to include their pueblo's name in the petition, indicating that it had been hit particularly hard.<sup>176</sup> Whether seeking autonomy or looking to escape overcrowding in the burgeoning frontier cities, those opting to settle beyond the city limits exposed themselves to Chichimec attack.

*[T]he great Injuries that [the settlers] have incurred...are so many and so great that human language is incapable of describing the smallest part of the many injuries that they have made and continue to make every day.*<sup>177</sup>

Reports from the frontier offer lurid descriptions of the Chichimecs' particular brand of cruelty and testify to the brutality of the killings. Victims were often hanged (undoubtedly in response to the Spanish practice of hanging Chichimec rebels in the field), and mutilations of bodies were common among both Indian and Spanish victims. In the wake of an attack on a wagon train, for instance, Francisco de Tapia

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<sup>176</sup> "Pa q los de la p<sup>o</sup>vinçia de xilotepeq e xalpa puedan poner en sus terminos las guardas necesarias p[ar]a el defendemi<sup>o</sup> de los yndios chichimecas bravos," 12 Feb. 1556, AGN, Mercedes, tomo 4, ff. 303r-303v [307r-307v]. A TS of this document is available in BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 7, fold. 741.

<sup>177</sup> Acuña, *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 9, Michoacán, 224: *los grandes daños que de los indios chichimecos han recibido y reciben... son tantos y tan grades. q[ue] lengua humana no será bastante a poder decir una mínima parte de los much daños que han hecho y hacen cada día.*



recalled how Chichimecs hanged three Spaniards and nine “Indian merchants.”<sup>178</sup> A member of the royal *Audiencia* seemed to believe the Chichimec conflict had become a war of extermination, the enemy “sparing neither the women nor the little children” and committing “the most unspeakable cruelties imaginable.”<sup>179</sup> One witness could testify to those cruelties as perpetrated against Spanish and Indian victims, he claimed, because “he had seen the majority of [the bodies] and been present at their burials.”<sup>180</sup> As an example, he cited the many “Indians, Spaniards, and blacks” the Chichimecs had killed and whose faces they had mutilated.<sup>181</sup> No one, however, described the grisly nature of Chichimec violence more shockingly than the author of Michoacán’s *Relación geográfica*—just one of many regional reports mandated by the king in order to collect information about colonial provinces. According to this witness, Chichimec treatment of Spanish victims was especially appalling, but we can assume that Indian allies met similar fates as well. The enemies, he claimed,

inflict such cruel deaths, especially onto Spaniards, that it moves one to a profound sense of pity to see how, to some, they open the chest and remove their hearts while they are still alive; to others, they place a foot in the throat and cut the skin from the top of the skull and from the lower part of the face, pulling it against the grain and tearing it off, then killing them. To others, they

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<sup>178</sup> Testimony of Francisco de Tapia, forming part of “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 340.

<sup>179</sup> Carta del doctor Pedro Farfán al rey Felipe II, 6 Nov. 1584, CSWR MSS 841, box 3, fold. 10, p. 73 (PS of AGI, Audiencia de México, leg. 69): *las mas inauditas crueldades que se pueden imaginar sin perdonar a las mujeres ni a las criaturas*. Literally, The term *inauditas* at the time meant “strange and completely unheard of” but the literal translation (“the most unheard-of cruelties”) is not idiomatic in English. I have attempted to retain the flavor here.

<sup>180</sup> Testimony of Baltasar Bañuelos, forming part of “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 298: *porque este testigo a visto la mayor cantidad dellos e se a hallado a sus entierros*.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

cut off the private parts and place them in the mouth. Others they impale, as the Turks do, and others they toss down onto very jagged cliffs. They hang some, and with others, they cut open the back and remove the spine. The babes, still at their mothers' breasts, they take by the legs and dash their heads against large rocks, causing their brains to fly out...<sup>182</sup>

That one individual witnessed all of the above strains credulity, and the description certainly seems embellished and indulges in sensationalist rhetoric. Nevertheless, other sources corroborate hangings and mutilations, and it is likely that at least some victims suffered fates similar to those described above, even if the totality of the description verges on the incredible. The witness's penchant for hyperbole notwithstanding, what we can be certain of is the effects the violence and devastation had on populations of communities of relocated Indian laborers, the influx of new workers, and consequently the mining economy as a whole. In response to the numerous slayings along the roads and the persistent threat of attack at frontier settlements, many Indian merchants stopped making the journey north, while those working in the mines and haciendas abandoned the frontier. As a result of this decision, New Spain's silver economy suffered dramatically.

In the wake of the slayings along the silver roads, Spanish settlers noted a drastic diminution in the number of Indian merchants arriving with food and supplies. It was noted in the *relación geográfica* of Nueva Galicia, for instance, that Chichimec violence caused the Indian merchants to stop bringing deliveries of foodstuffs.<sup>183</sup> As a consequence of the roads being blocked, the cost of food soared and "great number of Indians who worked in the service of refining silver stopped

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<sup>182</sup> Acuña, ed., *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 9, *Michoacán*, 224-25.

<sup>183</sup> Acuña, ed., *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 10, *Nueva Galicia*, 248-51.

coming” one witness noted.<sup>184</sup> Residents of Zacatecas described excessive rises in prices of food and wine (the effects of which were felt even more dearly at places like San Martín and Sombrerete, which received their supplies from Zacatecas), leading to starvation and causing Indian laborers to abandon the mines.<sup>185</sup> One witness recalled how “many Indians who were employed in the service of the mines” abandoned the area, only to be chased down and slain by Chichimecs: “fleeing out of hunger, the hostile Zacatecas Indians kill and rob them along the roads.”<sup>186</sup> Another described the desperation felt in San Martín, where Indians employed producing silver were “dying of hunger and on the verge of abandoning” the settlement.<sup>187</sup> Sombrerete, which previously boasted a relatively robust sixteenth-century frontier population of some 200, was now much diminished because of Chichimec attacks and the flight of its Indian laborers. The less numerous Spanish miners were soon to follow, because, “on account of not having Indian laborers, the mines are not worked,” as one informant recorded.<sup>188</sup> While sources are richest for the highly productive Zacatecas-San Martín-Sombrerete mining sector, other frontier districts faced similar straits, as reports from those settlements indicate the large-scale flight of indigenous laborers and frontier

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<sup>184</sup> “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 333: *e dexado dentrar mucha cantidad de yndios de trabajo para el beneficio de la plata.*

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 348.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 288: *despoblo mucha cantidad de gente de los que en las dichas minas entendian en el beneficio de la plata y viniendose los yndios amigos de las dichas minas huyendo del hanbre los matavan en los caminos e rrobaron los yndios de guerra zacatecas.*

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 341-42: *le dezian quen las dichas minas de san martin se morian de hanbre y estaban a punto de se despoblar e sabe que se despoblaron mucha cantidad de yndios de los que entendian en el benficio de la plata.*

<sup>188</sup> Acuña, ed., *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 10, *Nueva Galicia*, 254: *a causa de no tener indios de servicio, no se labran las minas.*

residents in general. In the northwest, persistent attacks and harassment from Chichimecs forced Chalchihuites's abandonment, for instance, while another small mining camp, Real de los Reyes, was reported as completely depopulated by the time Nueva Galicia's *relación* was written.<sup>189</sup> On the northeastern frontier, there were reports that Indian women and children were fleeing a settlement in the Huasteca (territory of the pre-Hispanic Huastec civilization located along Mexico's central Caribbean coast) out of fear of Chichimec violence.<sup>190</sup>

As a consequence of the dramatic reduction in Indian laborers, mining output suffered a steep decline, especially in the more distant, isolated settlements (Zacatecas's production did not fare as poorly, owing to its greater population and capacity for defense). Witnesses explained that Chichimecs effectively impeded the roads, causing shortages, famine, and rising prices, while their raids destroyed refineries and bread factories and carried off the livestock that transported the ore from mine to mill. Eventually the attacks caused the general abandonment of the mining regions by indigenous laborers, which in turn forced Spanish mine owners, lacking essential labor and protection afforded by native workers, to turn tail and try their luck elsewhere. Upon completion of his term as viceroy in 1590, don Álvaro Manrique de Zúñiga, Marqués de Villamanrique, recalled the years when the once-bustling silver frontier had been transformed into a veritable no man's land and applauded efforts that had since led to improved security, allowing the search for new mines to resume and permitting the repopulation of those that had been

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 253.

<sup>190</sup> "Para que se buelvan çiertos yndios que se fueron del puº de chapulhuacan por temor de los chichimecas," 21 July 1576, AGN, General de Parte, tomo 1, exp. 1123, f. 220r. TS available: BL, MSS MA1, cont. 4, folder 412.

abandoned.<sup>191</sup> Prior to this date, however, Chichimecs had effectively caused mining output to cease in many of the more distant and exposed settlements, resulting in the loss of as many as 400,000 pesos in royal fifths in addition to causing in excess of one million pesos in damages, according to contemporary estimates.<sup>192</sup>

From the start of the war in the 1550s through the 1580s, Indian settlers on the frontier suffered dreadfully as a result of New Spain's northward expansion—an extension in which they played a key role and for which they paid an exorbitant price. But what do we know concerning the total number of Indians killed as a result of Chichimec hostilities? The most complete information we have comes from the report written at the behest of captain Pedro de Ahumada concerning his actions during his campaign against Chichimecs in 1562. It is the only source that speaks to the question of casualties suffered (Spaniards and Indians, as well as blacks) with any modicum of specificity, and it gives a surprising amount of detail on the number and nature of Indian deaths—much more than would be expected from a document ultimately aimed at justifying Spanish military action against Chichimecs. In such a document, it would be expected that the number of Spanish deaths would be inflated, so as to warrant not only Ahumada's military campaign but also future ones that would secure the frontier and enable mining to resume (as most of the witnesses were in fact Spanish mine owners). Contrarily, relatively little would be gained from artificially inflating the number of Indian deaths, as Spanish officials

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<sup>191</sup> CSWR, MSS 841, vol. 2, p. 27 (PS of "Copia de los advertimientos generales que el marqués de Villamanrique deja al virrey don Luis de Velasco," 14 February 1590, forming part of viceroy Velasco to the king, 8 October 1590, AGI, México, leg. 22, no. 24).

<sup>192</sup> "Información de Ahumada," in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 250, 262, 325, 339, 365.

would be less likely to respond as forcefully or swiftly on their account. Surprisingly, no witness ever claimed that more than 200 Spaniards had been killed at the hands of Chichimecs, while the number of Indians slain was estimated at between 500 and 2,000. The majority of the informants claimed that 1,000 had been killed (one specified that Chichimecs had killed “more than one thousand Nahuas and Tarascans”), two cited the lower figure, one offered 2,000, and two more claimed that the total number was in excess of that.<sup>193</sup> However, these figures only reflect the total said to have been killed in the Zacatecas areas (including San Martín, Avino, and Sombrerete). Recall that Otomí Indians claimed that they had lost 300 of their own to Chichimecs in just a four-year period in the vicinity of Querétaro, and additional deaths were reported at Xilotepec.<sup>194</sup> No formal estimates tallying Indian deaths were ever recorded for these areas, and so we have no way of knowing how much they would have increased the total number, but it is clear that the *información* only records a fraction of a much larger figure. Moreover, the miners’ estimates only account for casualties suffered before 1562, when the inquiry was carried out. Of course, the Chichimec War dragged on for another twenty-eight years, meaning that the total number of Indian allies and laborers killed as a direct result of the Chichimec War must have been far greater. As with most conflicts, and especially one that took place in the sixteenth century and for which sources are sparse, the exact number of casualties is unknowable. What is clear, however, is that between Spaniards and their allies, Amerindian laborers and settlers were the

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<sup>193</sup> “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 250 (2,000), 286 (“more than one thousand Nahuas...”), 298 (1,000), 306 (500 “Nahuas and Tarascans”), 333 (more than 2,000).

<sup>194</sup> See page 87, above.

real losers in the Chichimec War—the ones who sacrificed the most and who figured most heavily among the fallen.<sup>195</sup> And this is to say nothing of the disruption caused by work stoppages, food shortages, and the forced abandonment of settlements and the upheaval and hardship that resulted in frontier indigenous communities and households. To add to their misfortunes, once the Chichimec threat began to subside, a different, yet familiar, foe reemerged.

## **II. Indians and Spaniards in Conflict on the Chichimec Frontier**

While it could have economic benefits, life on the frontier for Indian migrants was a double-edged sword. For one, migration exposed them to the crescendo of Chichimec violence that swept the north on the heels of the silver strikes and associated deluge of miners and laborers. Second, relocation to the frontier was much like staring into a distorted mirror. Indians seeking to escape disease and increasing exploitation in the center would come face to face with those very problems on the frontier, particularly since the ebb of the Chichimec threat in the 1580s reinvigorated Spanish efforts to settle and exploit the resources—and peoples—of the north.

Around 1582, the author of the *relación geográfica* of Nueva Galicia weighed in on a potential solution for the various problems facing New Spain's northern frontier region. The plan, as he saw things, would curtail the hostilities associated with the Chichimec War, augment mining productivity (thus increasing imperial

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<sup>195</sup> But see note 148, above.

revenue), and improve the lives of Indians and Spanish settlers alike. All of New Spain would be improved, he argued, by

ordering that two, three, or four thousand Indian families be removed from the towns of...New Spain, or from the province of Michoacán, so that they will come to reside in this territory, where they can be given lands on which to live and cultivate and sow their crop fields. And these [measures] will have two effects: they will resist the Indian rebels, with the help of the Spaniards, so that they will no longer inflict the damages mentioned. And...they will labor in the mines, of which there are a great number to be worked...because of the lack of people. And, by giving them a modest salary, they could sustain themselves quite well, because in addition to the salary that they are given, the Indians who work in the mines take their *pepenas* of the metal...from which they pay your Majesty the royal fifth. With this, and with the large quantity the miners would remove, the royal treasury would be increased significantly by a great number of gold pesos, and the miners would not be so penurious and wretched as they [now] are, nor plagued by debt.<sup>196</sup>

Even though a formal resettlement of Indians to the northern frontier would not be brokered until 1591, the author's plan nonetheless captured the benefits that frontier life already offered the many natives living on the frontier. Indigenous laborers working in the mines received a wage, were permitted to mine and smelt a certain quantity of ore (so long, as the observer pointed out, that they pay the royal tax), and were given lands of their own—even in some cases self-governing towns—theoretically free from Spanish meddling. Nevertheless, the reality of the developing frontier situation as pertaining to land, labor, and livelihood revealed the stark difference between theory and praxis. And to be sure, even in theory indigenous peoples were not meant to benefit in the long term. By design, Indian laborers would form a protective arc, insulating Spanish settlements from Chichimec threats and thus bearing the brunt of the war's violence. At the same time, these laborers would mine the silver that would continue to enrich the empire. And, as with the

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<sup>196</sup> Acuña, ed., *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 10, *Nueva Galicia*, 267.



royal fifths paid on *pepena* silver, eventually Indians would pay tribute, too. Having been initially lured in with promises of tribute exemption, after several years, “it could be ordered that they pay double,” the author of the *relación* suggested, “because they will enjoy greater benefits—more than in the lands in which they currently live.”<sup>197</sup> While the steady stream of Indian migrants to northern communities (which continued through the initial phases of the Chichimec War, despite the violence) testify to those benefits, it was also true that the systems of domination the migrants sought to escape followed them to the frontier. As the Chichimec conflict began to wane, Spanish migration to the north rebounded, bringing renewed conflicts over land and rights in addition to traditional forms of exploitation such as *repartimiento*.

In the final decade of the sixteenth century, numerous complaints reached the *Audiencia* of New Spain from the frontier concerning Spaniards’ encroachment onto Indian lands. In 1590, for instance, the indigenous noblewoman doña Beatriz de Tapia brought suit against a Spanish man whom she accused of violating her claims to lands forming part of a significant estate left her by her father, don Fernando de Tapia (Connín), whom the viceroy recognized as the indigenous “ruler, lord...and founder of Querétaro.”<sup>198</sup> Spanish irruptions in Querétaro seem to have accelerated in the years leading up to 1590, primarily because the conflagration of the Chichimec War had died down and again opened the north to exploration, prospecting, and land grabbing. In fact, Querétaro had managed to largely preserve

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<sup>197</sup> Acuña, ed., *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 10, *Nueva Galicia*, 268.

<sup>198</sup> “A Pedimiento de los de Queretaro,” 29 May 1590, AGN, Indios, vol. 4, exp. 622, f. 189r. PS available: BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 5, folder 577.

itself as an Indian republic from 1550 to 1590 but around the latter date began to yield to the steadily increasing wave of Spanish settlers arriving from the south. In 1582, the scribe of Xilotepec claimed that there were only fifty Spaniards in the entire Querétaro area, but by 1590 enough had arrived that the newcomers were clamoring for a permission to establish a “community house” where the *alcaldes mayores* would live and the Spanish *cabildo* would operate, as well as for permission to construct a plaza and church. This suggests not only that the Spanish population was increasing markedly, but also that these institutions had been non-existent or fledgling to that point.<sup>199</sup> In Apaseo, evidence of Spanish encroachment began much earlier. In 1563, Luis de Velasco the elder received word that Indians there were disputing a land grant bestowed on Juan Garcia, claiming that it violated their own titles to land in the same area.<sup>200</sup> Even lands that were considered to belong inviolably to Tlaxcalan settlers—who had founded colonies on the frontier in 1591 as part of viceroy Velasco’s effort to end the Chichimec War—were not free from Spanish interference. As of 1616, Spaniards were reported to have established themselves in Agua del Venado, the westernmost of the colonies, and were said to be selling liquor and causing other disturbances.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Acuña, ed., *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI*, vol. 9, *Michoacán*, 217; “A Pedimiento de los de Querétaro,” 29 May 1590, AGN, Indios, vol. 4, exp. 663, ff. 189r-189v.

<sup>200</sup> [C]onfirmación de la merced que se hizo a Juan García en terminos de apaseo, 1563, BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 7, folder 744 (TS of AGN, Mercedes, tomo 7).

<sup>201</sup> Para que el Thenite de Cappan general de V ex<sup>a</sup> de las poblaciones de chichimecas no consienta que...españoles hagan agravios a los yndios del pu.<sup>o</sup> del agua del Venado, 27 Aug. 1616, AGN, Indios, volume 9, exp. 1, ff. 1r-1v. A TS of this document is available in BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 6, folder 624.

In essence, each colonial outpost was a microcosm of New Spain itself in the sixteenth century: dependent on native labor for agricultural bounty and reliant on indigenous auxiliaries for military protection and territorial expansion. This dynamic was especially evident on the far frontier, where diminutive settlements bereft of indigenous labor struggled to retain tenuous footholds in hostile country. In thinly settled Pánuco, on the northeastern frontier, Spanish settlers complained that their numbers were few, labor short, and that their houses were in disrepair, prompting the concession of a certain number of Indians to be given from nearby villages in *repartimiento* to compensate for the lack of laborers and to sustain this precarious frontier area. However, it was also stipulated that these Indians be paid, so as not to upset the delicate balance between the overexploitation of the Indian settlers and the needs of its Spanish citizenry.<sup>202</sup> In San Miguel, one of the first frontier settlements established in the Chichimec country (and the result of viceroy Velasco the elder's 1560 recolonization of Otomís), Spanish estancia owners had to plead with the viceroy in order to retain the modest six Indian laborers they were accustomed to receiving from the villa for weeding fields and providing the animals with hay. Velasco only consented under the conditions that they be paid two and a half *reales* per week and be well treated.<sup>203</sup> On the other hand, more substantial

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<sup>202</sup> "Sobre los XXX yndios que sean de dar dose vezes en el año por dos años para la cosecha de la seminteras de los herederos," 8 Oct. 1563, AGN, Mercedes, tomo 7. TS available: BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 7, fold. 744b; [A] pedimiento a los vezinos de panuco par[a] que el alcalde mayor prouea...algunos yndios, 1563, BL TS, MSS M-A1, cont. 7, folder 744b.

<sup>203</sup> "[A] pedimiento de la villa de san miguel sobre que los yndios de las estancias de sant antonio y san francisco no hagan nouedad en el dar de los seys yndios que suelen dar pagandoles su trauajo," 1 Feb. 1564, BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 7, folder 744b (TS of original in AGN, Mercedes, vol. 7).

claims to Indian labor could be granted to Spaniards in proportion with their involvement in turning back the Chichimec threat. A justice in the buffer community of San Felipe, for instance, was granted 200 *fanegas* of maize (a *fanega* was about a bushel and a half) grown by indigenous laborers in the more distant settlement of Sichú because he claimed that he frequently set out to “heal the wounds” the Chichimecs were wont to inflict on the frontier, and for his supposed role in protecting the Indians settled there. Situated in a fertile valley, Sichú already served as a grain supplier for the mines of San Martín and Avino. The reallocation of additional grain to San Felipe must have further stressed the indigenous laborers there.<sup>204</sup>

In the face of Spaniards’ unrelenting labor demands, native settlers on the frontier petitioned the viceregal government in an effort to demonstrate service and sacrifice and win exemptions. For instance, representatives of the frontier community of Tecozautla complained in 1576 that Spaniards were recruiting its Indian residents to construct fortifications in the area to deter Chichimec raids.<sup>205</sup> This demand was particularly irksome considering the community itself had recently been the target of attacks. Its members were reeling from “the injuries and deaths they have received from the enemy Chichimecs,” and weary on account of having to “keep vigil day and night” in order to avoid further bloodshed.<sup>206</sup> Similarly,

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<sup>204</sup> “[S]obre las dozientas hanegas de maiz que se an de dar de la sementera de sichu a juan sanchez de alaniz por las causas aqui contenidas,” 4 Jan. 1564, BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 7, folder 744b (TS of original in AGN, Mercedes, vol. 7).

<sup>205</sup> There is a Tecozautla (“place of the yellow stone”) located in modern Hidalgo.

<sup>206</sup> “Reseuanse a los de taçaçalca de los yndios q dan para hazer vna casa a a<sup>o</sup>l de rrobledo,” 21 Feb. 1576, BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 4, folder 412, p. 1 (original at AGN,

Indians from a settlement on the frontier of Xilotepec announced that they were forced to give twelve Indians a month in *repartimiento* to the mines in Zimapan (where mining activity still takes place today), despite having served with the soldiers of a nearby presidio during the Chichimec War. Not only did they go out on campaign—“fighting with their bows and arrows, being as they are very dexterous and strong”—but they maintained that they continued their service of the Crown even after the hostilities ceased, brokering peace accords with the Chichimecs of the Sierra Gorda and encouraging them to settle in the town. With mining being of such importance to the treasury, and Indian labor being so integral to its operation, the viceroy could not reduce the number of Indian laborers without firm evidence of their service, and so he requested that an official of the court investigate their claims. The Indians of Tecozautla, it was determined, “have always been very useful and of very great importance on this frontier,” and in light of the “services they perform and always have, they deserve the utmost reward.” Despite this encomium, the judge concluded that “it will be difficult to reduce [the tribute] entirely, especially that which they give to the mines” because of the need for labor, and so Tecozautla would still be required to send eight laborers per month. In this case, even tremendous sacrifice on behalf of an entire indigenous pueblo could not trump

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General de Parte, vol. 1, 267-268 [ff. 134r-134v]): *por parte del g<sup>or</sup> preñçipales e naturales del pueblo de taçacalca me fue hecha rr<sup>on</sup> q siendo notorios ... los daños e muertes que auian rreçiuído de los Chichimecas de guerra y que pa heuitar otros andauan velandose de dia y de noche...*

the labor demands of the mining economy that drove New Spain's development and expansion.<sup>207</sup>

"It was Francisco de Sosa himself who afflicted us and took us to war": Indian Service in Frontier Militias<sup>208</sup>

If natives who relocated to the frontier were unable to outrun the exploitation and abuse of ordinary Spanish settlers in central New Spain, they were especially vulnerable to the authority of powerful officials on the frontier. Their authority went largely unchecked both because of a conspicuous lack of *protectores de indios* (attorneys and advocates assigned to Indian pueblos), especially in the sixteenth century, and because geographical separation from the capital impeded access to the legal system and prolonged court battles. This meant that redress was slow in coming, if it came at all, and in the interim Indian *naborías* were often at the mercy of local Spanish magistrates. Due to the persistent threat of Chichimec violence, relocated Indians from the south were frequently recruited into militia service. Sometimes this was achieved through enticements of land, arms, privileges, and even access to Chichimec captives, but more frequently the participation of Indian allies was mandated by some frontier authority, or even lesser captains and soldiers, and coercive means were not uncommon.

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<sup>207</sup> "Pa que se quiten quatro yndios de los doze que da el puº de tecozautla a las m<sup>as</sup> de çimpan y obra del desagüe en considera<sup>on</sup> de lo que sirven en estar en frontera de guerra," 4 Dec. 1620, AGN, Indios, vol. 9, exp. 273. TS available: BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 6, fold. 628.

<sup>208</sup> Barlow and Smisor, eds., *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 33.

The exigencies of the frontier subjected all of its residents to the whims of its magistrates, who were vested with considerable powers in order to compensate for the paltry Spanish citizenry and to effectively combat Chichimec violence. The *corregidor* (similar to an *alcalde mayor*) of Maravatío, located on the Chichimec frontier in northern Michoacán, was authorized to enter any pueblo necessary in order to capture highwaymen who were causing trouble in the area, “even if they be located outside of your jurisdiction,” according to his orders. And because of the shortage of manpower in the area, all “*vecinos* and persons” were obliged to cooperate with the effort, including Indian settlers.<sup>209</sup> In essence, the frontier was ruled by martial law, and its denizens could expect to have to answer the call of an *alcalde mayor* or *corregidor* at any moment simply because the frontier was thinly manned with soldiers and Chichimec violence was ubiquitous.

*Alcaldes mayores* and *corregidores* were essentially lieutenant governors holding authority in civil, criminal, and military affairs within their jurisdictions.<sup>210</sup> During the Chichimec War, these officials were authorized (and often directly ordered) to organize *entradas* or military expeditions into Chichimec territory to kill

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<sup>209</sup> Comision al corregidor de marabatio para entrar con bara de Justicia fuera de su juridicion a prender ciertos ladrones, 7 May 1580, BL, MSS MA-1, cont. 4, fold. 414 (TS of AGN, General de Parte, vol. 2, ff. 300-01 [171v-172r]): *doy poder y facultad al dho corregidor de marabtio para que libremente pueda entrar en siguimiento e presion de los dhos salteadores con bara de Justicia en qualesquier pueblos e parte de la dha probincia y comarca no enbargante que sea fuera de su juridicion y distrito aunque sea para tan solo este efeto y no mas y mando a los vezinos y personas que biben e rresiden en la dha provincia y comarca acuden al fabor e ausilio[.]*

<sup>210</sup> Technically, in New Spain a *corregidor* oversaw Indian subjects while an *alcalde mayor*’s bailiwick was the Spanish sphere, but the posts were essentially equivalent in that they both administered a subdivision of a *gobierno* and governed the affairs of its residents. See Gerhard, *North Frontier*, 46 and Hackett, *HDNM* I, 25.

and capture hostile Indians. Recruiting Spanish residents was their prerogative, as when viceroy Velasco authorized the alcalde mayor of Xilotepec to take local Spaniards with him on a mission to castigate and capture Chichimecs in 1560.<sup>211</sup> However, a dearth of Spanish settlers and an inadequate frontier soldiery often forced frontier officials to tap Indian settlements as well as nearby mines whose laborers could conveniently double as militiamen. This was quite common at the time. There was little to keep alcaldes from overstepping their boundaries, and instances of frontier officials abusing their power as provincial military leaders were common.<sup>212</sup> The small mining camps and settlements of the northwestern frontier are illustrative in this regard, as a group of Nahuas and Purépechas (Tarascans) reported having been dragooned into military service several times by men who served as alcaldes mayores in San Martín and nearby Nombre de Dios (founded 1562) in the early 1560s. According to their narrative of events, recorded in Nahuatl around 1563 (referred to here as the *Memorial*), indigenous migrants saw extensive action as militia members during these years.<sup>213</sup> Their account begins

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<sup>211</sup> Facultad e[tc?] gr<sup>mo</sup> mercado para la entrada de la tierra adentro de los chichimecas a rreçibir los carros q tienen la plata de su mag<sup>tt</sup>, 26 Oct. 1560, AGN Mercedes, vol. 5, f. 135v. A TS of this document is available at BL, MSS MA-1, cont. 7, fold. 742.

<sup>212</sup> See, for example, the commentary on the conduct of Alonso de Castilla, who reportedly harassed peaceful Indian communities in Nueva Galicia, hanged many residents, and sold others into slavery, causing large-scale flight and depopulation. “Traslado de la carta misiva que la Real Audiencia del Nuevo Reino de Galizia escribió al Señor Marques de Falces, Virrey de la Nueva España en XI de hebrero 1567 años,” BL, MSS ZE1, cont. 7, fold. 539.

<sup>213</sup> Robert H. Barlow and George T. Smisor published an English translation of the nineteenth-century Nahuatl-Spanish transcript created from the original by the Mexican bibliophile Faustino Chimalpopoca Galicia in 1845, which represents the only known source. (See “Memorial de los indios de Nombre de Dios, Durango, acerca de sus servicios al rey, c. 1563,” in Barlow and Smisor, eds. and trans.,



with their services fighting Chichimecs in the area around San Martín, where they likely worked in the mines and its attendant industries before being called upon to meet an escalating Chichimec threat.<sup>214</sup> Among a myriad of other services and experiences recounted in their memoir, they recalled how Juan Vázquez de Ulloa recruited their people to go on campaign against the Chichimecs, probably in the year 1560: “When there was anger among the Zacatecas [i.e., when they rose up], the alcalde mayor summoned the Mexica and said: ‘Come, Mexicas! You will help the king where there are Chichimecs coming down [i.e. from the sierras to commit attacks].’”<sup>215</sup> Vázquez, a bellicose man (he was once shot in the throat during a brawl), reportedly left little room for argument, threatening them if they refused:

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*Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 2-45). Charles Gibson and Robert Glass have deemed their work “unsatisfactory.” Therefore, I have consulted the Chimalpopoca manuscript in the Bancroft Library (“Traducción al castellano de un manuscrito mexicano antiguo,” BL, MSS M-M93, ff. 15r-27v) and offer my own translations here. (An updated, full translation of the Chimalpopoca manuscript is a major desideratum.) When my reading of a Nahuatl passage does not differ significantly from Barlow and Smisor’s, I cite their version. In my transcriptions of the Chimalpopoca manuscript I have adjusted word spacing in accordance with the standards of modern Nahuatl scholarship.

The original document from which Chimalpopoca Galicia worked has not been located, though apparently Barlow claimed that it was “in the Franciscan papers” of the Biblioteca Nacional de México. (See Charles Gibson and John B. Glass, “A Census of Middle American Prose Manuscripts in the Native Historical Tradition,” in *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, vol. 15, *Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources* pt. 4, ed. Howard F. Cline (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1975), 325.)

<sup>214</sup> It is not known where these natives came from, but they do claim to have “served when we were in Zacatlan” (*otictequipanoque ynic oticatca y zacatla*), which could refer to Zacatecas. However it is more likely they were referring to a fertile, agricultural region of the frontier—perhaps the Bajío—since Zacatlan means “place of grass” in Nahuatl. There was a region of that name in the current state of Tlaxcala, but it is doubtful they hailed from that place considering they refer to themselves as Mexica and not Tlaxcalan. See Barlow and Smisor, *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 15.

<sup>215</sup> BL, MSS M-M93, f. 16r: *iquac in otlauehilo catque y zacateca y nima oquintotz in y mexica in alcalde mayor oquito tlaxihualhuiya mexicaye aquipalehuizque in ca[m]pa cate motemotihui*

“And he said, ‘if you do not wish to go, I will fine you forty pesos, which you will pay because you are the king’s children [i.e. vassals].’”<sup>216</sup> Without recourse to a *protector*, Indians were vulnerable to the whims of local authorities and were frequently coerced into military service.

While certain frontier officials were authorized to recruit men from among the ranks of frontier settlements, lesser captains and even common soldiers without such authorization sometimes forced natives into service as well. In 1579, for instance, Indians from a town in the Pánuco region sought redress from the viceroy on account of the harassment they claimed they received from Spanish soldiers and civilians. People were often taken from the village “in order to go in the company of the Spanish soldiers against the Chichimecs,” read the complaint, but what the native residents found particularly irksome was that they took “more people from this pueblo than from others,” causing many individuals to flee to neighboring villages. As a consequence, those left behind were saddled with the same tribute obligations but with fewer hands to meet them, invoking a common refrain from Indian pueblos farther south and further demonstrating the extent to which systems of exploitation of central New Spain followed indigenous migrants to the frontier.<sup>217</sup> In a similar vein, Indians in the vicinity of Xilotepec explained that since their pueblo was on the Chichimec frontier and near a *presidio* (or military fort), they were often forced to serve in its campaigns, during which many villagers died. According to the

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<sup>216</sup> BL, MSS M-M93, f. 16r: *Auh niman oquito itlamo anquinequi anyazque pena namechhuquiliz ompoali pesos ica tlaxtlahuazque ipampa rey amipilhua*[.] Cf. Barlow and Smisor, *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 3-5.

<sup>217</sup> “[L]os de tanpacayan sobre que se buelban a bibir a su natural los que se obieren y de otros pueblos,” 29 July 1579, BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 4, fold. 414 (TS of AGN, General de Parte, vol. 2, f. 39v).

complaint, submitted years later in 1620, the town had not been compensated in any way for this sacrifice.<sup>218</sup>

Additional instances of this sort of impressment occurred during Pedro de Ahumada's campaign in the Zacatecas area in the early 1560s. In 1561 the high court of Guadalajara tasked Captain Ahumada with heading a military expedition of *pacificación y castigación* (pacification and punishment) against area Chichimecs in response to attacks on wagon trains, haciendas, and farms. Active in Nueva Galicia since the 1540s, Ahumada was an early explorer of the region and wealthy mine owner with business ties to the Cortés family.<sup>219</sup> His *entrada* represented the first prolonged military action against the Chichimecs, lasting eight months. Like expeditions that came before his, and many that would come later, indigenous allies outnumbered Spaniards significantly (as much as twenty to one) and played key logistical and military roles. Also like other Spanish missions against Indian peoples, the armies heavily recruited native allies from the frontier. In addition to the 400 Cazcanes from the Tlaltenango Valley to the west, Ahumada sought reinforcements from frontier outposts like San Martín. Despite having recently served in reconnaissance missions and counter raids headed by alcalde mayor Juan Vázquez, native migrants at San Martín reported having been recruited on two separate occasions to serve on Ahumada's *entrada* into the Malpaís—"the Badlands"—and in other areas of the Zacatecas district. Their account provides a first-hand glimpse

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<sup>218</sup> "Pa que se quiten quatro yndios de los doze que da el puº de tecozautla a las m<sup>as</sup> de çimapan y obra del desagüe en considera<sup>on</sup> de lo que sirven en estar en frontera de guerra," 4 Dec. 1620, AGN, Indios, vol. 9, exp. 273, ff. 133r-134r. TS available: BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 6, fold. 628.

<sup>219</sup> Carillo Cázares, *El debate sobre La Guerra Chichimeca*, vol. I, 218n; Barlow and Smisor, *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, xvi.

into frontier recruitment practices as experienced by frontier migrants. The following describes Ahumada's first visit to San Martín:

When the *senõr* Pedro [de] Ahumada...went to Malpaís in order to conquer it, he summoned the Mexica, saying: "Come, Mexica! The time has come that I am to take you to the Malpaís so that we may conquer it. Gather as many Mexica as you can from the *altepetl* [i.e. village of San Martín], and from among those who live here in Zacatlan,<sup>220</sup> ye who are the king's children." Then we Mexica conferred together and talked among ourselves. "Very well," we said. "Let us go—let us take the captain."<sup>221</sup>

According to their own account, the Mexica leaders offered little resistance when Ahumada approached them (though they did not oblige unthinkingly—they first conferred before deciding to go). But this was undoubtedly because the situation in the surrounding area at this time was dire, and the Indians knew this. Because of the earlier foray of Juan Vázquez de Ulloa, Ahumada had obtained reports indicating that Zacatecas Indians had joined forces with Guachichiles and were plotting to destroy San Martín and the nearby mines of Avino. (During this expedition, the Mexica warriors had captured two Chichimec scouts who revealed the positions and intentions of the larger Chichimec force).<sup>222</sup> In other words, they had a vested

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<sup>220</sup> It is ambiguous whether this refers to other Indian migrants like the Mexica or to settled Chichimec Indians. There are many entries including the toponym Zacatlan, and there is no way of knowing definitively to which place the authors were referring. Despite its literal meaning, "place of grass" one gets the sense from the context that Zacatlan meant "place of the Zacatecas [Indians]" though technically this would be *zacatecapan*, as Nahuas referred to Chichimec territory as *chichimecapan*, "place where there are Chichimecs," or *chichimecatlalpan*, "in Chichimec country." It remains a mystery.

<sup>221</sup> BL, MSS M-M93, f. 17v: *yniquac ynoquimopehualtili ynitequitzin y Señor Pedro Aomada yniquac ymohuicaz ynopa ymalpaiz ynic tepehuatiuh ynima oquinotzin y mexica omilhui tlaxihualhuiya mexica ye yn axca ca namechiuicas ynopan ymalpaiz ynic titepehuazque ximocetlalica yn amexica yn izqui altepetl ynica nemi y cacatla yn amipilhua y rey. Auh nima otitocetlalique y temexica otitononotzque otiquitoque ca yecuali ma tictohuilia matictohuilica y capita.*

<sup>222</sup> Barlow and Smisor, *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 5-7.

interest in joining the Ahumada expedition. They had to protect their village and their livelihoods.

If the allies seemed invested in the Ahumada expedition, they were less convinced of the urgency of Francisco de Sosa's mission when he attempted to recruit them from Nombre de Dios, a village near modern Durango that they had helped found and build in 1563. Like the other instances of recruitment, their narrative identifies the individual by name and captures the dialogue that was exchanged, a quintessentially Nahuatl manner of recording—and authenticating—transactions that took place in the past.<sup>223</sup> First, it situates the exchange in time, informing the reader that the events transpired in the time of the Chichimec War: “When the Chichimecs were ambushing people who were coming along the roads, *alcalde ordinario* (town councilman) Francisco de Sosa came here to the village of Nombre de Dios,” it states. Next it records how Sosa attempted to recruit their people: “He summoned the Mexica *alcaldes* and those from Michoacán and said, ‘Come, my children, you *alcaldes*! I have been ordered to take you [on campaign]. The order comes from Mexico, and states that we are to find the Chichimecs.”<sup>224</sup> Sosa demanded that each major contingent of Indians in Nombre de Dios (Nahuas, Tarascans, and settled Chichimecs) field twenty warriors each, but the Mexica balked. Even though they were subordinate to the *alcalde mayor*, the Mexica boldly

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<sup>223</sup> Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 168-69, 364-71.

<sup>224</sup> BL, MSS M-M93, f. 21v. *Auh yn iquac yn otetzacuiliue y chichimeca yn opa yn otlica ynic hualhuilohua Auh nima y fracisco de susa allde ordinario y nica a la bila del nobre de Dios niman oqui[no]tzin y alldesme y mexica yhuan y michihuaque oquito xihualhuiya nopilhuane yn amalcaldesme auh ca onihuala namechanaco oninahuatiloc yhuala mexico y nahuatili ynic tiquitemozque y chichimeca[.]* Cf. Barlow and Smisor, *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 27-29.

asserted their claims to equal status, both as village leaders (*alcaldes ordinarios*) and as *vecinos*, attempting to negotiate with Sosa. They tried reasoning with him, arguing that sending all of the Indians would endanger Nombre de Dios itself: "If we all go, there will be no one [here] should the Chichimecs come from the rear in order to kill us and destroy the village."<sup>225</sup>

The Mexica knew that they were beholden to the *alcalde's* orders, and they were aware that there could be repercussions for anyone who disobeyed. But at the same time, like natives across the northern frontier at this time, they had to reconcile their roles as subordinates with their will to assert themselves as citizens and *vecinos*, that is, as people with the right to protest what they saw as excessive and unreasonable requests (this was, after all, the fourth time in two years that they had been called upon to serve). What is more, in the absence of a *protector de indios*, native settlers had to stand up against what they clearly saw as absurd, unreasonable, or abusive. In this case, they were loathe to jeopardize their home and the lives of their people merely to satisfy the whims of an overzealous Spanish overseer.

Service, if adequately documented and effectively packaged, could provide native allies with certain perquisites, and so militia service, even if undertaken unwillingly, was not necessarily a total loss for Indians as a collective, though individual Indians did die as a result. The *Memorial*, like many native-authored sources, is clearly a petition seeking recompense for services rendered to the Spanish Crown. Moreover, in addition to the prospect of long-term reward, usually

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid.: *cayac tlacatl ytla timochiti tiazque azo ticapa hualazque y chichimeca techimicliquihui [sic]*.

in the form of reductions in or even exemptions from tribute obligations, Indians received additional benefits that would otherwise remain closed off to them. In the time of the Chichimec War, it was common to reward Indians who served with a license to ride a horse and to carry Spanish arms (including daggers and swords), which was usually forbidden.<sup>226</sup> Also, there is evidence to suggest that Spanish leaders occasionally promised land and even Chichimec slaves in payment for their services.

#### “All of of our noblemen went to serve our God and the king”: Indian Allies’ Experiences in War

What took place once local *alcaldes* and frontier soldiers recruited indigenous allies into missions of exploration and conquest? What were their specific roles in frontier warfare, and what defined their specific experiences? What other types of activities did they engage in, and what did they hope to get in exchange for their services?

Fortunately, the *Memorial* provides detailed commentary on these aspects as well.

Using the first-hand observations of native participants recorded in Nahuatl, coupled with petitions and complaints from indigenous frontier communities

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<sup>226</sup> For Indians receiving licenses to ride horses, see AGN, Indios, vol. 6, pt. 2, exp. 818; “Licencia de una haca a don M[art]in gou<sup>r</sup> de taçacalca [Tecozautla?],” 21 Feb. 1576, BL, M-A1, cont. 4, folder 412. For the privilege to bear arms, see “Liçençia a fr[ancis]co martinez yndio interprete...”, 28 May 1576, BL, M-A1, cont. 4, folder 0412; “Licencia a Diego Paolomo Gobernador de los Yndios del Nuevo Reyno de Leon...”, 19 Jan. 1616, BL, M-A1, cont. 5, folder 603.

