

Introduction



FIGURE 1. The Library of Philip II at El Escorial Palace projects a global vision of Habsburg Christendom joining many lands and peoples under a common faith and sovereign. (Scala Archive, Florence/Art Resources, New York, 2006)

THE WHIPPING OF ANTONIO GONZALES

In November 1782, Vicente González de Santianes the governor of Nuevo León, received a sheaf of documents from a protracted legal dispute in the Indian town of San Miguel de Aguayo.¹ At first glance, the case seems so utterly commonplace as to be beneath the notice of the region's chief magistrate. One of San Miguel's Tlaxcalan stoneworkers had been accused of an adulterous liaison with a townswoman. The local *alcalde*, believing him guilty of the offense, ordered him jailed and whipped. This would have been an open-and-shut case, were it not for one crucial detail: the mason claimed to be a Tlaxcalan nobleman. The legal privileges of Tlaxcalan elites rested on two centuries of colonial law and custom, and they could not be taken lightly even by the Spanish governor.²

The initial complaint came from the stonemason, Antonio Gonzales. According to his testimony, the unreasonable *alcalde* of San Miguel, Marcos Suarez, subjected him to a humiliating whipping "without any cause or motive." Suarez maintained that he simply meted out the appropriate punishment for adultery. When Gonzales made an appeal to the governor, the *cabildo* began gathering testimony to resolve the dispute. Initially, Gonzales vigorously denied the story of his midday dalliance with a neighbor woman. Later, he conceded that he was, indeed, laboring at the woman's home on the day in question, but he still insisted that, despite the suspicions of her jealous husband, he was only moving rocks and committed no sin or crime of any kind. Gonzales claimed the whole scandal was provoked by malicious rumors. The preponderance of evidence was stacked against Gonzales, and even today, his story seems less than convincing. In truth, though, he was not so interested in refuting the specific charge of adultery as he was in proving his status as a Tlaxcalan nobleman and his consequent categorical immunity from the *alcalde*'s corporal punishment.

Gonzales described himself as "a Tlaxcalan son of the pueblo of San Miguel de Aguayo" and "sergeant of the militia." He offered these facts not merely for the purposes of identification, but also to establish his legal standing. Colonial magistrates needed these facts to determine the jurisdiction of the tribunal and the legal privileges of the petitioner. The individual's place of birth and residence, ethnicity, language, ancestry, and profession were all relevant to the case. Gonzales's status as a *vecino* (local resident and citizen) was vital to his appeal, and his military post might have conferred additional

¹ Several histories treat San Miguel de Aguayo's (Bustamante's) distinctive history as a Tlaxcalan colony: David B. Adams, "At the Lion's Mouth: San Miguel de Aguayo in the Defense of Nuevo León, 1686–1841," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 9, no. 3 (2000), 324–46; Elisabeth Butzer, *Historia social de una comunidad tlaxcalteca: San Miguel Aguayo (Bustamante, N.L., 1686–1820)* (Saltillo, Mexico: Archivo Municipal de Saltillo, 2001); Héctor Jaime Treviño Villarreal, *El Señor de Tlaxcala* (Monterrey, Mexico: Archivo General del Estado, 1986).

² The following story of Antonio González is reconstructed from documents contained in AMM Correspondencia vol. 121, exp. 4.

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legal immunities. In this case, however, it was upon his ancestry that Gonzales staked his most important claim. Gonzales proclaimed himself a Tlaxcalan nobleman and maintained that he was thus legally protected from the sort of abuse he had suffered:

I am a Tlaxcalan. I am from the nobles and the elites like you . . . that never have been accustomed to be punished thus in this village, nor with exile, when they are not remanded to Royal Justice or to the judgment of the Republic, leaving the penalty of whipping for the commoners who have not had and do not have an office in the Republic, nor did their ancestors.

