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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Eighteenth Century Nahuatl Documents from the Mexican North¹

David Lorey

The Indian companions of Spaniards settling the Mexican North have remained a mystery to scholars of colonial Mexico. Even scholars who have focused directly on the topic have been unable to penetrate the Indian life of northern society beyond its most superficial characteristics. David Adams, for example, in his University of Texas dissertation on the Tlaxcalan colonies of 1591, describes Tlaxcalans who went North as “. . . those industrious colonists who helped to conquer and defend the Northern Mexican frontier.”² Even less enlightening is Marc Simmons’ conclusion: “. . . wherever these Indians ventured, whatever enterprise they undertook, they inevitably assumed the character of frontier heroes.”³

Certainly, the scholars are not to blame for this deficiency. The understanding of the social and cultural contexts of Indian lives has been limited to the parameters defined by the source material of traditional colonial history—chronicles of exploration, official government and Church hierarchy administrative correspondence.

But documents written by the Indians, in their own language, do exist. This paper presents two eighteenth century Nahuatl wills from the Mexican North and suggests how such documents can shed light on the day-to-day life of central Mexican Indians in the North and on the roles these Indians played in Spanish settlement and in the assimilation of Northern Indian groups to Spanish-central Mexican Indian society.

Expanding our knowledge of central Mexican Indians in the North beyond the limits of past research with these documents is part of the rapidly expanding study of Latin American Indian groups through native language material. This path of study has provided an entirely new perspective on Indians and on the society of Latin America, in the pre- as well as post-conquest epochs. This perspective, in turn, has revolutionized our notions of the relation be-

tween Indian social structures and Spanish colonial institutions. To make the historiographical place of this new field of study clear, I introduce the two wills here by reviewing briefly the dominant characteristics of past work on Spanish expansion into the Mexican North and outlining the limitations of this literature for the study of Indian groups and northern society in general.

I - Traditional Approaches and New Interpretations

There have been two major approaches to the study of the Northward expansion of Spanish culture in Mexico: one works through the records of settlement left by religious Spaniards, the other through the decrees and letters of civil Spanish administrators. In both approaches, the chronology of Spanish expansion into the North is colored by a division into two periods.

The first period is the era of the "War By Fire and Blood," from the discovery of silver in Zacatecas in 1546 to about 1585, characterized by fierce but sporadic and inconclusive skirmishes between Spaniards and northern Indians. Writers suggest that during these years the Spanish did not "realize" the futility of unorganized warfare against small bands of mobile Indian groups, skilled in war and familiar with the northern terrain. The second period, from about 1580 to 1600, features a supposed change of heart and mind on the part of Spaniards. Usually emphasized in this change of attitude is the Bishop of Guadalajara's 1584 petition to the viceroy of New Spain, which included for the first time the suggestion that the nomadic Indian groups of the North might imitate the "Christian example" of transplanted central area Indians. The redirection of Spanish energy after 1585 to an emphasis on trade, gifts (especially gifts of livestock), and food as part of the general realization is fully elaborated.

This chronology and its two "epochs" of Spanish program are the essential weaknesses of the literature. Analysis of the gradually increasing impact of Spanish and central-Mexican Indian society in the area has been almost entirely lacking. We have a wonderful chronology of the period in Philip Wayne Powell's *Soldiers, Indians, and Silver*, for example, but find there little reflection on the underlying processes of the expansion of Spanish culture into the North.⁴ Scholars have emphasized the Spanish decision-making process seemingly all-important in their civil and religious administrative sources. Because of the high profile given decision and program in the documents, scholars have been unable to perceive a continuum of expansion and settlement, and along it progressive acculturation on both sides of the frontier.

A sudden break in "Spanish policy" might make sense if we could discover other important discontinuities in northern society occurring between 1575 and 1590. The steady rhythm of the all-important motor of expansion in the North, the discovery and exploitation of large silver deposits, however, belies the existence of any such break. JEven the raids of non-sedentary

northern Indian groups on mining towns, much emphasized in the period accounts and thus in the secondary literature, did not cause perceptible slumps in mining operations⁵.

The idea of "Christian example" pervades the literature. Yet once again, no dramatic break exists in our understanding of the relationship between Spaniards and central Mexican Indians that would make intelligible a sudden switch on the part of Spaniards to viewing central Mexican Indians as possible examples. Although we lack any accurate information on population flows to the North, nothing suggests that the accompaniment of Indians, as explicit examples or not, followed a two-part development. The number of Indian migrants, we assume, reflected at all times the number of Spanish migrants.