That carrying arms was typically forbidden can be gleaned from a 1583 order prohibiting blacks, *mulatos*, and Indians from carrying knives with blades longer than one inch, under penalty of service in the *obrajes*, in addition to 100 lashes and a fine of fifty pesos, the proceeds of which would go to defraying the costs of the ongoing Chichimec War. See “Ordenanza sobre que los negros mulatos ni indios no traygan cuchillos,” 17 June 1583, BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 7, folder 771.

written in Spanish, a relatively clear, if selective, picture of indigenous experience in frontier warfare, reconnaissance, and settlement materializes.

In certain respects, native auxiliaries' experiences on the Chichimec frontier were comparable to those of who participated in the wave of Spanish conquests throughout Mesoamerica in the decades immediately following the conquest of Mexico. As with the earlier expeditions, Indian allies on the Chichimec frontier were used as burden bearers charged with transporting equipment and supplies. They also functioned as interpreters and scouts, served as couriers delivering documents and intelligence, and guarded the animals that customarily accompanied expeditions of exploration and war. Likewise, native allies on the northern frontier reported being treated unfairly by Spanish captains and soldiers and being bilked out of compensation (whether it be in privileges or more tangible recompense, such as arms, captives, and mounts). Also like these earlier expeditions, native-authored sources offering insight into specific motivations are few, and special care must be paid to placing what data they do offer within the context that more abundant sources provide.

Unlike the earlier *entradas*, however, it appears that, on the frontier more than elsewhere, Indian auxiliaries were directly involved in the three primary aspects of colonial expansion, namely exploration and conquest, the establishment of settlements, and the spiritual reduction of the area's indigenous peoples. First, indigenous allies were frequently used for menial labor. This could easily be dismissed as drudgery, but in actuality this work was critical to frontier operations, just as indigenous labor was fundamental to the mining economy. When Pedro de



Ahumada began his *entrada* in the vicinity of San Martín, he used the Valley of Sichú as a rendezvous point while he awaited reinforcements from an Indian settlement outside Zacatecas. In the meantime, “he made the Indian allies that be brought with him weed the fields that were suffocated with grass” on account of not having been worked due to fear of Chichimec violence. This enabled a significant harvest of maize (five or six thousand *fanegas*, roughly 8,000 bushels), which would help to sustain the army during its campaign and provide much-needed relief to nearby San Martín, which was in dire straits. Dependent on the Sichú valley’s agricultural bounty, the village was on the brink of starvation because, fearing attack, laborers “did not dare” to tend to the fields.<sup>227</sup>

Natives also occasionally served as messengers and couriers. While Ahumada was in the Malpaís, alcalde mayor Juan Vázquez tasked three Mexicas from the village with sending him a communication from viceroy Velasco. (“Thereby we served our God and the king,” they later glowed.)<sup>228</sup> While this demonstrates the great trust Vázquez placed in the Indian allies, he could also be reckless and was wont to put indigenous people at risk by sending them on needless errands. In what the indigenous community must have interpreted as an exceptionally senseless act, the Mexica authors of the *Memorial* reported that one of their own had been killed by Chichimecs while traveling to a nearby mining camp to fetch him wine.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 291.

<sup>228</sup> Barlow and Smisor, eds., *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 11.

<sup>229</sup> Barlow and Smisor, eds., *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 9. To make matters worse, Sosa jailed the Mexica remaining in San Martín until they could come up with the money that had been lost as a result of the runner’s death.

As elsewhere in sixteenth-century New Spain, Indian auxiliaries on the frontier frequently served as *tlamemes* or porters—that seemingly universal role assigned to native allies. Primarily this seemed to have occurred in the context of warfare, suggesting that the Indians were charged with carrying the army’s equipment and supplies (such as lead, powder, and food), but burden bearing occurred in other contexts as well, specifically construction. In a 1620 complaint the indigenous residents of Tecozautla, in the jurisdiction of Xilotepec, mentioned that part of their duty while serving Spanish presidio soldiers involved carrying loads.<sup>230</sup> And when Vázquez recruited warriors from San Martín to assist Ahumada in the Malpaís, the Indians’ *Memorial* recalled how some of them “went very early bearing burdens,” identifying Vázquez as the one who “distributed loads to our people.”<sup>231</sup> After Ahumada had defeated the confederation of Chichimecs holding inside the Malpaís, he turned his attention to the area around modern Durango. Before setting out, he recruited an additional fifty indigenous warriors, some of whom would shoulder the burden, quite literally, of transporting equipment.<sup>232</sup> Tlamemes were an important component of Spanish expansion and settlement in the area, too. When a small contingent of Spanish soldiers and Franciscans set out to found villages for the purpose of converting area Chichimecs, for example, the expedition’s

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<sup>230</sup> “Para que se quiten quatro indios a los doze que da el pueblo de tecozautla a las minas de Cimapan y obras del desagüe en consideracion de lo que sirven en estar en frontera de guerra,” 4 Dec. 1620, AGN, Indios, vol. 9, exp. 273, f. 133r. TS available: BL, MSS M-A1, cont. 6, folder 628.

<sup>231</sup> Barlow and Smisor, eds., *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 5.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

indigenous auxiliaries were tasked with carrying loads, presumably materials and tools needed for erecting structures.<sup>233</sup>

These indigenous allies were not only tasked with carrying equipment necessary for building settlements. They were used as the primary labor source in their construction. For instance, the same natives involved in the founding of Nombre de Dios erected the church and other structures. Once the site had been selected, the *Memorial* records how the natives “began our work of building the village, working diligently.” As for the church: “We built the house of God and of our Fathers,” they remembered, an effort they claimed took them two months.<sup>234</sup>

More than merely constructing houses of God, native allies from central Mexico played a direct role in bringing Christianity to the northern frontier by participating in the first efforts to evangelize Chichimecs. Wide-scale conversion as a policy of pacification was not initiated until the 1590s, with the relocation of nearly 1,000 Tlaxcalans to colonies on the frontier (covered in-depth in chapter 3), but some attempts to convert and settle Chichimecs in towns took place sporadically in the 1550s and 1560s. These efforts were primarily under the auspices of the Franciscans and commonly incorporated Indian auxiliaries. Religious leaders were known to accompany contingents of Spaniards and their Native allies in hopes of capturing Chichimec children, who made for more tractable converts. An early seventeenth-century Franciscan text, for instance, claimed that missionaries would enter Chichimec *rancherías*—the Spanish term for the seminomads’ mobile villages

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 25, 23.

and camps—and “take the little children in order to indoctrinate them.”<sup>235</sup> Similarly, after an engagement described in the *Memorial*, the native soldier-apostles recalled how they “divided up among ourselves [for religious instruction] the children whom our fathers had seized” from a vanquished Chichimec settlement.<sup>236</sup>

Though frequently used as menial laborers, natives recruited from the frontier settlements were viewed as trusted allies, as demonstrated by their repeated service as scouts, sentinels, and guards. Indian petitioners from the Xilotepec area claimed that they served as *espías* (literally “spies,” but meaning scouts here) on campaign against Chichimecs, while a Spanish observer noted how Indian allies had “gone out with their arms and horses in the company of [Spanish] captains” and “served as scouts.”<sup>237</sup> The Indians of the *Memorial* stated that they served in this capacity on numerous occasions. While Ahumada was searching La Poana,<sup>238</sup> for instance, two Mexica allies stayed behind to keep watch over a nearby ranch. In the process they captured and detained two Chichimec scouts who revealed upon interrogation that their comrades had formed a league bent on “destroying the palefaces everywhere and [especially] in San Martín.” This was important intelligence that corroborated reports Ahumada had received. (Both Chichimec “spies” were eventually executed.)<sup>239</sup> They also reported having been ordered to hold night watches as sentinels, as when ordered by captain Río de Losa

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<sup>235</sup> “Ynformación de los conventos de Zacatecas,” BL, M-M93, f. 58v.

<sup>236</sup> Barlow and Smisor, eds., *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 43.

<sup>237</sup> BL, MSS M-M93, f. 101v.

<sup>238</sup> Barlow and Smisor, eds., *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 5n7 describe this as an agricultural valley that held “ten or twelve settlements and an Indian pueblo of 40 or 60 inhabitants in 1575.”

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

(alcalde mayor of Nombre de Dios) to keep vigil when Chichimecs were reported to be in the area: “We did not sleep,” they recalled, “because we were commanded to watch through the night.”<sup>240</sup> We also know that on certain occasions they were counted on to guard captured enemy prisoners. At Santiago they “helped by guarding the Chichimecs for seventeen days” until the arrival of the Spanish soldiers (who hanged and beheaded the group’s leaders and kept the rest as slaves).<sup>241</sup>

In the above capacities, central Mexican migrants served as auxiliaries in the truest sense of the word. That is, they functioned as utility personnel or all-purpose helpmeets in the Spaniards’ cause of pursuing, capturing, converting, and killing Chichimecs. At times they were relegated to the most abject of tasks (such as burden-bearing), but on other occasions they assumed more active and important roles, participating directly in the customary acts of war. For this was their war, too. The authors of the *Memorial* reported numerous occasions during which they engaged directly in warfare. According to their account, Pedro de Ahumada was unequivocal regarding what the Mexicas’ roles would be. When he recruited indigenous allies from San Martín to fight in the Mezquital (from Mezquitlan, “place of many mesquite trees”), he reportedly said: “Gather yourselves, you Mexica! Today you will help the king. Your company of soldiers will face the enemy, so that the king will be served in this war. You will accompany the captain to the Mezquital.”<sup>242</sup> This was not their only experience as soldiers in war. Soon after their recruitment from

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>242</sup> BL, MSS M-M93, f. 18v: *ximoxetlalica yn amexica yn axca aquimopalehuilizque y tohuetocatzin y rey aquixtizque yaoquizque soldados ynic quimopaleuilitiuh y rey yn opa aquimohuilizque y capita yn opa mizquitla*. Cf. Barlow and Smisor, eds. and trans, *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 13.

San Martín by Francisco de Sosa, an indigenous contingent encountered a Chichimec force, whereupon “the group of twelve men led by Bartolomé de los Angeles and Juan de San Pedro [indigenous war captains] began fighting.”<sup>243</sup> They also described another, more protracted, assault during the Sosa expedition, during which they served as the vanguard: “the attack began, the [indigenous] warriors spreading out and appearing in front.” The battle lasted for hours, they recalled: “We began fighting the enemy at dawn and finished at midday...”<sup>244</sup> Similarly, after being recruited by captain Río de Losa, Mexica allies and warriors from Michaoacán described how they pursued and waged war against enemy Chichimecs.<sup>245</sup> After receiving word of the slaying of a religious at Atotonilco, the allies “went in pursuit of the Chichimecs who had done the killing.” They also described having pursued Chichimecs in the vicinity of Chalchihuites.<sup>246</sup>

As these cases make clear, indigenous allies were not playing mere bit roles in what were ultimately Spanish campaigns. In fact on certain occasions they even composed the majority of the fighting force, as when Río de Losa recruited men from Nombre de Dios: “The [indigenous] men of the village formed two groups of warriors. Captain Rodrigo de Río led these and three other men [i.e. Spaniards] in search of the Chichimecs,” they recorded.<sup>247</sup> They remembered killing Chichimecs, too. Given the anxious state of the frontier settlements and the fact that a number of their own had fallen victim to the rebels, this was probably carried out with

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<sup>243</sup> Barlow and Smisor, eds. and trans., *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 31.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 39.

particular gusto. On one occasion, they recalled having fought with and captured some Chichimecs, after which they “meted out justice on the prisoners [i.e. executed them].”<sup>248</sup>

Such active—and seemingly enthusiastic—participation in combat raises interesting questions regarding indigenous allies’ motivations and indicates that coercion is only part of a much more complicated story. Indigenous allies at times demonstrated an eager readiness to defend their land and settlements—a strong desire to protect what they had earned through frontier service. Just as it had before the conquest, military service opened avenues to social prestige and presented opportunities for material gain. The *Memorial* for instance records transactions during which Spaniards promised Indians land in exchange for their service. After Ahumada had conquered the Malpaís and turned his attention to the Mezquital, he returned to San Martín in order to once again enlist indigenous recruits. Unlike Francisco de Sosa, who forced indigenous participation using the threat of punishment, Ahumada adopted a more diplomatic approach, extending the carrot in lieu of brandishing the stick: “upon beginning in the Mezquital, captain Pedro de Ahumada consulted with us. He said, “Come Mexica, help the king. You are all to receive an equal amount of land. [Your service] is not merely in vain.”<sup>249</sup> During their mission to find a suitable location to found the village of Nombre de Dios, the

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>249</sup> There is slight ambiguity in this last sentence. Some alternate translations might read, “It is not merely in vain [that I say this]” or “It [your service] is not without purpose.” BL, M-M93, f. 19v: *Auh y niquac ytopehua y mizquitla otechimolhuili y capita y pedro aomada oquimitalhui tlaxihualhuia mexica y naxca xicmopalehuilica y rey canoyxquichi aquimaceua y tlali camo çatlapic*. Cf. Barlow and Smisor, *Nombre de Dios, Durango*, 14-15.

authors of the *Memorial* recorded an exchange in which the religious implied that the Indian allies would receive land within the village, and thus a corporate stake in it as *vecinos*. The friars originally chose a site along the riverbank in the place known as la Poana, but soon changed their mind. “We will not establish the village here now,” they said, “because the parcel of land is not big [enough], and much land is to come to our Mexica and Michoacano children.”<sup>250</sup> (Interestingly, they do not state that land was to be given to the Zacatecos neophytes who came along.)

Spanish documents corroborate the fact that Indians were granted land in exchange for their participation in the settlement of Nombre de Dios referenced in the *Memorial* (though Spanish settlers resented and attempted to deny this in legal documents).<sup>251</sup> But there were other recorded exchanges and agreements that went unhonored, as with the awarding of Chichimec captives to native warriors. Unlike with the granting of land, we have no Spanish sources to confirm claims in the *Memorial* that Spaniards promised captives to native allies in exchange for their support, but we do know that pledging captives to soldiers was commonplace on the Chichimec frontier, which provides substance to the allies’ claims. Historian Philip Powell observed that Chichimec slavery “was the main answer to the problem of soldier recruiting—without the hope of Indian slaves to sell, an adequate soldiery on the frontier would have been even more difficult to maintain than it was.”<sup>252</sup> Indeed, Pedro de Ahumada was unable to pay his men upfront, as one Spanish

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<sup>250</sup> BL, M-M93, f. 20r: *amonica ticchihuazque y naltepetl ypapa amo huey tlalica miyac tlali haulaz topilhua ymexica y michihuaque*.

<sup>251</sup> See AGN, Mercedes, vol. 6, ff. 269v-270r, and “Autos de pedimiento de los Vecinos de Nombre de Dios...”, AGN, Tierras, vol. 1458, exp. 15, ff. 1r-31r.

<sup>252</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 111.



participant later claimed that soldiers “followed him out of respect and friendship” and were not paid (though undoubtedly they subsequently benefitted from the sale of Chichimec captives, or from their labor in mines).<sup>253</sup> A 1582 petition advocated for “perpetual slavery” of captured Chichimecs, because this would “bring more soldiers to the frontier” hoping to profit from their sale.<sup>254</sup> Governor of Nuevo León Luis de Carvajal y de la Cueva gained notoriety as a prodigious Chichimec slave raider in the 1570s and 1580s, and while the sordid business was unquestionably meant to line his own pockets, it was also necessary in order to compensate his soldiers. Indeed his men came to expect payment in captives. According to a 1587 report, no one wished to follow him to Xalpa, in Nuevo León, unless he guaranteed that they could keep as slaves half of the Indians they captured, “as is done with the Chichimecs.”<sup>255</sup>

The *Memorial* indicates that such offers were not exclusive to Spanish soldiers but could apply to native allies as well. Francisco de Sosa reportedly made such a promise when he recruited indigenous warriors from San Martín. “Anyone who catches a Chichimec will not have to give him up, for he is his,” he proclaimed. “The same holds good if he catches two or three.” But the allies knew Sosa to be a slippery character, and they admonished him to keep his word. “Remember your word that you gave,” they shouted to him before an engagement with Chichimecs. “No one shall take away from my children the Mexicans or from any of the warriors

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<sup>253</sup> “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 324.

<sup>254</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 111; Estancianero petition, quoted in *ibid.*, 174.

<sup>255</sup> “A la audi[enci]a de nu[ev]a España q castigue los q hallare culpados en auer dado por sclauos çiertos yndios...”, 1587, BL, MSS M-A1, Cont. 10, folder 1384.

the Chichimecs that they catch,” he reassured them, “for they belong to those who take them.” After the battle was over, Sosa ordered the allies to bring him the captives so they could be counted. Just as they feared, “the Spaniards divided them up among themselves; and we...received not a single thing.” In addition to being hoodwinked by the *alcalde mayor* and stripped of their captives, the allies also complained that Sosa deprived them of their arms after their service was up. They concluded their statement with a stinging indictment of Sosa: “It was Francisco de Sosa himself who afflicted us and took us to war.”<sup>256</sup>

## Conclusion

As with migration to the North itself, there is frustratingly little primary source material that speaks directly to the question of what motivated native allies to participate in these campaigns. Clearly, in some cases they had little choice. Native allies were beholden to the whims of local magistrates and subject to the orders of captains commissioned to undertake *entradas* into the interior. But native allies fought for their own reasons, too. They had something to gain from aiding Spaniards, particularly the acquisition of land, captives, and, they hoped, autonomy and even corporate sovereignty.

The Indians of the *Memorial* reported instances of Spaniards promising land in exchange for their participation in expeditions of settlement and conquest. The distribution of captives to frontier soldiers was common practice during the first few decades of the Chichimec War, and on at least a few occasions this was used as

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<sup>256</sup> Barlow and Smisor, eds., *Nombre de Dios*, 31-33.

an enticement to encourage native involvement (though as we have seen such promises were not always kept). Lastly, Spanish documents that discuss the founding of Nombre de Dios, including the original *merced* (grant or charter), refer to the Indians of the expedition as *vecinos*, or property-owning residents entitled to participate in governance, a significant benefit that few Indians of the time enjoyed. That Indians were granted the right to govern themselves is borne out in instances in the *Memorial*, in which Spaniards engaged in dialogue with the native allies refer to them as *alcaldes* (meaning *alcalde ordinario*, a cabildo member of significant rank).<sup>257</sup>

Viewed in this context, serving in militias and in colonization efforts may have been seen as a means to lay claim to and preserve land and status and to attain or defend rights to participate in local governance. When we view their service from their own perspective, that is, if we interpret their activities as serving the specific purpose of obtaining important assets or preserving highly desirable privileges, we may even imagine that Amerindian allies participated with alacrity and that they were fighting not to advance Spanish aims but to defend what was theirs.

But there were inherent dangers in these activities as well. Inevitably Spaniards also used coercion to force natives' participation, at times fleeced them out of what had been promised them, and doggedly attempted to undermine the

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<sup>257</sup> Consider, for example, when Francisco de Sosa came to Nombre de Dios to recruit native settlers: "He summoned the Mexica *alcaldes* and those from Michoacán and said, 'Come, my children, you *alcaldes*! I have been ordered to take you [on campaign]." BL, MSS M-M93, f. 21v: *Auh nima y fracisco de susa allde ordinario y nica a la bila del nobre de Dios niman oqui[no]tzin y alldesme y mexica yhuan y michihuaque oquito xihualhuiya nopilhuane yn amalcaldesme auh ca onihuala namechanaco oninahuatiloc[.]*

privileges they had justly earned. Nevertheless, in the context of the time, native allies' efforts can be seen as rational attempts to improve economic and political standing and to advance their individual positions and those of their communities within a colonial order that was still very much being determined.

The northern frontier in the sixteenth century offered a myriad of opportunities for New Spain's indigenous colonial subjects, but those opportunities came with considerable risks. Therefore we must use extreme caution when attempting to impute motivations to indigenous subjects, as it does not necessarily follow that migrants enthusiastically capitalized on these opportunities just because they existed. The next chapter will explore a different type of migration—one that at first glance appears to have had much in common with the voluntary or contractual movements of indigenous settlers from central Mexico to the frontier in the sixteenth century. Yet the extent to which this "migration" was voluntary is up for debate. In fact, when we peer beyond the Spanish colonial sources and look to what the migrants themselves wrote, a very different picture of indigenous settlement in the north emerges—one that calls into question the willingness of the so-called migrants and sheds new light on their experiences as colonial subjects in diaspora.

*CHAPTER 3. "IN CASE I DIE WHERE I AM SELECTED TO BE SENT:" THE TLAXCALAN RESETTLEMENT OF 1591 AND THE END OF THE CHICHIMEC WAR IN NEW SPAIN*

If indigenous people from central Mexico were critical sparks triggering the Chichimec War, they were also instrumental to its resolution. As we saw in the previous chapter, southern migrants recruited from frontier settlements played decisive roles in the skirmishes that defined the war's early years. Nevertheless these were small, even pyrrhic, victories, as anything short of completely ending the war merely galvanized the Chichimecs and provoked additional violence and killings. Migrants from the south would ultimately leave their most indelible mark on the era of the Chichimec War not as soldiers but as agents of peace and acculturation.

A vast literature has explored the activities of Indians from central Mexico as allies in the colonial north. In particular, the Tlaxcalans have been celebrated as Spanish allies par excellence. This work has provided valuable insight into the roles and contributions of indigenous allies and shapers of empire in the Americas. Yet by relying too heavily on official Spanish documentation—which tends to cast their activities in overly sanguine terms—historians have imputed a level of enthusiasm and willingness to the Spaniards' allies that is unsupported and even contradicted by indigenous sources. Worse still, such an optimistic interpretation of indigenous

attitudes towards colonial service has precluded analyses of the allies' experiences during the Chichimec War and subsequent peace efforts.<sup>258</sup>

This chapter revisits the Chichimec War's final decade, and particularly a critical event that helped finally bring the bloody and costly conflict to a close. The Tlaxcalan resettlement of 1591, in which nearly one thousand indigenous colonists

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<sup>258</sup> For non-Tlaxcalan auxiliaries during the Chichimec War, see Barlow and Smisor, eds., *Nombre de Dios, Durango*; Wright, *Conquistadores otomíes*. For the 1591 resettlement and the Tlaxcalans' subsequent activities as allies in northern New Spain, see David B. Adams, *Las colonias tlaxcaltecas de Coahuila y Nuevo León en la Nueva España: un aspecto de la colonización del norte de México* (Saltillo: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 1991); Adams, "At the Lion's Mouth: San Miguel de Aguayo in the Defense of Nuevo León, 1686-1841," *Colonial Latin American Review* 9:3 (2000): 324-346; Vito Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas en la época colonial* (Mexico City: Editorial Cultura, 1938), chap. 8; Elizabeth Butzer, *Historia social de una comunidad tlaxcalteca: San Miguel de Aguayo (Bustamante, N.L., 1686-1820)* (Saltillo: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 2001); Israel Cavazos Garza and María Isabel Monroy, eds., *Constructores de la nación: La migración tlaxcalteca en el norte de la Nueva España* (San Luis Potosí: El Colegio de San Luis; Tlaxcala: Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1999); René Cuéllar Bernal, "Los Tlaxcaltecas en Nuevo León," in *Estudios de Historia del Noreste* (Monterrey: Sociedad Nuevoleonesa de Historia, Geografía, y Estadística, 1971), 102-111; J. de Jesús Dávila Aguirre, *La colonización tlaxcalteca y su influencia en el noreste de la Nueva España* (Saltillo: Gobierno del Estado de Coahuila, 1991); Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, chap. 6; Patricia Martinez, "'Noble Tlaxcalans': Race and Ethnicity in Northeastern New Spain, 1770-1810," PhD diss., Univ. of Texas, Austin, 2004; Andrea Martínez Baracs, "Colonizaciones tlaxcaltecas," *Historia Mexicana* 43, no. 2 (Oct.-Dec. 1993): 195-250; Tomás Martínez Saldaña, *La diáspora tlaxcalteca: Colonización agrícola del norte mexicana* (Tlaxcala: Tlaxcallan, Ediciones del Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1988), esp. chaps. 6-8; McEnroe, *From Colony to Nationhood*; Offutt, "Levels of Acculturation;" Offutt, "Defending Corporate Identity on New Spain's Northeastern Frontier: San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala, 1780-1810," *The Americas* 64, no. 3 (2007): 351-375;" Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 194-223; Barry M. Robinson, *The Mark of Rebels: Indios Fronterizos and Mexican Independence* (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 2016); Eugene B. Sego, *Aliados y adversarios: los colonos tlaxcaltecas en la frontera septentrional de Nueva España* (San Luis Potosí and Tlaxcala: Colegio de San Luis; Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala; Centro de Investigaciones Históricas de San Luis Potosí, 1998); Cecilia Sheridan Prieto, "'Indios Madrineros': Colonizadores tlaxcaltecas en el noreste novohispano," *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 24 (Jan.-June 2001): 15-51; Marc Simmons, "Tlascalans in the Spanish Borderlands," *New Mexico Historical Review* 39, no. 2 (April 1964): 101-110.

relocated to five colonies across the Chichimec frontier, was critical to efforts to end the war. According to many historians, the Tlaxcalans leapt at this opportunity to serve, and their noble efforts helped to end nearly a half-century of bloodshed, enabled the final pacification and conversion of the indomitable Chichimecs, and reenergized northern expansion and mining.<sup>259</sup> Some of these settlements survived well into the eighteenth century and beyond—a selected few even thrived, experiencing population growth that led to the founding of additional “spin-off” colonies.<sup>260</sup> In consequence, the 1591 initiative has been cast as the first installment of a great Tlaxcalan epic of colonization and defense in New Spain’s north, and the settlers themselves have been afforded almost legendary status.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Philip Wayne Powell, “Peacemaking on North America’s First Frontier,” *The Americas* 16, no. 3 (Jan. 1960): 244-47, characterized the pacification program of the 1580s and 1590s as foundational to these processes, and he considered the Tlaxcalan settlement a key component of that peace effort. Works characterizing the resettlement as voluntary include David Bergen Adams, “The Tlaxcalan Colonies of Spanish Coahuila and Nuevo León: An Aspect of the Settlement of Northern Mexico,” PhD diss., Univ. of Texas, 1971, 30-31; Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 184; Powell, *Mexico’s Miguel Caldera*, 150; Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 204-223, esp. 213, 216; Sego, *Aliados y adversarios*, 45; Simmons, “Tlascalans in the Spanish Borderlands.”

<sup>260</sup> The most important of these colonies maintained horse herds and frequently fielded soldiers in militia campaigns to pursue *indios bárbaros* and maintain peace across the frontier. Some colonies, such as San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala in Coahuila (examined in-depth in the following chapter) and San Miguel de Aguayo in Nuevo León endured well into the nineteenth century. San Esteban also frequently provided colonists for additional settlement ventures. See Offutt, “Defending Corporate Identity;” Adams, “At the Lion’s Mouth;” Butzer, *Historia social*; Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 181-89; McEnroe, *From Colony to Nationhood*, 37-43.

<sup>261</sup> That the Tlaxcalan presence in the north has achieved almost legendary status is supported by the outpouring of works by both Mexican and U.S. scholars in recent decades, summarized in note 258, above. Consider also Adams’s characterization of “the epic of Tlaxcalan settlement in the Mexican north,” and Simmons’s, statement: “wherever these Indians [i.e. Tlaxcalans] ventured, whatever enterprise [sic] they undertook, they inevitably assumed the character of frontier

This narrative, however, is problematic. First, it disregards compelling evidence that the resettlement was received with considerable ambivalence at the leadership level and with widespread resistance among Tlaxcalan commoners. Also, by portraying the Tlaxcalans as enthusiastic allies—an assumption based on insufficient evidence—historians have glamorized indigenous roles and portrayed their actions in the north as contributions to Spanish colonial enterprises. The literature has seldom acknowledged the impact of imperial service on Tlaxcala and its people. By relying heavily on official colonial sources in Spanish, accounts of the resettlement have largely overlooked the question of the mission’s significance for the colonists involved. By and large, scholars examining the Tlaxcalan migration of 1591 have ignored relevant sources in Nahuatl, sources that tell a much more complex—and painful—story of indigenous allies’ involvement in the Chichimec peace process.<sup>262</sup>

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heroes.” Adams, “Tlaxalan Colonies,” iii; Simmons, “Tlascalans in the Spanish Borderlands,” 110.

<sup>262</sup> Few scholars have devoted significant attention to the migration’s Nahuatl sources. The few pages Gibson devoted to the migration in *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* relied partially on Nahuatl manuscripts designated “Anales antiguos de México y sus contornos” at the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología y Historia (BNAH) in Mexico City. These, however, provide only sparse data. Andrea Martínez Baracs’s excellent work relies on a greater variety of Nahuatl sources, but more have come to light since the appearance of her “Colonizaciones tlaxcaltecas,” on which the chapter covering the resettlement (chap. 6) in her more recent *Un gobierno de indios: Tlaxcala, 1519-1750* (Mexico City and Tlaxcala: Fondo de Cultura Económica; Fideicomiso Colegio de Historia de Tlaxcala; Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 2008), is based. And while Sheridan Prieto’s masterful “Indios madrineros” mined the bountiful Archivo Municipal de Saltillo in Coahuila, this work does not take advantage of the abundant Nahuatl materials available there. This is despite the fact that Tlaxcalan migrants and their descendants created all of the Nahuatl documents existing in that archive. Offutt’s work (see note 258, above), by contrast, does make use of San Esteban’s Nahuatl materials. Indeed she is believed to be the first U.S. scholar to discover this



In contrast to the prevailing narrative that the migration was a voluntary act undertaken by heroic Indian allies, this chapter interprets it as a forced exodus that provoked far-reaching opposition and strained an indigenous state facing demographic collapse, economic upheaval, and political turmoil. The event also signaled shifting attitudes towards indigenous allies in New Spain. Once acknowledged as indispensable military partners meriting privilege and reward, by the end of the sixteenth century natives in Tlaxcala started being treated like other *indios*—members of a vanquished underclass who owed allegiance and tribute to the Spanish Crown. Put another way, the migration of 1591 marked a critical turning point after which “Indian Conquistadors” became forsaken allies.

In order to gauge the consequences of indigenous participation in colonial enterprises in northern New Spain, this chapter examines sources written by those who planned, commented on, and participated in the Tlaxcalan resettlement of 1591. It revisits familiar Spanish documentation seeking a native perspective, but more importantly it relies on Nahuatl documents, which have been underutilized. These include records of Tlaxcala’s indigenous *cabildo* (municipal council), annals composed by native historians, and manuscripts authored by Tlaxcalan colonists, including a testament representing the only known document to record events leading up to the migration from the perspective of a participant.<sup>263</sup> This important

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incredible archive. Nevertheless her work has focused more on social conditions and corporate identity at San Esteban than on the migration itself.

<sup>263</sup> I am grateful to John Frederick Schwaller, whose *A Guide to Nahuatl Language Manuscripts held in United States Repositories* (Berkeley, CA: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2001) directed me to this important testament and gave me an indication of its contents. I have searched in vain for additional Nahuatl documents representing participants’ perspectives on the resettlement. None could

source is analyzed in-depth here for the first time. In stark contrast to the Spanish sources that have informed earlier histories, Nahuatl records reveal chaos in Tlaxcala preceding the migration, a divided leadership, and widespread resistance. The view from Tlaxcala belies narratives of enthusiastic allies and willing volunteers, revealing a dark history of an indigenous state in decline, a high-handed viceroy, and native families torn apart.

The 1591 mission was as an important facet of the northern peace initiative, but it was not the first resettlement of its kind. Section one outlines New Spain's prosecution of the Chichimec War and the role that Indian colonization played in those efforts. Section two situates the Tlaxcalan resettlement in the context of decline that characterized late-sixteenth-century Tlaxcala, highlights the mission's extreme unpopularity, and assesses the role coercion played in Tlaxcala's recruitment of settlers. Their power compromised by internal crises and increasingly limited by the colonial state, ruling-class elites (*tlatoque*) had no choice but to grant the viceroy's request for settlers, and since few recruits volunteered, many appear to have been coerced.<sup>264</sup> The final documents how proposals for Indian colonization were received in Tlaxcala, how the 1591 expedition was organized and

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be located among the hundreds of Nahuatl testaments at Mexico City's AGN, nor are participants' writings to be found at the Archivo Histórico del Estado de Tlaxcala or the BNAH, according to my research. Nahuatl documents do survive from the colony of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala (preserved at the Archivo Municipal de Saltillo in Coahuila—hereafter AMS), but none of the several dozen I examined for this study provides insight into settler recruitment or the exodus from Tlaxcala. Nevertheless these do offer unprecedented glimpses into indigenous community formation, governance, and social dynamics in the Tlaxcalan colonies. These topics will be explored in greater detail in chapter four.

<sup>264</sup> Following Lockhart (*The Nahuas*, 133), I use the term *tlatoque* to mean noblemen affiliated with the cabildo.

carried out, and what consequences this had for common individuals and families. Much of what is known concerning these points comes to us from indigenous sources. Particularly important is the last will and testament of Domingo Morales, a Tlaxcalan commoner selected to undertake the northern mission. His words, set down in his own language the day before he and family members were forced to leave their home forever, evoke the uncertainty and fear that colonists experienced on the eve of their departure for the great unknown. His personal, poignant account provides unprecedented insight into the internal thoughts of an indigenous commoner facing permanent exile in the guise of colonial service. As such, it not only offers unprecedented insider access to a trying period in Tlaxcalan history but also serves as an instructive counterpoint to Hispanocentric narratives of the migration, which often obscure indigenous points of view.

### **I. Ending the Chichimec War**

Bookending the Chichimec War were two rulers of the same name, Luis de Velasco the elder, viceroy of New Spain (r. 1551 to 1564), and his son, who held the post from 1590 to 1595. The father presided over the war's beginnings, but the younger Velasco would be the one to finally bring it to a close. Mostly he accomplished this by elaborating the peace policy of his predecessor, don Álvaro Manrique de Zúñiga, marqués de Villamanrique (r. 1585-1590), who disavowed the scorched-earth strategy of his forebears and sought instead to 'reduce' Chichimecs to civilization through diplomacy and gift giving. Still, much of what the younger Velasco accomplished was in the spirit of his father. Early in his tenure as viceroy, *el viejo* (as

the older Velasco was called) sponsored the settlement of the frontier by Nahuas, Purépechas, and Otomís, providing a buffer from Chichimec attack and a rallying point for *entradas* of discovery and conquest.<sup>265</sup>

While this burst of settlement activity—known as “defensive colonization”—has been portrayed as *el viejo*’s brainchild, in a sense he was merely extending and giving his imprimatur to an indigenous settlement initiative that was already under way. Liberated from Aztec and Tarascan dominion by Spanish conquest, factions of Otomís scrambled to reclaim the Bajío. Since the fifteenth century, Otomís had tilled the valley’s fertile soils, but they had done so as subjects of Tarascan and Mexica overlords who sent them to colonize the margins of their empires. Starting in the 1520s, Otomís used the smokescreen of Spanish conquest to claim the area around Xilotepec from the vanquished Mexica and insert themselves as masters of Querétaro and much of the Bajío. By the time the first Velasco was installed as viceroy, Querétaro was an expanding Otomí republic anchoring New Spain’s northern frontier. Its indigenous lord, Connín (baptized Francisco de Tapia), had been beating back and incorporating local Chichimecs since the 1530s. Seeing an opportunity, Velasco opted to keep Tapia as an ally rather than oppose him. But he checked the upstart’s designs on the rest of the Bajío by recognizing Spanish claims at San Miguel, which had been settled by Otomís in the 1530s but was contested by Spaniards.<sup>266</sup> Likewise, Velasco chartered the Spanish town of San Felipe, situated

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<sup>265</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 67-70.

<sup>266</sup> Tutino, *Making a New World*, 71-77, 81.

on the edge of the Bajío, in 1562.<sup>267</sup> Thus Velasco deftly limited Otomí expansion in the Bajío at the same time that he strategically harnessed its potential.

Velasco also encouraged other Mesoamerican peoples to populate the land of war by offering legal titles to status, property, weapons, and mounts. As we saw in the previous chapter, the establishment of Nombre de Dios, near present-day Durango, was part of this process. In its charter, Velasco granted the Nahua and Purépecha founders rights comparable to the town's Spanish settlers.<sup>268</sup> Through the use of Indian buffer towns, *el viejo* strengthened Spanish claims to a long-contested borderland and dotted the frontier with the ramparts of a new Spanish-Mesoamerican order. Furthermore, by enticing Mesoamericans to come north, the older Velasco anticipated the policy his son would use to great effect in the 1590s and that would finally bring peace to this embattled borderland.<sup>269</sup>

But it would be decades before that plan would be realized. In the meantime, Velasco's defensive colonization did little to curb Chichimec depredations. It was not until viceroy Martín Enríquez (r. 1568-1580) unfurled a comprehensive platform for prosecuting the war that the Chichimec problem was addressed in any systematic way. Enríquez established numerous *presidios* (forts) and additional defensive towns, created a system of escorts and patrols, and commissioned special officers

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<sup>267</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 68-69.

<sup>268</sup> See the document pertaining to the settlement's foundation in AGN, Mercedes, vol. 6, ff. 269v-270r; and "Autos de pedimiento de los Vecinos de Nombre de Dios...", AGN, Tierras, vol. 1458, exp. 15, ff. 1r-31r. This practice continued under subsequent viceroys. For instance in 1588 Villamanrique apparently granted Nahuas and Tlaxcalans settled at the frontier town of Celaya "the same privileges" as Spaniards, including "Vezindad," (municipal citizenship). See "Auto en que se aprueba el mandamiento de los yndios de Çalaya [Celaya] sobre la Vezindad," 29 August 1591, BL, MSS M-A1, ctn. 5, fold. 575 (TS of AGN, Indios, vol. 3, exp. 936).

<sup>269</sup> Tutino, *New World*, 67-77.

tasked with conscripting soldiers to wage an all-out “war of fire and blood” (*guerra a fuego y a sangre*) with total Chichimec annihilation as its object.<sup>270</sup>

For all its system, though, Enríquez’s plan of total war was only modestly effective. In fact in many ways it was counterproductive. For starters, neither Spaniards nor their allies had extensive experience fighting elusive, highly mobile Indians on their home turf. The terrain was rugged, making travel tedious and maintaining supply lines nearly impossible. Once located, Chichimecs were wont to retreat to broken, craggy refuges where their pursuers “could not avail themselves of their horses” and became easy targets for ambushes.<sup>271</sup> The most nettlesome problem, however, stemmed from the Crown’s refusal to adequately fund the war effort. Soldiers and even captains went long periods without pay, (spawning the widespread custom of promising Chichimec captives as compensation, discussed in chapter two).<sup>272</sup> Despite decrees mandating that captured Chichimecs be tried in Mexico City courts, more wound up there as slaves than as defendants, having been summarily sentenced to lengthy periods of slavery after mock trials organized by officers and soldiers looking to profit from their sale.<sup>273</sup> Some did not make it that far. Those labeled rebel leaders were often hanged in the field; others were sentenced to have limbs amputated and left to wander the deserts missing hands

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<sup>270</sup> Philip Wayne Powell, “Spanish Warfare against the Chichimecas in the 1570’s” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 24, no. 4 (Nov. 1944): 580-604; Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 105-19.

<sup>271</sup> “Información de Ahumada,” in Montoto, ed., *Colección de documentos*, 280.

<sup>272</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 120-40.

<sup>273</sup> Doctor Arteaga Mendiola to the king, 30 March 1576, AGI, Audiencia de México, leg. 69, ramo 4, no. 52, Portal de Archivos Españoles, pares.mcu.es: *todos los yndios que estan en servidumbre en esta ciudad y en otras partes son desta manera [i.e. illegally enslaved] con informaciones echa[n] por los soldados q son interesados y partiçip[an]tes y escribanos interesados y dandoles defensor q es interesado[.]*

and feet.<sup>274</sup> With their homeland invaded and their kin chased down, slain, mutilated, and sold into slavery, there is little wonder that the “war of fire and blood” actually prolonged the Chichimec War rather than brought it to a close. Guillermo de Santa María, a long-time missionary among the Chichimecs, invoked the words of his order’s founder, St. Augustine, in condemning what he saw as the principal cause of the Chichimec War: “To fight in war is no crime, but to wage war in order to enslave is sin.”<sup>275</sup>

Martín Enríquez’s “war of fire and blood” was the first coherent plan aimed at managing what was a major threat to New Spain’s security, revenue, and expansion. But ultimately it was a failure. The increase in troops and military activity merely resulted in a spike in slaving, and Chichimec violence actually increased in the five years immediately following Enríquez’s tenure as viceroy.<sup>276</sup> When the marqués de Villamanrique took office in 1585, violence was at an all-time high and Chichimec slavery was a noted problem throughout the viceroyalty, particularly in the capital.<sup>277</sup> A judge on Mexico City’s high court observed a decade

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<sup>274</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 109.

<sup>275</sup> Santa María, *Guerra de los Chichimecas*, 19: *Militar en la guerra no es delito, pero militar por saquear es pecado*.

<sup>276</sup> That is, from 1580 to 1585. Enríquez was New Spain’s viceroy from 1568 to 1580. Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 181.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 109: “the slave system...seems to have reached its height in the period 1575-1585, judging by the greatly increased Chichimeca hostility in this decade, the increased number of Spanish soldiers sent against them, and by the vigor of viceregal indictments after 1585 on the traffic in Chichimeca slaves”; Ibid., 172-73.

prior that there were upwards of 4,000 Chichimecs in that city alone, most of which “were given as slaves.”<sup>278</sup>

Through various administrative approaches running the gamut from complete apathy to total war, the Chichimec conflict consumed four decades and thousands of lives. Ironically, though, once adequate resources were directed to finding a sensible peace policy, the conflict was ended in a matter of a few years.<sup>279</sup> It was ultimately cheaper, and more effective, to pursue peace over war. This new platform was the brainchild of viceroy marqués de Villamanrique. His first proclamation while in office banned Chichimec slavery, which he understood, unlike those before him, to be the war’s root cause. This was an important factor in ending the war, though the intensification of military action in the late 1570s and the early 1580s undoubtedly helped assure that the new message of peace found resonance among beleaguered Chichimecs.<sup>280</sup> Villamanrique sought to dramatically reduce the

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<sup>278</sup> Doctor Arteaga Mendiola to the king, 30 March 1576, AGI, Audiencia de México, leg. 69, ramo 4, no. 52, Portal de Archivos Españoles, pares.mcu.es: “ansi mismo ay en esta ciudad mas de quatro mill indios chichimecos y los mas dellos y los mas dellos [sic] an cumplido los años de la servidumbre porque fueron dados por esclabos.” Gerónimo Mendieta likewise noted the presence of Chichimec slaves in many Spaniards’ homes. See Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 109-10.