Gonzales was claiming that he possessed an elite form of Tlaxcalan citizenship transmitted by heredity.³

The *cabildo*, which promised to conduct a full investigation of the matter, took the issue of ancestry quite seriously, collecting the information needed to verify or disprove Gonzales's noble genealogy. To substantiate his claims, Gonzales cited a history of family service to the state: "My grandfather served the king and republic in the employ of the governor and ministers of justice; in the same post, my father don Ignacio Gonzales has and still serves." Gonzales hastened to add that he himself had served in the elite frontier forces and was now the sergeant of the town's militia. Marcos Suarez, the very man who had whipped Gonzales, was the head of the *cabildo* that prepared the report. Yet the *alcalde* was in no position to dismiss Gonzales's complaint out of hand. The legal principle involved was too weighty.

In the final report to the governor of Nuevo León, San Miguel's *cabildo* challenged Gonzales's claim of immunity on several grounds: first, it cast doubt on his ancestry; second, it asserted that, though Gonzales may have been a noble, even nobles were subject to whipping for certain offenses. The one thing never disputed by any party was the underlying principle of Tlaxcalan privilege and Tlaxcalan nobility. These were universally recognized elements of colonial law in the north. Neither Suarez (who himself claimed Tlaxcalan *hidalgúia*), nor Gonzales, nor Santianez had anything to gain from tampering with the time-honored Tlaxcalan-Spanish compact.⁴

³ On Indian law in the region and viceroyalty, see Charles R. Cutter, *The Legal Culture of Northern New Spain, 1700–1810* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1995); Brian P. Owensby, *Empire of Law and Indian Justice in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Jovita Baber, "Native Litigiousness, Cultural Change and the Spanish Legal System in Tlaxcala, New Spain (1580–1640)," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 24, no. 2 (2001), 94–106. On Spanish notions of *vecindad* and citizenship, see Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2003).

⁴ The *cabildo* was informed by elements of the 1591 Tlaxcalan charter, which transferred privileges held by Tlaxcala to its daughter colonies in the north. 14 Mar. 1591 mercedes, *San Esteban de la Nueva Tlaxcala: documentos para conocer su historia* (Saltillo, Mexico: Consejo Editorial del Estado, 1991), 53; Andrea Martínez Baracs, *Un Gobierno de Indios: Tlaxcala, 1519–1750* (Mexico City: CIESAS, 2008), chap. 6 notes that while the principle of nobility long remained important in Gran Tlaxcala, the phenomenon of false titles of nobility was widespread.

The population of Tlaxcala, like that of other Nahuatl societies, was divided between two orders: the *pilli* and the *macehualli*. The *pipiltin* enjoyed both political and economic privileges denied the *macehualtin*. They were exempt from labor levies, dominated the *cabildo* system, and marked their status with luxury goods forbidden their inferiors.⁵ Though this division between orders softened gradually in Tlaxcala, and dramatically in the Tlaxcalan colonies, it remained legally relevant throughout the eighteenth century. Spaniards recognized this distinction between the orders as being similar to contemporary European distinctions between nobles and commoners and to the ancient Roman distinction between plebs and patricians. It was common, in fact, for Spaniards to refer to the *macehualtin* as *plebeyos* and to the *pipiltin* as *principales* or *hidalgos*. Like the native nobility among Rome's allies, Tlaxcalan nobles were the first to taste the fruits of colonial citizenship. In the northern colonies, both the founding families and all of their descendants were guaranteed by charter the status of *hidalgos*. Some among them, like Antonio Gonzales, claimed an even higher order of birth. The people of northern New Spain viewed Spanish and indigenous hierarchies as paralleling each other – each with its own distinctions between noble and common, governors and governed. This case from the town of San Miguel de Aguayo suggests that all parties shared an assumption that Tlaxcalans were legally distinct from non-Tlaxcalans, and that a nobility among Tlaxcalans could claim further privileges in contradistinction to the commoners around them.⁶