Scholars have not seen, then, that Indians accompanied the Spaniards as auxiliaries, not in "conquest" of northern Indian groups, but as necessary adjuncts of Spanish settlement. Spaniards did not bring along Indians as models of "Christian tilling of the soil," but because the two groups, in the already deeply ingrained social roles developed in central Mexico, simply did not act independently. After all, the highly developed Indians of central Mexico would have had roughly the same value as the Spaniards as an example to the "wild Chichimecs" of the North.

The Spaniards, in bringing along Indians from the central areas as they moved North were trying to recreate in the North the situation of central Mexico, to create a base of support, like that in the center, in order to make possible Spanish livelihoods. As Ida Altman writes in *Provinces of Early Mexico*, the Spaniards of the North ". . . had no desire or need to reject the larger society of which they were the product and of which they remained a part; they helped shape the province [*Nueva León*] in the image of the center."⁶ We must consider the central Mexican Indian component of central area society an integral part of this image.

In general, the approaches through records of religious and civil Spaniards share the limitations mentioned here. Our new understanding is the result of reevaluation of the motives of the Spaniards who left these records; it constitutes part of the general reassessment of institutional sources, and the search for new types of source material, underway for the past fifteen years in early Latin American history.⁷

But whereas documents of civil administrators have been more or less exhausted, an important part of the religious documentation remains to be exploited for the study of northern Mexican society. The actual notes of the religious Spaniards, particularly the original diaries (as opposed to memoirs or administrative reports), of the great Jesuit expansionists, without the paraphrasing and distillation of later scholars, can be of great value in the study of Indians and colonial society in the North.

Brief passages like the following are more valuable for their portrayal of the day-to-day life of the North than the official correspondence employed

by so many scholars. That the valuable material represented by such hints as those below have been consistently subverted to programmatic interpretations well illustrates the force of the traditional conceptions.

[Tapia] brought with him from the mines choristers of Tarascan Indian boys and musical instruments A more solemn Mass than usual was celebrated, to the sound of flute and flageolet, and the singing of sweet Tarascan voices.⁸

Santiago Papasquiario exhibited the finest example of a Christian community among the Tepehuanes, where matters were advanced by the presence of numbers of old Christian Indians - Mexicans and Tarascans - who worked in the mines.⁹

Such passages are rich references to the relations between Spaniards and central area Indians in the North, and shed light on the role of acculturated Indians as both laborers and catechists in "Spanish" expansion into the North. Religious Spaniards apparently could and did function in the same capacity as civil Spaniards in contact with northern Indians, furnishing Indian labor to regional hacienda and mine owners in some sort of *repartimiento*¹⁰ fashion, even sometimes becoming mineowners themselves.

But such religious literature too tends to focus on the efforts and achievements of Spaniards and not Indians in the Mexican North. These passages were probably included more or less by chance in the process of abstraction from original records. Although much useful information can be gleaned in occasional passages and frequently between the lines, we must accept that the Indian contribution to settlement and "civilization" of the North has been greatly deemphasized.

With the partial exception of this religious documentation, which has yet to be thoroughly examined, the use of traditional sources has reached a dead end. The documents that form the base of the secondary literature, in which Spaniards presented their decisions as programmatically as possible to their superiors, have led scholars to suggest an explicit Spanish program for the development of the North, crowned by the Spanish success in pacifying northern Indian groups. The cornerstone of this success is the planned accompaniment of central Mexican Indians to serve as examples to the "uncivilized tribes" of the North.

II - Documents from San Esteban

Clearly, the documents have not of themselves revealed social patterns. The major missing element in the existing literature is any framework for understanding the day-to-day life of Indians in the North; and this is true for

both northern and transplanted central area Indian groups. Too, expanding our knowledge of northern Indian society is one of the last remaining ways to free the study of both Indians and Spaniards in the North from the limitations of the traditional documentary base.

We have in the two wills translated below a special tool for investigating central Mexican Indians, cultural change, and assimilation of northern Indians in the North. The Tlaxcalan colonies of 1591, from which these wills come, provide us this tool: the number of Indians from one place in central Mexico made natural the keeping of records in the Indian language.