<sup>279</sup> Diplomatic successes were achieved under Villamanrique beginning in 1588, and much of the “peace by purchase” was executed under Velasco the younger between 1590 and 1595. See Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 205-06, 217-18.

<sup>280</sup> Though a failure in the short-term, over the long run the “war of fire and blood” probably weakened the enemy considerably. Chichimecs were clearly affected by decades of slave raiding, and they experienced profound alterations to social structure in response to epidemics, migration, and the chaos of war. They also endured privation as subsistence patterns were fundamentally altered in response to environmental change wrought by mining-driven deforestation. And they likely eventually felt the effects of the apogee of New Spain’s military effort as well, which had been revamped and applied with renewed vigor, more substantial funds, and a bolstered soldiery capable of paying Spanish soldiers and Indian allies alike. These processes capped nearly four decades of conflict, likely making wearied Chichimecs



military presence on the frontier, increase missionary activity, and encourage Chichimecs to settle in *reducciones*, or towns where they would be clothed, fed, and educated in Christianity and agriculture.<sup>281</sup>

In just a few years, official Spanish policy had undergone an abrupt about-face, from pursuit of a “war of fire and blood” premised on annihilation and enslavement to *reducción*, or peaceful incorporation through acculturation. Villamanrique provided a framework that subsequent viceroys would elaborate. Velasco, his immediate successor, created new posts for individuals tasked with supplying large amounts of clothing, food, tools, building materials, reading primers, and various other supplies to depots along the frontier, where they were then distributed to the *reducciones*.<sup>282</sup> One of the most important aspects of the peace initiative was to be a bulwark of new settlements populated by Indians from central Mexico. In the words of the king, these would provide the “foundation” for the broader pacification effort. Viceroy Velasco used similar terms to describe the increased missionary activity that the settlements and their Indian colonists were meant to support.<sup>283</sup> Militarily, the colonies would shore up the frontier’s vulnerable sectors and close distances between isolated mining settlements, deterring attacks and protecting recent strides towards Chichimec peace. Finally, the settlements

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more amenable to the peace overtures that replaced slave raids, amputations, and hangings. Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 105-78; “Spanish Warfare against the Chichimecs;” Studnicki Gizbert and Schecter, “Silver Mining and Deforestation in New Spain.”

<sup>281</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 204-23, esp. 217-20.

<sup>282</sup> Powell, *Mexico’s Miguel Caldera*, 131-46.

<sup>283</sup> “Copia de los advertimientos generales...,” 14 February 1590 (part of viceroy Velasco to the king, 8 October 1590, AGI, México, leg. 22, no. 24, PARES, pares.mcu.es); “Para que a los yndios de Tlaxcala...se les guarde las preheminencias aqui contenidas,” 14 March 1591, AGN, Tierras, vol. 2956, f. 201r.

would facilitate the process of *reducción* by doubling as spiritual centers undergirding the reinvigorated missionary effort and as depots for the distribution of clothing and food to the former enemy.<sup>284</sup>

## II. The Tlaxcalan Resettlement of 1591

The Nahua *altepetl*, or city-state, of Tlaxcala had long been considered Spain's most dependable ally. The Tlaxcalans had allied with Cortés to conquer the Aztecs, contributing as many as tens of thousands of warriors in that campaign and in later Mesoamerican conquests.<sup>285</sup> In return, Tlaxcala received special privileges and tribute exemptions and was permitted to govern its internal affairs with more autonomy than other subject indigenous states. No Spaniards were permitted to live within Tlaxcala's borders and its citizens paid a modest tribute relative to other Indian subjects. It operated a semi-autonomous government via a *cabildo*, or Spanish-style town council, answerable only to the king, viceroy, and a Spanish governor. Legally, Tlaxcala was a suzerain of the Spanish empire, as much a part of

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<sup>284</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 191-93; Philip Wayne Powell, "Peacemaking on North America's First Frontier," *The Americas* 16, no. 3 (Jan. 1960): 235-42.

<sup>285</sup> Oudijk and Restall, "Mesoamerican Conquistadors," 33-35. The Tlaxcalans were just one of many groups of "Indian conquistadors" who facilitated the conquest of much of Mexico and Central America in the sixteenth century. See Altman, *War for Mexico's West*; Ida Altman, "Conquest, Coercion, and Collaboration: Indian Allies and the Campaigns in Nueva Galicia," in *Indian Conquistadors*, ed. Matthew and Oudijk, 145-174; Florine Asselbergs, *Conquered Conquistadors: The Lienzo of Quahquechollan, A Nahua Vision of the Conquest of Guatemala* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2004); Pedro Escalante Arce, *Los tlaxcaltecas en Centro América* (San Salvador: Dirección de Publicaciones e Impresos; Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y el Arte, 2001); Matthew, *Memories of Conquest*; Matthew and Oudijk, eds., *Indian Conquistadors*; Restall, *Maya Conquistador*, esp. 3-50.

New Spain's government as subject to it.<sup>286</sup> And since they had never been conquered, Tlaxcalans viewed themselves as conquistadors and Spain's military and political allies.

This special relationship made Tlaxcalans likely candidates for service in the peace effort. Between the mid-1570s and mid-1580s, several of New Spain's leading men proposed relocating native people to the frontier, and Tlaxcalans were frequently floated as potential candidates.<sup>287</sup> Likewise, in 1566 king Philip II sought Villamanrique's opinion regarding a plan to populate the frontier with "natives of Tlaxcala and other regions," a plan he eventually endorsed and recommended to his successor, Luis de Velasco.<sup>288</sup> When the younger Velasco assumed office as viceroy in 1590, he wasted little time in approaching Tlaxcalan leaders and requesting settlers.

The Tlaxcalan *cabildo* carefully weighed Velasco's request over the next few months, consulting with Franciscans and drafting a list of privileges and exemptions

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<sup>286</sup> This important distinction is made in Andrea Martínez Baracs, *Un gobierno de indios*, 24-25. Consider also Andrea Martínez Baracs and Carlos Sempat Assadourian's comment about the Spanish *corregidor* in *Tlaxcala: Una historia compartida* vol. 9, *Siglo XVI* (Tlaxcala and Mexico City: Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala; Consejo nacional para la cultura y las artes, 1991), 54: "Sin duda el corregidor o equivalente transmitía su órdenes superiores y era, por lo mismo, jerárquicamente superior al gobierno indio; es igualmente cierto que el funcionario virreinal poco podía hacer sin la colaboración del cabildo."

<sup>287</sup> Doctor Arteaga Mendiola to the king, 30 March 1576, Archivo General de Indias (Seville), México, leg. 69, ramo 4, no. 52, pares.mcu.es. For proposals specifically mentioning Tlaxcalans, see doctor Juan de Orozco to the king, 25 Nov. 1576, AGI, México, leg. 69, ramo 4, no. 59, PARES, pares.mcu.es; Orozco y Jiménez, ed., *Colección de documentos*, vol. 3, 186; Acuña, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, vol. 10, 267-68.

<sup>288</sup> "Al Virrey de la Nueva España que embie relacion con su parecer sobre...los Yndios Chichimecas..." in Charles Wislon Hackett, ed., *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches thereto, to 1773* vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1923), 154-57.

the colonists would receive in exchange. These the king ratified, with some modifications, on 14 March 1591.<sup>289</sup> According to the agreement, Tlaxcala was to provide 400 married couples to “settle among the Chichimecs in order to instruct them” in all things Christian and civilized. They would teach them to live “civilly” and with order (*en policía*), forming a harmonious “republic” and “community of Christians.” These model citizens were expected to facilitate the Chichimecs’ spiritual edification, ensuring they receive the sacraments and be regularly instructed in the faith. Tlaxcalans would also oversee their conversion to a sedentary lifestyle, teaching them to build houses and plant crops.<sup>290</sup> In essence, the Tlaxcalans would serve as all-purpose agents of acculturation in the north, propagating peace and incorporating Chichimec enemies-turned-refugees into the expanding colonial state.

### The View from Tlaxcala

For decades following the conquest of Mexico, Tlaxcala occupied a relatively privileged rung on New Spain’s social ladder. However, beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, that position was being eroded. By the 1590s, Tlaxcala was under serious threat, experiencing demographic collapse and profound political and economic change. At the same time, the colonial government undermined Tlaxcalan privileges by increasing tribute demands. In order to properly gauge its impact, the migration of 1591 must be situated within this context of decline and interpreted in

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<sup>289</sup> AGN, Tierras, vol. 2956, ff. 201r-202v; Martínez Baracs, *Un gobierno*, 278-87.

<sup>290</sup> AGN, Tierras, vol. 2956, f. 201v.

reference to the changing attitudes about Indians that informed colonial policy toward Tlaxcala at the time. In this light, the resettlement appears less a voluntary mission undertaken enthusiastically by empowered allies and more an oppressive burden foisted on a struggling indigenous polity.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, Tlaxcala experienced heavy population loss. Deaths caused by Spanish wars, epidemics, and scarcity had taken an especially horrific toll, reducing numbers by an estimated eighty-five percent by century's end.<sup>291</sup> With Tlaxcala experiencing its sixteenth-century demographic nadir, the proposed resettlement would have been immensely unpopular.

The colonial government also increased Tlaxcala's tribute at this time, further straining an already much-diminished population. In 1592 the *tostón*—a one-half *peso* tax levied on New Spain's Indians—was imposed on the province, despite its formal exemption from taxation and its provisioning of nearly one thousand settlers for northern colonization the previous year.<sup>292</sup> The additional tax significantly hampered Tlaxcala's ability to meet its standard tribute obligation—the annual provisioning of 12,000 bushels of maize—which was never adjusted for population loss stemming from disease and the recolonization.<sup>293</sup>

The *tostón* was particularly onerous coming on the heels of the resettlement, but more significantly, its enforcement reflected changes in colonial administrators' attitudes toward natives and their proper place in the colonial hierarchy. Velasco in

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<sup>291</sup> Martínez Baracs and Assadourian, eds., *Tlaxcala: Una historia compartida*, vol. 9, 78; Martínez Baracs, *Un gobierno de indios*, 182.

<sup>292</sup> Martínez Baracs, *Un gobierno de indios*, 193; Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 175.

<sup>293</sup> Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 179.

particular balked at the notion that certain *indios* be privileged over others, and Tlaxcala would receive no special treatment under his rule, no matter its former service or status. He was determined to impose the tax on Indians he described as “entitled” (*regalados*) and who “fancy themselves conquistadors.”<sup>294</sup> (Since he knew them to be a litigious and “knowledgeable” people, he suggested it be imposed through “artifice” in order “to preclude audiences [and] suits.”)<sup>295</sup> Working together to nullify their tribute exemption, Velasco and the king simultaneously declared the Tlaxcalans’ unexceptional, subordinate position and affirmed their *indio* status.<sup>296</sup> While administrators were reevaluating their position towards Tlaxcala, economic reorganization was undermining the province’s ruling elite, leaving them especially vulnerable to Spanish impositions. The traditional source of their power—rights to the labor of landless peasants—was eroding as dependents abandoned the fields to enter the emerging market economy. Penniless and increasingly powerless, native lords sold the emptied lands, often to *macehualtin* (commoners) or to Europeans.<sup>297</sup> The flight of the peasants, their deaths due to disease, and their forced congregation in cities and towns left productive lands on Tlaxcala’s margins vulnerable to opportunistic squatters.<sup>298</sup> Ironically, by furnishing colonists to secure New Spain’s borders, Tlaxcala would be left with fewer individuals to protect its own. Facing

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<sup>294</sup> Carlos Sempat Assadourian and Andrea Martínez Baracs, eds., *Tlaxcala: textos de su historia*, vol. 6, *Siglo XVI* (Tlaxcala, Mexico: Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala; Consejo nacional para la cultura y las artes, 1991), 287.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>296</sup> See Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 176. Cf. Martínez Baracs, *Un gobierno de indios*, 285.

<sup>297</sup> Martínez Baracs and Assadourian, eds., *Tlaxcala: Una historia compartida*, vol. 9, 62.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 80-81.

demographic collapse and economic reorganization that threatened its political base, the tlatoque were in no position to refuse Velasco's request for settlers. Cooperation was the only way forward. But it would not be the tlatoque who would go north. That burden would be offloaded onto the macehualtin.

### Volunteers or Coerced Colonists?

*Making [a resettlement] will bring inconveniences...on account of the difficulty with which the Indians from Tlaxcala and other regions leave their native homes.*<sup>299</sup>  
 - viceroy marqués de Villamanrique, 1586

The tlatoque's vulnerable position might well explain why they obliged Velasco. Nevertheless the possibility remains that the Tlaxcalans had strong incentive to participate and desired to do so. Citing the various privileges Velasco granted the colonists in exchange for their service, scholars have portrayed the resettlement as a voluntary migration.<sup>300</sup> However, such an interpretation merits closer scrutiny. One of the most significant concessions the settlers received was the condition they and their descendants be declared "*hidalgos*, free of all tribute, *pecho*, *alcabala* [i.e. taxes], and personal service."<sup>301</sup> However tribute exemption was not as exclusive—and therefore perhaps not as attractive—as has been supposed. Recent scholarship has shown that natives who relocated to frontier communities like San Luis Potosí

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<sup>299</sup> Villamanrique to the king, 15 Nov. 1586, BL, MSS Z-E1, cont. 33, folder 2957, p. 4. Original at AGI, Patronato, leg. 24.

<sup>300</sup> See note 259, above. For the original list of the privileges granted the Tlaxcalans, see AGN, Tierras, vol. 2956, ff. 201r-202v. A copy of this document appears in *DHSLP*, vol. 1, 177-83.

<sup>301</sup> AGN, Tierras, vol. 2956, f. 201v.

and Zacatecas in the sixteenth century found not only exemption from tribute and draft labor but also opportunities to earn wages in the bustling mining economy.<sup>302</sup> Native women earned livings as landlords and retailers, while men supplemented mining wages by collecting and smelting silver tailings in a practice known as *pepena*.<sup>303</sup> Some indigenous men and women even owned mines.<sup>304</sup> Zacatecas was also considerably safer than the recently pacified regions in which the Tlaxcalan migrants settled in 1591—and more welcoming. Within its confines there was a large population of Nahuas, including many Tlaxcalans.<sup>305</sup> Given the choice, it seems unlikely that Tlaxcalans seeking tribute exemption would have forgone the benefits, security, and camaraderie of the mining communities in order to build new settlements from the ground up in a desert surrounded by enemies.

The stipulation that colonists and their descendants be considered *hidalgos* (members of Spain's minor nobility) was significant in that it guaranteed tribute exemption, but for most colonists the title would have rung hollow. The salient status marker in Tlaxcalan society was the distinction between macehualtin and *pipiltin* (nobles), and judging from the conspicuous lack of the titles *don* and *doña* in the muster roll taken during the journey as well as in documentation from the colonies, the vast majority of the settlers belonged to the former category.<sup>306</sup> The

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<sup>302</sup> Corbeil, "Identities in Motion," 129; Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians*, 19, 37; "Laboring above Ground," 17.

<sup>303</sup> Velasco Murillo, "Laboring above Ground," 12-13; Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, 125; Corbeil, "Identities in Motion," 91-92.

<sup>304</sup> Velasco Murillo, "Laboring above Ground," 11-12.

<sup>305</sup> Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians*, 47, 58-59, 95-96.

<sup>306</sup> *DHSLP*, vol. 1, 184-203; Offutt, "Levels of Acculturation," 412. See also the discussion on p. 152, below.



colonists might have been declared *hidalgos*, but their participation in the resettlement did not make them *pipiltin*.

The connection between *hidalguía* and elevated social standing has been inferred, not empirically demonstrated, and social differentiation in the Tlaxcalan colonies remains understudied. Leslie S. Offutt, one of few scholars to address the issue, analyzed twenty-five seventeenth-century testaments from the colony of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala (modern Saltillo, Coahuila) and discovered that the majority of testators were devoid of noble title. “Curiously,” she observes, “while the terms of the establishment of the community provided that all Tlaxcalan colonists would be considered...*hidalgos*, entitled to the use of the title *don*, only two of the earlier [i.e. seventeenth-century] testators bear that title.”<sup>307</sup> Furthermore, Offutt notes that testators’ estates, even those belonging to dons, “were, in the main, rather modest.”<sup>308</sup> In other words, while the colonists did receive tribute exemption, most appear to have experienced no appreciable increase in social status or wealth as a result of their participation in the mission, and they were probably worse off than their counterparts at the mining communities, where wage-earning opportunities abounded and tribute exemption was standard.

If relocating to the frontier did not immediately improve the settlers’ positions within native society, it is nevertheless possible that some hoped to eventually achieve elevated standing through participation in local government. After all, the colonists’ privileges permitted them to form self-governing towns, and Nahuatl records from San Esteban indicate that a select few individuals did use the

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<sup>307</sup> Offutt, “Levels of Acculturation,” 412.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 413.

cabildo and confraternities to lay claim to political power and social prestige (in a process similar to that documented by Dana Velasco Murillo at Zacatecas).<sup>309</sup> Nevertheless this process took time, and it would not have been a realistic expectation for most colonists, the majority of whom were commoners. In other cases, colonists' descendants celebrated their services in the north (and their ancestors') and identified themselves as nobles in documents addressed to Spanish officials—facts that could be interpreted as evidence the colonists did enjoy elite status.<sup>310</sup> The Tlaxcalans were remarkably adept at invoking past services to win royal favor, and it is important to note that this rich tradition continued at the frontier.<sup>311</sup> Nevertheless the claims of descendants do not provide a reliable indicator of the original settlers' social positions. Since these cases are often far removed in time, tracing hereditarily derived status to the original settlement group is difficult.<sup>312</sup> It seems more likely that descendants claiming noble status (who were in any case few in proportion to the overall settler population) achieved this as a result of services performed at the frontier and invoked the 1591 provisions bestowing *hidalguía* to bolster their claims before Spaniards. And in fact the contents of their petitions—trumpeting militia service, the discovery of mines, the

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<sup>309</sup> AGN, Tierras, vol. 2956, f. 201v. Consider, for example, the careers of don Gaspar Cleofas (AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exps. 1-6; Testamentos, caja 1, exps. 2-3, 7-16, 18, 20) and don Andrés del Saltillo (AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exps. 5-6, 8-15, 39, 41). Velasco Murillo, "Creation of Indigenous Leadership."

<sup>310</sup> McEnroe, *From Colony to Nationhood*, 2-3, 36, 42, 77-78.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.

<sup>312</sup> McEnroe (*From Colony to Nationhood*, 2-3, 36, 42, 77-78) discusses cases from 1782, 1723, and 1698-1701. Butzer (*Historia social*, 32-33) notes petitions from 1685 and 1686.

founding of additional colonies, and officeholding—support this conclusion.<sup>313</sup> In sum, the correlation between privileges conferring exemptions and increased social status and the colonists' willing participation in the 1591 migration has been assumed rather than proven.

There is almost no evidence to support a willing resettlement, despite claims that the Tlaxcalans volunteered. Only two cases of 'volunteers' can be documented, and both refer to individuals looking to escape difficult circumstances at home. One man was hoping to secure his release from one of Tlaxcala's many *obrajes* (prison-like sweatshops with notoriously dreadful conditions), to which he had been condemned as punishment for an offense.<sup>314</sup> And certain individuals who, according to Velasco, intended to make the trek were evidently looking to evade debts owed to Spaniards or to get out from under contracts.<sup>315</sup>

More reliable evidence suggests the cabildo selected colonists and that they were given little choice. This is most apparent in the manner in which they were recruited. To fulfill the required 400 heads of household, a quota of 100 men was imposed—undoubtedly by the cabildo—on each of Tlaxcala's four *tlayacatl* (constituent parts of a complex altepetl): Ocotelulco, Quiahuiztlan, Tizatlan, and Tepeticpac.<sup>316</sup> Significantly, this is how rotary draft labor and other tribute was

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<sup>313</sup> See note 310, above.

<sup>314</sup> Viceroy Velasco to governor Nava concerning Miguel Tlaquitl [Quauhtli], 12 March 1591, AGN, Indios, vol. 5, exp. 282, f. 145r.

<sup>315</sup> Velasco to the governor of Tlaxcala, 9 March 1591, AGN, Indios, vol. 5, exp. 271, f. 142r.

<sup>316</sup> Juan Buenaventura Zapata y Mendoza, *Historia cronológica de la noble ciudad de Tlaxcala*, ed. and trans. Luis Reyes García and Andrea Martínez Baracs (Tlaxcala, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala; Secretaría de Extensión

typically organized, with the responsibilities being imposed on and rotated among the altepetl's subunits.<sup>317</sup> This indicates that participation was something extracted rather than freely offered. The Tlaxcalan annalist Juan Buenaventura Zapata y Mendoza recorded that two captains were chosen from each tlayacatl to lead the colonists, and it appears these individuals were tasked with recruiting settlers from their districts.<sup>318</sup> Domingo Morales, the only participant to have left record of these events, stated flatly in his testament that he was chosen to be sent, possibly by captains Zapata mentions.<sup>319</sup>

The scale and pervasiveness of Tlaxcalan resistance also provides compelling evidence. Gauging from the opposition it generated, the mission was highly unpopular. All eight captains refused to carry out their duties. Those selected from Ocotelulco (Esteban Zacamaquitl and Hipólito Amantecatli) and Tizatlan (Bartolomé Osorio and Rodrigo de Molina) were particularly outraged, traveling to Mexico City to protest directly before the viceroy.<sup>320</sup> Velasco immediately had them detained.<sup>321</sup> The resettlement was the foundation of the pacification effort, so he cast the disaffected noblemen as rabble-rousers whose disobedience imperiled the mission, the Chichimec peace, and thus the realm. He refused to let the "agitators" return to

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Universitaria y Difusión Cultural; Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1995), 182.

<sup>317</sup> See James Lockhart, Frances Berdan, and Arthur J. O. Anderson, eds., *The Tlaxcalan Actas: A Compendium of the Records of the Cabildo of Tlaxcala, 1545-1627* (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1986), 22-23.

<sup>318</sup> Zapata, *Historia cronológica*, 180, 182.

<sup>319</sup> Testament of Domingo Morales in Nahuatl, 8 June 1592 [1591], Gilcrease Museum (Tulsa, OK), Hispanic Manuscripts 184, f. 11r (hereafter GM, HM).

<sup>320</sup> Zapata, *Historia cronológica*, 180.

<sup>321</sup> Para que se les notifique a los quatro yndios..., 1 March 1591, AGN, Indios, vol. 5, exp. 252, ff. 136v-137r.

Tlaxcala, mandating they “neither deal nor communicate with the other Indians” there.<sup>322</sup>

However, resistance was not isolated to a few firebrands. Rather it was widespread and reached the highest levels of Tlaxcalan government. The ‘rebellious’ captains came from the indigenous elite,<sup>323</sup> for example, and one of the individuals Velasco identified as the source of their disaffection was none other than don Leonardo Xicotencatl, *tlatoani* (sing. of *tlatoque*) of Tizatlan and future governor of Tlaxcala.<sup>324</sup> And even though the cabildo had agreed to the resettlement, there are hints that this was a contentious decision that divided leadership. Zapata observed that the indigenous governor at the time, don Alvaro de Morante, was deposed after serving only one year on a two-year term. During his tenure, he wrote, “the *tlatoque* fought with one another.”<sup>325</sup>

Meanwhile, the situation with the rebellious captains threatened to derail the mission. Velasco dashed off stern orders to Tlaxcala’s Spanish magistrate, governor Alonso de Nava, reminding him of what was at stake and the consequences of inaction.<sup>326</sup> “Know well how much God our lord and his majesty will be served should the new settlements...be realized,” he wrote. They promised to be of “such benefit for the entire realm” that he carefully instructed Nava to investigate “with

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<sup>322</sup> AGN, Indios, vol. 5, exp. 252, ff. 136v-137r.

<sup>323</sup> Velasco refers to the four he detained as “*yndios principales*” (ibid, f. 136v). The other four all appear on the mission’s muster carrying the “don” title (DHSLP, vol. 1, 185, 198).

<sup>324</sup> Martínez Baracs, *Un gobierno de indios*, 290-91.

<sup>325</sup> Zapata, *Historia cronológica*, 184: *mixnamique tlatoque*. My translation.

<sup>326</sup> Spanish *gobernadores* (also sometimes called *corregidores*) exercised administrative and judicial authority over a particular territory. For this office in Tlaxcala, see Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 66-75.

great care” any Indians “who disturb or incite or attempt to dissuade” the others and “bring them before me so they can be punished.”<sup>327</sup> Velasco needed the colonists to appear as willing, and a mutiny in Tlaxcala might have caused the king to reconsider whether his subjects were in fact serving “without force, pressure, or compulsion.”<sup>328</sup> With increased vigilance from his agent in Tlaxcala, Velasco intended to weed out subversives and crush the resistance. Four uncooperative captains were already languishing in jail. Others, fearing a similar fate, were forced to carry out their unenviable tasks.

They did so only grudgingly, however. Zapata explains that, at the eleventh hour, there was a delay. Quiahuiztlan and Tepeticpac failed to field the required number of colonists.<sup>329</sup> Two captains from these districts—don Diego Ramírez and don Francisco Vázquez—had been among the original eight who objected, but they avoided detention by opting not to bring their protest to Mexico City. Nava, following orders from Velasco, likely ensured their cooperation, but they remained resistant to the end. It can be no coincidence that their districts fielded the fewest settlers.<sup>330</sup>

In truth, no *tlayacatl* ever met the quota. Even though Zapata recorded 399 total married men, a muster taken on the road a month after the colonists’ departure reported only 341.<sup>331</sup> While desertion could explain the discrepancy, I suspect the captains struggled to recruit married heads of household and had to pad

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<sup>327</sup> Velasco to Nava, 9 March 1591, AGN, Indios, vol. 5, exp. 267.

<sup>328</sup> AGN, Indios, vol. 5, exp. 252, f. 136v.

<sup>329</sup> Zapata, *Historia cronológica*, 182.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 182, 663n117.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, 182; *DHSLP*, vol. 1, 184-203. The latter figure is based on my own count as the scribe’s are off.

the list with single individuals, and in fact fifty-four Tlaxcalans on the list went unaccompanied by a spouse.<sup>332</sup> The picture that emerges is clear: the families did not want to go, and the captains did not wish to send them.

### III. The *Macehualtin* Speak

Can we access the colonists' thoughts and get a sense for what they felt when informed of their impending removal from Tlaxcala? Minutes of the Tlaxcalan cabildo for 1560 provide a somewhat unlikely angle. In 1560 Velasco's father had requested one thousand settlers from Tlaxcala for his own resettlement project—a request the cabildo had initially granted. When it later backpedaled, sending a delegation to Mexico City to plead with Velasco to let them out of the obligation, its objections hinged on the unprecedented nature of the request and the hardship it would cause the settlers and their families, particularly women and children. The concerns they raised would have also resonated among those chosen in 1591. The tlatoque said:

Because the lord viceroy Luis de Velasco wanted a thousand married Tlaxcalans to establish their homes in Chichimec country ... at first the lords entirely accepted ... but later they saw that going would cause much affliction. Who would take the land and houses here of those who went? There would be contention over it. And how would the women and children travel on the road? Who would carry their provisions? And those who went would view it with abhorrence because they would be going forever. Hence the cabildo members said, "Never before has such a duty been undertaken ever since the Spaniards came, that women and children went to some far distant place. And though many times groups have gone far away to war by

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<sup>332</sup> *DHSLP*, vol. 1, 184-203.

order of the king our ruler, the Tlaxcalans went knowing that some would die there but others would be left and could return and not go forever.”<sup>333</sup>

The cabildo stressed that no *tequitl* (service, tribute) ever exposed women and children to the furies of war, and the Chichimec frontier was a warzone in 1560. The permanence of the resettlement was also unprecedented. Tlaxcalans frequently participated in military ventures, but the tlatoque deemed it unconscionable that men (let alone their wives and children) be sent away forever.

The evidence suggests that Tlaxcalan leaders accepted the viceroy’s terms believing many would volunteer. In fact, they had assured Velasco as much. Addressing Tlaxcalan leaders, the viceroy wrote, “I was under the impression on the occasions this matter was discussed there were more than enough people for this settlement.”

He was therefore surprised to learn that the settlers “have not offered to go.”

Evidently, cabildo members had badly misjudged the willingness of the macehualtin and spoken prematurely on their behalf. Embarrassed, they reportedly offered that the settlers “be compelled and pressured to go,” but Velasco refused. “It is not just that anyone be forced,” he reminded them.<sup>334</sup> Instead, he gave them additional time

to see if “there are people who will go willingly.”<sup>335</sup> Six weeks later, when cabildo

members appeared before him in Mexico City, he got his answer. There were none.

The cabildo’s complaints reflect the consternation the proposed settlement stirred up among the macehualtin. However, in stark contrast to his son, who jailed

dissidents and railroaded the 1591 resettlement forward despite widespread

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<sup>333</sup> Lockhart, Berdan, and Anderson, eds., *Tlaxcalan Actas*, 107.

<sup>334</sup> Assadourian and Martínez Baracs, eds. *Tlaxcala: Textos de su historia*, vol. 6, 526.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 527.



resistance, the elder Velasco offered to send Otomís from Xilotepec in the Tlaxcalans' stead.<sup>336</sup>

Even though the 1560 project involved Tlaxcalans of a different generation, we know that those recruited in 1591 shared some of the same concerns, as they expressed similar grievances. For instance, the prospect of abandoned houses and lands, a concern the tlatoque raised in 1560, likewise prompted a petition to the younger Velasco in 1591 requesting orders of protection safeguarding settlers' property.<sup>337</sup> Naturally, both parties fretted over what would become of abandoned homes and lands, but only the later group actually had to reckon with this reality. Velasco was determined to go ahead with the resettlement, and the cabildo was in no position to refuse.

Illuminating as they are, these cases nevertheless reflect settlers' concerns as framed by the tlatoque. The last will and testament of Tlaxcalan colonist Domingo Morales, on the other hand, documents the difficult period leading up to the exodus from a participant's perspective. Written entirely in Nahuatl, it was composed the day before colonists from his native Quiahuiztlan were forced to leave their homes to start a new life in an unknown land.<sup>338</sup> It not only provides concrete evidence of coercion but also captures a pivotal moment in Tlaxcalan history from the perspective of a macehualli.

When explaining why they were ordering their testaments, Nahuas commonly cited illness or old age. However, Domingo appears to have been a young

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<sup>336</sup> Lockhart, Berdan, and Anderson, *Tlaxcalan Actas*, eds., 107-08.

<sup>337</sup> Velasco to Nava, 9 March 1591, AGN, Indios, vol. 5, exp. 270, f. 142r.

<sup>338</sup> GM, HM 184, f. 12r, clause 30; Zapata, *Historia cronológica*, 182.

man, and as he explains in his testament, “I am not sick.” Rather he was making arrangements “so that I can prepare my soul in case I die where I am selected to be sent, when I go to Chichimec country.”<sup>339</sup> He had been chosen as a recruit for the resettlement of 1591.

In the colonial period, Nahuas like Domingo believed the soul lingered in purgatory after death and needed the cleansing power of Holy Mass to speed it along its heavenly journey, so the fact that he arranged for one in his testament comes as no surprise.<sup>340</sup> However he went to greater lengths to ensure this than was typical. He left the task to his children, and if they could not come up with the money, he instructed them to borrow it from the community. If all else failed, he hoped the local priests would “take pity on me” (*nechmocnoyttlizque*) and perform a Mass even in the absence of funds.<sup>341</sup> Domingo felt he would face grave danger in the north, and he sensed that this could very well be his last chance to ensure his soul’s release from purgatory. He twice mentioned the possibility of death “in Chichimec country” (*chichimecatlalpan*), and worried that he would “die somewhere along the road”—undoubtedly a reference to the frequent Chichimec ambushes on northern highways.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> GM, HM 184, f. 11r: *maçoyhui yn amo nimococoua yca yn notlalnacayo ca nipampa yn nanima ynic nicçencaua yntlacana ninomiquiliz yn campa nixquetzalo ynic niyaz chichimecatlalpan...* All Nahuatl translations are my own.

<sup>340</sup> See examples in Cline and León Portilla, eds. and trans., *The Testaments of Culhuacan* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California, 1984) and Caterina Pizzigoni, ed. and trans., *Testaments of Toluca* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2007).

<sup>341</sup> GM, HM 184, f. 11r.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid: *yntlacana ohtlica ninomiquiliz ynic niyaz yn ompa campa chichimecatlalpan*

Domingo knew the journey would be trying and perilous, so he took measures to protect himself and his wife—she would be going with him—and to encourage the loved ones they would be leaving behind. He instructed his children to go to the Franciscans in Tlaxcala, “so that they will plead to our lord God on my behalf, so that he will give me and my wife strength,” and he encouraged his godmother to “aid me by saying prayers for me and for my children.”<sup>343</sup> Left behind in Tlaxcala, they would need courage to face a world devoid of the ones who brought them into it.

Since the resettlement’s official documentation made no mention of children, it appears that colonists were free to choose whether or not their offspring would accompany them. And while affording a modicum of agency, this also led to agonizing decisions. Would parents decide to bring their children, exposing them to Chichimec violence and other frontier hazards? Or would they opt to keep them safe in Tlaxcala, and in so doing rip their families apart?

We have no way of knowing how colonists arrived at these decisions, but they must have been excruciating. In the case of Domingo and his wife Clara, it appears the matter was debated right up until the last minute. Domingo ordered his testament on June 8, the day before the group from Quiahuiztlan left Tlaxcala.<sup>344</sup> He bequeathed land to his children and left them tasks to carry out in Tlaxcala, indicating he planned to leave them behind. Nevertheless, his son Simón’s name

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid: *ynic nopampa quimotlatlauhtilizque ttº. dios ynic nechmochicahuiliz no yehuatl yn teoyotica nonamic...* Ibid., f. 12r: *nechicneliz nopan motlatoltiz teoyotica yoan ynpan motlatoltiz yn nopilhuan*

<sup>344</sup> Zapata, *Historia cronológica*, 182.

later appears on the list of colonists sent north. They took the boy after all.<sup>345</sup>

Between the time Domingo's testament was recorded and the moment they left Tlaxcala less than twenty-four hours later, Domingo and Clara had a change of heart. It is easy to see why. Simón was just four years old.<sup>346</sup> Many other couples faced similarly gut-wrenching decisions. And while there is no telling exactly how many families were broken up in this way, clearly the migration caused Tlaxcalans much anguish.

Both recruitment patterns and the list of participants suggest the colonists were mostly macehualtin. Domingo's family was no exception. Neither his name nor his wife's carries the don or doña title indicating indigenous nobility. In fact, among the actual colonists (excluding captains and their wives, who merely escorted the colonists to the settlements before returning to Tlaxcala) only one boasted the don, and there were no doñas.<sup>347</sup> Domingo's testament lists several plots of land, but it was not unusual for Nahuas of all stations to own numerous parcels scattered over a wide area.<sup>348</sup> Besides, he appears to have been cash poor. Tellingly, he leaves behind no money to pay for the Mass essential to his soul's release from purgatory.

The coercion Domingo faced also appears to have been typical. He states unequivocally in his testament that he was selected to be sent, and other evidence presented here strongly suggests that many of his fellow colonists had a similar experience. Resistance among Tlaxcalan elites and the macehualtin themselves

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<sup>345</sup> *DHSLP*, vol. 1, 187.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-203.

<sup>348</sup> Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, 150-51.

indicate that the resettlement was tremendously unpopular. Surely many—possibly most—went against their will.

Like their forebears thirty years prior, the permanence of their removal must have gnawed at the Tlaxcalan colonists of 1591. But unlike that earlier group, spared by the elder Velasco, this contingent faced a different political climate and a viceroy determined to effect peace in the north. In Luis de Velasco II's New Spain there was little room for "entitled" indigenous republics whose privileged lords reaped rewards Spaniards saw as rightfully theirs. The tlatoque did what they could for themselves and for Tlaxcala, conceding to Velasco in order to protect what little they had left. Ultimately, though, this meant that common families would suffer. Because of power struggles and other forces beyond their control, each colonist would have to come to terms with the fact that they would live out their lives and probably die in some distant, unknown land, far from their Tlaxcalan home.

## **Conclusion**

Previous studies have presented an overly sanguine portrait of Tlaxcalan participation in the resettlement of 1591, casting the settlers as eager volunteers whose heroic efforts helped to restore peace and prosperity to New Spain. This narrative obscures the resettlement's impact on Tlaxcala and its meaning for individual participants and frames indigenous actions as contributions to a Spanish colonial agenda. The resettlement must be understood in reference to the prevailing political circumstances in New Spain as well as deteriorating social conditions in

Tlaxcala. That context is crucial to understanding the cabildo's acceptance of the mission and the displacement of its onus onto the macehualtin.

This chapter has sought to revise the standard narrative of the resettlement by turning to indigenous sources. Considering the paucity of texts reflecting participants' experiences, sources like Domingo Morales's testament are invaluable. They crystallize the objections of the macehualtin and capture poignantly the fear and uncertainty they experienced. But it is when these are set within the reconstructed context that they speak most audibly. Together, the Nahuatl texts and their context demonstrate that Tlaxcalans at all levels of society staunchly resisted the resettlement and that many colonists were coerced.

As officials of the time knew well, the Tlaxcalan resettlement of 1591 was the lynchpin that secured the "peace by purchase" initiated under Villamanrique and elaborated most substantially under Luis de Velasco the younger. With their aid, the broader mission of pacifying Chichimecs, incorporating them into the colonial state, and achieving their evangelization would have proven much more difficult. Furthermore, as New Spain's frontier reached northward in late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Tlaxcalans in particular and Nahuas in general continued to play important roles in colonial development and expansion. These aspect of colonization should not be ignored. The Tlaxcalans' ubiquity and longevity as frontier auxiliaries—they continued to act as laborers, frontier militia, and especially as colonists, founding many additional "spin-off" colonies in the north over the course of the seventeenth century and even beyond—has rightly earned them a prominent place in the annals of New Spain's northern frontier. However

lost in evaluations of the “roles” natives played in Spanish expansion is the sacrifices made by Tlaxcalan settlers who left behind houses, family members, and their homeland to resettle in a strange and unfamiliar land. Lost also are the attempts native peoples made to rebuild their communities and their lives on the frontier after experiencing profound dislocation and loss.

Part II turns to these questions. Each of the following chapters offers a different case study from the far frontier—one the Tlaxcalan colony of San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala in Coahuila, the other Santa Fe, New Mexico. At both settlements natives from central Mexico maintained a strong presence as settlers, and in both places they set about reconstructing their lives and communities as fragmented groups in diaspora, although they did so under very different circumstances. In both cases, Indians from central Mexico braved dislocation, exploitation, and violence. Nevertheless they continued to make their lives their own and give them meaning, despite all the miles separating them from the places they once called home and in spite of the wrenching upheaval and dislocation that defined their lives under colonialism.

## PART II. COMMUNITIES

The sixteenth century marked the high water mark of New Spain's attempts to recolonize Indians on the northern frontier. Thereafter, colonial officials and frontier captains increasingly relied on *indios fronterizos* and *indios flecheros*—both of which referred to indigenous militia recruited locally (though some of these were descendants of Mesoamerican migrants of the sixteenth century). And while many of the settlements established by Mesoamerican Indians endured through much of the colonial period (or even spawned additional settlements in their own right), this transition signaled the end of an era. After the sixteenth century came to a close, Mesoamerican settlers and their descendants found it more difficult to defend rights, lands, and protections conceded to them, even those granted in perpetuity. As the Spanish and *mestizo* populations increased, Nahuas and other relocated Mesoamericans found it more difficult to maintain their communities' integrity and even to uphold their ethnic homogeneity. Ethnic mixing and intermarriage became more common, and the ability to trace one's lineage back to an original founder population became more difficult at the same time that Spanish audiences grew more indifferent to indigenous requests based on such claims.

Despite this inauspicious climate, some communities were able to sustain themselves as distinct corporate entities and therefore resist the offensives that Spaniards unleashed against them in the legal sphere. Native leaders fused Spanish governing institutions with elements of prehispanic indigenous rule and were able



to protect their community at the same time that they advanced their own interests and those of the ruling class. Chapter four demonstrates how native migrants at San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala in Coahuila embraced the Spanish town council or *cabildo* and in so doing rose to positions of leadership within the town. This enabled them to make decisions that not only served the interests of their community and promoted a distinctive Tlaxcalan identity but also improved their social positioning relative to other Indians.

Frontier indigenous communities that were able to remain largely insulated from the encroaching Spanish world—those like San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala—were unique. While instructive, San Esteban is not representative of the majority of migrant communities in the Greater Southwest in the seventeenth century. The fifth and final chapter turns to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where Mesoamerican settlement followed an altogether different pattern. There was no formal colonization of Mesoamericans in New Mexico. Indigenous people were brought by individual Spaniards as servants or arrived on an ad hoc basis as skilled laborers. As a result, there were few institutional protections in place, and natives' experiences there differed dramatically from those in places like San Esteban, where *cabildos*, archives, and advocates for indigenous rights put in place by the colonial regime provided an effective, if not always successful, check against impositions. Despite these limitations, indigenous migrants in early New Mexico successfully integrated into the community and experienced some social and economic mobility. However, owing to the lack of institutional protections, these achievements were short-lived. In the mid 1620s the Spanish brought an institution to New Mexico that would

swing the scales dramatically back in their favor, relegating Indian migrants to a status on par with New Mexico's defeated—and increasingly enslaved—indigenous populations.

If Part I traced a specific process, Part II explores particular places. In the sixteenth century, migration spurred by epidemic disease, famine, and warfare combined with the lure of economic opportunity to precipitate an indigenous diaspora of a magnitude yet to be entirely fathomed. The following chapters seek to reveal the lives that those people made on the frontier and address the questions of how they restructured their communities and rebuilt their lives amidst the disruption and dislocation of diaspora.