New Spain's vision of empire and citizenship was reflected in colonial charters and in the historical discourse of early chroniclers. However, the most common invocation of the principles of citizenship was in the application of normal criminal and civil law. Spanish law recognized a variety of legal standings based on nobility, caste, and membership in the military or clergy. In the New World, the *república de indios* and *república de españoles* were two separate legal spheres that converged only when cases were appealed above the local level. Tlaxcalans enjoyed an intermediary form of citizenship between that of other Indians and that of the Spanish – a condition that was most clearly articulated in practice.⁷ To understand this hybrid political system, one must consider Spanish expectations about multiple modes of citizenship and the long history of the relationship between Nahuas and the Spanish crown.⁸

⁵ Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1952), chap. 6; on Nahuatl social and political hierarchies, see James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), chaps. 8–9.

⁶ In Tlaxcala, the hereditary group of *principales* was well defined, institutionalized, and long lasting, Lockhart, *The Nahuas after Spanish Conquest*, 125–39; Martínez Baracs, *Un gobierno de indios*, chap. 4.

⁷ On law and political culture, Susan Kellog, *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture, 1500–1700* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1995), and Owensby, *Empire of Law*.

⁸ The tradition of examining central Mexico as a distinctive civilization with persistent elements of Nahuatl civilization was begun in earnest by Charles Gibson in *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A*

TLAXCALANS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE MEXICAN NATION

The modern nation of Mexico that emerged in the nineteenth century incorporated a multitude of ethnically distinct peoples. It did so, in part, by building upon a process of political integration inherited from a long history of hybrid colonial rule.⁹ Early New Spain was a colony whose political structures were grafted together from Iberian and indigenous ones. The early success of this colonial state owed a great deal to the alliance between Spain and Tlaxcala. Spaniards and Tlaxcalans cooperated first to conquer Tenochtitlan and later to colonize dangerous frontier areas. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, Tlaxcalan settlers created webs of self-replicating colonies that drew nomadic frontier peoples into the emerging colonial society. Tlaxcalans were both cultural intermediaries between Europeans and other Indians and the authors of their own local political systems.¹⁰

The long history of Tlaxcala's frontier colonies reveals the ongoing success of the Spanish-Nahua political system in binding together distinct ethnic groups as corporate elements of a larger empire. This colonial system created both new towns and a new type of citizen. Tlaxcalans introduced northern Chichimecs to

History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519–1810 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964) and continued through the use of Nahuatl language sources by James Lockhart in *The Nahuas after Spanish Conquest* and Martínez Baracs, *Un Gobierno de Indios*. Similar inquiries into other regions of New Spain may be found in Nancy M. Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1985); Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca: Nudzabi History, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Rebecca Horn, *Postconquest Coyoacan. Nahua-Spanish Relations in Central Mexico, 1519–1650* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

⁹ In using the term *hybrid*, I borrow loosely from a tradition begun by Homi K. Bhabha. While the term is most commonly applied to post-Colonial societies, I use it throughout this book to describe the mingling of political structures and cultures in colonial New Spain. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994). On Nahua-Spanish hybridity, see Arij Ouweneel, "From Tlahtocayotl to Gobernadoriyotl: A Critical Examination of Indigenous Rule in 18th-Century Central Mexico," *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 4 (Nov. 1995), 765–85; as viewed through other media, Jaime Cuadriello, ed., *El origen del Reino de La Nueva España, 1680–1750* (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1999) and *Las Glorias de la república de Tlaxcala: o la conciencia como imagen sublime* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2004); with respect to syncretism, Viviana Díaz Balsera, "A Judeo-Christian Tlaloc or a Nahua Yahweh? Domination, Hybridity and Continuity in the Nahua Evangelization Theater," *Colonial Latin American Review* 10 (2001), 209–28; with respect to language, Laura E. Matthew, "El náhuatl y la identidad mexicana en la Guatemala colonial," *Mesoamerica* 40 (2000), 41–68; and political geography, Barbara Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996).