Our questions about the Indians of the Tlaxcalan colonies are essentially the same as those about all central Mexican Indians in the North: what was the function of these Indians in relation to Spaniards in settling the North; what was the nature and degree of cultural change within the colonies; to what extent did the Indians of the colonies participate in, or facilitate, the assimilation of Northern Indian groups?

Will of Cristóbal Ramos, 1748¹¹

In the name of the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, it is to be done in this manner:

Let all who see this know that this is my written will, that I make it, whose name is Cristobal Ramos, whose house is here in the altepetl of San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala; although my body is sick, in my five senses I am content, by the grace of our Lord God and . . . Holy Mother Church of the the Catholic Roman faith in which I wish to die, it is the following:

First I leave my soul to God for truly it is his creation by spilling his blood upon the Holy Cross. As to my earthly flesh, I consign it to the earth for from the earth it was made.

I say also that when God wishes I should die, I want my body to be buried in the holy church of our Lord God . . . Holy Saint Francis, my grave will go in front of (the image of) the Holy Conception, wherever there is room [*lugar*]. My priests are to say my mass with the small cross, and my shroud will be a white cloak, also there will be one recited mass [*misa resada*].

I say also that I pass on to be sold one saddle [*silla*], one bridle [*freno*], one chisel [*escoplo*], one adze [*azuela*], one drill [*barrena*], and one axe [*acha*] to pay for my burial [*entierro*].

Also I say that I surrender the obligatory bequests [*mandas forzosas*] to the house of holy redemption of captives, two reales [*dos reales*], and for our Lord, for the Holy Mother, and for the Souls of the Dead [*animas*], each one tomin [*tomin*].

I say too that I married a wife in the Church, she was called Figenia Fracisca; we had one child. Then God took her.

I say that my present wife is named Melchora Simeona and that we had seven children; they are all already dead.

I say also that my first wife did not have any inheritance from her family; she brought nothing to my burden.

And I say that my present wife brought no more from her family than one piece of land [*no mas que ce tlali*]; we already sold it

. . . .

I say too that the house in which I obeyed God we worked both of us, myself and my present wife Melchora Simeona.

I say also that the land upon which are the house and its fruit trees are all of my inheritance.

I say too that the house in which I lived (obeyed God); I say I leave half of it to my wife and one piece [*pedaso*] of land because I sold another one, and half a field with a garden I give to my wife to help her; she will speak concerning my work (what is to be done).

I say that I leave to the Holy Mother [the figure of Mary] to whom I already made a vow to serve, I leave her now half a house that I built and now where I have obeyed God, where my wife is to take care of it [the image] until God calls her.

Also I say that my brothers [*hermanos*] across the way will see they will take care of her forever.

Also I say I leave a field with garden [*alahuerta*]; it is to be sold to pay debts, and a corral [*corral*] too.

Also I say that I leave a field next to the field of my older sister Maria Josepha, I leave it to my nephew Juan Gavino son of my brother [*hermano*] Don Salvador Matias.

I say also that I leave a debt here with my testament [*testamento*], it will be paid, my executors [*albaceas*] will see to it.

And all the rest here with the house, all of it I leave with the house, my wife will say what is to be done with it.

Let all be entirely as I have ordered it as to the land in here in my last will; my requested executors [*albaceas*] will do it: Don Francisco Antonio Seledon and my wife Melchora Simeona for I give them all my power to each one so that they will complete and do everything here that I have ordered in my will and so that it will be believed. Before a notary [*escribano*] and witnesses [*testigos*] one Don Esteban Miguel, another Don Miguel Angel, another Don Lorenzo Marcos, all citizens of the above-named altepetl. I the notary [*escribano*] know the sick person; he made the document on the 20, 10, and one day of the month of July [*Julio*], 1748 [*setesientos quarenta y ocho anos*]. By his request I put his name and signature [*firma*].

Cristobal Ramos

in my presence
Francisco Xavier . . .
public notary
[*escribano publico de cabildo*]

Will of Mariana Balberde, 1765

In the name of the Holy Trinity, God the father, God the son, God the Holy Spirit, Amen:

Let all who see this know that it is my will and testament, I do it, I whose name is Mariana Balberde; my home is here in this altepetl of San Esteban de la Neuva Tlaxcala, and belongs to the barrio of Señor San Esteban. Although I am sickened in body, my five senses are very sound. By the grace of our Lord God I acknowledge the faith in our Lord God and in our mother the holy Roman Catholic Church. I believe all of the things of the faith and in this faith I wish to die. My will is the following:

First, I leave my soul in the hands of our Lord God for truly it is of his creating; and he redeemed it with his death on the Holy Cross.