CHAPTER 4. CREATING A NEW TLAXCALA, CREATING TLAXCALA ANEW:  
GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN SAN ESTEBAN DE LA NUEVA  
TLAXCALA

*At the request of the Tlaxcalan Indians, [the lieutenant] gave as the name of the town that of lord San Esteban, being the patron of those Indians' community, in the province of Tlaxcala.*<sup>349</sup>

-Saltillo scribe Gaspar Duarte on the naming of San Esteban, August 1591

As the dust plumes on the horizon spiraled towards the sky, the town's residents must have exulted. A caravan was approaching. Much to the delight of the embattled settlers of Saltillo, an isolated Hispanic enclave on New Spain's northeastern frontier, the Indian settlers they had been promised had finally arrived.<sup>350</sup> And not a moment too soon. Their humble settlement, established in 1577 by Basque miners

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<sup>349</sup> "Traslado de la fundacion del Pueblo de S.<sup>n</sup> esteban de la Nueva tlaxcala...", 1768 copy of 1591 original, AMS, Fondo de Presidencia Municipal, caja 1, exp. 3, f. 16r. A transcription of this document appears in Carlos Manuel Valdés Dávila and Ildefonso Dávila del Bosque, eds., *Los tlaxcaltecos en Coahuila*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Luis Potosí and Tlaxcala: El Colegio de San Luis; Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1999), 11-52. (See note 371, below, for additional information about this source.) San Esteban was the patron saint of the Tlaxcalan tlayacatl of Tizatlan, from which the great majority of the settlers were taken. ...*a pedimiento de los yndios tlaxcaltecos, puso por Nombre de S.<sup>r</sup> S.<sup>n</sup> esteban, al dho Pueblo, por ser la advocacion, que los dhos yndios tlaxcaltecos tenian de su Pueblo, en la Provincia de Tlaxcala.*

<sup>350</sup> There are many secondary treatments of Saltillo, spanning the many centuries of its history. See Vito Alessio Robles, *Saltillo en la historia y en la leyenda* (Mexico City, 1934); Pablo M. Cuellar Valdés, *Historia de la ciudad de Saltillo* (Mexico: Editorial Libros de México, S. A., 1975); José Cuello, *Saltillo: Orígenes y formación de una sociedad mexicana en la frontera norte* (Saltillo, Coahuila: Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila; R. Ayuntamiento de Saltillo, 2004); see also his dissertation, in English, "Saltillo in the Seventeenth Century: Local Society on the North Mexican Frontier," PhD diss., Univ. of California, Berkeley, 1981; Leslie S. Offutt, *Saltillo, 1770-1810: Town and Region in the Mexican North* (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2001). Useful primary sources pertaining to the region can be found in Estéban L. Portillo, *Apuntes para la historia antigua de Coahuila y Texas* (Saltillo, 1886).

and slave raiders, was on the brink of catastrophe. Though historians typically place the end of the Chichimec War in 1590, the frontiersmen of Saltillo would have begged to differ with the date. Encircled by hostile Indians (perhaps the very kindred of the slaves they stole for sale in local mines), Saltillo's residents were in danger of being overrun.<sup>351</sup> The arrival of seventy-one Tlaxcalan families in the summer of 1591 quite literally saved the town—and their necks.<sup>352</sup> So grateful were the settlers that they provided the newcomers a substantial land grant and rights to some of the area's most productive springs.<sup>353</sup> And as anyone who has visited Coahuila in late summer could readily grasp, this can only be interpreted as a sign of most sincere gratitude.

The caravan now creaking toward the town had been part of the great migration that left Tlaxcala back in June. In early August, on the outskirts of Zacatecas, the settlers had been split up and sent to various points scattered across the Chichimec frontier.<sup>354</sup> Many of these were still dangerous, and Saltillo was no different. In fact the settlement was so vulnerable that, in order to provide additional security, the Tlaxcalan colony was established virtually on top of it. The migrants would call it San Esteban Yancuic Tlaxcallan, both to honor the patron saint of Tizatlan, the province from which they had come, and to acknowledge that this was a "New Tlaxcala."

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<sup>351</sup> Sego, *Aliados y adversarios*, 68-69; David Bergen Adams, "The Tlaxcalan Colonies of Spanish Coahuila and Nuevo León: An Aspect of the Settlement of Northern Mexico," PhD diss., University of Texas, Austin, 1971, 57-58, 214.

<sup>352</sup> Peter Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, rev. ed. (Norman and London: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 222.

<sup>353</sup> AMS, Presidencia Municipal, caja 1, exp. 3.

<sup>354</sup> Sego, *Aliados y adversarios*, 58.

Theirs was the northernmost of the five colonies established as part of viceroy Velasco's pacification effort (see chapter 3).<sup>355</sup> The others were dispersed across the Chichimec frontier. San Andrés del Teul was planted in the western sierras. San Miguel Mezquitic was established near the site that was to become San Luis Potosí. The "Place of the Scorpions," San Luis Colotlan, was founded southeast of Zacatecas. Facing Indian hostilities, the settlers who established San Sebastián del Agua de Venado near the mining settlement of Charcas eventually relocated to the Chichimec mission of San Jerónimo del Agua Hedionda.<sup>356</sup>

Of all the colonies the Tlaxcalans established in 1591, San Esteban has been most studied.<sup>357</sup> Because of its proximity to Saltillo, Spanish records concerning the settlement are abundant.<sup>358</sup> Most of what we know comes from these sources

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<sup>355</sup> Asunción Tlaxcalilla was founded after San Miguel Mezquitic by colonists from that settlement. Thus, technically speaking, there were only five "original" colonies, though Tlaxcalilla is often included as a sixth because it was founded shortly after the others. Adams, "Tlaxcalan Colonies," 65.

<sup>356</sup> Adams, "Tlaxcalan Colonies," 65-66. Martínez Baracs, "Colonizaciones tlaxcaltecas," 221.

<sup>357</sup> Works devoting significant discussion to San Esteban include Adams, "The Tlaxcalan Colonies," esp. chaps. 1-2; Offutt, "Levels of Acculturation;" Offutt, "Defending Corporate Identity;" Sego, *Aliados y adversarios*, chap. 3; Sheridan Prieto, "Indios madrineros."

<sup>358</sup> Unlike the other Tlaxcalan colonies, there are several useful published collections of primary sources pertaining to San Esteban (and neighboring Saltillo). See, for example, Carlos Manuel Valdés Dávila and Ildefonso Dávila del Bosque, eds., *San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala: Documentos para su historia* (Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico: Gobierno del Estado Coahuila, 1991); Carlos Manuel Valdés Dávila, and Ildefonso Dávila del Bosque, eds. *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Luis Potosi and Tlaxcala, Mexico: El Colegio de San Luis; Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1999); Joaquín Meade, "Documentos que se refieren a los colonias tlaxcaltecas en el norte de la Nueva España," *Divulgación histórica* 11 (1939).

Both Adams and Eugene Sego have claimed that little archival material (in any language) survives from the other Tlaxcalan colonies established in 1591. See Adams, "Tlaxcalan Colonies," 55-56, 56n26; Eugene B. Sego, "Six Tlaxcalan Colonies

despite the fact that a substantial corpus of Nahuatl documents survives for San Esteban, currently preserved at the Archivo Municipal de Saltillo in Coahuila.<sup>359</sup> This is most significant because although it is probable that most Nahua communities in the north kept records in Nahuatl, tragically little survive.<sup>360</sup> The San Esteban Nahuatl materials are thus a rare treasure. Yet they remain virtually untouched. Only a handful of these documents have been published, and to my knowledge, the only work to incorporate a substantial number of these materials into a historical analysis is Offutt's revealing article, "Levels of Acculturation in Northeastern New Spain: San Esteban Testaments of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries."<sup>361</sup> Offutt uses thirty-nine Nahuatl testaments from San Esteban as a window onto the

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on New Spain's Northern Frontier; A Comparison of Success and Failure," PhD diss., Indiana Univ., 1990, viii.

<sup>359</sup> The extent of this corpus is not definitively known. Leslie S. Offutt notes that the testamentary component of the corpus contains 277 Nahuatl wills. In addition to the testaments there are also, according to my research, petitions, cabildo proclamations, election documents, and receipts. Eustaquio Celestino Solís estimated the entire corpus at 698 pages as of 1991, but it is possible that it is greater than this, as new documents have likely been found since the archive was recatalogued. Offutt, "Nahuatl Testaments of San Esteban," 2; Celestino Solís, *El Señorío de San Esteban del Saltillo: Voz y escritura nahuas, siglos XVII y XVIII* (Saltillo: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 1991), 8.

<sup>360</sup> Elisabeth Butzer notes that only five documents survive from the Tlaxcalan "spin-off" colony of San Miguel de Aguayo (founded 1686), while Dana Velasco Murillo has encountered only "fragments" of Nahuatl records from Zacatecas. While not a Tlaxcalan colony, Zacatecas nevertheless attracted large numbers of Nahua migrants in the sixteenth century (including many Tlaxcalans). Sego, "Six Tlaxcalan Colonies on New Spain's Northern Frontier: A Comparison of Success and Failure," PhD diss., Univ. of Indiana, 1990; Butzer, *Historia social de una comunidad tlaxcalteca: San Miguel de Aguayo (Bustamante, N.L.), 1686-1820* (Saltillo, Mexico: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 2001); Velasco Murillo, "Laboring above Ground," 8n12.

<sup>361</sup> Celestino Solís transcribes and translates into Spanish twenty-one documents in *El Señorío de San Esteban*. Offutt transcribes and translates three testaments in "Levels of Acculturation," 426-443, and Valdés Dávila and Dávila del Bosque transcribe and translate one testament (into Spanish) in *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 301-08.

impact of the Spanish world, and especially of the Spanish language, on the indigenous sphere in a frontier region far removed from the Nahuatl “core.” She convincingly demonstrates how San Esteban’s residents, despite their proximity to neighboring Saltillo and the steady envelopment of their community by the Spanish colonial world over time, remained firmly ensconced in their indigenous context and resisted acculturation resulting from contact with Spaniards and their language.<sup>362</sup> This chapter seeks to build on these insights by offering an analysis of San Esteban’s internal political and socioeconomic development in the seventeenth century. It also endeavors to situate the community within the context of the Tlaxcalan migration of 1591. In so doing it places a particular native frontier town within the broader sweep of Spain’s colonial expansion into the northern borderlands at the same time that it seeks to illuminate the daily lives of the indigenous settlers who called it home.

Overall this chapter documents how an undifferentiated assemblage of Tlaxcalan exiles and migrants had coalesced, by the mid-seventeenth century, into a tightly organized and rigidly stratified corporate entity. It argues that the Tlaxcalan founders of San Esteban, by embracing certain colonial institutions and practices, inserted themselves into positions of power, reassembled a community despite the fragmentation of diaspora, and protected that community’s interests. However they also used the tools of governance to advance ruling class agendas at the expense of Chichimecs, Spaniards, and even other Tlaxcalans. Once ensconced in the seats of power, San Esteban’s early leaders passed their status on to their kin, creating in

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<sup>362</sup> Offutt, “Levels of Acculturation.”

essence a new class of *pipiltin* or hereditary nobility. Over the course of the century, San Esteban became heavily stratified with substantial separation between nobles and commoners. In other words, San Esteban became more like the Tlaxcalan homeland.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first identifies San Esteban's early leaders and determines how they arrived in positions of power. Since there were very few if any *pipiltin* in the founder population, literate and bilingual individuals would have presented themselves as natural candidates for service on the first cabildo. However analysis of San Esteban's notarial documents for the early seventeenth century (when the Nahuatl documentary record begins) reveals only a few literate individuals, and none appears to have been bilingual. It appears likely, then, that some of San Esteban's early leaders may have had connections to the lower nobility in Tlaxcala and parlayed this into leadership positions in San Esteban. Still, the degree of social differentiation existing among the original migrants appears to have been slight, so in the early years status must have derived from leadership and service more than descent. The cabildo, therefore, was instrumental to creating and perpetuating ruling class power. Through it native rulers managed virtually all aspects of public life in the town and promoted and defended San Esteban's corporate interests. However it also became a tool leaders used to pursue their own class interests. By dominating the cabildo and controlling access to it, certain Tlaxcalan men laid exclusive claim to political leadership and social prestige in ways that distinguished them from *macehualtin* (commoners), women, and non-Tlaxcalan natives.



Part two traces these widening social divisions in San Esteban and examines how political leadership translated to social prestige and socioeconomic advancement. In San Esteban's early years, leaders capitalized on their newly acquired political power to elevate themselves at the expense of other social groups. Analysis of San Esteban's testaments and other documents suggests that the pipiltin were significantly wealthier than the macehualtin and had access to material items absent in the testaments of commoners. Their testaments are more likely to provide more substantial offerings of cash and kind to local confraternities and more apt to include larger amounts of land and bigger herds of livestock, as well as prestige associated with the Spanish world such as books and firearms.

If the pipiltin embraced Spanish institutions to manufacture political power, they also adopted certain European practices in their efforts to maintain it. For instance they abandoned indigenous surnames in favor of Spanish ones that connoted higher social rank and which could, when passed from father to son, confer it hereditarily. There is evidence that San Esteban's elite passed their status on to their kin, creating quasi-hereditary elite clans. By the end of the seventeenth century, San Esteban's residents were identifying cabildo leaders as pipiltin—the term used in the prehispanic Nahua world to refer to the elite hereditary nobility.

The pipiltin preserved the social divisions they had created in other ways, too. For instance by restricting commerce with neighboring Saltillo, the cabildo controlled economic activity in the town in ways that protected residents from certain abuses but also functioned to isolate San Esteban from the wider colonial world and keep its macehualtin destitute. Similarly, connections to the church and

Spanish ecclesiastical leadership served to reaffirm the pipiltin's claims to power and promote social solidarity. However the strict observance of Christian rites, especially those surrounding death, also functioned to keep San Esteban residents poor and thus to maintain the divisions in native society that emerged over the course of the seventeenth century.

In prehispanic times, the indigenous government served to reinforce the social boundaries that gave order to the world. In colonial times the cabildo in San Esteban achieved much the same purpose. By embracing Spanish institutions and coopting them for indigenous purposes, San Esteban's leaders protected themselves and their community from the impositions of the Spanish world. If Tlaxcalans in the north have traditionally been portrayed as faithful allies assisting Spaniards in achieving their colonial objectives, San Esteban offers a counterexample. Here Spanish institutions aided a native community to advance its own agendas, maintain its integrity, and even become more indigenous. Largely left to their own devices in the colonial north, not only did the Tlaxcalans of San Esteban resist contributing to Spanish initiatives, they virtually shut the Hispanic world out and reverted back to indigenous forms. Though Spanish colonials would have liked to believe that Tlaxcalan migrants in the north would do their bidding, in fact they served their own interests more than their putative Spanish overlords—and subsequent historians—have acknowledged.

## I. Social Differentiation and the Cabildo

As the previous chapter demonstrated, resistance to the colonization effort in Tlaxcala, evidence for coercion, and the nature of recruitment all suggest a founder population of mostly macehualtin. Nevertheless the composition of the early cabildo suggests that, if there were no bona fide pipiltin, there were at least a few individuals of rank among them. Their specific social positions provide important clues to the eventual development of an elite ruling class in San Esteban and the elaboration of a more rigidly stratified society over the course of the seventeenth century. But what evidence exists that might suggest the social stations of the original cabildo members?

One indicator of high social standing is the presence of the titles *don* and *doña*. While in the Spanish world the *hidalgos* were lesser nobles, Indians who acquired these titles often belonged to the ruling class. The muster taken during the journey from Tlaxcala listed only captains and their wives as dons or doñas, indicating that the scribe was indeed recording rank but that he recognized few individuals of substance.<sup>363</sup> San Esteban's earliest records support this. While no Nahuatl records survive for the sixteenth century, Spanish documents reveal that the first cabildo, established immediately upon the Tlaxcalans' arrival in 1591, consisted of only two dons, the captain don Joaquín de Velasco—who became the colony's first governor—and the *alcalde* don Antonio de Naveda. (The other captain, don Buenaventura de Paz, a possible descendant of Xicotencatl<sup>364</sup> and a bona fide

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<sup>363</sup> DHSLP, vol. 1, 177-83.

<sup>364</sup> Ildefonso Dávila del Bosque, *Los cabildos tlaxcaltecas: ayuntamientos del pueblo de San Esteban De la Nueva Tlaxcala desde su establecimiento hasta su fusión*

Tlaxcalan *pilli* who had been governor of Tlaxcala, evidently returned after the founding of San Esteban and never served on the cabildo).<sup>365</sup> Another cabildo officer, Gaspar Cleofas, is referred to as don in a Spanish document that predates the migration, but his name does not carry that title in the muster taken during the journey north, and Nahuatl records from San Esteban do not list him with it until much later.<sup>366</sup> Judging from his surname, Gaspar Cleofas was probably a younger son who did not stand to inherit much, which might explain why he does not appear in later records carrying the don title (that is, until he earned it through cabildo service in San Esteban).

Furthermore, it is entirely possible that in these cases the don title is merely a reflection of the office. While it is true that governors and alcaldes were usually pipiltin whose names always carried the title, it was not unusual in San Esteban for still-unproven individuals to hold it only while occupying those higher posts.<sup>367</sup> In other words, there is a distinct possibility that the only two dons on the cabildo (and presumably in the entire founder population) were called thus owing to the office

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*con la villa del Saltillo*. Saltillo: Archivo Municipal del Saltillo, 2000, xi (“primero nieto del rey guerrero Xicoténcatl”). Vito Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas en la época colonial*, 125, also claims he was “nieto de Xicoténcatl.” Gibson, however, casts some doubt on this claim: “Morfi wrote, with questionable accuracy, that Buenventura de Paz was the grandson of Xicoténcatl” (*Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 187n92).

<sup>365</sup> Martínez, “Colonizaciones,” 224n.

<sup>366</sup> Luis de Velasco approves Tomás de Aquino’s request for a *mandamiento de amparo* on behalf of his son, don Gaspar Cleophas, AGN, Indios, vol. 5, exp. 273, ff. 142r-143v. It seems likely that the Spanish scribe appended the title don to Gaspar’s name because of the standing of his father, who appears to have been a legitimate *pilli*.

<sup>367</sup> There are many examples of this in San Esteban’s Nahuatl cabildo records, but it occurred in Tlaxcala as well. When Diego Téllez served as regidor on the Tlaxcalan cabildo in 1561 and 1563, his name is devoid of the title, but he is called don when serving as alcalde and acting as elector. Lockhart, Berdan, and Anderson, eds., *The Tlaxcalan Acts*, 138.

they held rather than the social position they occupied before the migration (though there probably was some correlation between the two). This is made all the more likely when we consider that the only records available for the first cabildo are in Spanish. The Spanish notary, Gaspar Duarte, had no way of knowing whether the Tlaxcalans before him hailed from noble lines or not, but since governors and *alcaldes* were typically *dons* in native cabildos, he likely recorded them as such, regardless of their birth or status in Tlaxcalan society.

It is also telling that no lower cabildo members carry the *don* title at this early point. Later in the seventeenth century, however, individuals who had established themselves through years of office holding and advancement were called *don* even when occupying lesser cabildo posts, such as *regidor* and even *alguacil mayor*.<sup>368</sup> Since *pipiltin* would be recognized with the *don* regardless of which office they held, the glaring absence of that social marker below the rank of *alcalde* suggests there were few *pipiltin* in the founder population—if any. Therefore the first cabildo members most likely hailed from middling families or were the younger sons of nobles. (Obviously the remainder of the population ranked below the cabildo members, and therefore, for reasons explored in the previous chapter, must have been *macehualtin*.) But if few of the founders came from Tlaxcala's noble houses, how, then, were they selected? In other words, what distinguished early cabildo members, and what might this tell us about how Tlaxcalan society in San Esteban eventually came to be so segmented?

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<sup>368</sup> See, for example, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 1 (don Juan de la Fuente, *alguacil mayor*), and Testament of Gabriel de los Ángeles, 10 March 1619, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 5 (both *regidores* and *alguacil mayor* listed as *dons*).

### Paths to Power: Bilingualism, Literacy, and Descent

There are some tantalizing clues to suggest that writing helped determine social ranking in early San Esteban. In pre-conquest Mesoamerican societies, the scribe (*tlacuilo* in Nahuatl) was typically a high-ranking man, and the association between literacy and social status persisted after the conquest. As Matthew Restall observes, “literacy and writing continued to serve the interests of the dominant political class” into the colonial period, and this correlation is well attested at San Esteban.<sup>369</sup>

Writing, then, would have made one an attractive candidate for cabildo leadership. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know whether writing was imported from Tlaxcala or developed in San Esteban, since the first documents in Nahuatl do not appear until the first decade of the seventeenth century.<sup>370</sup> Whether this means there were no documents produced before this time period or simply that none survive, however, remains an open question.

Nevertheless Spanish documents from San Esteban’s founding can shed light on the question of literacy among the Tlaxcalan settlers. In 1591 the Spanish cabildo of Saltillo generated a lengthy series of *diligencias* (proceedings) documenting the

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<sup>369</sup> Matthew Restall, “Heirs to the Hieroglyphs: Indigenous Writing in Colonial Mesoamerica” *The Americas* 54, no. 2 (Oct. 1997), 245.

<sup>370</sup> The earliest Nahuatl document undoubtedly authored by a Tlaxcalan in San Esteban may have appeared in 1603, but the date is not firm. In the only part of the document that provides a date—an addendum in Spanish—the scribe clearly writes *myll y seysçientos y trese* (1613), but cabildo membership for the same year taken from another document (AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 2) does not match. Moreover, 1613 would more typically be written *mil seiscientos trese* (without the intervening *y*) leading me to suspect that the *e* in *trese* is a mistake, and the actual year is *mil seiscientos y tres*, or 1603. Confirmation of San Esteban’s cabildo elections for the year 1603 [1613?], AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 1.

legal transfer of lands and water rights to representatives of San Esteban's newly established governing body. After the Tlaxcalans were read the order giving them possession of the town's lands, the Spanish scribe mentions that those who knew how signed, but then adds that the interpreter "made two marks for [the] signatures," of don Buenaventura de Paz and the governor don Juachin de Velasco, indicating not only that they did not understand Spanish but that they could not sign.<sup>371</sup>

While this fragmentary evidence is certainly better than nothing, it is also far from conclusive. Fortunately, the relationship between literacy and cabildo membership is clarified somewhat with the advent of the first Nahuatl writings in the early seventeenth century. These documents reveal that while few knew how to write, those who did enjoyed increased prestige, reflected in cabildo rank and social status. The earliest scribes figure prominently among San Esteban's ruling class. In general, indigenous notaries in New Spain, even more so than their Spanish counterparts, were individuals of significant social rank.<sup>372</sup> This was partly because the capacity to write implied a degree of intimacy with the colonial bureaucracy that few native people possessed. Native notaries, furthermore, were masters of the all-important colonial art of petition writing—an absolutely vital tool as far as

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<sup>371</sup> AMS, Presidencia Municipal, caja 1, exp. 3, f. 17: *el dho. nahuatato hizo dos Garabatos por firma...* On another occasion (*ibid.*, f. 21), the scribe records that the Tlaxcalan representatives "lo firmaron de sus nombres," but it is impossible to say whether they actually signed because the document is a copy. Alessio Robles, (*Coahuila y Texas en la época colonial*, 126n7) claimed that the original is in AGN, Tierras, tomo 191, exp. 7, but my check of that expediente revealed only unrelated documents.

<sup>372</sup> Restall, "Heirs to the Hieroglyphs," 245.

indigenous cabildos were concerned.<sup>373</sup> Notaries, in other words, were indispensable to the effective operation of indigenous government and vital defenders of native communities' corporate sovereignty. In San Esteban, where literate individuals were scarce and knowledge of the art of governance was at a premium, the notary enjoyed an especially high status indeed.

Gaspar Cleofas is a case in point. He served as regidor on the original cabildo and would be elected *gobernador* (governor) and *alcalde* numerous times over the course of a lengthy career in public service.<sup>374</sup> He also frequently served as scribe in San Esteban's early years. A list of election results, apparently for the year 1603,<sup>375</sup> appears to be in his hand, even though he is also listed as *alcalde* (notaries are seldom identified in these election documents, and the position of notary was not voted on). The same occurs in 1608: Cleofas is elected *alcalde*, and while the scribe's name goes unrecorded, the document again appears to be in Cleofas's hand.<sup>376</sup> During the election of 1609, Cleofas did not assume a cabildo position (he was likely "resting"—or enjoying a temporary respite from cabildo service), but this time there is no doubt as to its authorship: he signed the document as scribe. He also wrote for the cabildo in 1614, despite having served as governor the previous year.<sup>377</sup> At one

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<sup>373</sup> Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*, 110.

<sup>374</sup> AMS, Presidencia Municipal, caja 1, exp. 3 (regidor, 1591); AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 1 (*alcalde*, 1603[1613?]); AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 2 (*alcalde*, 1608); AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 2 (*gobernador*, 1613); AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 18 (*alcalde*, 1618); Dávila del Bosque, *Los cabildos tlaxcaltecas*, 6 (*gobernador*, 1619).

<sup>375</sup> See the explanation in note 367, above.

<sup>376</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 2.

<sup>377</sup> AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 2 (*gobernador*, 1613); AMS, Presidencia Municipal, caja 1, exp. 6 (*escribano*, 1614).



point, probably in 1617,<sup>378</sup> he signed the same document as both regidor *and* scribe.<sup>379</sup>

That Cleofas frequently pulled double duty as a high-ranking cabildo officer and as notary suggests that he was the only literate individual in San Esteban's early years. Supporting this, when a new scribe by the name of Andrés del Saltillo (who was Tlaxcalan, his surname notwithstanding)<sup>380</sup> appears on the scene in 1611, the newcomer holds the post in at least seven of the next eleven years. And sometimes, it appears, Cleofas filled in for him when he was unavailable. Furthermore, there is little evidence to suggest that anyone other than Cleofas and Saltillo occupied the post of notary prior to 1614 (and possibly even later), indicating that there were few who could be counted on to conduct the formal and all-important business of

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<sup>378</sup> Testament of Ana Toxtlapal in Nahuatl, n.d. [1615?], AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 16. Carlos Manuel Valdés et al., *Catálogo del Fondo Testamentos* (Saltillo: Archivo Municipal del Saltillo, 1998), 3, gives 1615 as the year, but 1617 is more likely, as Melchior Cáceres appears as governor in that year and Gaspar Cleofas as regidor (as they do in this document). See AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 20.

<sup>379</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 16. Lockhart, Berdan, and Anderson note a similar occurrence on Tlaxcala's cabildo. Tadeo de Niza served as regidor every other year between 1551 and 1561 before becoming notary. *Tlaxcalan Actas*, 8.

<sup>380</sup> AMS, Presidencia Municipal, caja 1, exp. 3 records "xardillo," "xarchillo," and "Saltillo." To my eye, this appears to be a Tlaxcalan attempting to dictate "Saltillo" to the Spanish scribe and one—or both—of them butchering it. Only later does the notary finally get it (perhaps the man improved his pronunciation or was corrected along the way). It is also possible that "Saltillo" is actually a corruption of some other indigenous name.

drawing up cabildo documents.<sup>381</sup> Notably, both went on to reach the cabildo's premier position of governor.<sup>382</sup>

Gaspar Cleofas's appointment to the cabildo in 1591 probably owed to his birth rather than his capacity to write (if in fact he could write in 1591, which is uncertain). Nevertheless his literacy clearly made him indispensable to the cabildo and contributed to his longevity as a career officer. His notarial abilities made him a particularly versatile candidate, virtually guaranteeing him a position on the council every year. As for Andrés del Saltillo, there is no doubt he used pen and ink to his advantage in climbing the social ladder in San Esteban. After a long career as scribe, in 1652 he was elected governor. However it took him much longer to reach the cabildo's highest position.<sup>383</sup> While cabildo membership has not been established for every year of the seventeenth century, his late debut as governor suggests that Saltillo's lineage posed greater obstacles to his upward mobility, especially when compared to the instantaneously ascendant Cleofas. In Saltillo's case, then, possessing (or harnessing) writing was perhaps the only reason he rose through San

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<sup>381</sup> Dávila del Bosque, *Los cabildos tlaxcaltecas*, 3, identifies Buenaventura Xochitlanemi as scribe in 1609, but there is no source listed so I have been unable to corroborate this independently. A novice scribe by the name of Diego de Zamora may have authored a cabildo document in 1614, but the date is inconclusive. AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 3.

<sup>382</sup> Cleofas served as governor numerous times (see AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exps. 2, 4, 5; AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exps. 7-11, 14-15; Dávila del Bosque, *Los cabildos tlaxcaltecas*, 6). Andrés del Saltillo became governor in 1652 (AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exps. 39, 41).

<sup>383</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exps. 39, 41. In 1671 was referred to as don, though he was probably dead by this point and so it is uncertain whether his contemporaries considered him a don during his lifetime. AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp., 89bis.

Esteban's ranks, whereas Cleofas seems to have been better positioned initially because of his birth.

The repeated use of the same scribes, even those who were occupying other cabildo positions at the time (such as Cleofas), suggests there were few individuals who could write. Other evidence points to the same conclusion. A 1615 document ends with the statement, "those who knew how signed their names," but the signatures appear to have been added by the scribe Andrés del Saltillo, with only Gaspar Cleofas signing on his own.<sup>384</sup> In another early seventeenth-century document, the cabildo members' names are listed but only Gaspar Cleofas and a novice scribe, Pedro Juachin, actually sign. (They also affix rubrics, indicative of notarial training.) A simple set of perpendicular lines in the shape of a cross accompanies the others' names—a common mark added by or on behalf of those who could not write.<sup>385</sup>

The prestige that writing bestowed was not restricted to the earliest years of San Esteban's cabildo. Writing continued to confer status long after the original founding, even as more individuals became literate. For instance Buenaventura Xochitlanemi may have done a brief stint as scribe in 1609<sup>386</sup> before serving several times as regidor (1614-1616)<sup>387</sup> and as alcalde (at which point he was also graced with the title don).<sup>388</sup> Domingo de Ramos's ascendancy was much more rapid. After

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<sup>384</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 14.

<sup>385</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 3.

<sup>386</sup> See Dávila del Bosque, *Cabildos tlaxcaltecas*, 3, and note #, above.

<sup>387</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exps. 4, 12, 13, 14, 17; Dávila del Bosque, *Cabildos tlaxcaltecas*, 3-5.

<sup>388</sup> The document in which Buenaventura Xochitlanemi appears (AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 4) as don and as alcalde is undated, but it can be safely

entering the documentary record as notary in 1627, by 1630 he had become governor and was also referred to as don.<sup>389</sup> Nor was Andrés del Saltillo the only one of his line to serve as scribe then governor. His son, Bentura Juan de Valverde, followed in his footsteps, reaching the cabildo's pinnacle post after long functioning as notary.<sup>390</sup>

If notaries' capacity to write demonstrated familiarity with the colonial political system and the functioning of its legal apparatuses, it did not necessarily reflect competency in Spanish. In their study of the cabildo minutes from sixteenth-century Tlaxcala, James Lockhart, Frances Berdan, and Arthur J. O. Anderson found that the early notaries knew little Spanish, and this trend manifested itself in San Esteban as well. Although bilingual individuals would have made strong candidates for positions on the first cabildo, records indicate that such individuals were few. The drawn-out legal proceedings occurring between Saltillo's cabildo and Tlaxcalan

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assumed that this was after his terms as regidor. It may have been in 1618, 1622, or 1624-1625. Although cabildo membership is unknown for these years (according to Dávila del Bosque, *Los cabildos tlaxcaltecas*), Juan de Morales appears as governor in the document in question, and Pedro Joaquín as scribe. Both were active in those respective capacities around these years.

<sup>389</sup> Dávila del Bosque, *Los cabildos tlaxcaltecas*, 8, and AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 25 (escribano, 1627); AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 19 (escribano, 1628); AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 6 (escribano, 1628); AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 27bis (gobernador, 1630).

<sup>390</sup> Bentura Juan de Valverde was elected governor in 1686 (Dávila del Bosque, *Los cabildos tlaxcaltecas*, 25), and served several times as scribe before then. Oddly enough, however, he appears to have never occupied another cabildo post (though he was "maestro" in 1681—AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 18). Bentura Juan de Valverde was undoubtedly Andrés del Saltillo's son, though Dávila del Bosque (*Los cabildos tlaxcaltecas*, 11) lists him as his brother. See Petition of Bentura Juan Valverde and Francisco Andrés before the cabildo, 22 April 1671, AMS, Testamentos, Caja 1, exp. 89.

representatives between late August and October 1591 were carried out by means of an interpreter. This was more than just a legal courtesy, as at several points the Spanish notary records that the Tlaxcalans replied by means of the translator.<sup>391</sup> Despite engaging in formal legal proceedings with Spanish representatives, San Esteban's leaders—those who formed the original cabildo—were speaking Nahuatl. If any of them knew Spanish, they were evidently uncomfortable using it.

By charting patterns in the language used in San Esteban's Nahuatl documents, we can index the degree of bilingualism among scribes. The town's early notaries, the likeliest candidates for bilingualism, manifest patterns of writing that betray a restricted knowledge of Spanish, suggesting that other San Esteban residents (including other cabildo members) must have known very little of the language. A notary's familiarity with Spanish can be measured by categorizing the documents they wrote according to the schema established by Frances Karttunen and James Lockhart, which indexes philological changes in Nahuatl in response to contact with Spanish.<sup>392</sup> According to the schema, philological change progressed in three stages. In stage one, encompassing essentially the first post-contact generation, Nahuatl changed little for the simple reason that Spanish contact was minimal and Nahuatl speakers had limited opportunities to hear Spanish spoken. By stage two, lasting from 1545 to 1650, Nahuas had enough contact with Spaniards to incorporate a substantial amount of Spanish vocabulary, but not enough to affect

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<sup>391</sup> AMS, PM, caja 1, exp. 3, f. 11: *lo qual dixeron mediante lengua del dho ynterprete*.

<sup>392</sup> Frances Karttunen and James Lockhart, *Nahuatl in the Middle Years: Language Contact Phenomena in Texts of the Colonial Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1976).

Nahuatl grammar (and thus loan words were primarily nouns, which could more easily be integrated in accordance with Nahuatl grammar). Only by the onset of stage three, beginning around 1640 or 1650 and lasting into the present, had cultural contact been sustained and intense enough for Nahuatl grammar to adapt to and accommodate all of the nuances and complexities of the dominant language.<sup>393</sup>

Nahuatl writings from San Esteban from the founding up until about 1650-1670 correspond to stage two of this schema. In stage two, bilingualism was becoming more common but was by no means pervasive. According to Lockhart, during this stage “many Nahuas [still] lacked the opportunity to hear much Spanish spoken or the ability to understand it when they did.”<sup>394</sup> Early notarial documents from San Esteban reinforce this. An abundance of stage two characteristics suggests that literate scribes were not yet fully bilingual, indicating—as with literacy—that the community’s level of bilingualism must have been exceedingly low, perhaps nonexistent.

One of the identifiers for stage two Nahuatl is a practice known as substitution. As Lockhart first observed for Nahuatl and Kevin Terraciano later noted for Mixtec, the orthography used by Mesoamerican scribes unfamiliar with Spanish tended to follow certain patterns.<sup>395</sup> Hearing Spanish words using sounds their language lacked (such as those represented by the letters *b*, *d*, *f*, *g*, and *p*), Nahuas managed by using letters corresponding to approximate sounds in Nahuatl.

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<sup>393</sup> This system has been discussed more recently in Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, chap. 7. For an explanation of philological change in San Esteban in a later period (primarily the eighteenth century but also the late seventeenth), see Offutt, “Levels of Acculturation.”

<sup>394</sup> Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 302.

<sup>395</sup> Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*; Terraciano, *The Mixtecs*.

This process, known as substitution, occurred in predictable ways, meaning that substitutions found in stage two Nahuatl in central Mexico also appear in San Esteban. In both regions the letter *p* was commonly substituted for *b* (as in *yscripano* for *escribano*).<sup>396</sup> *P* was also frequently substituted for *f*, and *l* often stood in for *r*. Thus the Spanish word for signature, *firma*, was often written *pilma*, substituting for both *f* and *r*. The letter *c* was often swapped for *g* (*testico* for *testigo*), *t* for *d* (*gobernator* for *gobernador*) and so on.<sup>397</sup> The patterns Lockhart observed were drawn from central Mexican Nahuatl documents, but the process occurred wherever Nahua (and other Mesoamerican) scribes wrote, including in San Esteban, and in fact all of the above examples can be found in San Esteban's seventeenth-century Nahuatl documents.

Tlaxcalans of San Esteban readily adopted Spanish surnames, and notaries just as readily misspelled them. Those involving *r* and *l* were especially prone to butchery, and names involving both letters were particularly nettlesome. For instance Lorenzo appeared as *lolle[n]ço*, and the surname Morales was written *molas* and *mollallis*.<sup>398</sup> The scribe Diego de Zamora had trouble even with his own name and chose to avoid the bedeviling *l/r* conundrum by rechristening himself *diego de çamo*. The name Hernández was befuddling, too, often appearing *elnadez*.<sup>399</sup>

Another common stage two marker in San Esteban texts is the use and misuse of plurals. At this stage Nahuas freely borrowed Spanish nouns (verb

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<sup>396</sup> AMS, Procolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 3 (*yscripano*).

<sup>397</sup> Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, 293-95.

<sup>398</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 4.

<sup>399</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 16.

borrowing is more grammatically complicated and did not occur regularly until stage three), especially those denoting material items and livestock. Morphologically these functioned as roots to which Nahuatl prefixes and suffixes were attached, and thus Spanish loans were pluralized by adding the Nahuatl plural endings *-me*, *-tin*, and *-huan*, as in *cristianome* for “Christians.”<sup>400</sup> However scribes in San Esteban would affix a Nahuatl plural ending even when the loan already carried the Spanish plural. Thus *testigos* (witnesses) was often written *testicosme* or *testicoshuan*<sup>401</sup> (both of which, incidentally, manifest substitution—*c* for *g*), *alcaldes* frequently appeared as *alcaldesme*, and *regidores* could be rendered *regidorestin*.<sup>402</sup> Speakers and scribes clearly grasped the meaning of the ubiquitous and weighty legal term *testigo*, just as they undoubtedly recognized the august titles of *alcalde* and *regidor*, but few at this stage seem to have been able to distinguish between their singular and plural forms, or even to recognize them as one or the other.

As if to counterbalance these instances of redundant plurals, scribes sometimes neglected to add a plural ending in either language, as with *ome cauallo* (literally, “two horse”—from the loan word *caballo*).<sup>403</sup> The obverse was also true. Often nouns typically heard in the plural form would be written as such even when the singular was intended, as with *ce bueyes*, “one oxen.” This error was still being

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<sup>400</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exps. 45, 59.

<sup>401</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 16 (*notesticoshuā*); AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 10 (*notestigohuā*).

<sup>402</sup> Petition of Bernardino García et al. in Nahuatl, 15 Dec. 1630, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 27bis (*regidorestin*). A rarer example of the same phenomenon involved the loan word for singers (of a Mass), or *cantores*, being rendered *cātoRESTIN* (AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 10).

<sup>403</sup> Testament of María Jacoba, 9 March 1611, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 5 (*ome cauallo*).



made in the late seventeenth century. For instance in 1694 the scribe recording Ana Francisca's testament listed among her estate *se bueyez manso* ("one gelded oxen").<sup>404</sup>

In a similar phenomenon, scribes would at times incorporate an entire Spanish phrase as a noun. The construction *alahuerta* is a well-known example, frequently attested in other Nahua areas during stage two and present also in San Esteban. Since when Spaniards spoke of the garden they most frequently used the prepositional phrase *a la huerta*, "at/in the garden (or orchard)," the entire construction was borrowed into Nahuatl as if it were a noun.<sup>405</sup> The case of *alaguna* (for *a la laguna*, "at the pond") is even more instructive, since this involves the absorption of the article *la* into the initial syllable of *laguna*. In other words, Nahuas listening to Spanish failed to recognize the definite article *la* as distinct from the noun *laguna*, and it was therefore elided.<sup>406</sup>

In sum, early seventeenth-century Nahuatl writings from San Esteban indicate that Tlaxcalans there could grasp the import of certain Spanish words and phrases but not necessarily their grammatical function, reflecting some familiarity with the language but ultimately a low level of competency in it. Since grammar is the sine qua non of language, without command of it Tlaxcalan notaries in early seventeenth-century San Esteban could not have been bilingual.

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<sup>404</sup> Testament of Ana Francisca in Nahuatl, 22 Feb. 1694, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 25. The scribe also wrote *ze tepoztli grillos* ("one iron grills"). Nahuatl did not typically pluralize inanimate objects.

<sup>405</sup> Testament of Ana Toxtlapal in Nahuatl, n.d.[1615, 1617?], AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 16 (*allahuelda*). Incidentally this example also uses substitution.

<sup>406</sup> *alaguna* is attested in Testament of Ana Francisca in Nahuatl, 2 July 1697, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 28, f. 39v (as is *alaguerta*).

Despite their proximity to Saltillo, San Esteban residents appear to have had limited exposure to Castilian. Yearly elections were conducted in Nahuatl, even though these proceedings would have occasioned the presence of certain Spaniards. The scribe recording the elections for 1609, for instance, inserted a note indicating they were taking place exclusively in Nahuatl. He recorded the post of “andres moscoxo” as *yyalqzil señor cap<sup>ta</sup> juscti<sup>a</sup> ma<sup>r</sup> nicā ypā altepetl s. tiesteuā . yacuic tlā* (“constable to the lord captain senior magistrate here in the altepetl of San Esteban, New Tlaxcala”).<sup>407</sup> As we will see, this insularity contributed to processes of social stratification ongoing in the seventeenth century.

Few Tlaxcalans, then, possessed skills that would have recommended them for cabildo service, so at least some of their positioning must have been determined by descent. And since there were few bona fide pipiltin among the founders, the original cabildo must have been composed of men of more middling status.<sup>408</sup> The differences in social station between the general population and San Esteban’s first cabildo members therefore were probably minor when compared to Tlaxcala proper. In the mother province, broad chasms separated macehualtin and pipiltin, both in terms of wealth and social standing.<sup>409</sup> In early San Esteban, individuals

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<sup>407</sup> Confirmation of San Esteban cabildo elections for 1609, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 3.