¹⁰ On the structure of Spanish Empire, see Henry Kamen, *Empire: How Spain Became a World Power, 1493–1763* (New York: Penguin, 2002); John Elliott, *Imperial Spain, 1469–1716* (New York: Pelican, 1970); Elliott, *Spain and Its World: Selected Essays* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1989); John Chávez, *Beyond Nations: Evolving Homelands in the North Atlantic World, 1400–2000* (New York: Cambridge, 2009). The conquest of Mexico is a well-trodden subject, and the role of Tlaxcalans has been noted repeatedly in widely read works such as Hugh Thomas, *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés and the Fall of Old Mexico* (London: Hutchinson, 1993) and Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

the political culture of the *república de indios* and integrated them into local militias. The incorporation of these local military and political systems into the regional militias and governments of the Bourbon period created a land of Indian and Spanish citizen-soldiers, who at first inhabited separate civic spheres, but whose shared interests would eventually yield a surprising level of interethnic solidarity. These interethnic relationships determined the region's alignment during the Hidalgo Rebellion and Independence periods and the application of new political systems under the Constitution of Cádiz and the Mexican Constitution of 1824. Ultimately, the political culture transmitted through the Tlaxcalan colonies helped to produce the modern citizens and modern municipalities of the nineteenth century.¹¹

Mexico's 1824 Constitution speaks of the nation as a body of formally equivalent individuals, each of whom is termed a "citizen of the state" and "citizen of the Republic." It is a notion of citizenship that takes no account of ethnicity or language – one in which all citizens are theoretically interchangeable. This is a familiar notion for modern readers, but it is a very different model than that which prevailed at the time of Spanish conquest. Spain's early North American empire was a patchwork of European and indigenous communities, whose separate ethnic "republics" were united by a shared allegiance to the crown. In local political life, Spaniards and Indians spoke of themselves as *vecinos*; and in relation to the broader empire, they spoke of themselves as the king's *vasallos*. The former term described the lateral political ties between legitimate members of a town, and the latter expressed the hierarchical relationship between the subject and sovereign. *Vecindad* described the possession of both active and passive elements of citizenship: protection for property and contract rights, and the ability to vote and stand for local offices. *Vasallaje* conferred both obligations and privileges. The vassal was protected by the king's law and, at the same time, obligated to render him service. In New

¹¹ On the application of the Bourbon reforms to northern New Spain, see Peter Gerhard, *Colonial New Spain, 1519–1786: Historical Notes on the Evolution of Minor Political Jurisdictions* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1967); Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, rev. ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1993); and Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*, rev. ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1993). On local systems, see José Cuello, "The Economic Impact of the Bourbon Reforms and the Late Colonial Crisis of Empire at the Local Level: The Case of Saltillo, 1777–1817," *The Americas* 44, no. 3 (1988), 301–24. The changes to military systems and jurisdictions are treated in Christon I. Archer, *The Army in Bourbon Mexico, 1760–1810* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1977); María del Carmen Velásquez, *Tres estudios sobre las Provincias Internas de Nueva España* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1979); Luis Navarro García, *Las Provincias Internas en el siglo xix* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1965) and *La política americana de José de Gálvez según su "Discurso y reflexiones de un vasallo"* (Málaga, Spain: Algazara, 1998); Isidro Vizcaya Canales, *En los albores de la independencia: las Provincias Internas de Oriente durante la insurgencia de Don Miguel Hidalgo* (Monterrey, Mexico: ITESM, 1976). For a general overview of the Hapsburg and Bourbon periods, see John Lynch, *Spain under the Hapsburgs* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981) and *Bourbon Spain, 1700–1808* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), as well as Anthony H. Hull, *Charles III and the Revival of Spain* (Washington, DC: University Press, 1980).