As to my earthly body, I assign it to the earth from which it emerged and was made. I say that when God wishes I should die, my body be buried in in the Church of our Lord God Saint Francis.

Also I say my grave is to go in front of the altar of our redeemer down below on the side of the chapel of Saint Antonio wherever there is a place [*lugar*].

I say that my wrapping is to be the habit [*abito*] of Saint Francis; I leave for it a yoke of tame oxen [*yunta de buellas manzos*] to [*para*] be sold for it.

I say also that my burial [*entierro*] is to be done with the high cross [*cruz alto*] and a mass [*misa*] and vigil with the body present [*vigilia de cuerpo presente*]; I leave my child Joseph Francisco Ignacio to pay all the fees [*derechos*] to my priests.

As to the house in which I await the order of our Lord God [in which I live], truly I desire to leave it to him - it will go to care for my soul. This already mentioned house with its land [*alahuerta*]; it has a frame [*marco*] and a door [*puerta*] on the public street [*Calle Real*] with two leaves [*manos*] and lock and key [*llave*]; and to the back [*para trasera*] a door [*puerta*] with one leaf [*mano*] and its frame [*marco*], and an altar [*santa altar*] - all for [*para*] my child as granted him by my spouse, the late Don Lucas Hernández as he set it down in his testament [*testamento*] and one big bench [*banca*] and one big table [*meza*]. I say also that the mandatory bequests [*mandas for osas*] of the House of Holy Jerusalem and the Redemption of Captives, two reales will be surrendered to each, as to the cofradia of the Most Holy Sacrament, Our Holy Mother of Rosario, and Dead Souls,¹² to each one tomin: God will pay it.

I say that God gave me a legitimate husband named Don Lucas Hernández and God gave us ten children: seven died, four are still alive and already married: Antonio Lucía Josepha Clara Josepha and Joseph Francisco Ignacio and Maria Trinidad.¹³

Also I say that of the inheritance [*erencia*] of my father¹⁴ the late Don Bernabé Augustin I very proudly assign a portion to my girl Maria Trinidad: a field of six varas toward [*para*] the garden [*alahuerta*] and down by the exit of the public way [*para salida de Calle Real*] it has three varas and the portal [*portal*] of five

beams [*morillos*] and one little house [*casito*] and one grinding stone.

I say that another field here in Barriales near the place of Don Lorenzo Matias to the West I give to be divided among all my children as siblings [*ermanitos*].

I say also that I give to my daughter Clara one chest [*caja*] with its key [*llave*].

I say also that I leave to my child Joseph a good big pot [*caso*], a barrel [*barril*] and a big grinding stone.

Also I say I give to my child Maria Josepha one big hoe [*asadón*] and a little chest [*cajita*] with its key [*llave*] and a thresher and a bottle [*botixa*].

I say that I leave to my girl Antonia Lucia a lathe [*torno*] with all its things and a cutting tool [*tranchete*] and a bottle [*botija*].

I say that I leave to my daughter in law Ines Feliciana a lathe [*torno*] with which to work, some gear [*aparejo*], and a laso [*laso*]; I give it to be sold in order to aid my soul.¹⁵

I say also that I leave to my child Joseph Francisco Balberde a field in Chihuahua near Maria Idelfonza and one loom-made shirt, one dress, one cushion [*almuada*], and a ball of spun cotton, and three almuds (of land) just the way it was.

I say also that I leave him another three almuds of land where three plantings of maize can be sown if God should wish to give me his strengthening with which to get along and a shovel and a trough [*artesitta*], a little door [*puertita*], a pig, a candelabra [*candelero*], and a scale [*peso*].

I say also that I leave to my child Juan Martín one little hoe [*asadoncitos*] and a grinding stone and a bar [*barra*] and half an almud of maize to plant for the two of them [*he and his older sister*]; *they will help themselves*.

Also I say that Gregorio Seledón owes me two pesos, Simon Ramos owes me one peso and Juan Miguel Hernandez owes me half a pound [*media libra*] of wax [*sera*] and beside that half pound of wax, two shirts which he did not make.¹⁶

Also I say that no one else owes me anything and I do not own anyone and if someone comes and swears before God that I owe him he is to be paid.