<sup>408</sup> This position is argued in chap. 3, herein. See also Valdés Dávila and Dávila del Bosque, eds., *Los tlaxcaltecas en Coahuila*, 8: “Las familias que llegaron a Saltillo procedían de Tizatlán y eran acompañadas y dirigidas por algunos cuantos nobles pero, en su mayoría, eran *macehuales*.”

<sup>409</sup> Referencing Aztec social structure Inga Clendinnen identified an “abyss between lords and commoners, with...few perilous bridges across.” *Aztecs: An*

would have been separated by narrower gaps, such as those existing between a common yeomen and perhaps the youngest son of one of the lowest-ranking *teccalli* or lordly houses. (And this in fact appears to have been Gaspar Cleofas's situation.)

This means that individuals who would have never sniffed the cabildo—let alone carried the title “don”—in Tlaxcala were elevated to the forefront of governance in San Esteban virtually overnight. In Tlaxcala, men served on the cabildo because they were pipiltin. In San Esteban, on the other hand, it appears that men became pipiltin because they served on the cabildo. Throughout the seventeenth century there is a clear correlation between social standing and cabildo service. Nevertheless this merit-based system was also complemented by Tlaxcalan (and Spanish) conceptions of hereditary descent, meaning that while cabildo ranking determined who could be considered a *pilli*, sons of noblemen tended to be fast-tracked into cabildo service by dint of their noble birth, and the two determiners became mutually reinforcing. In this way, then, those who distinguished themselves through cabildo service in San Esteban's early years appear to have become the progenitors of elite clans, though inconsistencies in naming practices make it difficult to track descent with precision. But before we examine how members of the elite passed their names and hence their status on to their progeny, we turn first to the cabildo itself to understand how these middling-status men became pipiltin in the first place.

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*Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), 4. See also Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 150-52.

## Protecting Community, Performing Power: San Esteban's Cabildo in the Seventeenth Century

From a very early date, the Tlaxcalan cabildo of San Esteban monopolized the administration of the town. Drawing on pre-Hispanic precedent, the pipiltin managed the town's corporate assets, particularly land (or *altepetlalli*, "altepetl land," as it appears in the documents). It also attempted to control trade and interactions with the Spanish sphere and served as the town's preeminent juridical institution, adjudicating conflicts, managing public assets, and setting the terms under which property could change hands privately. By limiting interference from outsiders and preventing commoners and women from serving, the indigenous elite controlled San Esteban and largely set the tone for everyday life and interactions in the village. Finally, since those who served it were also its gatekeepers, the extent to which the status quo could be changed was limited, creating a closed, self-perpetuating system.

To understand how members used the cabildo to manufacture and perpetuate its social prestige and political power, it is necessary to understand its composition and how it functioned, both as a juridical institution maintaining social order and as a corporate entity promoting solidarity. The initial cabildo was composed of one governor, two *alcaldes* (or one *alcalde* and one *regidor*—the document records both), an *alguacil mayor*, and a *fiscal* (chief aide to a local curate).<sup>410</sup> When the records next pick up, in about 1603, there are two *regidores*,

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<sup>410</sup> AMS, Presidencia Municipal, caja 1, exp. 3. For a discussion of the important position of *fiscal* in indigenous cabildos, see Haskett, 114-16.

two *alcaldes*, an *alguacil mayor*, a *fiscal*, a *teniente* (lieutenant-governor), and an *alcayde* (jailer).<sup>411</sup> In 1608, a governor, two *alcaldes*, two *regidores*, an *alguacil mayor*, a *teniente*, and a *fiscal* comprised the *cabildo*.<sup>412</sup> Over the course of the seventeenth century the existing positions expanded to take on additional representatives (for instance three to four *alcaldes* and between three and five *regidores*), while a host of lesser positions were added. The appearance of some posts in certain years and not in others, and the seeming invention of altogether new posts, suggests fluidity in the *cabildo*'s structure, which would make sense since as San Esteban evolved its needs changed over time. However the basic structure of one governor, between two and four *alcaldes*, and between two and five *regidores* was maintained throughout the seventeenth century.

These posts were ordered hierarchically, with governor the loftiest and most honorable position.<sup>413</sup> In contrast to the Spanish *cabildo*, however, in the Nahuatl world the post of *alcalde* came to command more social prestige while the *regidores* (who in Spain were high noblemen from important lineages and more or less permanent fixtures on the *cabildos*) were relegated to a lesser, if still significant, position.<sup>414</sup> In fact, in San Esteban it was common for individuals moving up through the *cabildo*'s ranks to not carry the *don* while serving as *regidor* but be graced with

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<sup>411</sup> AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 1.

<sup>412</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 2.

<sup>413</sup> Despite its terminology, the *cabildo* post of *gobernador* was an indigenous innovation, apparently having emerged as a means of retaining the *tlatoani* in preeminent position (although the Spanish-imposed rotation of the governorship guaranteed that individuals other than the *tlatoani* would also be governor). In Spain, *cabildos* were headed by *corregidores* appointed by the king more as checks to town councils than the integral components of them that *gobernadores* became in the Nahuatl world. Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 30.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

the title the instant they managed to pull themselves up to *alcalde*, reflecting the “hierarchical ranking of the two offices” in the Nahua world.<sup>415</sup>

Cabildo posts were elected positions, and the elections were typically held on the first of each New Year. When completed the results were sent to Spanish officials for approval, as in Tlaxcala.<sup>416</sup> However, unlike Tlaxcala and other central Mexican *altepeme* like Cuernavaca, election records for early seventeenth San Esteban, while extant, are not particularly detailed. They are simple lists of names and the offices to which each person was elected, followed in the earliest years by tally marks—evidently the number of votes each winning candidate received. Election documents from other *altepeme* customarily included a wealth of useful information. For instance the records for Tlaxcala’s cabildo elections included the *tlaxilacalli* or *barrio* (neighborhood) affiliation for each winning candidate and the exact number of electors, and in Cuernavaca, a description of the electorate was included.<sup>417</sup>

In San Esteban, by contrast, next to nothing is known of the electorate and no mention is ever made of the unsuccessful candidates, leaving many questions as to the specific election procedures there.<sup>418</sup> Also, much remains to be learned

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<sup>415</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>416</sup> Lockhart, Berdan, and Anderson, eds., *The Tlaxcalan Actas*, 5.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.; Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*, 29.

<sup>418</sup> What we ‘know’ of the electorate in San Esteban has to be gleaned from cabildo election records. These documents hint at the existence of an electorate (tally marks beside individual names presumably indicate votes) but one is never specifically mentioned so far as I am aware. However as Lockhart, Berdan, and Anderson observed, despite the formal emphasis on voting, “it appears probable that an almost unanimous consensus after informal discussion was the rule...in electing the cabildo (except the governor)...” (*The Tlaxcalan Actas*, 7). One document (AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 7) may suggest that governor was voted on first, and then unsuccessful candidates were appointed to the other cabildo posts. In this document there is an untitled list of four men, the first of which appears in the list of

concerning the specific functions of cabildo positions and how these compared with those known in other Nahua *altepeme*. According to Robert Haskett, Cuernavacan election documents summarized the officials' duties, providing essential insight into the responsibilities of local officials.<sup>419</sup> In San Esteban, however, there is little information bearing on the responsibilities of particular officers.

The San Esteban Nahuatl documents much more reliably record the actions of the cabildo as a whole. Perhaps more than any other activity, the cabildo registered, authenticated, and controlled the transfer of land and property. This likely explains why it came to be so intimately involved with the recording of testaments, especially early in the seventeenth century when the pipiltin class was still being constructed. Since a testament's *raison d'être* is the verification and legal transfer of an estate—including land—the cabildo had a vested interest in these proceedings. Many testaments from the early period are signed by several cabildo members, and in some cases, virtually the entire cabildo was represented.<sup>420</sup> In contrast to those produced by Spanish scribes, San Esteban's testaments were essentially cabildo documents, typically witnessed by many cabildo members and recorded by the cabildo notary.

Likewise, requests for land had to go through the cabildo, and in the early seventeenth century members approved several petitions from residents requesting

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elected officials above as governor, another of which appears as *alcalde*, another as *regidor*, and the last of whom does not appear.

<sup>419</sup> Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*, 29.

<sup>420</sup> For several cabildo members, see AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exps. 4, 6, 10, 16, 18, 22. For virtually the entire cabildo, see Testament of Gabriel de los Ángeles, 10 March 1619, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 5.

land grants.<sup>421</sup> Stewardship of *altepetlalli* was a particular point of pride for the cabildo. In 1617 the notary recorded the grant of a *solar*, or plot, to a father and his son. The notary made a special point to emphasize just on whose authority the land was being transferred, subtly drawing attention to the cabildo's authority over such matters: "they requested it from *us*, we who are the governor, *alcaldes*, *regidores*, and all the cabildo people" (*qui[motlat]lani tlaltzintli solar techtlatlanili yntehuātin go<sup>or</sup> alldes regidores mochi tlacatl cabildo*).<sup>422</sup>

Much more frequently than it awarded it, the cabildo documented the transfer of land (and other property) that was already in someone's possession. In fact a large share of the cabildo's activity involved placing its legal stamp on transfers that were spelled out in testaments. While the cabildo would never contravene the terms of a testament (unless lawful possession, inheritance, or the like were at issue) it was ultimately its prerogative to approve or deny such transfers. Even those named in testaments as beneficiaries had to register property bequeathed to them before the cabildo, just as executors employed for the sole purpose of overseeing these transfers nevertheless had to seek the cabildo's approval in order to do so. In 1694 most of the cabildo appeared in the home of the deceased don Juan Diego and Ana Francisca in order to verify the distribution of their estates. After both testaments were read aloud, the scribe recorded how "everything listed...was given to the children as they are the legitimate heirs of their

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<sup>421</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exps. 8 (1613), 11 (1613), 13 (1614). As the years progressed, petitions for land grants become scarce and the number of disputes over land increased, indicating that arable land within the confines of the town's original grant had been exhausted.

<sup>422</sup> Petition of Diego Juarez, 21 Dec. 1617, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp 20.



deceased parents,” after which “they divided and presented [for verification by the cabildo] all of the property that is theirs (*Mochi yehuatl nican omoteneuh omacoque yn yehuan tepilhuan quenami yc herederos lixitimos yca yntatzin ocatca D<sup>n</sup> Juan diego yhuā ana fran<sup>ca</sup> ye micatzitzintin auh moxelhuilique yhuan omonextilique mochi yn tlen ymaxa yntlatqui*).<sup>423</sup> Concerning the property being transferred in her testament, one dying mother explained how her son “already took his share before the cabildo so that, [should] someone claim it, they shall not keep it” (*ye oconā yparte yxpā justicia yc acmo quipiaz aquin tlahtoz*).<sup>424</sup>

The cabildo also registered property and oversaw the transfer of estates belonging to those who died intestate. In 1687 virtually the entire cabildo (governor, alcalde, three regidores, alguacil mayor, teniente, and scribe) went to the home of don Gabriel Pérez to inventory his estate and oversee its distribution to his heirs before witnesses, presumably because he left no will prescribing this.<sup>425</sup> Another case involved a woman who sought notarization of a document (“un eschrito de repartision”) claiming that the estate belonging to her father—who evidently died without making a will—was divided among his heirs.<sup>426</sup> The cabildo ultimately approved the request, noting that “each and every one of the heirs was placed in possession of his inheritance.”<sup>427</sup> In 1671, two brothers appeared before

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<sup>423</sup> AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 26.

<sup>424</sup> Testament of Ana Francisca in Nahuatl, 2 July 1697, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, exp. 28.

<sup>425</sup> Inventory of the estate of don Gabriel Pérez, 1687, AMS, Testamentos caja 2, exp. 67.

<sup>426</sup> Notice of division of estate in Spanish, 23 Dec. 1686, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 22.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid: *se metieron en posesión todos los erederos cada uno lo que [recibió?] de sus herensias.*

the cabildo claiming that their sister's husband was trying to claim a house that belonged to them as part of their inheritance from their father's will. They argued that since the sister had died intestate—"she did not make a will; she just died" (*amo oquichiuh testamento çan yuhqui omomiquili*)— the house, which she had received from her father's estate, should revert back to them as the original heirs. The brothers knew that the law was on their side, and that the cabildo would be too. With no will to establish the transfer of possession to him, the brother-in-law was without legal recourse.<sup>428</sup>

By overseeing the transfer of community members' property, the cabildo protected its citizens and mediated disputes in ways that fostered group identity. However their close association with these activities also functioned as public displays of cabildo authority that legitimized and reinforced hierarchical divisions emerging in San Esteban society.<sup>429</sup> In 1628 Francisco de San Marcos asked the cabildo to approve the transfer of a house from a woman named Ana Juana to her daughter. As executor of Ana's estate, it was Francisco's responsibility to ensure that the house changed hands, but the act of granting possession to the new owner had to be performed by the cabildo, just as what followed—the public ceremony that established the transfer as legally binding—had to be witnessed by its members.

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<sup>428</sup> AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 89.

<sup>429</sup> Matthew Restall notes that cabildo activities represent "an indigenous need to continue the traditional public rituals (now recorded on paper) of settling one's estate, exchanging property, selecting community officers, and so on. They were also an expression of the concern to protect land from outside encroachment." In other words, by overseeing the transfer of property and offering stewardship over altepetl land, cabildo members performed many of the same political functions as in preconquest times, a fact that likely served to reinforce their claims to political legitimation. "Heirs to the Hieroglyphs," 246.

After duly noting the presence of the governor, *alcaldes*, and *regidores*, thereby establishing them as authoritative witnesses, the scribe recorded how “Ana Juana took possession of the house. She went inside...and there she went about opening and closing the door,” in a public display that ritually established lawful possession according to *cabildo* protocol (*oconan in calli ana Ju<sup>a</sup> yca posesion ompa ocalac calitic yhuan oncan onenen oquitlapo puerta yhuan oquitzacu*).<sup>430</sup>

While it was most common for supplicants to appear before the *cabildo*, its members also visited individuals in their homes, especially the dying but others as well. These types of house calls and the processions they entailed served to publicly display *cabildo* power and prestige before the community. When don Juan Diego’s widow died in 1697, it appears that most of the *cabildo* accompanied the heirs to the home so that the testaments could be read aloud and the property distributed. In what followed, the *cabildo*’s authority was performed and made public, both by the authenticating action of the notary and the communal nature of the act.<sup>431</sup>

Performances like these were designed to be communal acts—rituals in which *cabildo* members identified themselves as the dispensers of justice and the instruments of authority, while lookers-on witnessed potent performances of power that imbued the actors with considerable prestige. Unsurprisingly then *cabildo* activities were not seen as perfunctory duties but were jealously guarded prerogatives, the exercise of which came as a particular source of pride to council members. *Cabildo* procedure was sacred and not to be trifled with, as Domingo de

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<sup>430</sup> Petition of Francisco de San Marcos, 2 May 1628, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 6, f. 7v. The words “in calli ana ju<sup>a</sup>” are interpolated between lines.

<sup>431</sup> Execution of the testaments of don Juan Diego and Ana Francisca, 5 March 1694, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 26.

Ramos discovered in 1615. Appearing before the council in hopes of being granted title to property his father left him upon passing, Ramos received a tongue-lashing from the governor instead. Evidently Domingo had already approached the *cabildo* once, and in the intervening period he had had the gall to go to the Spanish *protector*. His authority—and that of the *cabildo*—undermined, the governor became incensed. Speaking past Ramos, rather than to him, he fulminated: “Already he stood straight before the *justicia* [i.e. *cabildo*] to ask us [permission]. We granted it to him then. By my very hand I the governor gave him possession of his house and his lands and all his deceased father possessed!” (*auh ye oquitlamelauhcayttac. Justicia, yc otechnahuati. nimā oticneltilique . nomatica nehuatl . go<sup>or</sup> . onicmacac Posesion. ynical ynitlal. ynquexquich. oquipyaya ytatzin ocatca*).

The *cabildo* also demonstrated its authority publicly by more conventional means, such as the issuing of pronouncements. While these documents are rarer than mundane texts, they are instructive in that they reveal the extent of *cabildo* power in San Esteban. In September of 1615 governor Gaspar Cleofas decreed that no one was to permit Spanish merchants (*pochtecatl*) into their homes or lodge travelers longer than one or two days. Anyone found in violation of this would have to pay a one-hundred-peso fine (an impossible sum for most San Esteban residents), suffer one hundred lashes, and be paraded through the streets mounted atop a horse as an object of public ridicule.<sup>432</sup> In one sense preventing the intrusion of Spanish merchants into San Esteban would protect residents from the many

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<sup>432</sup> Proclamation of governor don Gaspar Cleofas, 6 Sept. 1615, AMS, Procolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 4. See also Celestino Solís, *El Señorío de San Esteban*, 33-35.

mistreatments natives so often faced at the hands of European traders. However restricting this activity may also have deprived San Esteban residents of essential income. (In Zacatecas, for instance, some of the city's indigenous transplants served as landlords.)<sup>433</sup> And there is the possibility that the pipiltin's intention here was to reserve this trade for themselves. Whether intentionally or not, clearly pronouncements such as these functioned to limit economic activity in the town and restrict interaction with the Spanish sphere, which could affect San Esteban residents' ability to earn a living.

In fact, many of the pipiltin's activities in the seventeenth century served to deepen divisions in socioeconomic status that did not exist in 1591. Over the course of the seventeenth century, San Esteban became more rigidly stratified with wider gaps separating macehualtin from pipiltin, men from women, indigent from affluent, and Tlaxcalans from non-Tlaxcalans. In many cases, as we will see, this was a direct consequence of decisions made by the pipiltin to safeguard and advance their own interests. In others, this was merely an unintended consequence of the adoption of colonial institutions and the aping of Spanish customs that served to advance ruling class agendas.

## II. Social Stratification and the (Re-)Emergence of the *Pipiltin*

*nehuatl notoca fran.<sup>co</sup> hernādes onpa nochan tlaxcallan ynitech nipohui yn notlahxilacal s. esteuā tiçatla auh onihualla nicā chichimecatlalpa s. esteuan yancuictlaxcallan ynahuac la villa de santiago del saltillo*<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> Velasco Murillo, "Laboring above Ground," 13.

<sup>434</sup> Testament of Francisco Hernández in Nahuatl, 5 April 1645, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 30.

*My name is Francisco Hernández. My home is in Tlaxcala, where I belong to the tlaxilacalli of San Esteban Tizatlan. And I came here to Chichimec land, to San Esteban New Tlaxcala, next to the village of Santiago de Saltillo.*

-Testament of Francisco Hernández (1645)

Though old and dying in 1645, Francisco Hernández could still remember the long journey he and his family made in 1591 from Tlaxcala—the place he continued to call home despite the fact he had not seen it in over half a century. Yet references to the homeland are surprisingly rare in San Esteban's Nahuatl documents. It is almost as if the settlers had set so busily about creating a "New Tlaxcala" that they had forgotten about the old. Of course, as statements like Hernández's make clear, the many years and long miles had in no way dimmed the migrants' memories of their homeland; the silences are more a product of the kinds of "mundane" documents San Esteban residents produced than they are evidence of cultural amnesia. Nevertheless, in some ways, for Tlaxcalans like Francisco it was necessary to cut certain ties to the indigenous world in order to gain a leg-up in the colonial one. For instance there was no Francisco Hernández listed on the muster taken in the summer of 1591 on the journey north. If his dying words are to be believed, if he had in fact come with the original migration in 1591, Francisco Hernández would have had to materialize out of thin air.

In a way, he did. The man who looked back wistfully on his departure from Tlaxcala in 1591 had been known in that time as Francisco Xochinenemi.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> Francisco Xochinenemi came with the original migration in 1591, and he served on San Esteban's cabildo in the early seventeenth century (see AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 1). That Hernández and Xochinenemi were one and the same can be established by the fact that, in a suit brought before the cabildo in

Sometime in San Esteban's early years, while sitting periodically on its cabildo, Francisco had fashioned a new identity more in keeping with his newfound stature as a councilman with pretensions to nobility and political power. His choice of the Hispanic surname Hernández was indicative of decisions and changes that would profoundly transform San Esteban's society by the mid seventeenth century.

This section demonstrates how common Tlaxcalans like Hernández invoked the tools of leadership in San Esteban to recreate local government and re-stratify their society, creating in the process a social order in the image of their Tlaxcalan homeland. By embracing Spanish institutions and practices—but also inflecting them and twisting them to indigenous purposes—certain Tlaxcalan men managed to distance themselves from the macehualtin, from women, and from local Chichimecs. Eventually, through service and seniority, they established themselves as pipiltin, and some even transferred their noble names to kin, becoming the progenitors of elite, quasi-hereditary clans. By the end of the seventeenth century, a new pipiltin class had emerged, wealthier and more distinguished than the common macehualtin. If the cabildo resolved disputes, maintained corporate integrity, and encouraged group solidarity, it also functioned to etch lasting divisions into the very bedrock of San Esteban society.

If the 1591 founder population was relatively homogenous, by the end of the seventeenth century San Esteban was a rigidly stratified community with large gaps between commoners and noblemen. Elite members of the ruling class are identified in documents as pipiltin, which in pre-Hispanic times referred to members of the

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1613, the plaintiff identified the defendant as Francisco Hernández Xochinenemi. Demanda, 26 April 1613, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 9.

hereditary nobility. They enjoyed greater social prestige and factored among the town's wealthiest individuals. Their positions contrast markedly with the many impoverished men and most strikingly to women. Although men tended to dominate politics in pre-Hispanic Tlaxcala, women were not entirely excluded from leadership. However in San Esteban it appears that the pipiltin's embrace of Spanish institutions led to a more patriarchal society in which women had fewer leadership opportunities than they did before the conquest.

Likewise, the boundary separating Tlaxcalans and non-Tlaxcalans was an impermeable one in San Esteban. Despite mandates in the *Capitulaciones* (see chapter 3) stipulating that Tlaxcalans oversee the local Guachichiles' conversion to a sedentary, 'civilized' way of life, there is virtually no evidence of their interactions in San Esteban's Nahuatl records. Evidently Tlaxcalans in San Esteban did not share Spaniards' concern for the Chichimecs' conversion. Despite the popular conception of Tlaxcalan allies aiding Spanish colonialism in the north, in San Esteban, at least, Tlaxcalans more often pursued their own agendas instead.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> As was so often the case, Chichimecs are most visible in the records in death. Death records of the parroquia of San Esteban list Guachichiles fairly often, since the parish church ministered to them, but they are glaringly absent from the Nahuatl records. In fact, if one were to read only the Nahuatl records, one would very likely be unaware of the Guachichiles' existence at San Esteban. See Archivo Diocesano de Saltillo, Defunciones, 1632-1712 ("Memoria de los yndios q han muerto en este Pueblo de s. esteuan del Saltillo desde 1 de Abril de 1632 años"), ms. microfilmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah (Salt Lake City), 1966-1975, and available online: Iglesia Católica, San Esteban Protomártir, Saltillo, Coahuila, "Registros parroquiales, 1632-1928," (web page), Family Search, accessed June 19, 2017, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/151915?availability=Family%20History%20Library>.



Despite its location adjacent to the Spanish *villa* of Saltillo, San Esteban was an incredibly insular society with minimal influences from the Spanish world. This insularity permitted the community to endure as a near-autonomous indigenous corporate entity well into the nineteenth century, far longer than most other indigenous communities (Saltillo finally incorporated San Esteban in the late 1820s).<sup>437</sup> This hermeticism had a profound social cost, however. Limited contact with the wider colonial world restricted economic opportunities and kept the majority of San Esteban residents poor. This, in turn, reinforced the divisions between pipiltin and macehualtin that the cabildo had been instrumental in (re)creating.

#### The Emergence of a New Pipiltin Class

In pre-conquest Tlaxcala, pipiltin referred to a class of elites who derived nobility from either direct or collateral relationship to a *teuctli*, or the head of a noble house (*teccalli*).<sup>438</sup> Unlike in other indigenous communities in New Spain, the distinctions between macehualtin and pipiltin were maintained in Tlaxcala for much of the sixteenth century.<sup>439</sup> Nevertheless the transition to cabildo rule, with its elections and strict term limits, posed challenges for the pipiltin's hereditary claims. These challenges were magnified in San Esteban. Not only were there few pipiltin to begin

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<sup>437</sup> Leslie S. Offutt, "Women's Voices from the Frontier: San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala in the Late Eighteenth Century" in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, ed. Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 275.

<sup>438</sup> Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 102-03.

<sup>439</sup> Martínez Baracs, *Un gobierno de indios*, 180.

with in the colony, but those who had worked to establish themselves as political leaders had to contend with challengers each year in the elections. Thus, as in other frontier societies like Zacatecas, there was in San Esteban a strong tendency towards meritocracy, whereby the ruling class distinguished itself through service in administration and governance, as well as by seniority.<sup>440</sup> Nevertheless vestiges of the old, descent-based system remained, and one detects strong dynastic tendencies in the Nahuatl records of San Esteban and especially in the career profiles of its governing elite. While the mechanisms through which one became a *pilli* had changed, the category was still very much alive in San Esteban.

The ascendancy of a ruling class occupying a higher social stratum than the majority of the population took place long before the end of the seventeenth century. Nevertheless it was at that time that the direct association between governance and nobility became explicit as a social fact. Not only did people appearing before the cabildo in the century's waning years tend to refer to its members as *pipiltin*, but it becomes clear they were doing so specifically because of their association with the instruments of governance. For instance, a 1686 testament was said to have been "done before the *pipiltin*—the *alcaldes* and *regidores*" (*omochiuh ymixpan pipiltin Alcaldes yhua Rexidores*), while in 1694 a testator directed himself to "all the *pipiltin* of the cabildo" (*mochintzitzin pipiltin cabildo*).<sup>441</sup> The next year a petition was presented "before the *pipiltin* in charge of

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<sup>440</sup> Velasco Murillo observes this same phenomenon in Zacatecas. "Creation of Indigenous Leadership," 687.

<sup>441</sup> Testament of Lucas Juan, 3 August 1686, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 20. Like many cabildo documents, this is a palimpsest with multiple dates. The

justice" (*imixpantzinco pipiltin Justicia*).<sup>442</sup> The scribe who transcribed Melchora María's testament in 1700 mentioned that it was recorded "before the pipiltin"—by which he meant specifically the *alcaldes*, the *regidor*, and the *alguacil mayor*.<sup>443</sup> Drawing a clear line of separation, the notary pointed out that the document was "done also before the witnesses"—important (male) functionaries in their own right, but ranking far enough below the *pipiltin* to be relegated to a separate clause.<sup>444</sup>

Interestingly, while there is clear evidence for processes of hierarchical stratification ongoing throughout the seventeenth century, it is only in its final decades that one sees explicit references to *pipiltin*. This lends credence to the notion that Tlaxcalans in San Esteban were using the term as it had been used in preconquest times, that is, to refer to a member of a noble house whose status was passed hereditarily. Earlier in the colony's existence, elite clans were still being constructed through *cabildo* service and seniority. By the late seventeenth century, however, the families' credentials had been established, permitting earned status to transfer hereditarily.

The language of petitioners and testators reveals a clear distinction between the *pipiltin* associated with governance and the more plebeian *macehualtin*. That

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quoted text appears to have been written in 1691; Testament of Ana Francisca, 22 February, 1694, AMS, Protocolos, exp. 25.

<sup>442</sup> *Justicia* was evidently a weighty term among Tlaxcalans of San Esteban. In 1619 Gabriel de los Ángeles referred to *ijusticiatzin dios*. AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 5.

<sup>443</sup> Petition of Nicolás Hernández, Nov. 1695, AMS, Testamentos, caja 3, exp. 19.

<sup>444</sup> Testament of Melchora María, 14 Dec. 1700, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 29.

distinction is also visible in the economic sphere, indicating that for at least some pipiltin, their social capital translated readily into material wealth. San Esteban's testaments reveal considerable disparities between common individuals and those associated with the ruling class. Offutt has suggested that the San Esteban testaments represent "all but the lower socioeconomic strata" in San Esteban, and if this is true, then the disparities between pipiltin and the humblest macehualtin are even starker than the documents can reveal.<sup>445</sup>

Socioeconomic position can be gleaned from Nahuatl testaments in several ways. First, individuals can often be distinguished by their names. Commoners tended to have two given names, while the pipiltin carried surnames such as Hernández, Cázeres, and Pérez borrowed from the Spanish world. However the most obvious markers come in the form of assets (like houses, land, and livestock) and moveable property. In San Esteban, an individual listing more than one house and several plots of land probably occupied one of society's more rarefied strata. Livestock are an important gauge as well. Pipiltin could have considerably more livestock than commoners and were more likely to possess cows, horses, and oxen. Macehualtin often had goats and sheep but in smaller numbers than noblemen, and they rarely list the larger breeds of livestock. In San Esteban, metal tools often feature prominently in testaments, suggesting that they were highly valued and possibly rare. (Plows, for instance, were uncommon and tended to appear in the estates of elites, both because they required oxen or horses to pull them and

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<sup>445</sup> Offutt, "Nahuatl Testaments of San Esteban," 8.

because they were made of iron.)<sup>446</sup> Items associated with the world of letters, such as books and tools used for writing, are occasionally found among the estates of San Esteban's nobility, as are other, rarer, items like surgical instruments, but not among individuals of lesser means.

Another useful gauge is the amount given to local *cofradías*, or confraternities that collected monies for supporting Catholic causes and charities. Testators may have been obliged to make these contributions (hence their being known as *mandas forzosas*, or obligatory bequests), and many people consistently gave the same amount.<sup>447</sup> Occasionally, however, someone would contribute significantly more, indicating the more ample resources at their disposal. Charitable donations to *cofradías* were not the only offerings seen in San Esteban testaments. The dying also set aside money for Masses, candles (for vigils), and funerary shrouds. As we will see, these institutions served as a social glue binding the community together and protecting its members from misfortune. However they also functioned to sap a largely indigent population of precious wealth and channel it to the Spanish world. Tellingly, testators in San Esteban never leave cash to loved ones (or at least they did not record these exchanges in their testaments), but they always leave cash or kind to the church. Even poor residents contributed the few coins or the little surplus corn they could spare to purchase candle wax, to buy a funerary shroud, or to have a Mass said for them. While technically not "obligatory" like the *cofradía* donations, they were nevertheless indispensable to the proper observance of

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<sup>446</sup> Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 150.

<sup>447</sup> For example Pizzigoni observes that contributing to the Jerusalem fund "seems to have been intended as obligatory," though this varied in practice. *Testaments of Toluca*, 17.

Christian funerary rites and thus were similar in that they functioned to remove wealth from native hands and funnel it toward European ones.

Let us first begin by identifying individuals who appear to have formed part of the lower class in San Esteban. In their testaments both Nicolás Matías and Melchora Juana gave one *almud* (1/12th bushel) of shelled corn to each of San Esteban's confraternities,<sup>448</sup> while Estebana Ana gave two.<sup>449</sup> Ana Francisca and Catalina Luisa left two *reales* (¼ peso) to these institutions, a standard offering for ordinary folk.<sup>450</sup> Magdalena María gave two reales each to two confraternities but then evidently ran out of cash, giving the rest of her offerings in maize.<sup>451</sup> Pasquala de Aquino did much the same, giving four reales to the Casa Santa de Jerusalem and a half-fanega of maize each to two others.<sup>452</sup> Nor did Gabriel de los Ángeles appear to have any money. To the confraternities of the Holy Sacrament and Our Holy Mother in 1619 he gave one turkey each in offering, reserving his maize for "our

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<sup>448</sup> AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exps. 27, 29.

<sup>449</sup> Testament of Estebana Ana in Spanish, 1 February 1689, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 23.

<sup>450</sup> Of course, an offering by itself does not prove poverty. In fact, the testament of Catalina Luisa is much more elaborate than those belonging to typical women, suggesting a higher station (perhaps she was married to a nobleman). Ana's testament, on the other hand, suggests a humbler background. It reflects a modest estate, and in it, she bequeaths items of little value, like an iron grill. Testament of Catalina Luisa, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 24; Testament of Ana Francisca, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 25.

<sup>451</sup> Spanish translation of testament fragment of Magdalena María, n.d., "Traducciones al español de varios documentos en nahuatl, que forman parte del fondo protocolos, del Archivo Municipal de Saltillo que se localizan en la caja nº 1, libro nº 1," (unpublished AMS cuaderno), f. 10r (exp. 9).

<sup>452</sup> Testament of Pasquala de Aquino, 5 October 1648, AMS, Testamentos, Caja 1, exp. 33.

father *guardián*” of San Esteban’s Franciscan monastery “so that he will help me with a Mass.”<sup>453</sup>

Occasionally the debts someone mentioned in their testaments can be instructive, as with Juan Miguel, who on his deathbed in 1647 or 1648 called in a debt owed him consisting of a pair of socks and a pair of shoes.<sup>454</sup> In other cases, court documents can provide similar insight into a person’s economic circumstances. One record for 1673, for instance, shows Sebastián Lorenzo hauling his brother to court for pilfering nuts from his walnut tree.<sup>455</sup>

While the historian can often enough infer social standing from information provided in testaments, on occasion the dying rendered this unnecessary by making explicit admissions of poverty. Facing the end but devoid of cash, Nicolas Matías ordered sold what little property he had—a single mule—in order to buy the candles for his funeral Mass and to cover the costs of his burial. This was necessary, he explained, “because I am poor—I have nothing to offer [in payment]” (*nimotilinia amo nicpia limosna*).<sup>456</sup> In 1700 a woman said of her humble funeral arrangements involving a *misa resada*—or low Mass, the plainest and cheapest of funerary

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<sup>453</sup> Testament of Gabríel de los Ángeles, 10 March 1619, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 5, f. 5r.

<sup>454</sup> Testament of Juan Miguel, 17 Dec. 1647 (1648?), AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 34.

<sup>455</sup> Complaint of Sebastián Lorenzo against Juan Francisco, his brother, 5 September 1673, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 6.

<sup>456</sup> Testament of Nicolas Mathias, March 1696, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 27.

Masses—“let it be simply thus, as I am poor” (*ma çan quenami ic nimotolinia yca Missa resada*).<sup>457</sup>

If indigence in San Esteban can be glimpsed in meager quantities of corn and cash and gauged by offerings in poultry, wealth appeared in the form of livestock, more sumptuous offerings and larger sums of cash, prestige items associated with the Spanish world, and even servants. Whereas a humble individual might offer two *reales* to local confraternities and request one low Mass, people commanding more wealth typically made more substantial offerings (whether in cash or kind) and requested more—and more elaborate—Masses.<sup>458</sup> For instance don Bernardino García, brother of Andrés del Saltillo and a fixture on the early cabildo who had served as governor in 1643, requested ten High Masses (*huehuei missas*), “two with vigils, eight simply sung” (*ome yca Vigilia chicuei çan yuhqui Cantada*). Fascinatingly, he actually received twenty-three, six low and seventeen high or sung Masses. Three of these were “with their vigils” and cost the significant sum of five pesos each. Don Bernardino also left three fanegas (roughly five bushels) of maize to various *cofradías*.<sup>459</sup>

Furthermore, García controlled a broader range of livestock than most commoners, who typically refer in testaments only to sheep and goats. Spaniards called these *ganado menor*, and they were worth considerably less than *ganado*

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<sup>457</sup> Testament of Melchora María, 14, Dec. 1700, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 27

<sup>458</sup> In *The Testaments of Toluca*, Caterina Pizzigoni notes only three cases in which a testator ordered more than one mass, and all were wealthy. See p. 15.

<sup>459</sup> Testament of don Bernardino García in Nahuatl, 20 Nov. 1652, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, exp. 10. García is attested as Andrés del Saltillo’s brother in *ibid*. He is listed as alguacil mayor in AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 27bis, and as governor in AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 28.



*mayor*—cows and horses. To fund his lavish funerary arrangements he arranged to sell two yokes for oxen as well as a horse's saddle and bit (*çe silla...yca freno*), indicating that he owned or at least had access to the larger—and pricier—of New Spain's domesticated animals. He also planned to sell a mule, a cow, and a goat. García's privileged access to draft animals and his ownership of "a large plow" (*çe huei reja*) probably had something to do with his possession of substantial quantities of grain. He referenced a significant amount (six *fanegas*, or nine bushels) of wheat, for instance, which fetched a higher price at market than maize. Since wheat was "generally rejected by Indians," don Bernardino likely peddled the grain to Spaniards in neighboring Saltillo.<sup>460</sup> A man of his stature would have had access to more land as well, and in fact García references land he acquired through purchase (*notlalcohual*), whereas commoners were more often restricted to plots they inherited or married into.<sup>461</sup>

Working more land with more powerful animals and more efficient equipment, don Bernardino was able to amass grain and stockpile wealth. Quite possibly a key component of his ability to do so was the labor of a woman he refers to as "my servant Pascuala" (*notlaquatequil pasquala*), to whom he left his plow. Perhaps this was in joint homage to the individual and to the kind of labor that

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<sup>460</sup> Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 149.

<sup>461</sup> Testament of don Bernardino García in Nahuatl, 20 Nov. 1652, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, exp. 10. Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*, 150, observes that pipiltin in the mother province enjoyed greater agricultural surpluses because they "could maintain greater areas under cultivation than could Indians of the lower class." Also, "their methods were more productive, for they could afford oxen, iron plows, and other farm implements."

helped this *pilli* to accumulate a small fortune in comparison to other San Esteban residents.<sup>462</sup>

García was not the only one to have considerable wealth bound up in livestock and cash. In his testament of 1675, Juan Hernández bequeathed a total of 100 sheep to his many sons, and thirty years earlier Francisco Hernández (it is unclear if they were related) left the same number to just one son.<sup>463</sup> However Francisco clearly bested Juan in overall wealth. Whereas Juan left a total of three pesos to the *cofradías* (which was still above average), Francisco gave six, in addition to donating another two just for candle wax. Most tellingly, though, he contributed a total of twenty-six pesos to the local priest to cover costs associated with burial and the purchase of a Franciscan habit (commonly used as a burial shroud) and sung Mass. Francisco also seems to have recognized the rarity of his coins and the exclusivity their possession betokened. He referred to his money, seemingly with a glint of pride, as *pesos teocuitlatl* (“pesos in precious metal”). Francisco may also have been involved in business dealings locally. He mentions debts owed him by three individuals for a total amount of forty pesos (one for ten pesos and another in excess of twenty).<sup>464</sup> In an isolated frontier village with limited

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<sup>462</sup> Testament of don Bernardino García in Nahuatl, 20 Nov. 1652, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, exp. 10.

<sup>463</sup> Testament of Juan Hernández in Nahuatl, 7 April 1675, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 17. A Juan Hernández appears as a lower-level cabildo officer (*yalguacil gobernador*, lit., “the governor’s constable”) in 1643. This may well be the same individual, but the frequency with which names repeated makes it difficult to say. AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 28.

<sup>464</sup> Testament of Francisco Hernández in Nahuatl, 5 April 1645, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 30. To my ear the names of his business associates—Nicolas Flores, Diego López, Phelipe Morones (?)—sound Spanish. Moreover

opportunities for cash transactions and where a few pesos represented a significant amount of cash, these were substantial sums indeed.

Like don Bernardino, Francisco Hernández also had assets associated with the elite (like *tlalcohualli*, purchased land) and had served on the cabildo (including as governor in 1628).<sup>465</sup> In addition to his wealth and his don title, there are other indicators that suggest Francisco was considered a *pilli*.<sup>466</sup> For example, unlike most testators—indeed, unlike most *people* in early San Esteban—Francisco was able to place his own signature on the document. And he traveled in an elite circle. He named the venerable don Juan de Santiago as one of his executors, and the witnesses were all important men traceable to the cabildo, including “don Bernaldino garzia.”<sup>467</sup>

Other prestige items appearing in testaments can serve as useful markers of social standing. Because they betoken literacy and thus an elevated social standing, books indicate an individual of considerable rank. Two books were found when the cabildo inventoried the estates of don Juan Diego and Ana Francisca in 1694, in addition to a document associated with the church, perhaps a sermon (*ze teotlatol*

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Tlaxcalans owing these sums probably would have carried the don title. Yet they do not. Thus it is more likely they were Spaniards.

<sup>465</sup> AMS, Procolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 1 (regidor, 1603 [1613?]); Execution of the testament of Justina by Francisco de San Marcos, 2 May 1628, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 6, ff. 7r-v (gobernador).

<sup>466</sup> AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 6, ff. 7r-v.

<sup>467</sup> AMS Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 30. Don Bernardino García is established as a cabildo member in note 455, above. The other three witnesses were Gabriel Pérez (attested as don and alcalde in AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 33.), Juan Pérez (attested as don and gobernador in *ibid.*), and Francisco de Aquino (attested as regidor in AMS, Protocolos, caja 1 libro 1, exp. 11).

*amatl*).<sup>468</sup> And Ventura Hernández owned several books, including “one...in Spanish” (*çe libro en Romanse*).<sup>469</sup> The others were associated with prayer and the sacrament of Holy Mass, suggesting that Ventura served some official capacity within the church, and probably spent considerable time with the friars. Perhaps this is where he learned to write (he served at least four years, and probably more, as cabildo notary). They were undoubtedly the source of his knowledge of Latin, which he could not only read but write as well. Ventura made two testaments, both of which contain Latin appearing in his own, rather than the scribe’s, hand. At the top of one is scrawled, *et nomine domine*, “in the name of the lord,” while the other says, *yn dei nomine amen*.<sup>470</sup> Perhaps in what he believed to be his dying moments, he wished to exercise one final time the skill that had distinguished him and to write his last words of his own accord. (In fact, while away in the mining town of Mazapil, which evidently lacked an indigenous scribe, Hernández wrote one of the testaments himself.)<sup>471</sup>

For all his knowledge, though, Ventura appears never to have ascended beyond the rank of notary. Perhaps this owed to his desire to serve the church. Whatever course his life took while in San Esteban, however, it is clear that he eventually abandoned both the notary’s desk and the monastery, eventually making

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<sup>468</sup> Execution of the testaments of Don Juan Diego and Ana Francisca, 5 March 1694, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 26. “Teotlatol amatl,” f. 35r.

<sup>469</sup> Testament of Ventura Hernández in Nahuatl, 2 June 1684, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 45.