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Spain, citizenship (among both Indians and Spaniards) was defined by the individual's exercise of the obligations and privileges entailed by *vecindad* and *vasallaje*.¹²

Spaniards' ideas about Indians were complex and changed over time.¹³ When Europeans first arrived in the Americas, Tlaxcala was an independent polity that lay just to the east of the Valley of Mexico. The Tlaxcalans and the Mexica (the so-called Aztecs) were both Nahuatl peoples and, as such, shared a common language as well as many commonalities in economic life, political structure, and religious practice. In the era of Spanish rule, Nahuatl would remain central to the economy and governance of New Spain. Tlaxcalans, among Nahuatl, proved especially adept at defending their interests within this colonial society. The Tlaxcalans of the sixteenth century built themselves into the emerging Hispano-American empire by making first their armies, and later their civil society, indispensable to the Iberian invaders.¹⁴

¹² In a statutory sense, many of the elements of citizenship for both Europeans and Indians within the American empire were articulated under the Laws of the Indies, see Alberto Sarmiento Donate, ed., *De las leyes de indias: antología de la recopilación de 1681* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo, 1985). Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations*, has added to our understanding of citizenship among Spaniards by investigating the daily exercise of legal prerogatives and standards of naturalization among Europeans in the empire. My work considers some of the same questions, but begins its analysis in the Indian political sphere, rather than the Spanish one. On notions of local citizenship among frontier colonists, see Okah L. Jones, *Los Paisanos: Spanish Settlers on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1979). Also helpful in understanding the legal culture of the north and its multiple modes of citizenship are Charles R. Cutter, *The Protector de Indios in Colonial New Mexico, 1659–1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1986) and *The Legal Culture of Northern New Spain*.

¹³ Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Serge Gruzinski, *Painting the Conquest: The Mexican Indians and the European Renaissance* (Paris: UNESCO, 1992); Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico: The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World, 16th–18th Centuries* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge, 1993); Ilona Katzew, *Casta Paintings: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2004); Patricia Seed, *American Pentimento: The Invention of Indians and the Pursuit of Riches* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2001); Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Analysis of Nahuatl representations of alliance and conquest may be found in Stephanie Wood, *Transcending Conquest: Nahuatl Views of Spanish Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2003); Susan Schroeder, "Looking Back at the Conquest: Nahuatl Perceptions of Early Encounters from the Annals of Chimalpahin," in Eloise Quiñones Keber, Susan Schroeder, and Frederic Hicks, eds., *Chipping Away on Earth: Studies in Prehispanic and Colonial Mexico in Honor of Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble* (Lancaster, CA: Labyrinthos, 1994); Florine Alssselbergs, *Conquered Conquistadors: The Lienzo of Quauhquechollan: A Nahuatl Vision of the Conquest of Mexico* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1997). On the privileged status of Tlaxcalans under Habsburg rule, Baracs, *Un gobernador de indios*, 76–102; and in the north, Offutt, "Defending Corporate Identity on Spain's Northeastern Frontier: San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala, 1780–1810," *The Americas* 64, no. 3 (2007), 351–75; Patricia Martinez, "Noble Tlaxcalans: Race and Ethnicity in Northeastern New Spain, 1770–1810," (Ph.D. Dissertation, U.T. Austin, 2004).

After helping to conquer the Valley of Mexico, Tlaxcala made a place for itself in the Hapsburg Empire. It became an early center of institutional Christianity, an important part of the Euro-American economy, and a major contributor of soldiers to the frontier wars that continued throughout the sixteenth century. Tlaxcalans soon functioned not just as soldiers, but also as colonists who helped to export Nahuatl and Spanish institutions to the fringes of the empire. Beginning in the 1590s, the Tlaxcalan nation and the Spanish colonial state set out to remake the northern frontier in the image of the Tlaxcalan heartland. To this end, the Spanish viceroy and the Tlaxcalan council negotiated an elaborate partnership. The Tlaxcalans agreed to colonize the north and suppress the northern Chichimecs in return for generous royal concessions: titles of nobility, land grants, and the authority to form self-governing towns. Spaniards considered the Tlaxcalans ideal emissaries for transmitting the emerging Hispano-Indian civilization to the north: they were expert agriculturalists, skilled craftsmen, reliable soldiers, and enthusiastic converts to Christianity. Spaniards viewed Chichimecs, in contrast, as the very antithesis of civilization: they lacked cities, complex political hierarchies, sedentary agriculture, and Christian faith.¹⁵