And I made a vow [*promesa*] to the Jesus Nazareth of Mazápil; it will be seen to by my child Joseph Francisco - he will do it.

Whatever I have set down here in my testament [*testamento*], will be realized. I request that it be completely carried out; my executors [*albaceas*] will do it: Don Francisco Rujelio and my child Joseph Francisco - I give them all my power to do it; and they will speak that my body is buried and for the sake of God that all that I have ordered here is completely done on behalf of my soul: This document was made in the presence of three witnesses [*testigos*], citizens here in in the altepetl of San Esteban de Nueva tlaxcala; here they placed their names and signatures [*firma*] now on this 11 of the month of August,¹⁷ 1765 [*mil setecientos sesenta y cinco*]. And I the notary [*escribano*] affirm how it was done by the sick person and I affix her name and signature [*firma*]:

Mariana Balberde Xpl Santiago

Witness Juan de los Tos

Witness Luis Xavier

At the request of Don Andres Ramires and before me

Notary Xptoval Santiago

Fuentes scribe

Examination of the Documents

These two examples suffice to show the promise of this kind of deep-level native language documentation. By way of the testaments we have an intimate look at the highly developed social structure of northern society in late colonial Mexico. There are several ways to approach documents such as these wills, and different approaches yield different insights. Here, emphasis is placed on the language of the testaments.

Indeed, the Nahuatl of the wills is itself the single most important clue to the basic structures and processes of life in the North in the period. Both wills bear an impressive likeness to wills of the old Tlaxcala of central Mexico from which the colonists came; in form, they are exactly like them,¹⁸ and both wills contain a great quantity of Spanish words and usages. These fundamental characteristics indicate a complex intertwining of Spanish and central Mexican Indian societies in the North.

Immediately striking in the two testaments is the great number of Spanish

loan words (which I have included in the translations in parentheses). The constant use of the Spanish diminutive forms, and phrases like *no mas que ce tlali* ("no more than" - in Spanish; "one parcel of land," in Nahuatl), indicate an advanced familiarity with the idiom. On the material plain, the loan words betray an impressive incorporation of Spanish objects into daily life: boxes with metal locks and doors with keys are two examples. We see also the adoption of Spanish social conceptions, most noticeably the use of the words "brothers" and "sister," which Nahuatl does not employ in at all the same manner.

Very important for understanding the overall impact of contact between Indians and Spaniards is the incorporation into the Nahuatl of both Spanish verbs and complex idioms. The writers of these testaments are clearly in the third stage of the language contact continuum identified and described by Francis Berdan and James Lockhart.¹⁹ This is apparent in the outright adoption of the Spanish verb *tocar*, and the calque involving the Nahuatl verb *pia*. The verb *pia*, which in preconquest times and up until the middle of the seventeenth century had only the meaning of "to guard," has come to be used in all the various senses of the Spanish verb *tener*.

We see also in the testaments the combination of Spanish and indigenous legal forms and conceptions. The act of writing a will, for instance, and the general structure given it in these examples, we know to be Spanish.²⁰ The pattern of division of Cristóbal Ramos' and Mariana Balberde's worldly goods among many family members besides children and among a great number of children more or less equally, however, indicate the presence of indigenous tradition.

One of the most striking evidences of indigenous practices in the wills is the bequest of a house to the image of a saint. In a common form of Nahua bequethal, a piece of land or a house is conceived of as belonging to a saint; an heir is given the saint "to take care of" or "to serve" rather than directly given the property. Indigenous traditions are also apparent in the use of certain phrases, "the house in which I obey our Lord God," for example, which are definitely Nahua and not Spanish in origin.

The depth of interpenetration of the Spanish and central Mexican Indian cultures is shown as well by a brief note in Spanish at the foot of the will of 1748 reviewing the commands of the testator which had been carried out. Clearly, Indian town officials dealt very comfortably in Spanish with such procedures as the execution of the orders of a Nahuatl testament. It appears that the town officials were fully bilingual, and it is possible that they were actually passing to the regular use of Spanish among themselves. Here, at least, we see them using Spanish in the transaction of what must have been a very common piece of community business.

Conclusions²¹

These native language documents indicate most importantly that the life of central Mexican Indians in the North was very much like that of central Mexican Indians in the Center. Even in the North, where contact between central Mexican Indians and Spaniards was much increased, and where we might expect Indian language and customs to decline or disappear, we find instead both the continued strength of the central Mexican Indian idiom late in the eighteenth century and Indian practices that date to the time before the arrival of Europeans in the New World. These documents constitute further supporting evidence of the essential stability and resilience of Indian structures during European settlement, structures upon which the Europeans relied for the mechanics of every-day colonial life.