<sup>470</sup> Testament of Ventura Hernández in Nahuatl, 4 Oct. 1686, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 59 (*et nomine domine*); Testament of Ventura Hernández in Nahuatl, 2 June 1684, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 45 (*yn dei nomine amen*).

<sup>471</sup> Testament of Ventura Hernández in Nahuatl, 4 Oct. 1686, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 59.

his way to Mazapil where, according to his son Nicolás, Ventura went in order to find work.<sup>472</sup> At a certain point he acquired a rifle, and he also had “one good saddle,” stirrups, and a bit (*se çilla cuali ica estiberas yhuan se freno*) indicating that he owned a horse.<sup>473</sup>

That a well-connected former notary had to leave San Esteban to find work suggests that there were limited economic opportunities in San Esteban and that only the highest-ranking individuals—pipiltin like don Bernardino García—had any chance of amassing appreciable wealth. And in fact San Esteban’s Nahuatl sources corroborate this. The masses seem to have been primarily yeomen, based on the prevalence of agricultural tools and products in humble peoples’ testaments and their conspicuous lack of wealth. Moreover there are surprisingly few references to commercial activity and all of these involve San Esteban’s elite. Don Juan Diego may have been involved in commercial activity as far away as Zacatecas, or at least he appears to have been the beneficiary of such activity, judging from items in his testament.<sup>474</sup> And of course there was the churchman and scribe Ventura

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<sup>472</sup> Petition of Nicolás Hernández, Nov. 1695, AMS, Testamentos, caja 3, exp. 19: *...para poder trabajar*. (This document has been partially translated into Spanish by AMS staff. The Nahuatl original is badly mutilated.)

<sup>473</sup> Testament of Ventura Hernández in Nahuatl, 2 June 1684, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 45.

<sup>474</sup> This is based on the presence of material items in his testament with the prefix *zacate-*, which could refer to grass (from *zacatl*), but considering the nature of the items, this does not make sense. It is possible for *zacatecomatl* (lit., grass container) to refer to an earthen jar with grass woven into it, but it is highly unlikely that the meaning of *zacatecontzin* has anything to do with grass, since *tecontli* (actually, *teçontli*) means, “porous stone.” Therefore I presume the prefix refers to where these items came from (Zacatecas, or perhaps “Zacatlan”—see chap. 2, note 217, above) rather than the materials from which they were made. See Execution of the testaments of Don Juan Diego and Ana Francisca, 5 March 1694, AMS, Procolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 26.

Hernández, who went (on horseback, no less) to Mazapil, probably to participate in its mining economy.<sup>475</sup> As early as 1616 Sebastián of the exalted Ramos clan was carrying out business deals with Spaniards, undoubtedly in neighboring Saltillo. He mentions debts owed him by two Spanish men, one of three pesos and six reales for candles and tallow. Regarding the second sum, he said, “Pedro Castillo owes me one fanega of wheat, because I worked for him; I made him carts” (*pedro castillo nechhuiquilia çe anega trigo, yc onictequipano. onicchichih carretón*).<sup>476</sup>

Interestingly, in Saltillo, Sebastián de Ramos was probably perceived as merely another Indian day laborer, hiring himself out to Spaniards for modest wages. However in San Esteban, where economic opportunities were few, the prospect of working for Spaniards for cash (or wheat) would have elevated him conspicuously above the cash-starved, subsistence-farming macehualtin.

Finally, there is the possibility that members of San Esteban’s upper crust distinguished themselves by offering specialized services within the town. Don Juan Diego’s testament lists items suggesting that he was a barber (such as a barber’s razor, or *ze nabaxa de barba*, as the scribe wrote it) and provides tantalizing clues that he moonlighted as a surgeon, as barbers then were wont to do. Among his estate was a glass instrument known as a *ventosa*, which when heated and applied

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<sup>475</sup> Testament of Ventura Hernández in Nahuatl, 4 Oct. 1686, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 59; Petition of Nicolás Hernández, Nov. 1695, AMS, Testamentos, caja 3, exp. 19.

<sup>476</sup> Testament of Sebastián de Ramos, 17 Nov. 1616, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 18.

to certain areas of the body could draw “humors” towards the skin’s surface, whence they could be extracted through small incisions.<sup>477</sup>

### Religiosity and Poverty

In addition to providing windows into economic activity and the distribution of wealth in the town, San Esteban’s Nahuatl testaments also reveal an intense religiosity and close association with the Catholic Church—an association that had significant economic consequences, especially for San Esteban’s poor. San Esteban testaments reflect a devoutness that bespeaks a close connection with the resident Franciscans and a strong sense of community rooted deeply in Christian practice. This pious observance of Christianity, and especially participation in lay sodalities, encouraged group cohesion and bolstered San Esteban’s corporate identity. But it also functioned to keep residents poor and to siphon precious wealth toward the Spanish sphere.

Nowhere are the economic consequences of this religiosity more visible than in San Esteban residents’ punctilious performance of the rites surrounding death. In this economically hobbled community, death was an especially costly business. To depart the world in accordance with the dictums of the Christian faith, and thus to earn God’s grace, one was expected to obtain a shroud, to donate to several confraternities, and to make “offerings” to the priests to compensate their labors in

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<sup>477</sup> Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de Autoridades*, tomo VI (1739), entry for “ventosa.” <http://web.frl.es/DA.html>, accessed 9 September 2017.

performing Masses and handling the burial.<sup>478</sup> As the name suggests, in the case of the *mandas forzosas* (obligatory offerings to *cofradías*), testators may not have had a choice. The purchase of Masses, shrouds, and candles, on the other hand, were voluntary acts in which seemingly everyone who made a testament partook. Even the most humble individuals set aside money to purchase these things, even though their ‘estates’ often consisted of no more than a few pesos and some household items. While *cofradía* funds were redistributed among the community, the costs associated with these other rites went to the church, rather than to testators’ families.

This could cause family members considerable hardship. In 1695 Nicolás Hernández approached the cabildo complaining that his half brothers had withheld his share of the inheritance left him in their father’s will. When cabildo officers summoned the brothers, one admitted to keeping Nicolás’s share (a saddle and rifle) but explained that he had done so because he had to cover the obligatory church offerings when another brother passed away.<sup>479</sup> A few years earlier Pedro Gaspar had sought redress from the cabildo for expenditures he made in the wake of his wife’s death. When she passed, he said, “I aided her soul with Masses, a habit, and offerings, and wax, and obligatory bequests, without my father-in-law helping me with [one] coin or string of wax” (*onicpalehui Yanimahztzin yca missas yhuā abito*

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<sup>478</sup> See Pizzigoni, *Testaments of Toluca*, 14-17. For instance, the monetary amount of contributions to the Jerusalem fund, seen also in San Esteban, was likely set via “ecclesiastical directive” (17).

<sup>479</sup> Petition of Nicolás Hernández, Nov. 1695, AMS, Testamentos, caja 3, exp. 19. Nicolás Hernández was the son of Ventura Hernández, who had been a cabildo notary and later developed economic interests in Mazapil. Evidently, while he inherited his father’s surname, Nicolás received little else upon his father’s passing.



*yhuā limosnas yhuā sera yhuā mandas forcaz sinque nomontahtzin*

*onehpalehui*[torn] *tomin ni çe cabo sera*).<sup>480</sup> He was therefore seeking justice from the cabildo, because, as he put it, “I am truly poor” (*nelnimotolinia*).<sup>481</sup>

Stemming in part from grief, the indignation these men showed nevertheless reveals how death in San Esteban reaped more than its customary emotional toll. When loved ones died suddenly, without having made financial arrangements, or when they were simply too poor to cover costs, living relatives could be saddled with significant financial burdens. Furthermore, often the little money a dying individual could spare went toward covering funeral costs and church offerings, meaning that surviving relatives would receive little if any cash. In more ways than one, the financial implications of death often haunted the living.

### Women and Gender

If San Esteban’s Nahuatl documents reveal significant disparities in the social positions of macehualtin and pipiltin, the gap separating men and women was similarly wide. In San Esteban there were three primary avenues for social advancement: cabildo service, assuming a leadership position in a *cofradía*, or functioning as an executor of someone’s estate. A *pilli* might serve in all three capacities, but in the seventeenth century, there is no evidence of a woman occupying even one of these roles. Although women occupied positions of leadership in preconquest Nahua society (for instance positions such as

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<sup>480</sup> Petition of Pedro Gaspar to governor don Matheo de la Corona, 8 September 1692, AMS, Presidencia Municipal, caja 4, exp. 82, document 10.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

*cihuatepixqui*—"female person in charge of people"—and *cihuatlatoani*, female ruler, have been documented), when New Spain's indigenous communities adopted the cabildo, this possibility was eliminated, since women could not serve on Spanish town councils.<sup>482</sup> Thus no woman ever served on San Esteban's cabildo, and as far as I am aware, none served as executor to an estate in the seventeenth century.

Strikingly, only once was a female even mentioned as a witness to a testament over the course of the century (in 1611).<sup>483</sup> Nor did women occupy leadership positions in the *cofradías*, even though they were certainly members (not to mention paying contributors). Women occasionally represented themselves before the cabildo, but there were also cases where men represented them, and in the cases where a written petition was presented, men wrote them. In fact, there is no evidence that any woman in San Esteban could write. Nearly all women, even those married to *pipiltin*, had plebeian-sounding names, and, tellingly, almost none carried the title *doña* in seventeenth-century records.<sup>484</sup> In the main, then, it appears that the adoption of the structure of Spanish-style rule may have marginalized women even at the same time that it enabled the pursuit of indigenous agendas and the protection of the indigenous community at large.

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<sup>482</sup> Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 44; Susan Schroeder, "The Annals of Chimalpahin," in *Sources and Methods for Postconquest Mesoamerican Ethnohistory*, ed. Lockhart, Sousa, and Wood, 4. Camilla Townsend notes a "*cihuatecuhtli*, 'a lady of power.'" *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2006), 59.

<sup>483</sup> María Gomez appeared as a witness for the Testament of María Jacoba, 9 March 1611, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 5.

<sup>484</sup> Ana Toxtlapal appears to have been one of few women of noted social station in early San Esteban. She boasted a considerable estate (see the discussion on p. 217, below), and she clearly traveled in an elite circle, as in her testament she mentions *doñas* and, fascinatingly, *cihuapipiltin* ("noblewomen"). However, references like these are exceedingly rare in the seventeenth-century documents.

Regardless of their gender, the dying in San Esteban tended to select as their executors elite men associated with the cabildo and male relatives, usually sons or sons-in-law. When Estebana Ana ordered her testament in 1689, she emphasized that it had been done before don Andrés Maldonado, a cabildo member, and requested that he act, “along with my son, Juan Pérez,” as executor.<sup>485</sup> Ana Francisca also selected a son as her executor, and as with Estebana Ana, she also included a cabildo member and pilli (don Salvador Hernández).<sup>486</sup> Similarly, when she arranged her testament in 1648, Pasquala de Aquino chose two leading men, the alcalde don Gabriel Pérez and the career cabildo officer Pedro Clemente.<sup>487</sup>

To be sure, this pattern did not owe to any gender imbalance in San Esteban. For instance, when don Bernardino García was on his deathbed, he passed over his daughter and chose her husband, his son-in-law, as executor instead.<sup>488</sup> Decisions like these reflect the extent to which males had come to monopolize all aspects of public life in seventeenth-century San Esteban. James Lockhart has suggested that the alacrity with which the Nahuas of central Mexico took up the testamentary tradition suggests a pre-Hispanic analogue, and probably one involving the wider community, men and women alike. And he has also noted that “witnesses to Nahuatl wills were women as often as not.”<sup>489</sup> This was not the case in San Esteban. In fact, it

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<sup>485</sup> Testament of Estebana Ana in Spanish, 1 February 1689, AMS, Protocolos, exp. 23.

<sup>486</sup> Testament of Ana Francisca in Nahuatl, 22 February, 1694, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 25.

<sup>487</sup> Testament of Pasquala de Aquino in Nahuatl, 5 October 1648, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 33.

<sup>488</sup> Testament of don Bernardino García in Nahuatl, 20 Nov. 1652, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 10.

<sup>489</sup> Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 367-70, quote at 370.

appears that the only way a woman would have been present when a testament was being written in seventeenth-century San Esteban was if that woman was dying. Male control over the testamentary tradition in San Esteban was symptomatic of San Esteban men's efforts to seize the mechanisms of power and manipulate them in order to secure ruling-class interests.

That is not to say that women were entirely powerless in San Esteban. Women often appeared before the cabildo in order to bring complaints, to make requests, claim property, and order testaments. However they also at times relied on male representatives or claimed legitimation through male authority. For instance Bentura Juan Valverde and Francisco Andrés supplicated before the cabildo on behalf of their sisters in 1671, presumably because male representation gave the petition more legal pull.<sup>490</sup> And when Magdalena María returned to San Esteban from nearby Parras to claim her share of her father's inheritance, she presented a document claiming that her "lawful husband" had given her "his authorization" to do so (*teoyotica nonamic onechmacac yhuelitilizli*).<sup>491</sup> (Interestingly, even though she is the petitioner, the document is written in the husband's hand, suggesting either that she could not write or that her husband's words carried more weight. Perhaps both were true.) Even when women appeared before the cabildo independently, their identities were at times subsumed under those of male relatives. For instance, in 1613 the notary recorded a complaint by "María, wife of Juan Tlacoquin," referring

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<sup>490</sup> Petition of Bentura Juan Valverde and Francisco Andrés before the cabildo, 22 April 1671, AMS, Testamentos, Caja 1, exp. 89.

<sup>491</sup> Petition of Magdalena María in the hand of her husband, don Jusephe Hernández, n.d., AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 30. *Jusephe ernandes teoyotica nonamic onechmacac yhuelitilizli ycuā [ycuac] onechhualiac ypanpa nicceliz in tlen onech tlaocolitehuac in pili notatzin za micatzin*

to her only by her given name and in reference to her husband, as was often done in the Spanish world.<sup>492</sup>

The trend toward a more patriarchal San Esteban is especially evident in inheritance and naming patterns. In testaments, sons are favored over daughters. Sons are more likely to receive houses and land, while women are more apt to receive household items. In the testament of Pascuala de Aquino (1648), the son receives the house while his sisters receive only a skirt (*huipilli*) and a grinding stone (*metlatl*). Wives were often relegated to a subordinate position in matters of inheritance as well. Juan Hernández gave houses and land to his many sons, but reserved only minor household goods of little value for his wife.<sup>493</sup>

Naming patterns are even more arresting. In the early seventeenth century, one occasionally encounters a female name with an air of nobility, and usually these were Nahuatl names. For instance, it appears that back in Tlaxcala, Ana Toxtlapal belonged to a more genteel class, and she is one of the very few women who appear to have had a sizeable estate (though, ironically, it seems her most valuable assets were left behind in the homeland).<sup>494</sup> However Nahuatl names fell out of use early in the seventeenth century, and by century's end women's names were almost—to a woman, as it were—plebeian sounding.

James Lockhart observed that lower-status Indians in New Spain tended to carry two first, or given, names, while natives of nobler lineage more often had

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<sup>492</sup> Petition on behalf of María, wife of Juan Tlacoquin, 26 April 1613, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 9.

<sup>493</sup> Testament of Juan Hernández, 7 April 1675, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 17, f. 20v.

<sup>494</sup> Testament of Ana Toxtlapal, n.d. [1615?], AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 16.

Spanish surnames.<sup>495</sup> The first trend was pervasive in seventeenth-century San Esteban, among men and women alike. However, whereas men occasionally carried Spanish surnames, women rarely did. Thus a run-through of San Esteban's seventeenth-century Nahuatl documents yields names such as Melchora María, Juana Francisca, and María Elena. When women did possess Spanish surnames, which was comparatively rare, they tended to be those most typically associated with Indian commoners (for instance, de los Ángeles).<sup>496</sup> By far the most common given names were Ana, Francisca, Juana, and María, and hence typical full names were Ana Francisca, Juana María, and María Francisca.<sup>497</sup> Tellingly, one can also see the same set of names in reverse order and referring to different people, as with Magdalena María and María Magdalena.<sup>498</sup>

Even women married to (or descended from) elite men carried plebeian names in San Esteban, and this continued into the late seventeenth century. The wife of don Juan Diego was named Ana Francisca, for instance, and the spouse of

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<sup>495</sup> Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 122. See also the important discussion in Rebecca Horn, "Gender and Social Identity: Nahua Naming Patterns in Postconquest Central Mexico," in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, ed. Schroeder, Wood, and Hackett, 105-122.

<sup>496</sup> Petition of Elena de la Cruz, 3 Feb. 1684, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 42. Ramón A. Gutiérrez suggests that, in New Mexico, the surname de los Ángeles often referred to an enslaved, dishonored Indian. *When Jesus Came, The Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1991), 180.

<sup>497</sup> Testament of Ana Francisca in Nahuatl, 31 May 1683, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 78; Testament of Juana María in Nahuatl, 8 March 1689, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 75; Testament of María Francisca in Nahuatl, 12 March 1689, AMS, Testamentos, caja 2, exp. 76; Testament of María Francisca in Nahuatl, 13 Sept. 1691, AMS, Testamentos, caja 3, exp. 2.

<sup>498</sup> Testament of Fabian Gaspar, 1 September 1665, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 12, f. 15v (María Magdalena mentioned); Confirmación in the hand of Magdalena María, [n.d.], AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 30.

cabildo member Salvador Hernández was the humbly named Francisca Luisa.<sup>499</sup> Nor did daughters born to elite fathers inherit their surnames. For instance, Salvador did not pass on the noble Hernández clan name to Magdalena María, his daughter,<sup>500</sup> nor did Estebana Ana inherit the lofty namesake of her father, Juan Pérez. Fascinatingly, though, when Estebana herself had a son, he was named Juan Pérez, meaning that the name skipped the female descendant but was given immediately to the first male heir.<sup>501</sup> While not all men automatically inherited their father's surnames, at least *some* did (presumably elder or favorite sons of pipiltin), whereas women seemingly universally did not.<sup>502</sup>

In contrast, San Esteban's ruling class males carried Spanish surnames like Hernández, Cázeres, de la Fuente, Ramos, and the regal-sounding de la Corona (whose literal meaning, "of the Crown," probably had particular appeal to ambitious upstarts in early San Esteban). Quite clearly the adoption of these names was a deliberate strategy to manufacture political and social legitimacy, and in fact Lockhart observed the same process occurring in sixteenth-century Tlaxcala among male elites.<sup>503</sup> We have already noted Francisco Xochinenemi's metamorphosis into

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<sup>499</sup> Execution of the testaments of don Juan Diego and Ana Francisca, 5 March 1694, AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 26. Salvador Hernández and Francisca Luisa are attested as spouses in AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 30. Salvador Hernández is attested as a cabildo member in AMS, Protocolos caja 1, libro 1, exp. 20.

<sup>500</sup> AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 30.

<sup>501</sup> Testament of Estebana Ana in Spanish, 1 February 1689, AMS, Protocolos, exp. 23.

<sup>502</sup> Lockhart observes that "a special characteristic of Spanish surnames in the Nahuatl world is that, as among Spaniards and in contrast to most second names of Indians, they were frequently passed on to children and grandchildren." *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 125.

<sup>503</sup> Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 38.

Francisco Hernández, and there is reason to believe other founders who served on the cabildo followed his lead in trading Nahuatl names for Spanish ones.<sup>504</sup> Some, it appears, passed their surnames on, creating what were in effect elite clans. In fact, the surnames mentioned above can be found in cabildo documents throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>505</sup>

While yearly cabildo elections impeded the reestablishment of a pure hereditary elite, it certainly appears that at least some elements of social status could be passed from father to son in San Esteban (but apparently not from father to daughter).<sup>506</sup> In more urban frontier communities such as Zacatecas, the ethnic

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<sup>504</sup> Petition on behalf of María, wife of Juan Tlacoquin, 26 April 1613, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 9 (Francisco Hernández Xochichinenemi mentioned). Documents in which an individual is identified by both an indigenous and Spanish surname are exceptional, and therefore other instances of this phenomenon are difficult to establish definitively. The paucity of early records exacerbates this problem. Nevertheless I have a suspicion that the “don Juachin caçanitzin” listed as governor in 1603 (1613?) in AMS, Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 1 is the same man listed in another document (AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 2, also as governor), as don Juachin de la Corona.

<sup>505</sup> Lockhart noted this occurrence in Tlaxcala: “the same surnames adopted by the lords of that complex altepetl in the mid-sixteenth century are still seen in the cabildo membership in the 1620’s and beyond.” *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 125. The same trend occurred in San Esteban, and there are numerous examples in AMS of the persistence of surnames associated with members of San Esteban’s early cabildos. For instance a man named Andrés Hernández presented a petition before the cabildo in 1671 (in which he claims that his wife is the legitimate daughter of Andrés del Saltillo). See AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 89bis. A Francisco de la Corona appears in a different document of the same year (AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 90). One Joaquin de la Corona graces a 1648 document (AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 42), and this is almost certainly a different man than the early seventeenth-century governor of the same name. While it is possible that that man was still alive at this time, it is unlikely that he would have served such a seemingly minor cabildo role as *ytopile alcalde* in 1648, though more would have to be learned concerning the exact nature of this position.

<sup>506</sup> Scribes clearly passed on their trade—and the status it conferred—to their sons. For instance in a 1671 petition Bentura Juan de Valverde, who authored at least one cabildo document as scribe, identifies himself as the son of former



heterogeneity that was characteristic of a largely migrant population hindered the development of a hereditary elite.<sup>507</sup> San Esteban, by contrast, was incredibly homogenous, and Spanish interference in governance was low. Thus, elements of a hereditary nobility very well may have been retained—or more precisely, recreated—in San Esteban. At the very least, what has been presented above demonstrates that ruling-class males made conscious efforts to establish themselves as pipiltin and to perpetuate their power and social prestige through descent.

In the eighteenth century, women's status in San Esteban would change. Women begin bearing the honorific *doña* at this time, and in 1706, a woman is listed as an executor to someone else's estate—the first documented case in San Esteban's history.<sup>508</sup> In the seventeenth century, on the other hand, women were excluded from leadership positions and largely denied access to the public sphere. From the pipiltin's perspective, the timeline makes perfect sense. The process of determining who would dominate San Esteban's government and society was still ongoing in the

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notary Andrés del Saltillo. Petition of Bentura Juan de Valverde and Francisco Andrés, 22 April 1671, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 89. For the document Bentura Juan de Valverde authored as scribe, see the Acuerdo concerning joint Tlaxcalan and Spanish militia activity, 31 Dec. 1662, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 59.

Interestingly, earlier cabildo documents were created by a notary named Joan Bentura Valverde. See Order of Governor Andrés del Saltillo, February 1652, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 39; and Petition of Luisa, 17 Sept. 1652, AMS, Testamentos, caja 1, exp. 41. It is unclear if this is the same person. If it is not, it almost certainly a relation, further demonstrating how notarial skills were transferred hereditarily.

<sup>507</sup> See Velasco Murillo, "Creation of Indigenous Leadership."

<sup>508</sup> AMS translation of Protocolos, caja 1, libro 1, exp. 34. I have found no evidence for a woman serving as executor to a testament in San Esteban before this date. Interestingly, though, "In most parts of Europe, unmarried women and widows could make wills, serve as executors for the wills of others, and serve as witnesses in civil and criminal cases, though they could not serve as witnesses to a will." Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "Women" in *Europe, 1450 to 1789: Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World*, ed. Jonathan Dewald, vol. 6 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004), 233-240.

seventeenth century. By the early eighteenth, however, when women become more visible and their status begins to improve, the matter had already been decided.

## Conclusion

The Tlaxcalan community at San Esteban is remarkable for its longevity. As Offutt has observed, it endured as a distinct corporate entity from the late sixteenth century into the nineteenth.<sup>509</sup> The cabildo was essential to San Esteban's efforts to maintain its corporate integrity and defend the interests of the community against outsiders over such a long period. Yet works on San Esteban have tended to rely exclusively on Spanish sources, with the important exception of Offutt, who has worked extensively with San Esteban's Nahuatl materials. As a result, much of what has been written focuses on conflicts with neighboring Saltillo and tends to present the Tlaxcalan community as a unified front that used the cabildo to protect its interests from aggressive Spaniards.

Yet there were other struggles going on in San Esteban as well, as the community's Nahuatl records well attest. At the same time that the cabildo functioned to maintain corporate integrity, it also served as a means through which individuals in power could monopolize the mechanisms of governance, re-stratify society, and control the economic activity and thus the socioeconomic mobility of particular groups. Once firmly in control, San Esteban's leaders became in essence *teteuctin*—the progenitors of noble lineages who passed their status on to their kin.

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<sup>509</sup> See Offutt, "Defending Corporate Identity;" Offutt, "Women's Voices from the Frontier," 275.

In the process they recreated the social order that had existed in Tlaxcala but which the resettlement of 1591 had disrupted.

Yet for all the changes it wrought, the cabildo enabled the preservation not only of a corporate self but the elements of Tlaxcalan governance and social structure as well, facilitating a shared cultural identity rooted in the past and tied to a Tlaxcalan homeland. Despite the impoverished straits of the macehualtin, the lack of opportunities for economic advancement and upward social mobility, and the emergence of what was potentially a more patriarchal social order, San Esteban remained Tlaxcalan. The cabildo both preserved and protected a sense of communal identity, providing San Esteban residents a common language through which they could express their sameness, their sense of belonging, and their pride in being Tlaxcalan.

That attribute is what makes San Esteban such a compelling case study and such an instructive counterpoint to other frontier communities. San Esteban, of course, was not the only community of indigenous transplants formed along the northern frontier. In addition to the other Tlaxcalan colonies, there were buffer settlements of Otomís, Tarascans, Mexicas, and Huexotzincas, not to mention the polyglot urban mining communities of Zacatecas, Guanajuato, and San Luis Potosí, where indigenous peoples of diverse backgrounds found common cause and a way to forge communities and make a living on the unforgiving frontier. Yet San Esteban was unique in terms of how long it was able to maintain its integrity as a distinct corporate entity. In large part this was due to the ethnic homogeneity of its populace. However it also owed significantly to the cabildo—the most important

institution for safeguarding indigenous interests in colonial New Spain. Where native communities were more heterogeneous and lacked the institutional protections of the cabildo, indigenous communities much more rapidly succumbed to Spanish efforts to exploit Indian labor and undermine indigenous privileges. The final chapter offers a case in point.

## CHAPTER 5. THE NAHUAS AND NEW MEXICO

From the earliest moments of European contact, Nahuas were involved in the exploration, conquest, and colonization of what is now the American Southwest, especially New Mexico. They were by far the most numerous and important non-autochthonous native group in colonial New Mexico.<sup>510</sup> As elsewhere in Mesoamerica, their participation as military allies and settlers was most significant in sixteenth-century expeditions and diminished thereafter. Their first foray into New Mexico, alongside Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, was their most impressive in terms of sheer numbers, but they served in many later exploratory expeditions of the sixteenth century as well. They also formed part of the colonization effort under Juan de Oñate in 1598 and were integral to the colony's early life and development. In fact, the documentary record reflects a persistent Nahua presence through much of the seventeenth century, and it is probable that Nahuas formed a substantial

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<sup>510</sup> Much of the documentation indicating a Nahua presence in New Mexico uses the term *indio mexicano*, which at the time referred not to people from a specific place but rather people speaking a particular language—*mexicano*, or Nahuatl. In this chapter I translate *indio mexicano* as “Nahua Indian,” but the term is inexact. For example in the sixteenth century Nahuatl became an indigenous lingua franca in New Spain, and it is possible that some people identified as *mexicano* were not ethnically Nahua. That said, Spaniards had frequent contact with Nahuatl speakers and were adept at differentiating between Nahuatl and other indigenous languages. For instance, documents from northern New Spain frequently distinguish between *mexicanos* and *tarascos* (Purépecha speakers). I believe the marker faithfully identifies people speaking Nahuatl, and it can be safely assumed that most indigenous people speaking Nahuatl were ethnically Nahua.

component—and perhaps even a majority—of the settler population from the original colonization under Oñate through the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

In the eighteenth century, documentary traces fade and the few references to a Mexican Indian presence reflect local lore and nostalgia for the bygone days of more substantial Nahua occupation. In truth, by 1700 the Nahua population had diminished so as to be unrecognizable—an eventuality reflecting the original Nahua settlers' expulsion from the province during the Pueblo Revolt, migration back south, and the absorption of ethnically distinct Nahuas through intermarriage with Europeans, other Indians, and peoples of mixed ancestry. As a byproduct of this last process, previously distinct peoples recognized in seventeenth-century records as *indio mexicano* were later subsumed under the vague markers of *indio* and, in the eighteenth century, *genízaro*—Indians whose ties to their original tribes had been severed and who served in Spanish households as servants and slaves.

Unlike other frontier settlements, the Nahua presence in New Mexico was established under Spanish direction and authority and was generally non-corporate, meaning that Nahuas who settled there lacked critical institutional protections necessary for maintaining and defending distinctive indigenous communities and identities. Furthermore, as time wore on, their numbers dwindled while the Spanish and *mestizo* populations grew, contributing to their eventual disappearance from the province as a distinct ethnic group (or groups). Many Indians who arrived as permanent settlers did so in disadvantaged positions, and despite evidence that some Nahuas experienced upward social mobility, there was a countervailing effort by Spaniards to subordinate the province's *indios* under its rigid racial caste system.

Soldiers who arrived with Oñate (and some reinforcements who came later) were granted *hidalguía*—a position of minor Spanish nobility that entitled them to particular social and economic rights.<sup>511</sup> In resource-poor New Mexico, status-conscious settlers not only attempted to exert economic agency through claims to indigenous labor but, as Ramón A. Gutiérrez has demonstrated, many sought to improve their social positions by defining themselves in opposition to the vanquished Pueblos, on the one hand, and other Indians who entered colonial society as a result of warfare and trade, such as Apaches and Utes.<sup>512</sup> Lacking corporate protections, Nahuas in New Mexico were locked in a constant struggle with Spaniards and *mestizos* attempting to dominate and exploit them as they would the colony's other *indios*. Despite this, Nahua settlement in New Mexico endured throughout the seventeenth century, and their presence helped to anchor the fragile colony. More importantly, Nahuas braved the trauma of dislocation to successfully integrate into the colonial community. They carved out their own distinct physical space within the colony and contributed to its spiritual, social, and economic vitality. In the process, they left an indelible mark on New Mexico still perceptible to this day.

Much of the discussion concerning indigenous allies in the Spanish colonization of New Mexico has centered on whether the natives in question were Tlaxcalans. This chapter weighs the evidence regarding a Tlaxcalan settlement in the

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<sup>511</sup> See George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, eds. *Don Juan de Onate, Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, part 2 (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1953), 963, 974-75. See also Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 102-03.

<sup>512</sup> Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 176-206, esp. 178, 190.

colony, but its broader purpose is to reconstruct the lives of all Nahuas in diaspora in New Mexico, presenting a comprehensive overview of their activities from the Coronado *entrada* (1540-1542) through the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. In the process it considers the circumstances under which they arrived in the colony, how they contributed to its development and maintenance, and what defined their experiences there.

Part one evaluates the scope and character of Nahua participation in sixteenth-century expeditions to New Mexico, from the Coronado *entrada* to the Oñate colonization of 1598. Part two assesses Indian auxiliaries' roles in New Mexico's early development, sifting through the fragmentary documentary record to reveal the Nahua presence over the course of the seventeenth century, particularly in its principal settlement of Santa Fe (settled ca. 1610). Most significantly it draws on archival records generated by the Holy Office of the Inquisition, which arrived in New Mexico in 1626, to generate a portrait of seventeenth-century New Mexico, its Nahua population, and its social dynamics.

## **I. Nahuas in New Mexico: From Coronado to Oñate**

### **The Coronado Entrada**

It is no exaggeration to say that the conquest of the Americas during the sixteenth century was principally the conquest of native groups by other American natives, at least nominally under the direction of Europeans. The Coronado expedition was no different.<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> Richard Flint, "What's Missing from This Picture? The *Alarde*, or Muster Roll, of the Coronado Expedition" in *The Coronado Expedition from the Distance of*



–Richard Flint

Oddly enough, Coronado's odyssey through what is now the American Southwest had its origins in the Southeast, and more specifically in a 1527 effort to colonize Florida that ended in catastrophe. Only four men out of some six hundred survived the disastrous expedition led by Pánfilo de Narváez. After braving a hurricane, surviving shipwreck, and floating across the Gulf of Mexico on makeshift rafts, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and three companions spent the next eight years attempting to find their way back to New Spain over land. Their harrowing adventures and the yarns they spun about what they saw in the north proved to restless Spaniards that an *otro México*, or another Mexico, indeed awaited those with the mettle to follow in Cortés's footsteps. Intrigued, viceroy Antonio de Mendoza enlisted a small party led by fray Marcos de Niza to verify the stories. In the process the friar became the first European known to have visited the area inhabited by the Pueblo peoples. Upon his return to New Spain he indulged his patron with stories of a great kingdom—*Cíbola*, as it came to be known—with large cities of immense wealth inhabited by throngs of jewel-bedecked natives wearing cotton clothing. Its principal city, according to Niza, was "bigger than the city of Mexico."<sup>514</sup>

An expedition was hastily organized under don Francisco Vázquez de Coronado (then governor of Nueva Galicia) to conquer this other Mexico. His army left Compostela in February of 1540 and spent the next two years reconnoitering,

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460 Years, ed. Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2003), 64-65.

<sup>514</sup> Levin Rojo, *Return to Aztlan*, 69-72; the quotation is from Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 42.

skirmishing, and murdering its way across what are now the U.S. states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Kansas. The Coronado expedition's rapine and violence is well-known (for refusing to submit to foreign invaders, between forty and one hundred natives from Tiguex were burned at the stake.)<sup>515</sup> However as the expedition's preeminent historian, Richard Flint, has astutely observed, the ease with which Coronado's army subdued many of the Pueblos it contacted owed largely to its massive contingent of Mexican Indian allies. Thanks to Flint's exhaustive research into the Coronado *entrada*, we know a great deal about the numbers, activities, and motivations of these peoples.

Because the expedition's Spanish documents were concerned with securing reward or justifying Spanish actions, they rarely mentioned these critical allies.<sup>516</sup> For instance a muster taken of the expedition's fighting forces neglected to mention the presence of "thirteen hundred or more natives of central and western Mexico, the so-called *indios amigos*, who made up the great bulk of the expedition."<sup>517</sup> Possibly there were even more than that. Contemporaries put the indigenous component from New Spain at between 1,300 and 2,000, and estimates as high as 5,000 were recorded (though Flint errs on the side of caution and uses the lower figure because it is corroborated by other sources).<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 42-45. Levin Rojo, *Return to Aztlan*, 73, and Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 45, claim 100 were burned, while Flint, "No Settlement, No Conquest," 149, quotes from an eyewitness who offered the lower figure.

<sup>516</sup> For a thorough consideration of why Indian allies were excluded from Spanish accounts of the expedition, see Flint, "What's Missing from This Picture?," 67-69.

<sup>517</sup> Flint, "What's Missing From This Picture?," 59.

<sup>518</sup> Flint, *No Settlement, No Conquest: A History of the Coronado Entrada* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 58.

The Coronado expedition comprised a menagerie of peoples, mostly Indian. In addition to an unknown number of Tarascans, there were at least 800 Nahuatl-speakers from the Valley of Mexico, and 500 or more allies of various ethnicities were recruited as the army moved through what are now the Mexican states of Jalisco, Nayarit, and Sinaloa.<sup>519</sup> Nahua groups documented their participation in the expedition in pictorials like the *Codex Aubin* (Tenochcas) and the *Códice de Tlatelolco* (Tlatelolcans), while a host of others provided oral and written testimony of their experiences to Spanish officials.<sup>520</sup> (Despite their omnipresence in sixteenth-century conquests, there is little evidence that Tlaxcalans joined the expedition.<sup>521</sup> Nevertheless Flint leaves open the possibility that some Tlaxcalan warriors who stayed behind after Nuño de Guzmán expedition to western Mexico--in which thousands participated, voluntarily and otherwise--joined Coronado's ranks.)<sup>522</sup>

Thanks to these *indios amigos*, Coronado consistently enjoyed numerical superiority over the Pueblo peoples he encountered. Unlike the Guzmán *entrada*, in which thousands of Indian allies either served as burden bearers or were forced to participate as slaves, indigenous troops under Coronado served primarily as warriors. (In stark contrast to Guzmán, who marched Indian "allies" westward in

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<sup>519</sup> Ibid., 58-60.

<sup>520</sup> Flint, "No Settlement, No Conquest," 59-60; Levin Rojo, *Return to Aztlan*, 72-3, 153 (plate 15).

<sup>521</sup> *The Tlaxcala Codex*, composed in the 1580s, claims that Tlaxcalans participated "in the service of his majesty" alongside Coronado, but Flint notes that this has not been corroborated. Thus the possibility remains that this 'service' was fabricated in order to win royal reward. See *Tlaxcala Codex*, in Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Descripción de la ciudad y provincia de Tlaxcala*, f. 317; Levin Rojo, *Return to Aztlan*, 172 (figure 9); Flint, "No Settlement, No Conquest," 59-60; Cf. Levin Rojo, *Return to Aztlan*, 72.

<sup>522</sup> Flint, "No Settlement, No Conquest," 59-60. For Tlaxcalan participation in the Guzmán *entrada*, see Altman, *War for Mexico's West*, chap. 2, esp. 25, 47, 54.

chains, it is unknown whether Coronado even maintained nominal control over the indigenous soldiers with him.)<sup>523</sup> According to Flint, these facts go a long way toward explaining “the ease with which most of the indigenous communities met by the expedition were subdued or overawed into pro forma submission.”<sup>524</sup> The preponderance of native allies tipped the scales of many battles in the invaders’ favor. At Hawikkuh in 1540, the presence of between 500-800 Indian allies meant the attackers outnumbered the defenders by as many as two or three times.<sup>525</sup> Unsurprisingly, Hawikku fell to this superior force. Many other Pueblos followed suit.

In addition to their capacity as warriors, Nahuas among Coronado performed the more mundane tasks of carrying supplies, guarding livestock, and building shelters.<sup>526</sup> On at least one occasion, they lit fires in ground floors of Pueblos in an effort to smoke out defenders.<sup>527</sup> Nahuas were also agents of peace and frequently engaged in acts of diplomacy, despite the fact that virtually every example “of extended contact between the expeditionaries and indigenous groups eventually resulted in violent conflict.”<sup>528</sup> Indian allies were frequently sent ahead of the army to encourage its peaceful reception, and on certain occasions these emissaries were specifically identified as Nahuas.<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>523</sup> Flint, *No Settlement, No Conquest*, 60-61.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>525</sup> Flint, *No Settlement, No Conquest*, 112.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, 61. See also Flint, “What’s Missing from This Picture?,” 61.

<sup>527</sup> Flint, *No Settlement, No Conquest*, 148.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, 61, 78, 81.

Even those feats performed by the Indian allies that contributed directly to the army's success found their way into Spanish accounts only incidentally. Thus one expects to find little by way of detailed reporting on their activities and experiences. Nevertheless some fragments emerge. Passing references in testimony reveal that Indian allies were slain at a base camp the army established in Sonora.<sup>530</sup> Other witnesses placed Indian allies among the combatants in the infamous Tiguex War--fought over the winter of 1540-1541--revealing that an unspecified number were wounded and at least one died.<sup>531</sup> Other, vague references tell us only that some other *indios amigos* died along the route through "Cíbola" (the region occupied by sedentary, town-dwelling people in what we now know as Arizona and New Mexico).<sup>532</sup>

The fragments also shed some light on the trials the *indios amigos* faced. Evidently the expedition was unprepared for the cold winters, as a number of soldiers, Indian allies included, complained that they "did not have clothing and were dying of cold."<sup>533</sup> Still others perished from ingesting poisonous native plants--lengths to which they were driven by extreme hunger, of which everyone suffered, "especially the [Indian] allies."<sup>534</sup> Something of the hardship endured by the *indios amigos* can be inferred from the fact that some chose simply to abandon

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<sup>530</sup> Flint, "What's Missing from This Picture?," 61, 60.

<sup>531</sup> Cited in Flint, "What's Missing from This Picture?," 61.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>533</sup> Quoted in Flint, "What's Missing from This Picture?," 61.

<sup>534</sup> Flint, "What's Missing from This Picture?," 60. Quoted in Ibid.

the enterprise. Coronado later testified that rather than continue to bear the army's loads, "some of our Moors and Indians left."<sup>535</sup>

### Later Sixteenth-Century Expeditions

Coronado and his army limped back to New Spain in 1542 having reconnoitered much of the *provincia de cibola* but having failed to locate another Mexico. A successful colonization would have to wait until 1598, when don Juan de Oñate led some 129 men—in addition to an unknown number of wives, servants, and slaves—to a settlement on the upper Rio Grande. In the meantime, however, the prospect of another Mexico in the north continued to fire the imaginations of would-be conquistadors, and a series of expeditions—authorized and illicit—reached what is now New Mexico between 1581 and 1593.

Joining spiritual and temporal forces, fray Agustín Rodríguez and captain Francisco Sánchez Chamuscado organized a small exploratory expedition comprising twelve friars and soldiers and nineteen "Indian servants" and headed north from Santa Bárbara on 5 June 1581. Given that Santa Bárbara was a mining community, it is likely that some of the accompanying Indians were itinerant laborers from central Mexico.<sup>536</sup> Exploring what is now New Mexico, the expedition took possession in the name of the king, dubbing one of the Pueblos Nueva Tlaxcala

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<sup>535</sup> Flint, "What's Missing from This Picture?," 60.

<sup>536</sup> George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, eds., *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594: The Explorations of Chamuscado, Espejo, Castaño de Sosa, Morlete, and Leyva de Bonilla and Humaña* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1966), 6-9.