The application of European empire to local governance in the Americas was shaped by the colonizers' distinct approaches to sedentary versus mobile Indian populations. The northern frontier of New Spain was a point of interaction, both between Europeans and non-Europeans and among Indians with radically different patterns of subsistence and social organization.¹⁶ The relationships

¹⁵ On Tlaxcalan colonization, José de Jesús Dávila Aguirre, *La colonización tlaxcalteca y su influencia en el noreste de la Nueva España* (Coahuila, Mexico: Colegio Coahuilense de Investigaciones Históricas, 1977); 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"; Eugene B. Seigo, *Aliados y adversarios: los colonos tlaxcaltecas en la frontera septentrional de Nueva España* (San Luis Potosí: Colegio del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1998); Butzer, *Historia social*; Cecilia Sheridan Prieto, "Indios madrineros: colonizadores tlaxcaltecas en el noreste novohispano." *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 24 (Jan.–Feb. 2001); Phillip Wayne Powell, *Mexico's Miguel Caldera: The Taming of America's First Frontier, 1548–1597* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1977); Vito Alessio Robles, *Francisco Urdiñola y el norte de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Imprenta Mundial, 1931); Pedro de Antonio Escalante Arce, *Los Tlaxcaltecas en Centro América* (San Salvador: Biblioteca de Historia Salvadoreña, 2001).

¹⁶ David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2005); Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism Ethnic Spaces and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700–1850* (Durham, NC: Duke, 1997); Marie-Arèti Hers et al., eds., *Nómadas y sedentarios en el noreste de México: Homenaje a Beatriz Braniff* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2000); Donna J. Guy and Thomas E. Sheridan, eds., *Contested Ground: Comparative Frontiers on the Northern and Southern Edges of the Spanish Empire* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1998); Susan Deeds, *Defiance and Deference in Colonial Mexico: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); William B. Griffen, *Utmost Good Faith: Patterns of Apache-Mexican Hostilities in Northern Chihuahua Border Warfare, 1821–1848* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988); Griffen,

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between Spaniards, Tlaxcalans, and Chichimecs produced the central elements of a new political culture. On the northern frontier, Tlaxcalans built towns, farms, and irrigation systems. They established their own Indian governments, frontier militias, and local religious organizations. They also used a combination of force and persuasion to bring Chichimec bands into their settlements. This strategy produced Indian towns composed of multiple ethnic *barrios*. Over time, the Chichimec residents acquired the attributes of colonial citizenship by entering into Tlaxcalan systems of landholding, military service, and corporate governance. For more than two centuries, these Tlaxcalan-Chichimec towns provided the civic mechanisms for the growth of a functional, multiethnic state.¹⁷

The Spaniards' attitude toward Indian subjects was informed by classical notions of imperial citizenship. They recognized different types of citizenship based both on European notions of cultural hierarchies, and on the relative position of subordinate states within the military systems of the empire. Generally speaking, Hapsburg New Spain interpreted Spanish and Tlaxcalan subjects as the modern analogs of Roman citizens and their Latin allies respectively. Like the Latin allies of antiquity, Tlaxcalan communities were internally self-governing and their members possessed specific legal privileges within the empire.¹⁸ Chichimecs were initially categorized as noncitizens. Yet, in time, they

Apaches at War and Peace: The Janos Presidio, 1750–1858 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1988); Martha Rodríguez García, *Historias de resistencia y exterminio: los indios de Coahuila durante el siglo xix* (Mexico City: CIESAS, 1995); Griffen, *Indian Assimilation in the Franciscan Areas of Nueva Vizcaya* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1979); Martha Rodríguez García, *La guerra entre bárbaros y civilizados: el exterminio del nómada en Coahuila, 1840–1880* (Saltillo, Mexico, 1998); Edward Holland Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1553–1960* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962); Susan Deeds, "First Generation Rebellions in Seventeenth-Century Nueva Vizcaya," in *Native Resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain*, ed. Susan Schroeder (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1998).