(or just Tlaxcala—sources differ).<sup>537</sup> One historian offers the possibility that this act was meant to honor a Tlaxcalan participant, but the expedition's chronicler, Hernando Gallegos, clarifies that the name was applied to the Pueblo (probably Pecos) "because of its size," estimated at "some five hundred houses."<sup>538</sup>

Clearer evidence of Nahua participation emerges from the Espejo expedition, undertaken in 1582. In need of a gunsmith, Diego Pérez de Luxán noted that the soldiers used local "tornillo-wood, which is very strong and flexible" to replace their harquebus stocks. "These stocks were fashioned by an Indian whom we brought with us," Luxán recalled, "a good man, and a fine soldier and harquebusier named Gregorio de Tlaxcala."<sup>539</sup> Espejo observed that crosses had been erected among the Zuni, where they "found three Christian Indians who gave their names as Andrés of Cuyucán [Coyoacán], Gaspar of Mexico [City], and Antón of Guadalajara, and who said that they had come to the land with Governor Francisco Vázquez de Coronado." "By refreshing their memory of the Mexican language [Nahuatl], which they had almost forgotten" Espejo learned of "a large lake where the natives claimed there were many towns" and Indians who wore gold and cotton clothes (evidently a reference to the fabled lands of Copala or Teguayo, both of which referred to a densely populated lacustrine area, generally believed to be the Nahuas' ancient

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<sup>537</sup> Hammond and Rey, eds., *Rediscovery*, 135 (called Tlaxcala); 106, 118 (called Nueva Tlaxcala).

<sup>538</sup> Simmons, "Tlascalans in the Spanish Borderlands," 107-08. "Testimony of Hernando Gallegos," in Hammond and Rey, eds., *Rediscovery*, 135, 135n6.

<sup>539</sup> "Luxán's Account of the Espejo Expedition," in Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 169.

homeland).<sup>540</sup> Evidently these Nahua informants could not speak Spanish, but Espejo was fortunate to have individuals with him who could understand Nahuatl and translate into Spanish (Gregorio de Tlaxcala could have interpreted, of course, and perhaps there were others as well).<sup>541</sup>

In the wake of Coronado's disappointing odyssey, dreams of glittering, gilded cities to the north lay dormant until the Espejo expedition's reports of lake-dwelling Indians rekindled interest in the fabled north and prompted additional expeditions, like that of Gaspar Castaño de Sosa in 1590. Perhaps inspired by Cortés, who had defied the governor of Cuba and conquered Mexico as a fugitive, Castaño set out without authorization to establish a colony of his own. Unlike Cortés, however, he returned to New Spain in failure and in chains, having been overtaken and arrested as a criminal.<sup>542</sup> Not all of the expedition's members returned to Mexico alongside its disgraced leader. Eight years later, at Santo Domingo, Oñate encountered Tomás

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<sup>540</sup> "Copala" came into use in the 1560s and referred to "a lake densely surrounded by cities, frequently considered the Mexica ancestral homeland." Francisco de Ibarra's travels through Nueva Galicia in the 1560s—possibly fueled by information coming from Nahua informants—were said to have been motivated by a desire to find "the ancient Mexicans' place of origins," or Copala (as were many later expeditions). The analogous Teguayo was also said to be a land of lake-dwelling urbanites but entered Spanish discourse through early explorers' encounters with Pueblo peoples. For early Spanish explorations in search of 'Copala' and the influence of Nahua legend on such expeditions, see Levin Rojo, *Return to Aztlan* (quotations on 190, 77, respectively). Chávez, "Pohé-Yemo's Representative," 121-22n36 provides additional details on Copala. For Copala *and* Teguayo, see S. Lyman Tyler, "The Myth of the Lake of Copala and Land of Teguayo," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 20: 4 (Oct., 1952), 313-329; Donald C. Cutter, "Prelude to a Pageant in the Wilderness" *Western Historical Quarterly* 8:1 (1977), 10.

<sup>541</sup> "Report of Antonio de Espejo," in Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 225.

<sup>542</sup> Hammond and Rey, eds., *Rediscovery*, 45.



and Cristóbal, two “Mexican Indians” who had been with Castaño, and incorporated them into the expedition as interpreters.<sup>543</sup>

Oñate similarly capitalized on the misfortunes of another of these earlier ventures. At San Juan Bautista in 1599 his outfit happened upon Jusepe Gutiérrez, “a native of Cualhuacán” and “former servant of Antonio Gutiérrez de Humaña,” who had organized an ill-fated expedition to New Mexico alongside captain Francisco Leyva y Bonilla. Prior to Oñate’s encounter with Jusepe, little was known of the Humaña and Leyva expedition, and it is largely through Jusepe’s testimony that the details of what transpired come to light. The man from Culhuacan related how, among the buffalo plains of Quivira in 1593, Humaña stabbed and killed his partner “because Captain Leyva had said that he was going to give Antonio Gutiérrez a sound beating with a stick.”<sup>544</sup> He also recounted how shortly after this incident hostile Indians destroyed much of the expedition. Jusepe himself was captured and spent a year among enemy Indians (presumably Apaches) before he escaped and found refuge in Pueblo country, where Oñate later found him.<sup>545</sup>

In addition to the insight it provides into Humaña’s misadventures, Jusepe’s testimony sheds light on how Indians were recruited into northern missions. He claimed that “Humaña spoke to him at his own pueblo [Culhuacan] and took him away under an agreement whereby he was to serve him on some entradas that he was going to make.” He also explained that additional people were recruited at

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<sup>543</sup> Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 49, citing Hammond and Rey, *Oñate*, 339, 340.

<sup>544</sup> “Account Given by an Indian of the Flight of Leyva and Humaña from New Mexico,” 325, in Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*.

<sup>545</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 50.

Santa Bárbara—a distant mining camp and the last major settlement in northern New Spain—though their ethnicities are not specified.<sup>546</sup> Other Nahuas joined (or were impressed into) the mission at some point along the journey, however, as a 1602 investigation revealed that the “Escanjaques” (possibly Wichitas) of the plains of Quivira “had killed some Mexican Indians serving” those two men.<sup>547</sup>

### The Oñate Expedition

Don Juan de Oñate had a formidable pedigree. His father Cristóbal, former governor of Nueva Galicia, had become one of the wealthiest men in New Spain exploiting African slave labor at Zacatecas, which he helped to discover. Thus his son Juan was in prime position to be chosen as the one to find the wealthy kingdoms of the north—to succeed where Coronado, Espejo, and others failed.<sup>548</sup> Unlike most of the earlier entradas, Oñate’s was a formal colonizing venture meant to establish a permanent presence in the north. The byzantine Spanish bureaucracy conspired to

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<sup>546</sup> “Account Given by an Indian of the Flight of Leyva and Humaña from new Mexico,” 323, in Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*.

<sup>547</sup> Hammond, ed, *Oñate*, 866. Marc Simmons, *The Last Conquistador: Juan de Oñate and the Settling of the Far Southwest* (Norman and London: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 162 claims that the “Escanjaques” were in all likelihood Wichitas.

<sup>548</sup> George P. Hammond, “Don Juan de Oñate and the Founding of New Mexico,” chap. 2, *New Mexico Historical Review* 1, no. 1 (Jan., 1926), 56-57 (wealthiest men in New Spain); John Tutino, *Making a New World: Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America* (Durham and London: Duke Univ. Press, 2011), 124 (African slaves). For more on the Oñate family, see Donald Chipman, “The Oñate-Moctezuma-Zaldívar Families of Northern New Spain,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 52 (1957): 297-310. For an exhaustive account of the complicated negotiations and intrigue over who would lead the settlement of New Mexico, see George P. Hammond, “Don Juan de Oñate and the Founding of New Mexico,” chap. 2, *New Mexico Historical Review* 1, no. 1 (Jan., 1926): 54-77, and chap. 3, *New Mexico Historical Review* 1, no. 2 (April, 1926): 156-92.

delay this mission for several years, but he eventually received authorization to go forth with his colonization effort.<sup>549</sup> With promises of *hidalguía* and other rewards provided for in his contract, Oñate recruited married men in Mexico and from there departed first to Zacatecas and then on to Santa Bárbara.<sup>550</sup> Additional delays caused many settlers and soldiers to desert. When Oñate's much depleted army finally headed north, it had only 129 soldiers.<sup>551</sup>

That is, only 129 soldiers were documented. Of course, many others accompanied, including "an army of hirelings...the herders, drivers, packers, and personal servants whose ranks were made up of assorted shades of mestizos, mulattos, and Indians." This amounted to "a great concourse of people" totaling perhaps 500 or more women and men.<sup>552</sup> Nevertheless official inspections of the army as it gathered on the frontier left frustratingly little insight into its exact composition. The Ulloa inspection, conducted between December 1596 and January 1597, listed some servants but evidently made no systematic effort to record all

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<sup>549</sup> The transfer of viceregal power from Luis de Velasco II (who was Oñate's friend and who had drawn up the terms by which he was to colonize New Mexico) to Gaspar Zúñiga Acevedo y Fonseca, conde de Monterrey, in 1596 partially accounted for this delay, as the latter wished to review the arrangement before it was implemented. Hammond, "Don Juan de Oñate," *NMHR* 1, no. 1, 164-71. Later, the king suspended Oñate's contract in favor of don Pedro Ponce de León, but eventually reversed this decision and selected Oñate again. Hammond, "Don Juan de Oñate," chapter 2, *NMHR* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1926), 149; "Don Juan de Oñate," chapter 3, *NMHR* 1, no. 2 (April 1926) 170.

<sup>550</sup> Hammond, "Don Juan de Oñate," chap. 3, *NMHR* 1, no. 2 (April 1926), 174-75.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*, 191; "Don Juan de Oñate," chap. 6, *NMHR* 1, no. 3 (July 1926), 308. See also Hammond and Rey, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 1, 14.

<sup>552</sup> In his biography of Oñate, Marc Simmons suggests "half a thousand." *The Last Conquistador*, 97.

non-military personnel. The same was true of the final inspection conducted by Juan de Frías Salazar over the winter of 1597-1598.

These reviews did however indicate that people were recruited at nearby mining settlements where itinerant Indians likely lived and worked (such as Chalchihuites, Súchil, La Poana, Casco, and San Bartolomé).<sup>553</sup> Eugene Sego and Tomás Martínez Saldaña hypothesize that Tlaxcalans were recruited from nearby Chalchihuites, where the native settlers had fled after a Chichimec attack forced the abandonment of the nearby colony of San Andrés, established as part of the 1591 migration explored in chapter three.<sup>554</sup> This is indeed plausible, as Sego notes that Oñate's lieutenant, captain Francisco de Sosa Peñalosa, "conducted a large group of colonists from Chalchihuites to the [mission's] rendezvous point at El Casco."<sup>555</sup> Furthermore, Sosa had a reputation for dragooning Indians into frontier service: he is the same man who forced Nahuas and Tarascans settled at Nombre de Dios to fight Chichimecs on the frontier in the 1560s (see chapter two). Very possibly he did the same in the 1590s.

If he did, there is no record of it, and generally speaking, direct evidence of a Nahua presence in the Oñate *entrada* remains thin. Nevertheless the sloppiness of

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<sup>553</sup> Hammond and Reys, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 1, 12, 151-52, 160-61, 168.

<sup>554</sup> Eugene B. Sego, *Aliados y adversarios: los colonos tlaxcaltecas en la frontera septentrional de Nueva España* (San Luis Potosí and Tlaxcala: El colegio de San Luis; Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala; Centro de Investigaciones Históricas de San Luis Potosí, 1998), 114; Tomás Martínez Saldaña, *La diáspora tlaxcalteca: colonización agrícola del norte mexicano* (Tlaxcala: Gobierno Constitucional del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1998), 123n32.

<sup>555</sup> Sego, *Aliados y adversarios*, 114, citing "Ynformación del tiempo que el capitán don Luis de Velasco sirvió a su magestad en las provincias y gobernación de la nueva viscaya [1596-1614]," in Charles Wilson Hackett, ed., *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, vol. 1, 416-27.

the earlier inspections, coupled with the possibility that soldiers concealed the participation of unauthorized personnel (a muster from a 1600 reinforcement expedition to New Mexico acknowledged that Indian women were “brought illegally by the soldiers”) leaves open the possibility that the 1598 expedition’s Indian participants eluded official documentation. After all, Flint’s investigation into the Coronado entrada has demonstrated that the inherent biases of Spanish documents could obscure the presence of even large numbers of indigenous allies. Certainly the Oñate colonization yields fragments revealing the presence of *indios mexicanos*. It appears likely that, as with the Coronado entrada, those fragments represent the tip of a much larger iceberg. Thus there is probably truth in Frances Swadesh’s supposition that, on the Oñate expedition, “It is likely that Mexican Indians, both servants and soldiers, outnumbered the Spaniards” (though they were almost certainly fewer than the 1,300 who marched under Coronado, and there is no firm evidence they occupied combat roles).<sup>556</sup>

Oñate’s entrada paralleled Coronado’s in other ways, too—particularly in the violence it brought to Pueblo peoples. After Acomas killed his field marshal (*maese de campo*) and nephew Juan de Zaldívar, Oñate meted out an especially cruel form of early modern punishment, ordering all males over age twelve enslaved for a period of twenty years, while men over twenty-five would have one foot severed in addition to twenty years personal service.<sup>557</sup> Oñate’s treatment of the Indians and his subsequent tenure as governor later prompted investigations into his conduct.

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<sup>556</sup> Frances Leon Swadesh, *Primeros Pobladores: Hispanic Americans of the Ute Frontier* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), 12.

<sup>557</sup> Hammond and Rey, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 1, 21.

In one such inquiry, recorded in 1617, witnesses were asked whether the captain general, “on hearing that the Indians of the pueblo of Acoma had killed a Mexican Indian, ordered two of their number hanged on mere suspicion.” (Underscoring Oñate’s impetuosity, the interrogatory added, “and later the Mexican turned up alive.”)<sup>558</sup> Testimony included in the same inquiry also referred to “an Indian named Agustín, a Mexican servant,” who, on Oñate’s orders, allegedly attacked a suspected Spanish deserter with a knife.<sup>559</sup>

As with Coronado’s soldiers nearly sixty years prior, Oñate’s men quickly soured on New Mexico. The land was rugged and barren, it lacked minerals and precious metal, and the Franciscans were disheartened over the native Pueblo peoples’ indifference toward their preaching. Led by the Franciscans, a great many colonists abandoned the colony late in 1601 while Oñate was exploring the plains of “Quivira” to the east. Some Nahuas left even before this, though whether they had deserted or were sent as runners is unclear. Either way, they represented one of the precious few sources of information on the northern enterprise. Back in Mexico City, one of Oñate’s brothers wrote in 1600 that “the only information that has come from new Mexico is what was brought by two Indians of this land of New Spain who were in the service of Captain Juan [Diego] de Zubía.”<sup>560</sup>

Snippets of evidence provide insight into the possible roles of Nahuas with Oñate. Although Jusepe had come to New Mexico with Humaña, he nevertheless

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<sup>558</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, 1126. One witness claimed, “The governor [Oñate] never heard that the ‘dead’ Mexican Indian turned up alive, nor what there was such a rumor; the story was invented.” Ibid., 1127.

<sup>559</sup> Hammond and Rey, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 2, 1130.

<sup>560</sup> Letter of Luis Núñez Pérez, 30 Nov. 1600, in Hammond and Rey, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 1, 584.

played a pivotal role as an interpreter for the *entrada* (as did the “Mexican Indians” left by Castaño at Santo Domingo). Soldiers recalled that while out on the plains of Quivira (probably in eastern New Mexico) they were able to receive critical intelligence from Apaches “since the Mexican Indian Jusepe understood them,” owing to his earlier year-long captivity among them.<sup>561</sup> It also appears that Nahuas accompanied Franciscans and bolstered the mission’s proselytizing enterprise. Countering the pessimism that caused Franciscans to abandon New Mexico in 1601, Bartolomé Romero praised the Pueblos’ zeal for becoming Christians, and he “observed similar interest among the Hemes [Jemez], where a donado [a lay brother], a Mexican Indian, preached to them.” He was similarly impressed by the enthusiasm demonstrated by the Indians of Picurís, “where there is another donado.”<sup>562</sup> In his annals-style history of Chalco, the Nahua historian known as Chimalpahin was proud to reveal that on the journey to New Mexico, Franciscans “took along a lay brother from Amaquemecan named Francisco Faustino Quetzalmaçatzin.”<sup>563</sup> So there would be no confusion as to this man’s identity, Chimalpahin clarified that he was “one of us local people [i.e. an indigenous person] from Amaquemecan Chalco, a nobleman there.”<sup>564</sup>

Other evidence, while more ambiguous regarding their roles, is nonetheless suggestive of the esteem Indian allies garnered among Oñate’s men. Oñate valued Indian allies enough to execute Acoma Indians accused of killing one of the

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<sup>561</sup> Hammond and Rey, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 2, 865.

<sup>562</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 709.

<sup>563</sup> Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *Annals of His Time (Codex Chimalpahin vol. 3)*, ed. and trans. James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doris Namala (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 63.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

expedition's *mexicanos*. Likewise, a Spanish witness claimed they "looked for" the Nahua who was feared dead, suggesting he was treated as one of their own.<sup>565</sup> Years after the entrada, Oñate received permission to bring six Indians skilled in smelting and assay to Spain, perhaps suggesting that Spaniards sought to recruit Mesoamericans into the expedition for their mining skills and specialized metallurgical knowledge (like those before him, Oñate hoped to discover mines in New Mexico).<sup>566</sup> Evidently, though, the 1598 expedition had few Indian artisans, as in 1599 the captain general wrote back to New Spain requesting Indian craftsmen, whom he extolled as "the most skilled and capable in the world."<sup>567</sup> Apparently these pleas were heard, as later records reveal the presence of Nahua Indian artisans in New Mexico. For instance in 1609 Chimalpahin noted that "a master blacksmith, one of us natives" was heading to the colony. "The viceroy sent him to teach the people there," Chimalpahin boasted.<sup>568</sup>

Nahuas continued to filter into New Mexico after the Oñate entrada as well. The first reinforcement expedition to the colony, which arrived in 1600, included many Indians described as *mexicano*.<sup>569</sup> As with the original expedition, the reinforcement mission was subject to a formal review, only this time it was made clear that "each one of the soldiers must declare the Indians, mulattoes, and negroes,

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<sup>565</sup> Hammond and Rey, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 2, 709.

<sup>566</sup> The king to the president of the Council of the Indies, 18 June 1624, Bancroft Library, MSS Z-E1, container 7, folder 538. Location of original listed as AGI, Audiencia de México, leg. 13.

<sup>567</sup> Oñate to viceroy conde de Monterrey, 5 March 1599, Bancroft Library, MSS Z-E1, cont. 8, folder 615.

<sup>568</sup> Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *Annals of His Time*, 158. For additional Nahua artisans in the early colony, see pp. 257, 262, below.

<sup>569</sup> For Nahuas with the 1600 expedition, see "The Gordejuela Inspection," in Hammond and Rey, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 1, 514-79, esp. 557-60.



male and female, that he is taking in his service” or be “prosecuted to the full extent of the law.”<sup>570</sup> Consequently, a number of individuals revealed that they were taking Indian servants (in addition to African and mulatto slaves, one of whom was to be manumitted for his service).<sup>571</sup> María de Zamora was “taking in her service an Indian girl, Isabel 10 years old, native of Tecama,” and soldier Cristóbal de Brito brought “Beatriz de los Angeles, unmarried, native of [Te]peaca,” in Puebla, and “Juan, a Tarascan.”<sup>572</sup> Many others acknowledged that they were taking Indian servants, several of whom came from the Nahuatl-speaking region of Tepeaca in modern Puebla.

Despite the requirements and threats, it appears that not all Indians were documented. When the commissaries overseeing the inspection asked Bernabé de las Casas to declare whether there were any more females accompanying the expedition, he responded “that he did not know any other women in the army, except some Indians who are going.”<sup>573</sup> As with other wagon trains to New Mexico, there was also a number of “Indian carters” with the expedition. However these individuals were probably left off the inspection list since they were meant to return to Mexico City with the wagons and were not “in the service” of individual Spaniards. (For more on Indian carters, see chapter one).<sup>574</sup>

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<sup>570</sup> Hammond and Rey, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 1, 546.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, 562-63.

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.*, 558, 559.

<sup>573</sup> Hammond and Rey, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 1, 558.

<sup>574</sup> University of New Mexico, Center for Southwest Research, MSS 841, box 9, folder 15 (Photostat of original held at Archivo General de Indias, Contaduría, leg. 842A).

## II. Nahuas in Colonial New Mexico: Evidence and Experience

### The Tlaxcalan Question

Nahuas clearly played a significant part in Spanish expeditions to New Mexico in the sixteenth century, including the Oñate settlement, which established an enduring colony in the region for the first time. However the questions of whether Nahuas became a permanent presence in that colony, and what impact they had on it, have yet to be answered satisfactorily. And yet the presence and influence of Nahuas—and particularly the Tlaxcalans—in colonial New Mexico continues to be accepted as fact. Indeed, it forms an enduring part of New Mexico’s cultural heritage, particularly in Santa Fe but elsewhere as well. For instance, outside the chapel of San Miguel in Santa Fe a sign claims, “The original adobe walls and altar were built by Tlaxcalan Indians from Mexico, under the direction of Franciscan Padres, ca. 1610” (see fig. 1, below). Across the street, another sign boasts that the district known as the Barrio de Analco was “settled in the early 1600’s by the Tlaxcala Indian servants of the Spanish settlers from Mexico.”<sup>575</sup> What evidence exists to support these claims? How substantial was the Nahua presence in early New Mexico, and how did they factor into the colony’s early life?

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<sup>575</sup> Both signs can be found on Old Santa Fe Trail just south of the plaza.



Figure 5.1. Sign outside the chapel of San Miguel—one of many local markers testifying to the supposed Tlaxcalan presence in early Santa Fe. Photo by the author.

For over 100 years scholars have proposed a Tlaxcalan settlement in Santa Fe.<sup>576</sup> Yet the only references to Tlaxcalans in New Mexico after Espejo come from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—that is, after the Spaniards and their

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<sup>576</sup> In 1914, Ralph Emerson Twitchell argued that the Brito clan of eighteenth-century New Mexico was Tlaxcalan-descended. In the 1960s, fray Angélico Chávez claimed that servants from Tepeaca under Oñate were “Tlascaltec.” Tepeaca is located in the modern state of Puebla, which borders Tlaxcala, but Tepeaca was not under Tlaxcalan control in either colonial or pre-Hispanic times. In fact, when Cortés arrived, it formed part of the Aztec Empire, having been conquered by Motecuhzoma Ilhuicamina. Twitchell, *Spanish Archives of New Mexico*, vol. 1 (Cedar Rapids, IA: The Torch Press, 1914), 36; Chávez, “Pohé-Yemo’s Representative and the Pueblo Revolt of 1680,” *NMHR* 42, no. 2 (April 1967), 98. On Tepeaca, see J. Heath Anderson, “Prehispanic Settlement Patterns and Agricultural Production in Tepeaca, Puebla, AD 200-1519, PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University, 2009.

allies had been expelled from New Mexico and the Nahua presence was fading into memory. A Franciscan report of 1693 suggested that, prior to the Pueblo Revolt, Tlaxcalans had used the chapel of San Miguel as their parish church, and a 1779 letter likewise claimed that Tlaxcalans occupied Analco. However, as with other references to ‘Tlaxcalans’ in New Mexico, in both cases it appears the authors assumed that *mexicanos* in the province were Tlaxcalans. For instance the 1779 letter seems to be based off a report of governor Otermín written a century earlier and which uses the term *mexicanos* but does not mention Tlaxcalans.<sup>577</sup>

Perhaps the most famous piece of ‘evidence’ suggesting a Tlaxcalan presence in New Mexico is the eighteenth-century map of Santa Fe composed by Joseph de Urrutia. In the legend he depicted the “town or *barrio* [i.e. district] of Analco, which owes its origin to the Tlaxcalans who accompanied the first Spaniards who came to conquer this kingdom.” However when Urrutia composed his map (ca. 1766), Analco had long been a predominantly *genízaro* community.<sup>578</sup> Also, his bungling of “Tlaxcalans” (he wrote “tracaltecas” for *tlaxcaltecas*) leads one to wonder whether he was describing a distinctive group visible in the community or struggling to transcribe the name of a people whose presence persisted only dimly in local legend. Indeed, as Enrique R. Lamadrid points out, some have suggested that Urrutia’s map reflects “nostalgia for a Native [Nahua] culture that was already

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<sup>577</sup> Fray Salvador de San Antonio et al., “December 18, 1693,” in *Documentos para Servir a la Historia de Nuevo México 1538–1778* (Madrid, Spain: Ediciones J. Porrúa Turanzas, 1962); Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *Spanish Archives of New Mexico*, vol. 2, (Cedar Rapid, IA: Torch Press, 1914), 271. For the report, see note 632, below.

<sup>578</sup> Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 234; James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill and London: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2002), 130.



absent in the Santa Fe that he knew.”<sup>579</sup> Still others consider the lore surrounding the Tlaxcalans in Santa Fe an example of “fantasy heritage”—a mythologized trope that, while paying homage to the Tlaxcalans’ ubiquity and loyalty as Spanish allies, has little grounding in reality.<sup>580</sup>



Figure 5.2. Joseph de Urrutia, “Plano Dela Villa de Santa Fee” (ca. 1766), British Library, Bauzá Collection, Add MS 17662. © British Library Board. Reproduced with permission.

<sup>579</sup> Enrique R. Lamadrid, “Tlaxcalans in New Mexico: Fading Traces, Contested legacies,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 91, no. 2 (Spring 2016), 153, citing Elizabeth Oster and James Hare, “San Miguel Chapel and “The Tlaxcalans de Santa Fe,”” *Heritage Matters-National Park Service Publications and Papers* (Dec. 2004).

<sup>580</sup> Lamadrid, “Tlaxcalans in New Mexico,” 151.



Figure 5.3. Detail of the Barrio de Analco (E). Note the extensiveness of the Barrio and its many structures.

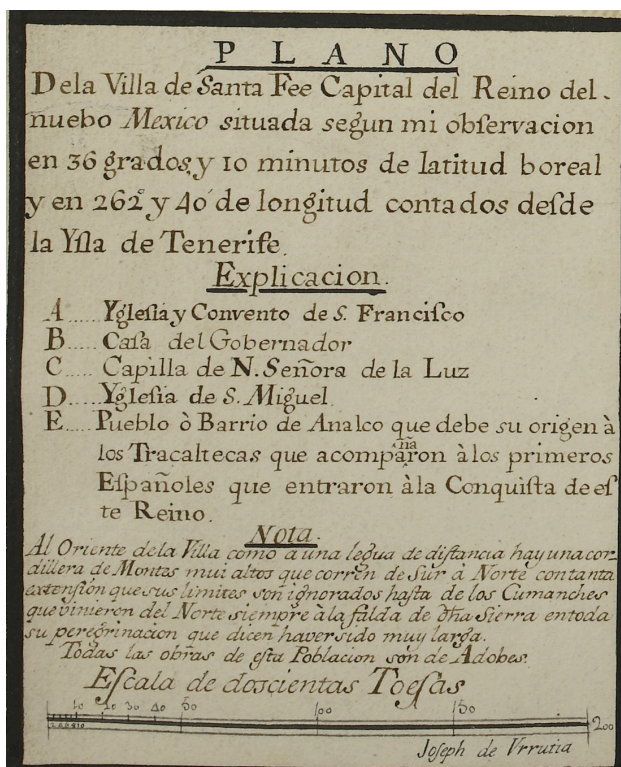


Figure 5.4. Urrutia Map, Legend Detail. Note letter E, depicting the "Town or District of Analco which owes its origins to the Tlaxcalans who accompanied the first Spaniards who came to conquer this kingdom."

If recent scholarly consensus rejects a Tlaxcalan colonization in New Mexico during colonial times, the Barrio de Analco likely was the home of other Nahuas who

had “accompanied the first Spaniards” to New Mexico.<sup>581</sup> After all, *analco* is a Nahuatl term meaning “on the other side of the water,” (or “on the other side of the river”), and as is apparent in Urrutia’s map, the Barrio de Analco was clearly situated on the south side of the Río de Santa Fe, across from the Spanish settlement. Moreover, William Wroth has demonstrated that other settlements in New Spain also had *barrios* named Analco and that these communities were home to Nahuatl-speaking Indians (for example, San Juan Bautista de Analco in Durango had 610 Tlaxcalans in the mid eighteenth century).<sup>582</sup> Clearly Nahuas, possibly even Tlaxcalans, were left off the expedition’s official reviews and journeyed north with Oñate. Very likely they established themselves in the Barrio de Analco in Santa Fe. The question is how many.

In 1630 Alonso de Benavides wrote a history of New Mexico known as the *Memorial*. Regarding the humble *villa* or village of Santa Fe the friar remarked that there were only 250 Spanish residents, “who hold about 700 souls in service, so that with Spaniards, *mestizos*, and Indians there are perhaps a thousand people.”<sup>583</sup> José Antonio Esquibel posits that those non-Spaniards were “mainly Pueblo Indians, and some *Indios Mexicanos*,” while Wroth speculates that the “some 700 Indians...living

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<sup>581</sup> Enrique Lamadrid’s 2016 article on the Tlaxcalans in New Mexico acknowledges that there is little documentary evidence to support such a presence, and Wroth considers it “highly unlikely that the Barrio de Analco was settled by a formal group of Tlaxcalan migrants.” Lamadrid, “Tlaxcalans in New Mexico;” Wroth, “Barrio de Analco,” 177.

<sup>582</sup> William Wroth, “Barrio de Analco: Its Roots in Mexico and Role in Early Colonial Santa Fe, 1610-1780” in *All Trails Lead to Santa Fe: An Anthology Commemorating the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1610* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2010), 167, 169.

<sup>583</sup> Alonso de Benavides, *A Harvest of Reluctant Souls: The Memorial of Fray Alonso de Benavides, 1630*, trans. and ed. Baker H. Morrow (Niwot, CO: Univ. Press of Colorado, 1996), 26-27.

in Santa Fe” around this same time were “mostly of Mexican origins.”<sup>584</sup>

Unfortunately, no estimates for the *mexicano* population are known to exist, and many of the records pertaining to the Spanish kingdom of Nuevo México were destroyed during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, so there is no way to verify these figures. But the truth probably lies somewhere in the middle. Certainly many of the indigenous residents of Santa Fe were *criados* (servants) and *cautivos* (captives) taken from among New Mexico’s autochthonous native peoples. On the other hand, surviving evidence suggests that there was a sizeable community of Nahuas in New Mexico, and especially Santa Fe, in the seventeenth century. Between those arriving with Oñate and those arriving later with reinforcements sent from Mexico, a Nahua population of a few hundred seems plausible.

On the other hand, it appears that “the Tlaxcalan presence” has been manufactured. This rests on flimsy evidence and unwarranted assumptions that references to *indios mexicanos* in documents pertaining to early Santa Fe must refer to Tlaxcalans.<sup>585</sup> Besides, the Tlaxcalan question may be largely academic. More ink has been spilled attempting to prove that *indios mexicanos* in New Mexico were Tlaxcalans than in reconstructing their lives, their roles in the colony’s settlement,

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<sup>584</sup> Ibid., 169. Benavides’s figures correspond roughly with numbers given by Francisco Xavier (*alcalde ordinario* of Santa Fe and secretary of government and war for the colony of New Mexico), who claimed that those besieged by the rebellious Pueblos—Spanish soldiers, their families and servants, “Mexican natives” and “all [other] classes of people”—totaled “more than a thousand souls.” See Francisco Xavier, “Certification [and] notice of departure,” 21 August 1680, in Charles Wilson Hackett, *The Revolt of the Pueblo Indians*, vol. 1, 19; Benavides, *Memorial*, 26-27.

<sup>585</sup> For instance Simmons, “Tlascalans in the Spanish Borderlands,” 108 cites “an early reference to Mexican Indians, no doubt Tlascalans, living in Santa Fe.” Two documents in the dossier he cites (AGI, Patronato, leg. 244, ramo 7) indeed mention “*indios mexicanos*,” but no further identifying information is provided.



and their experiences as diasporic peoples involved in the settlement of the Greater Southwest. With the Tlaxcalan question settled and a substantial—if indeterminate—Nahua population in New Mexico firmly established, we can at long last direct our attention to these more pressing matters.

### Nahuas in Colonial New Mexico: “Abomination” and Inquisition

New Mexico was distant, but it was not entirely isolated. A regular supply caravan traversed the long stretches of the Camino Real from Mexico City once every several years, and New Mexico was in more frequent contact and commerce with mining communities to the south (especially Parral).<sup>586</sup> Some Nahuas working out of Mexico City as carters and muleteers may have forfeited the second half of their salary and stayed on in New Mexico; others undoubtedly hitched rides north from the many mining camps and settlements along the Camino Real. And, of course, they just as easily headed back south. Many migrants were looking for opportunity, and New

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<sup>586</sup> See the three-part essay by France V. Scholes, “The Supply Service of the New Mexican Missions in the Seventeenth Century,” *The New Mexico Historical Review* 5, no. 1 (1930): 93-115; “The Supply Service of the New Mexican Missions in the Seventeenth Century, Part II, 1631-1684,” *NMHR*, 5, no. 2 (1930) 186-210; “The Supply Service of the New Mexican Missions in the Seventeenth Century, Part III, 1663-1680,” *NMHR*, 5, no. 4 (1930), 386-404.

The exact extent of this commerce will never be known, since some of it was illicit. For instance, in 1641 Francisco de Salazar testified against governor Luis de Rosas, claiming that during his time as governor he had arranged for “wagons and carts full of merchandise” to be conducted to Parral, some of which were said to contain “many Indians, most of them young in age, all of which were captured in...unjust wars and sold in Parral contrary to what your majesty has ordered.” Testimony of Francisco de Salazar, 5 July 1641, AGI, Patronato, leg. 244, ramo 7, f. 49v. Governor Juan de Eulate (1618-1625) also was alleged to have profited from the sale of Indian slaves. See Scholes, “The Inquisition in New Mexico,” 200. See also Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 188.

Mexico had little to offer. Thus even those who arrived with Oñate and thereafter may not have stayed permanently, meaning that Nahua colonization in New Mexico was, as on the mining frontier more generally, transitory. Identifying Nahuas in the documentary record, then, is like trying to hit a moving target.

Compounding this, Nuevo México's first decades were marked by chaos and instability as the fledgling colony struggled to establish itself. In 1601, just three years after their arrival, many of the colonists deserted and returned to New Spain.<sup>587</sup> Oñate was forced to resign as governor in 1607 and returned to Mexico a few years later, where he would eventually face charges relating to his conduct during the *entrada* and his administration of the colony.<sup>588</sup> The captain general never returned to New Mexico. The following years were defined by a bitter struggle between the colony's ecclesiastical and secular authorities, and most of the writings from its early decades therefore pertain either to Oñate's conduct or this church-state rivalry.<sup>589</sup> And of course, to top it all off, the colony's archive was largely destroyed during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

Despite these hurdles, the colony's Mexican Indian residents suddenly come into sharp focus with the arrival of a local commissary (or representative) of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in 1626. Established under Ferdinand and Isabella in the fifteenth century in order to expose Muslims and Jews, the Holy Office was

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<sup>587</sup> Scholes, "The First Decade of the Inquisition in New Mexico," 195.

<sup>588</sup> Hammond and Rey, eds., *Oñate*, vol. 1, 26-29, 32, 35.

<sup>589</sup> For the church-state rivalry, see Scholes, "The Inquisition in New Mexico," 195-98; Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 95-130, esp. 95-101. José Antonio Esquibel also notes that most of the seventeenth-century documentation refers to "social and political conflicts." "Thirty-eight Adobe Houses: The Villa of Santa Fe in the Seventeenth Century," in *All Trails Lead to Santa Fe*, 111.

exported to the New World where it continued to investigate and punish crypto-Judaism and heresy. Since Indians were neophytes whose capacity to comprehend the responsibilities of their spiritual conversion was fiercely debated, they were exempted from the Inquisition. They could be interviewed, but not tried. Nevertheless, since Indian practices deemed idolatrous could potentially corrupt the Spanish sphere, the Holy Office monitored Indian activity deemed threatening.<sup>590</sup> Such activity, in fact, became the focus of some of the Holy Office's earliest investigations in New Mexico.

The Holy Office of the Inquisition came to New Mexico in 1626 when Alonso de Benavides arrived in Santa Fe as commissary.<sup>591</sup> Almost immediately he began investigating *anathema*, or "abominations," plaguing Santa Fe, particularly demonology, superstition, and the practice of sorcery.<sup>592</sup> Benavides's investigations, and those of his successor, Esteban de Perea, invariably implicated Indians.

Three centuries after its establishment, the distinguished historian of Latin America France Scholes brought the Inquisition in New Mexico into public purview.<sup>593</sup> Scholes demonstrated that the Holy Office's earliest activities in the colony were concerned primarily with witchcraft and superstition, and he also pointed out that the blame for the colony's disturbances fell disproportionately on Indians, including *indios mexicanos*. Nevertheless Scholes's primary objective was to

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<sup>590</sup> John F. Chuchiak IV, ed. and trans., *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536-1820: A Documentary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2012), 11.

<sup>591</sup> Scholes, "The Inquisition," 198 (Benavides arrived in Santa Fe).

<sup>592</sup> AGN, Inquisición, leg. 354, exp. 19, no folio number. ("Anathema en el nuevo Mex<sup>co</sup>").

<sup>593</sup> France V. Scholes, "The First Decade of the Inquisition in New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 10, no. 3 (July 1935), 195-241.

document the Holy Office's activity; he was less concerned with the insights Inquisition testimony could provide into native peoples' experiences in New Mexico. Yet these records provide the fullest account of the lives of *indios mexicanos* in the colony—people whose presence has long been shrouded in mystery. Through them we can glimpse the social positions of Nahuas in early Santa Fe, their economic activities, and the extent to which they were able to integrate into New Mexican colonial society. Their experiences in New Mexico provide an illustrative counterpoint to other frontier settlements where Nahuas settled in substantial numbers. Nahuas in New Mexico appear to have occupied more marginal positions than their counterparts at San Esteban and Zacatecas, for instance. Lacking the corporate protections provided in those places, New Mexico's Nahuas were subjected to sexual and physical abuse and succumbed more rapidly to concerted efforts to undermine their status. Spanish soldiers and colonists sought to reap the spoils of conquest, and in order to do so, they had to frustrate the *mexicanos'* efforts to integrate into Hispanic society and subordinate them to the status of dejected, exploitable *indios*.

Juan Antón's life embodied the disruptive forces of Spanish colonialism. Like many men and women of mixed ancestry (he is described in Inquisition records as *mulato*), he sought out a living on the frontier. According to testimony, he was "brought" from Indé—a mining community in Nueva Vizcaya—to New Mexico by *maese de campo* Pedro Durán (evidently as a servant, though the records are mute on his exact status), "where after a few days he endeavored to marry a Nahua Indian

woman, a Spanish-speaking and Hispanicized widow named Ana María.”<sup>594</sup>

However rumor had it that Antón had been previously married (one individual testified that while in Cuencamé he had heard from “a Nahua Indian named Diego that Juan Antón had been married twice”), so the Inquisition investigated him for bigamy.<sup>595</sup>

Whether or not Antón was a bigamist is beside the point. It is his experience as an itinerant in New Spain’s northern borderlands that is most illuminating. *Indios mexicanos* were recruited as auxiliaries or servants into formal colonizing expeditions and by individual soldiers journeying to New Mexico from the central valley and the northern mining camps. Alongside *mulatos* and *mestizos*, these individuals established residency and took spouses in Santa Fe, forming a substantial multiethnic community, potentially in the Barrio de Analco.<sup>596</sup> They also, it appears, brought a tradition of alternative medicinal knowledge deemed dangerous by the Inquisition and which led to the persecution of Santa Fe’s underclass, especially the *indios mexicanos*.

Before his arrival in Santa Fe, Alonso de Benavides had exercised his authority as commissary of the Inquisition in the mining camp of Cuencamé (where he performed his investigation into Juan Antón). There he uncovered patterns of occult practices, including “love magic”— the use of “powders and herbs” to

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<sup>594</sup> Testimony of Captain Antonio Baca, 10 February 1635, BL, MSS M-A1, container 6, folder 702 (Photostat of AGN, Inquisición, vol. 380, exp. 2, f. 253v).

<sup>595</sup> Testimony of Hernando Martín the younger, 8 July 1633, BL, MSS M-A1, container 6, folder 702 (Photostat of AGN, Inquisición, vol. 380, exp. 2, f. 251v). See also Scholes, “The Inquisition in New Mexico,” 228.

<sup>596</sup> In supporting his estimate of 700 Mexican Indians in Santa Fe, Wroth points out that many were brought north by individual Spanish friars and soldiers, just as Juan Antón had been and Jusepe before him. Wroth, “Barrio de Analco,” 170.

influence a member of the opposite sex—and alleged pacts made with the devil.<sup>597</sup> (In one incident, a black slave known as Bartolo was accused of keeping a secret book, which he used to make blood offerings to “some devils” he had drawn in its pages.)<sup>598</sup> Investigations into similar practices occupied Benavides when he arrived in Santa Fe. For instance the soldier Lucas de Figueroa denounced Francisco “Pancho” Balón before Benavides in 1626 for possessing a “book of astrology and native secrets” which he claimed was used to divine the future and interpret “the nature of the persons born beneath each planet, predicting how long they will live” and other notable life events.<sup>599</sup> Francisco Balón was described as a “Nahua Indian blacksmith” of the villa of Santa Fe, and perhaps he was one of the artisans for whom Oñate had earlier sent.<sup>600</sup> Balón did not live long after this denunciation; he died sometime prior to September 1628.<sup>601</sup> The circumstances of his death represent some of the first instances of alleged witchcraft and sorcery in Santa Fe,

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<sup>597</sup> For the practice of “love magic” in New Spain and its prosecution by the Inquisition, see Chuchiak IV, *The Inquisition in New Spain*, 308-17; Ramón A. Gutiérrez has written on love magic in New Mexico as practiced by natives, but his research focuses on the eighteenth century, when Nahuas had ceased to form a distinct ethnic community in the colony. See “Women on Top: The Love Magic of the Indian Witches of New Mexico,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16, no. 3 (Sep. 2007): 373-390.

<sup>598</sup> Testimony of fray García de Zúñiga, 23 July 1629, and “Denunciación de Luis de Ribera contra si mismo,” CSWR MSS 867, vol. 47, no page number (Photostat of AGN, Inquisición, tomo 366, ff. 409-410).

<sup>599</sup> Lucas de Figueroa contra Pancho Balón, 30 Jan. 1626, CSWR MSS 867, vol. 46 (photostat of AGN, Inquisición, tomo 356).

<sup>600</sup> CSWR, MSS 867, vol. 46, no page number (Photostat of AGN, Inquisición, vol. 304, f. 187v). Francisco “Pancho” Balón is described as *indio mexicano herrero*. See also, Testimony of Lucas de Figueroa contra Pancho Balón, Santa Fé, 1 Jan. 1626, CSWR, MSS 867 vol. 46, no page number (photostat of AGN, Inquisición, leg. 356) *un yndio llamado pancho balon de nacion mexicano y errero desta Va*.

<sup>601</sup> Testimony of Bartolomé Romero, AGN, Inquisición, tomo 304, ff. 187r-187v. *pancho balon estuvo malo y no vivio un año*

occurrences that, if the testimony is to be believed, resulted in many deaths. These investigations would characterize the Inquisition's efforts for the next several years.

#### 'Sorceresses' of Santa Fe: Doña Beatriz de los Ángeles and Juana de la Cruz

When Beatriz de los Ángeles fell under the scrutiny of the Inquisition, she had already been in New Mexico for nearly thirty years. She had been among the reinforcements for the Oñate expedition in 1600 and was described in its documents as unmarried, a native of Tepeaca, in Puebla, and "servant of Cristóbal de Brito"—a Spanish soldier.<sup>602</sup> Three decades later, de los Ángeles had reached a respectable position within the Hispanic community. She had married a Spanish soldier and was said to be *ladina*—fluent in Spanish—and *muy española*, "very Hispanicized."<sup>603</sup> Beatriz possessed the specialized knowledge of a *ticitl*, a Nahuatl ritual healing specialist, and evidently served the indigenous community in that capacity. However she also attended to Spanish residents and had gained a fair degree of esteem in the community as a result.<sup>604</sup> One witness noted how she and another *india mexicana* "always carry themselves [as Spanish women] in their dress

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<sup>602</sup> Hammond and Rey, eds. *Oñate*, vol. 1, 559.

<sup>603</sup> Testimony of María Núñez, 14 October 1631, CSWR MSS 867, vol. 47, no page number (photostat of AGN, Inquisición, tomo 372, f. 19v) *india ladina mexicana muy española*.

<sup>604</sup> Bartolomé Romero testified that after he had allegedly been poisoned by doña Beatriz, Diego Bellido requested that he ask doña Beatriz to intercede and cure him, but she refused. CSWR, vol. 46, no page number (Photostat of AGN, Inquisición, vol. 304, f. 187r). In other testimony, Bellido returned to doña Beatriz's residence after taking ill seeking a remedy. Testimony of Isabel de Cabanillos, 22 June 1631, CSWR, MSS 867, vol. 47, no page number (photostat of AGN, Inquisición, tomo 372, exp. 19, ff. 7v-8v).

and behavior.”<sup>605</sup> Indicative of her newfound status, she had overcome her position as a servant and even acquired servants (*criados*) of her own.<sup>606</sup> Perhaps most tellingly, by the 1630s everyone—including Spaniards—refer to her as *doña* Beatriz de los Ángeles.<sup>607</sup> On the northern frontier, and especially in remote New Mexico, medical specialists of any stripe would have been few or nonexistent, and this opened up economic and professional space for *titicih* (pl. of *ticitl*) like *doña* Beatriz de los Ángeles.<sup>608</sup> Judging from her title and status, the services she provided the residents of Santa Fe—both indigenous and Spanish—evidently earned her considerable prestige.<sup>609</sup>

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<sup>605</sup> CSWR, MSS 867, vol. 46 (photostat of AGN, Inquisición, tomo 304, f. 186) *sean tratado sienpre en el vestido y en el trato*

<sup>606</sup> Testimony of Catalina Pérez, 22 June 1631, CSWR, MSS 867, vol. 47, no page number (photostat of AGN, Inquisición, tomo 372, exp. 19, f. 7r). Francisco Márquez also reported de los Ángeles to have “un criado...de nación tegua.” AGN, Inquisición, vol. 372, exp. 19, f. 30r.

<sup>607</sup> Inquisition testimony against her, including that of Spaniards, invariably refers to her as *doña*. See the abundant testimony in AGN, Inquisición, vol. 372, exps. 16, 19.

<sup>608</sup> In her study of indigenous female mining labor in Zacatecas, Dana Velasco Murillo notes another case in which a Nahua woman served her community as a *ticitl*. As Linda A. Newson has demonstrated, Spaniards in the Americas exhibited greater tolerance toward *curanderos* and alternative medicine more generally because of the lack of trained medical professionals in the colonies. Velasco Murillo, “Laboring above Ground,” 13; Newson, “Medical Practice in Early Colonial Spanish America: A Prospectus” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 25, no. 3 (2006): 367–391, esp. 376.

<sup>609</sup> Before the conquest and after, Nahua women engaged in a range of specialized ritual and medical practices on behalf of their communities. In a recent article on *titicih*, Edward Anthony Polanco argues that Spaniards’ tendency to interpret medical knowledge and practice among the Nahuas as male-dominated (as it was in Europe) diminished the roles and criminalized the activities of female healers. Polanco further suggests that Spaniards’ use of European terms like *curandera*—with their implications of superstition and pacts with the devil—to describe female Nahua healing specialists not only obscures the true extent of their activities but disparages their social roles. Polanco, “‘I am Just a Tīçitl’: Decolonizing



When Alonso de Benavides first arrived in the colony he heard rumblings of the involvement of two women, a mother and daughter, in the traffic in suspicious *polvos y hierbas* (powders and herbs), but he never undertook an extensive investigation. When Esteban de Perea took over as commissary of the Inquisition, a thorough inquiry was made into doña Beatriz and her *mestiza* daughter Juana de la Cruz, both of whom were denounced as sorceresses (*hechizeras*). Over fifty witnesses provided testimony, much of it centering on the traffic in these mysterious substances.<sup>610</sup> Shockingly, the two women were said to have killed several Indians and Spaniards by means of sorcery.<sup>611</sup> Multiple witnesses claimed that doña Beatriz had “enchanted” or bewitched Diego Bellido by giving him tainted food. According to reports, Bellido immediately began to experience acute gastric pain—“as if dogs were devouring his insides”—and a week later, he died.<sup>612</sup> For her part, Juana de la Cruz had also allegedly killed a Spanish man, Hernando Zambrano, likewise by giving him a bowl of tainted milk, which gave him a “stomachache that never left him and from which...he died within just a few days.”<sup>613</sup> According to

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Central Mexican Nahua Female Healers, 1535-1635,” *Ethnohistory* 65, no. 3 (July 2018): 441-463.

<sup>610</sup> Scholes, “Inquisition in New Mexico,” 218.

<sup>611</sup> Scholes briefly relates the stories of doña Beatriz and Juana de la Cruz in “The Inquisition in New Mexico,” 220-22. What follows is similar in its broad outline to the account Scholes offers, but I emphasize different details and posit an altogether different interpretation here based on my own review of the original Inquisition files.

<sup>612</sup> Many witnesses mention this incident, in varying degrees of detail. Among the most thorough accounts are the testimonies of María Núñez (Bellido’s sister), 14 October 1631, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 372, exp. 19, ff. 31r-32v, and Francisco Márquez, 1 October 1631, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 372, exp. 19, ff. 30r-31r.

<sup>613</sup> Testimony of Francisco Márquez, 1 October 1631, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 372, exp. 19, ff. 30r-31r. Also on the death of Hernando Zambrano, see testimony of Ana de Bustillos, 26 March 1631, AGN, Inquisición, tomo 372, exp. 16.

testimony, doña Beatriz was by far the more dangerous of the duo. In addition to causing Diego Bellido's premature demise, she was alleged to have bewitched two Indian servants of hers and killed Francisco Balón, the Nahua blacksmith, who had been "carrying on an affair" with doña Beatriz.<sup>614</sup> Dozens of people stepped forward to testify before Perea regarding doña Beatriz and Juana de la Cruz, leading the commissary to conclude, "In this town [Santa Fe], almost everyone is of the opinion that the mother and daughter are sorceresses."<sup>615</sup>

In his analysis of love magic and sorcery in early New Mexico, Scholes adopted the perspective of the Inquisition—that is, he espoused the Spanish view that Indians, *mestizos*, and *mulatos* were possessors of occult knowledge and practitioners of dangerous alternative medicine that had a corrupting influence on the Spanish sphere. Yet as Linda Newson has observed, alternative medicine as practiced by unlicensed individuals like doña Beatriz de los Ángeles and Juana de la Cruz was not only legal but an important component of community well being and care in the early modern period, both in Spain and the Americas.<sup>616</sup> When the Inquisition arrived in New Mexico in 1626, however, the same alternative medical knowledge that had evidently served the community well to that point was suddenly labeled illicit and dangerous.

What does that shift reveal about social dynamics in early New Mexico, and what light can Inquisition records shed on the lives of *indios mexicanos* there? The Inquisition testimony reveals a tangled web of intrigue, gossip, jealousy, and rumor.

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<sup>614</sup> Ibid. An alternative translation might read, "living in sin with."

<sup>615</sup> Statement of fray Esteban de Perea, 1631, AGN, Inquisición, exp. 16, no folio number. See also Scholes, "Inquisition in New Mexico," 224-25n42 (b).

<sup>616</sup> Newson, "Medical Practice in Early Colonial Spanish America."

Parsing truth and individual motivations from the testimony is a difficult if not impossible task. For instance much of the testimony into incidences of *hechizería* or sorcery allegedly perpetrated by doña Beatriz are often uncorroborated by other witnesses and so far-fetched as to be ridiculous. Nevertheless some patterns emerge that reflect deep transformations taking place in New Mexican colonial society and in New Spain.

In the cases of the *indias curanderas*, ironically their alleged crimes against the Spanish community reveal the deep roots they had sunk into it—and the apparent jealousy that had arisen as a result. The backlash against doña Beatriz undoubtedly owed to her remarkable rise from lowly servant to doña. This transformation was greatly facilitated not only by her marriage to the *alférez* (standard-bearer) Juan de la Cruz, but also by her proclivity to behave, as more than one observer put it, “like a Spanish woman.”<sup>617</sup>

The Inquisition cases are also highly racialized and gendered: overwhelmingly Indian women were targeted as the sources of occult knowledge and as practitioners of sorcery. Nahua men are typically mentioned in the records only incidentally, as with a hatter known as Domingo. Francisco Balón, the Nahua blacksmith, was denounced for possessing a suspicious book, but he more frequently appears in Inquisition records as a victim of female Indian ‘sorceresses.’ It is probably no coincidence that those accused of the most egregious crimes were the *indias* or *mestizas* who were most successful at integrating into the Spanish

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<sup>617</sup> Testimony of alférez Pedro Márquez, 2 October 1628, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 304, exp. 27, f. 186r. *doña Beatris india ladina mexicana que se trata como española es hechisera*

community. Recall that doña Beatriz had married a Spanish man. Her daughter, Juana de la Cruz, had done the same.

Furthermore, some of the most damning testimony comes from individuals closely connected to the alleged victims. For instance María Núñez, who implicated doña Beatriz in more acts of 'sorcery' than perhaps any other witness, was sister to Diego Bellido, the very man de los Ángeles was said to have murdered. María's husband, Francisco Márquez, also provided damning testimony, and he was the brother of Hernando Zambrano, the man whom Juana de la Cruz had allegedly poisoned.<sup>618</sup> Tellingly, both came forward and offered testimony "without being summoned" (*sin ser llamado*).<sup>619</sup>

Whether doña Beatriz and Juana murdered their paramours is impossible to establish. But it should be pointed out that neither woman was ever tried. Of course, since Indians were exempt from Inquisitorial trial, doña Beatriz could not be prosecuted in the institution's courts. Yet surely if she had been involved in the murder of a Spaniard she would have faced trial in criminal court. Apparently this was never done. Juana, on the other hand, being *mestiza*, could be tried by the Inquisition, but this evidently never occurred either. Moreover, the murder of Diego Bellido was alleged to have occurred in 1626, but no inquiry was made until 1628, under Benavides. As a matter of fact most of the witnesses' statements were not recorded until 1631, when Perea finally conducted a more thorough investigation.

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<sup>618</sup> Testimony of María Núñez, 14 October 1631, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 372, exp. 19, f. 31v (*muger de Francisco Márquez*). Perea lists her as *hermana de diego bellido* earlier in the expediente, but there is no folio number.

<sup>619</sup> Testimony of Francisco Márquez, 1 October 1631, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 372, exp. 19, f. 30r; Testimony of María Núñez, 14 October 1631, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 372, exp. 19, f. 31r.

And Perea himself doubted many of the witnesses who testified against doña Beatriz and Juana. As former commissary of New Mexico's missions, Perea had lived in the province for years and was well acquainted with Santa Fe's residents. He was skeptical of the townspeople because of their propensity toward gossip. Some he characterized as downright untrustworthy. Perea put little credence in the testimony of Petronilla de Zamora, for example, dismissing her as a simpleton, and he impugned Francisco Márquez as a man of "ill repute."<sup>620</sup> On the other hand, he had known doña Beatriz for many years and thought highly of her, calling her a "good Christian."<sup>621</sup> "Even though she is a Nahua Indian," he justified, "she comports herself as a Spaniard."<sup>622</sup>

Clearly Benavides and Perea put little stock in the charges. Nevertheless doña Beatriz and her daughter Juana certainly had the botanical knowledge to poison the men—and they also had a motive. (And, judging from the testimony, many other indigenous women in Santa Fe were similarly displeased with their abusive and unfaithful men). Amidst the many accusations María Núñez leveled against doña Beatriz, she let slip that Diego Bellido had beaten the accused prior to the alleged poisoning. Another witness similarly claimed Bellido had "beaten the said doña Beatriz out of jealousy." Juana de la Cruz was said to have poisoned Hernando

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<sup>620</sup> Statement of Perea following testimony of Catalina de Bustillos's, 26 March 1631, AGN, Inquisición, tomo 372, exp. 16; Statement of Perea, AGN, Inquisición, tomo 372, exp. 19, no folio number (*fr<sup>co</sup> marq[ues] es un hombre de poca opinion*).

<sup>621</sup> Statement of Perea, AGN, Inquisición, tomo 372, exp. 19, no folio number (*buena cristiana*).

<sup>622</sup> Statement of Esteban de Perea, 26 March 1631, AGN, Inquisición, tomo 372, exp. 16, no folio number (following testimony of Catalina de Bustillos).

Zambrano, “with whom she was living in sin, because he had beaten her.”<sup>623</sup> Captain Bartolomé Romero may also have laid hands on Juana de la Cruz. In his statement he claimed his own wife had tried to poison him, but he suspected it was “by the hand and at the order” of de la Cruz, who had reportedly vowed “to get revenge” on him “for certain things that happened between” them.<sup>624</sup>

If “the things that happened” between Romero and de la Cruz referred to an affair (or sexual assault) and the subsequent fallout, it would hardly have been the first time. Indeed, Ramón A. Gutiérrez has noted that Spanish soldiers in New Mexico looked upon Indian women as objects and attempted to dominate them through sexual conquest.<sup>625</sup> The Inquisition records support this. In fact the investigations conducted by Benavides and Perea reveal as much about patterns of sexual impropriety and male abuse towards concubines and wives (especially Indians) as they do about ‘sorcery’ and the trafficking of mysterious herbs and powders.<sup>626</sup>

In some cases it seems that it was male abuse and neglect that prompted women to consult healers like Juana de la Cruz and doña Beatriz in the first place. According to Romero’s testimony, Juana de la Cruz had witnessed Catalina Bernál’s abuse at the hands of her husband Juan Durán (which she viewed “with horror,

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<sup>623</sup> Testimony of captain Bartolomé Romero, 26 September 1628, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 304, exp. 27, f. 187r; Testimony of captain Alonso Ramírez, 30 May 1631, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 304, exp. 27, f. 189r.

<sup>624</sup> Testimony of captain Bartolomé Romero, 26 September 1628, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 304, exp. 27, f. 187r.

<sup>625</sup> Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 215, 219-20.

<sup>626</sup> These trends evidently continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For example, Gutiérrez presents convincing evidence that New Mexico’s Spanish men were habitual abusers of women—especially Indian women. See *When Jesus Came*, chap. 6.

crying”). Afterwards, Juana asked Catalina if she would like “something to give to her husband in order to tame him, so that even if he found her with a man he would not fight with her.”<sup>627</sup> Male infidelity, control over female sexuality, and physical and sexual abuse were hallmarks of the patriarchal society that emerged in New Mexico under Spanish colonialism.<sup>628</sup> And it was precisely women’s perceived desire to control men—and thus to upset the social order—that provoked the ire of Spaniards and prompted them to denounce troublemakers to local authorities. With the arrival of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in 1626, Spaniards received a powerful institutional tool to assist with the task of returning Indians to their perceived proper place in the social order.

## Conclusion

Nahuas are surprisingly visible in the New Mexico’s Inquisition records. Whether this was because they settled in the colony in large numbers or were targeted disproportionately relative to other social groups remains a mystery. Perhaps both were true. Whatever their numbers, Nahuas in seventeenth-century New Mexico integrated into the community through marriage and economic activity, in some cases even overcoming prior servant status and asserting themselves as legitimate economic and social actors. Indian women earned livings as healers, while men were employed in the villa of Santa Fe as craftsmen and laborers. (In a rare

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<sup>627</sup> Testimony of captain Bartolomé Ramírez, 26 September 1628, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 304, exp. 27, f. 188r.

<sup>628</sup> The best reconstruction of this violent, lascivious environment can be found in Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came*, 207-26.

reference to *indios mexicanos* in the seventeenth-century colony not coming from Inquisition files, a 1644 document refers to the economic activities of a “Nahua Indian hatter.”)<sup>629</sup> Nahuas also made an impact on the spiritual community. Very likely they helped to build the chapel of San Miguel, which was situated in the Barrio de Analco (see fig. 2, above). Though governor Luis de Rosas had ordered it closed in 1640 during his acrimonious feud with the Franciscans, it remained in use as an infirmary, and Nahuas evidently continued to use it as a community house or perhaps even a place of worship. When a Franciscan procession visited San Miguel in early May 1640, they found “the Indians had already opened the church door for us, and they all came out to receive us with their customary joy and reverence, and even more so, being Nahuas.”<sup>630</sup>

Nevertheless it was also true that *indios mexicanos* were perceived as marginal figures in colonial New Mexico and were treated as such. Unlike the contracts governing earlier resettlement efforts, the terms of the Oñate colonization provided *hidalguía* only to the Spanish soldiers, and most of the Nahuas who accompanied the expedition—as well as those who came in subsequent reinforcement missions—appear to have been servants or concubines, as far as records permit us to see, anyway. Once in New Mexico, these settlers lacked critical institutional and corporate protections (there is no evidence of their establishing a *cabildo* or confraternities, as in San Esteban), meaning they were more susceptible

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<sup>629</sup> “Testimonio de Francisco de Salazar...ante el gobernador, don Juan Flores de Sierra Valdés,” 5 July 1641, AGI, Patronato, leg. 244, ramo 7, f. 49v. Transcribed, translated, and published online by the Cíbola Project, University of California, Berkeley, [https://escholarship.org/uc/rcrs\\_ias\\_ucb\\_cibola](https://escholarship.org/uc/rcrs_ias_ucb_cibola) (quote p. 79).

<sup>630</sup> “Fray Bartolome Romero denuncia...don Luis de Rojas,” 4 May 1640, in *ibid.*, p. 98.



to exploitation by Spanish colonists. There are some indications, for example, that *indios mexicanos* fell victim to the abuses of unscrupulous governors. For instance a 1641 document claims that *indios mexicanos* were forced to labor for the governor producing textiles, “preventing them from working for the common good.”<sup>631</sup> And Indian women were treated as objects to solidify male honor, frequently falling victim to domestic violence in their relationships with Spanish men.

Despite these difficulties, Nahuas evidently remained in the colony right up through the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, though in what numbers remains uncertain. Nevertheless the Barrio de Analco was still a recognizably Nahua community at that time. For instance, when the uprising erupted, the first attacks were directed at the Barrio de Analco—where the *indios mexicanos* had their houses. According to governor don Antonio de Otermín, the uprising’s leader approached him and demanded “that all classes of Indian who were in our power be given up to them, both those in the service of the Spaniards and those of the Mexican nation of that suburb of Analco.”<sup>632</sup> That the Pueblo leader differentiated between the *indios mexicanos* and other Indians “in the service” of the Spaniards indicates not only the hierarchical ordering of distinct indigenous peoples settled in Santa Fe but also the Nahuas’ independent status. Nevertheless, because of their association with the Spanish villa of Santa Fe, the *indios mexicanos*’ homes were “robb[ed] and sack[ed],”

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<sup>631</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>632</sup> Charles Wilson Hackett, ed., *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches thereto, to 1773*, vol. 3 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1937), 330-31.

as was the Barrio de Analco's church.<sup>633</sup> Ironically, the Pueblo Revolt's first violent act was perpetrated not against Spaniards, but rather the Nahuas of Analco.

When the Spaniards returned to New Mexico—to stay, this time—during the Reconquest under don Diego de Vargas (1692-1693), Indians from Mexico accompanied the expedition, and there are some scattered references to *indios mexicanos* in eighteenth-century New Mexico.<sup>634</sup> However it appears that the Nahua community had largely dissolved by the time of the Pueblo Revolt or had fled back to New Spain in its wake, never to return. In the eighteenth century, the Barrio de Analco was primarily a community of *genízaros*—a generic term for Indians whose ties to their previous communities had been severed and who now lived among the Spanish.<sup>635</sup> And while the Nahua community had clearly diminished by the end of the eighteenth century, remnants of the population endured, and its impact continues to resonate in New Mexico. The Barrio de Analco can still be visited today, its shadowy history preserved in street signs and tourist traps, and the legacy of Nahua settlement lives on in local lore. But that presence is also historical as well, as Nahuas formed part of New Mexico's social fabric for much of its colonial history and thus contribute to the Land of Enchantment's vibrant multicultural legacy. In very real ways, then, the Nahuas belong to the soul of New Mexico and therefore the American nation-state.

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<sup>633</sup> Ibid., 331.

<sup>634</sup> Wroth, "Barrio de Analco," 465n25.

<sup>635</sup> Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*, 130.

## CONCLUSION

*Estos que ban aqui nombrados, son los que salieron desta Prouincia Para las fronteras de las chichimecas. que asta oy dia se hallan y los traslade de mi letra del original que para en este cavildo, el fin es por que no lo ygnoren assi por parte de sus desendientes, como por otros muchos. el dia que lo quicieren. testimoniado lo llevaran oy Martes de Carrastolendas. se acavo en 17 de Febrero de 1711 a,<sup>s</sup> y fue a pedimento de D. seuastian grauiel Escribano del pueblo de san sebas<sup>n</sup> y ahua del benado  
Y Porque conste lo firme*

*D. Sal.<sup>r</sup> de S. Miguel*

*Por todos fueron 1591*

Those named herein are the ones who left from this province [of New Spain] for the frontiers of the Chichimecs, where they are still found today... The [document's] purpose is so that their descendants will not be ignorant of it, like so many others. The day they wanted it borne witness to [is] today...17 February 1711, and [it] was at the request of don Sebastián Gabriel, notary of the pueblo of San Sebastián Agua del Venado. ...

Don Salazar de San Miguel.

On behalf of all those who went, 1591.<sup>636</sup>

As cabildo notary for the Tlaxcalan colony of Agua del Venado, don Sebastián Gabríel had a keen sense of history. He also had a historian's perceptivity to change. He noted it poignantly in a desperate plea to his countrymen, imploring them not to forget their ancestors who had come to settle among the Chichimec frontier all those years ago in 1591. He feared that, "like so many others," they would forget the sacrifices they made, how they carved a new home out of Mexico's western sierra, far from the land they knew. That signal event had engendered Agua del Venado and made its history possible. The migration had once been etched into its peoples'

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<sup>636</sup> DHSLP, vol. 1, 203.

souls. But that was no longer the case. Don Sebastián worried that his own people, in forgetting where they had come from, were forgetting also who they were.

Spaniards, to be sure, had long forgotten the contributions of the original Tlaxcalan settlers of Agua del Venado, and unlike don Sebastián, they no longer wished to remember.

In his analysis of Indian allies in sixteenth-century Yucatán, John F. Chuchiak IV argues that the indigenous auxiliaries—*indios conquistadores*—who enabled the Spanish conquest of the Maya kingdoms in the sixteenth century were ultimately “forgotten allies.”<sup>637</sup> The argument can be extended further still, as all across New Spain indigenous allies were forsaken and their service in the original conquests of Mesoamerica forgotten. Based on the sheer number of indigenous allies involved and Spaniards’ overwhelming dependence on their support, the establishment of Spanish colonial hegemony necessarily involved the disavowal of this activity and the abnegation of rights premised upon such service. Simply put, the indigenous contribution to the Spanish conquest of Mesoamerica was so great that rewarding all those involved would have amounted to the abrogation of Spanish authority. Nahuas like the Tlaxcalans were adept at packaging their service in order to secure privileges and exemptions, and for a time, while Spanish hegemony was still incomplete, the Spanish Crown honored and upheld these. However even the Tlaxcalans, whom the Spanish had never conquered and who were themselves widely considered in the early post-conquest years to be conquistadors, were eventually placed under the yoke of colonialism alongside all other indigenous

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<sup>637</sup> Chuchiak IV, “Forgotten Allies.”

peoples in New Spain. By the dawn of the seventeenth century—certainly by the beginning of the eighteenth, when don Sebastián arrived in Mexico City to plead his case—the memory of indigenous service had faded, and natives across New Spain had become forgotten allies indeed.

This project has endeavored to expose this willful amnesia and to demonstrate how it contributed to later historiographical misrepresentations. Those misrepresentations have been several. First, a previous generation of historians less trained in ethnohistorical methods relied too heavily upon documents authored by European actors and colonial authorities, unintentionally reproducing the omissions of native peoples whose efforts were indispensable to colonial expansion. This has served largely to excise native activities, experiences, and agendas from the historical record. Second, even those concerned with the exploits of indigenous allies (Powell, for instance, devoted an entire chapter in *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver* to the “Spanish Use of Indian Auxiliaries”) nevertheless tended to portray their exploits as contributions to colonial endeavors.<sup>638</sup> Such characterizations are not necessarily wrong. In fact I agree with the conclusion that native allies were essential to New Spain’s expansion and have presented a similar argument here for the colonial north. Nevertheless they do offer a somewhat one-sided perspective—one that tends to overshadow indigenous projects and discourages contemplation, and thus analysis, of native experiences.

Relying too closely on Spanish sources has also led to a teleological representation of New Spain’s northward expansion. In Mexico south of the

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<sup>638</sup> Powell, *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, 158-71.

Chichimec frontier, as in Yucatán, Honduras, and Guatemala, colonial hegemony was essentially established by the mid sixteenth century. However this process took considerably longer in the north, allowing significant opportunities for the expression of indigenous interests. On the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century northern frontier, native migrants contested Spanish authority and supremacy, brandishing Spanish titles, viceregal exemptions, and rights that placed them, at least theoretically if not in practice, on a par with Spaniards. Nevertheless these countervailing processes have been subsumed beneath and obscured by an overarching Spanish colonial project. To be sure, the activities of Indian allies were part of that project, but they had their own significance, too. By framing colonial expansion in the early borderlands as Spanish expansion, indigenous objectives and experiences are downplayed and even overlooked. Spanish suppression of competing indigenous interests was relentless, and in the end, unilaterally successful. But it was neither immediate nor guaranteed. Characterizing it as such gives a false impression of the rapidity with which Spanish hegemony was established and invalidates indigenous struggles to wrest land, privileges, and rights from the Spanish empire in the Greater Southwest.

Recent literature has convincingly shown that indigenous allies in sixteenth-century New Spain were not unthinkingly serving colonial overlords but strategically aligning with powerful new arrivals on the scene of local politics.<sup>639</sup> Still, there is more to be learned in terms of what native allies were fighting for, how

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<sup>639</sup> See, for instance, Camilla Townsend, "Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico," *American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (June 2003): 659-687; Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices*, 81-82.

successful they were in achieving their goals, and when exactly the window for achieving those goals closed. I have argued here (see chap. 3) that native struggles to strike an accommodation with the colonial regime were still ongoing in central Mexico at the end of the sixteenth century. Furthermore, it is apparent that native allies on the northern frontier continued to pursue their own agendas, to resist the impositions of Spaniards, and to aggressively defend their privileges through the end of the seventeenth century (and beyond), despite characterizations of native actions contributing solely to Spanish aims.

Eschewing teleological narratives and interpreting northern New Spain as a site where native allies pursued their own interests reorders the historiographical landscape in several ways. Perhaps most importantly it protects against native peoples being labeled either as traitors to their people (as “Indian conquistadors” sometimes are), or complicit in their own domination (as the term “Indian auxiliaries” implies). They were neither. Those familiar with Native American cultures will recognize that individuals owed their allegiance first to the village, or the local city-state or *altepetl* in the Nahuatl world. The term *indio* was a legal marker imposed by the Spanish in the sixteenth century and had no meaning in the indigenous world, just as the notion of a pan-Indian identity was a product of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and even then it was a response to Euroamerican colonialism and the consolidation of imperial power in North America).<sup>640</sup> Nahuas allying with powerful people in order to vanquish a long-

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<sup>640</sup> On the term *indio* and its insignificance in early New Spain, see Lockhart, *Nahuas after the Conquest*, 8, 115. On pan-Indian identity, see Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity* (Baltimore: Johns

standing rival were doing what they had always done. Only with hindsight does it appear obvious that Spanish hegemony would become absolute, that the decision would ultimately prove disastrous. At the time, however, certain native peoples' decisions to ally with the Spanish was eminently pragmatic and rational.

Likewise, just as they had done before the conquest, indigenous people from central Mexico fought during the colonial period to preserve the interests of their *altepetl*, or what remained of it. If ties to the *altepetl* had been weakened by diaspora, native migrants reassembled them as best they could. At Nombre de Dios, in Durango, ethnically and linguistically distinct Nahuas and Purépechas protected their identities as well as claims to land and sovereignty as *vecinos* and through active participation in local governance. Documents preserved in Nahuatl testify not only to their activities as frontier militiamen but also to their efforts to claim rights to self-rule and self-preservation.<sup>641</sup>

As was the case in San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala in Coahuila, preserving the *altepetl* also meant recreating the social divisions that structured indigenous society before the Spanish conquest. Like many other communities with substantial populations of indigenous migrants, San Esteban and Nombre de Dios bolstered New Spain's frontier, and both communities furnished militia to fight unreduced *indios bárbaros*. But to define the experiences and ordeals of the individuals involved in terms of those activities alone is to overlook how Indian settlers

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Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991); *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2004).

<sup>641</sup> Barlow and Smisor, eds., *Nombre de Dios, Durango*. See also the discussion in chap. 2, herein.



struggled to advance their own interests, to resist domination by Spaniards, and to remain Mexica, Otomí, Tlaxcalan, or Purépecha.

Those struggles are not wholly untraceable in official colonial documents written in Spanish, but they are difficult to elucidate and even obscured by the inherent biases of the genre. Thus a major goal of this project has been to recover indigenous perspectives and motivations through native sources. For instance the document known as the *Memorial*, composed in Nahuatl by Indian settlers from Nombre de Dios, is one of the few native texts to directly address what motivated indigenous soldier-allies to participate in the Chichimec War.<sup>642</sup> From it we learn that these particular native auxiliaries, like so many others, were migrants from the Nahua region and from Michoacán, and in all likelihood itinerant mine workers. After being recruited from San Martín, they aided in the physical establishment of Nombre de Dios, hauling construction materials and building structures, including the church, and earned a stake in the town itself by serving on the cabildo. Eventually Nombre de Dios became a staging ground for forays into the surrounding desert in pursuit of Chichimecs. Whereas Spanish sources are notoriously mute on the questions of roles and motivations, the *Memorial* informs us that local magistrates either coerced indigenous participation in militias or encouraged it with enticements of mounts, arms, and captives. The *Memorial* also occasionally calls attention to the losses sustained by the indigenous migrant community—a trend that is borne out much more extensively by Spanish sources (see chap. 2). Together, Spanish and Nahuatl sources reveal that indigenous migrants engaged in mass

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<sup>642</sup> Ibid., 2-45. See also David Wright, *Conquistadores otomíes*.

migration to escape the clutches of colonialism in their homelands and to pursue opportunities available at the frontier. However in the process they also suffered thousands of deaths as a result of the ongoing Chichimec War.

Nahuatl sources also provide new perspectives on efforts to end the war in the late sixteenth century. Considered in its day to be the “foundation” of the Chichimec pacification program, the relocation of nearly one thousand Tlaxcalans to permanent colonies across the frontier has been celebrated as one of the great achievements of the colonial regime and a shining example of indigenous loyalty and service. Nevertheless Nahuatl sources largely contradict the colonial record regarding the migrants’ willingness, demonstrating that many of the settlers were coerced. They also provide harrowing insights into the particular experiences of individuals chosen for what amounted to forced exile in the north for many of those involved. In addition to other Nahuatl and Spanish texts, the testament of Domingo Morales, the only known Nahuatl text to capture the experiences of a participant, suggests that the resettlement was at best a bitter sacrifice for many migrants. At worst, it was a traumatic dislocation for hundreds of families and a devastating blow to thousands of individuals affected in the community.

Despite the disorientation associated with mass migration, Tlaxcalans in diaspora in the Greater Southwest successfully rebuilt communities torn asunder and retraced the outlines of Tlaxcalan society. From the perspective of the colonial government, the settlements were meant to buttress the frontier and aid in the critical process of converting and incorporating Chichimecs into the colonial order. However, judging from the documents Tlaxcalans wrote, it appears they largely

ignored these directives and devoted their efforts instead to reconstructing the social order as it had existed in Tlaxcala. First and foremost this involved redrawing the boundaries between the *pipiltin* and the *macehualtin*, and between Tlaxcalans and non-Tlaxcalans. At San Esteban certain Tlaxcalans harnessed the power of the cabildo to defend their rights and protect their community, but they also used it to secure positions atop the social and political hierarchy and ensure that the New Tlaxcala they were building would be just as stratified as the old one they had left.

This project has built upon a series of works collectively uncovering the magnitude of indigenous settlement in the Greater Southwest and its importance to colonial development and expansion. P. J. Bakewell was the first to highlight the scope of indigenous settlement in the mining communities of the colonial north, suggesting an astoundingly high population of as many as 5,000 indigenous migrants.<sup>643</sup> More recent scholarship has continued to show that mining operations in the north relied upon a prodigious number of indigenous laborers. Dana Velasco Murillo's deep investigations into the colonial archives of Zacatecas have yielded fascinating new insights into the nature of settlement and the organization and experience of life and labor in an urban mining community.<sup>644</sup> John Tutino's analysis of nascent capitalism in the Bajío and northern New Spain, alongside other works, demonstrates that virtually all facets of economic development in the north depended on Indian

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<sup>643</sup> Bakewell, "An Economic and Social Outline," 214.

<sup>644</sup> Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians in a Silver City*; "Laboring above Ground;" "Creation of Indigenous Leadership."

laborers. Food grown in agricultural centers such as the Bajío and in Michoacán sustained the mining communities and fed their laborers, many of whom were indigenous. Equipment, supplies, and provisions reached the mining communities and even the remote missions of far-off New Mexico via carts and mule trains driven and led by native contract laborers. In the mines, Indians unearthed, carried, and refined the ore. They gathered wood for fires and building timbers and manufactured it into charcoal. They worked in bread factories supplying the mines and haciendas. In the bustling mining communities, indigenous women cooked meals, cared for children and husbands, and served as merchants, landlords, laundresses, and even mine owners. If Tutino locates the epicenter of American capitalism in northern New Spain in the sixteenth century, then Indian laborers—many, perhaps a majority, hailing from central Mexico—were its proletariat. While recent scholarship has made great strides in uncovering the activities and experiences of these workers and the implications of their labor, more scholarly attention to this massive indigenous labor force and the communities they formed is needed.<sup>645</sup> It is my hope that this dissertation prompts further scholarly investigation into these communities and into the broader diaspora of which they were part, and that it encourages reevaluation of the extent to which colonial projects in northern New Spain, and elsewhere in the Americas, were European.

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<sup>645</sup> Barragán-Álvarez, “Mule Trains and Transportation in New Spain;” Corbeil, “Identities in Motion;” Deeds, “Rural Work in Nueva Vizcaya;” Scholes, “Mission Supply Service;” Studnicki-Gizbert and Shechter, “Silver Mining and Deforestation in New Spain;” Tutino, *Making a New World*; Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians*; “Laboring above Ground.”

With the advent of borderlands as a historiographical framework, the Spanish periphery has come into its own as a region relevant to United States history. As noted earlier, the first borderlands scholars were primarily concerned with rescuing the Spanish imperial mission in North America from the oblivion to which centuries of Anglocentric scholarship had consigned it.<sup>646</sup> In the process, however, they largely omitted indigenous peoples from Mexico and consequently overlooked the fact that New Spain's advance into territory now belonging to the United States rested atop the colonization efforts, military services, and labor of native peoples.

Recent borderlands scholarship, especially that pertaining to New Mexico, has partially corrected this, addressing individual facets of Indians' involvement in northern expansion (e.g. Richard Flint's work on Mexican Indians with Coronado, and Enrique Lamadrid's historiographical synthesis of the Tlaxcalan presence in New Mexico). Nevertheless, just as with the early U.S.-Mexico borderlands more generally, the history of New Mexico remains essentially a narrative of Spanish conquest, followed by centuries of declension until American annexation. By and large, the literature has not acknowledged that there was a substantial Mexican

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<sup>646</sup> See, for example, Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands*; Bannon, *Bolton and the Spanish Borderlands*. Powell was engaged in a related project. He delighted in pointing out to Anglocentric scholars that "America's first frontier" began in Mexico, not the trans-Appalachian or trans-Mississippi West. He was also concerned with demonstrating that Spanish policies of frontier expansion in the sixteenth century were actually more measured, rational, and effective than those of the nineteenth-century United States, especially the reservation system. The first project is implicit throughout much of his work and is articulated directly in the titles of both his *Mexico's Miguel Caldera: The Taming of America's First Frontier* and the second edition of *Soldiers Indians and Silver: America's First Frontier War* (Tempe: Arizona State Univ. Press, 1975). For Powell's comparison of New Spain's Indian policy to that of the United States, see "Peacemaking on America's First Frontier," 244-47.

Indian component to all 'Spanish' efforts to conquer and colonize New Mexico, from 1540 through the late seventeenth century. Including the Mexican Indian diaspora in the history of New Mexico nuances the standard narrative of Spanish conquerors pitted against Pueblos, Apaches, and Navajos, adding new layers of meaning both to U.S. history and the history of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

Though this projects' protagonists are primarily Indians from Mexico, this is not a Mexican, nor is it an American, story. In the sense that the area under study here was eventually claimed by either Mexico or the United States (or both), it is relevant to both national histories. For the most, part, though, the borders that later came to divide and in many ways define the region have been inconsequential to the narrative. In writing it, I have purposefully sought to blur the nationalist lenses through which many modern people approach the past. By shaking readers loose from these traditional frameworks, I have hoped to render them more perceptive to omissions—to actors, patterns, and processes not typically covered in standard narratives. While for the sake of simplicity I have used terms like "Mexican Indian" and "Native American" (which for many still means a person found at European contact to be occupying territory now belonging to the United States), I hope this dissertation has done more to erode the barrier between those terms—and between the terms "Mexican" and "American" more generally—than to reify them. I also hope the methodology adopted here encourages students and scholars to step outside of nationalist frameworks when interpreting the past, when analyzing the present, and when looking toward the future.

If this dissertation is consciously a work of transnational history, it is also ethnohistory. One of its primary goals has been to reconstruct, to the best of my ability, the experiences of Indian migrants in the Greater Southwest. By and large this has meant relying on Nahuatl sources, both because Nahuatl was used as a lingua franca in New Spain and for the simple fact that the majority of indigenous migrants in question were Nahuas. However this project has not by any means exhausted the full range of indigenous, or even Nahuatl, sources pertaining to the colonial north. There is more work to be done with the extensive Nahuatl archive at San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala, for example, and perhaps other Nahuatl treasures await discovery in provincial and local archives in northern Mexico. Likewise, since not all migrants and settlers spoke Nahuatl, one wonders if there are indigenous sources preserved in colonial archives in other languages, what insights could be gained from them, and how they would jibe with the conclusions presented here. While David Wright's outstanding work has already provided a solid foundation, perhaps there is more to be learned from continued investigation into Otomí texts.<sup>647</sup> Comparison of the Otomí settlements founded in the mid sixteenth century—with both the predominantly Nahua communities as well as multiethnic settlements of the north like Zacatecas and San Luis Potosí—has the potential to yield fascinating insight into indigenous notions of Spanish colonialism, natives' rights within that system, and their efforts to maintain corporate integrity and to retain distinctive indigenous identities. This dissertation, I think, has contributed to our knowledge on these issues so far as certain Nahuas are concerned, but the

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<sup>647</sup> Wright, *Conquistadores otomíes*.

answers provided are in no way definitive. On the contrary, I hope they will serve as a foundation for continued investigation into indigenous experiences and prompt additional work with native-language texts pertaining to the Greater Southwest. I hope this dissertation has raised some new questions as well, questions that can lead in altogether new directions of research.

Long ago, the ancestors of the Aztecs and other Mexican peoples began an epic migration from the north, arriving after a long and tortuous journey in the basin of Mexico. There they would remain for centuries, conquering their neighbors, being themselves vanquished in turn, and fusing their blood with their conquerors to form an entirely new people—*la raza cósmica*, the people of the future. In the colonial period they began the slow process of recolonizing their place of origins, though not entirely under conditions of their own choosing. Since long before nation-states existed to cordon off territory and delineate borders, people have traversed the spaces now separating—and joining—Mexico and the United States. Now, in the twenty-first century, people from Mexico (and farther south) continue to do so, repeating in reverse a migration the ancestors of the Aztecs completed in the ancient past and retracing the footsteps of indigenous migrants who had come centuries before during colonial times. And while the circumstances have changed, the impetus for this movement remains the same: to trade poorer conditions at home for opportunity abroad. In other words, people continue to do today what people have always done. Don Sebastián of the Tlaxcalan colony of Agua del Venado knew, in more ways than one, that migration was essential to his people's identity, but he also knew that history had a funny way of making people forget the processes



that shape them. If we look back far enough, we are all migrants like don Sebastián's ancestors. We would do well, as he did, to try to remember that.

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