¹⁷ Tlaxcalans are on one of several groups that served as intermediaries between Europeans and other indigenous groups. On this social phenomenon, see Alida Metcalf, *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500–1600* (Austin: University of Texas, 2005); Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham, NC: Duke, 2009); Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Daniel H. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1992).

¹⁸ The links between Roman political models and those applied to New Spain are of several types: cases in which Hapsburg administration preserved premodern vestiges of Roman political organization, legal precedents transmitted through canon and secular law, and modeling based on classical education. On the political integration of early modern Italy and Iberia, see Thomas Dandalet, *Spanish Rome, 1500–1700* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2001). On the transfer of ideas and economic practices from the Mediterranean to the Americas, see William D. Phillips, *Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1985) and *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992). Two recent works have treated Roman models in the Andes: David Lupher,

entered the Spanish realm, either as defeated captives or as co-opted allies, and they advanced their fortunes in the colonial system by emulating the Tlaxcalans. Subsequent waves of Chichimec allies ascended the imperial hierarchy by assuming the functional role of their predecessors. In many ways, Chichimecs became Tlaxcalans, proclaiming their virtues as Christians, subjects, and frontier soldiers in distinctly Tlaxcalan terms.

In the long run, the north's pluralistic society, so much in keeping with the corporate structures of the Hapsburg Empire, gave way to a more uniform political culture. Spanish towns grew up beside the Tlaxcalan-Chichimec colonies, creating local economic and political systems that bound the three populations more closely together. In the late Bourbon period, the Tlaxcalan-Chichimec towns continued to attract Indian outsiders, but the place of these towns in the larger imperial system was changing as Tlaxcalan practices were universalized in the region. The distinctive political status of Tlaxcalans had always been linked to their service as militiamen.¹⁹ Now, faced with the military and fiscal crises of the Seven Years' War, Bourbon administrators sought to apply the Tlaxcalan soldier-settler model to the larger society. Soon, garrison towns and militia rolls included northerners of all castes. Just as the previous pattern of colonization had eroded the boundary between Tlaxcalan and Chichimec, so too did this new military and administrative system erode the boundary between Spaniard and Indian. The economic, political, and military relationships among neighboring ethnic enclaves laid the groundwork for the interethnic alliances that prevailed during the Hidalgo Rebellion and shaped a new society that emerged in the wake of national independence. Under the national and state constitutions of the 1820s, all legal distinctions between Indians and Spaniards were formally abolished. At the same time, the Indian and Spanish towns, once clearly geographically delineated, were merged into larger municipalities.

In many respects, the Tlaxcalan colonies succeeded in their original mission of transforming dangerous Chichimecs into civilized Indian citizens. Ultimately,

Romans in the New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth Century Spanish America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2003) and Sabine MacCormack, *On the Wings of Time: Rome, the Incas, Spain and Peru* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2007). Daniel Reff has noted underlying similarities in the material and cultural conditions of Christianity's expansion in late antiquity and in colonial Spanish America in *Plagues, Priests, and Demons: Sacred Narratives and the Rise of Christianity in the Old World and the New* (New York: Cambridge, 2005). The classic explanation of multiple layers of Roman citizenship has its origins in Adrian Nicholas Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University, 1939).

¹⁹ On the role of non-European soldiers in Spanish North America, see Laura Matthew and Michel R. Oudijk, *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2007); Matthew Restall, *Maya Conquistador* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998); Rebecca B. Bateman, "Africans and Indians: A Comparative Study of the Black Carib and Black Seminole," *Ethnohistory* 37, no. 1 (Winter, 1990), 1–24; Roberto Mario Salmon, *Indian Revolts in Northern New Spain (1680–1786)* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991); Ben Vinson, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Herbert S. Klein, "The Colored Militia of Cuba 1568–1868," in *Caribbean Studies* 6, no. 2 (1966), 17–27.