The testaments indicate that central area Indians in the North probably had some regular mode of contact with the Center. Because the changes seen in the language of these wills from the North are so consistent with changes we know to have occurred at roughly the same time in the Center, it is necessary to posit some sort of constant infusion of new immigrants, visiting relatives, or other central area culture-carriers from Tlaxcala.

The evidence of these testaments make it quite possible that the North served as a fringe area, receiving the marginal and the young, for the Indian as well as for the Spanish society of the Center.²² Central area Indians in the North, like their Spanish counterparts, remained tied to central area society. Of course we have no correspondence between Indian and no record of constant calls from newly settled areas for nephews and other relatives as we do for Spaniards. Yet, while we cannot make too much of it, we do see in one of the testaments above that Ramos left land to a nephew.²³

The wills contribute, then, to recent modifications of the idea of a frontier society drastically different from the society of the Center. Distant and less populated areas developed in the same fundamental ways, if generally more slowly and later, and displayed the same essential traits, as central areas.²⁴

One of the most intriguing questions about northern society the fate of numerous northern Indian groups that disappeared during the colonial centuries remains unanswered. Part of our interest in the way of life of central Mexican Indians in the North is stimulated by the conviction that somehow these Indians of the Center played an important part in the assimilation of northern Indians into central area society. The idea of a "Christian example" has survived a long time, yet authors typically do not express an opinion as to whether the example succeeded in what they take to be its most basic aim.

To assume that the northern Indians simply faded away gradually, imperceptibly amalgamated to the Spanish-central Mexican Indian whole, suggests that the northern groups had little of the basic community structure that would we know would keep separate central Mexican Indian entities together until such time as there were only two Indians left.

The testaments discussed here may indicate that the presence of the central area Indians functioned to ease assimilation by supplying their half of the proven structures of central area society. Such structures had certainly limited damaging confrontation between Spaniards and Indians in the Center: perhaps it was the community structure supplied by central Mexican Indian auxiliaries that, in the absence of a strong similar structure in the lives of northern Indians, made possible their assimilation as individuals.

The relations between Spaniards and central Mexican Indians would have functioned as an excellent model for assimilation. The testaments presented above clearly show a thorough and yet constructive mixture of Spanish and central area indigenous culture. While we remain unable to find the exact sector of the northern social matrix into which northern Indians were assimilated, these documents may indicate the mechanisms that made assimilation possible.

The Nahuatl documents translated here provide a definite step forward in studies of the Mexican North, both demystifying and bringing to life that area. Rather than an unfamiliar frontier society, we discover again the complex society of the Center. We expect to find in the North of Mexico, then, the same progression of social processes as in the Center. As generally throughout the New World, a critical mass of representatives of central area society is the main motor of social and economic change in this far flung concentric circle of central area influence. Adopting for the moment the assimilation hypothesis suggested above, we may add that the hybrid Spanish-central Mexican Indian society provided the context in the North of acculturation and assimilation of outside groups and individuals, just as it had in the center.

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¹Leslie Offutt, Ph.D. UCLA 1982, discovered and originally transcribed the Nahuatl testaments presented here. The testaments were translated for this paper by James Lockhart, David Lorey, and James Braun of UCLA.

²David Adams, p. 302.

³Marc Simmons, p. 110.

⁴Certainly much can be learned from Powell. He was fully aware, for example, that the lowly Spanish soldier was as capable of Spanish culture transfer as the high level appointee of the Crown. He gives a portrayal of the marginal and mestizo Spanish soldiers of the North that is very useful.

⁵See Peter Bakewell in Lockhart and Altman, eds., *Provinces of Early Mexico*.

⁶Lockhart and Altman, eds., *Provinces of Early Mexico*, p. 271.

⁷See James Lockhart, "'The Social History of Colonial Latin America: Evolution and Potential.'"

⁸Dunne, *Pioneer Black Robes on the West Coast*, pp. 27-29. Tarascan Indians are those of the present day state of Michoacán.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁰Repartimiento means here simply organized labor drafts, based on indigenous practice, and divided among Spaniards needing labor.

¹¹After the first three paragraphs, the religious terminology of which is almost wholly Spanish, Spanish words in the wills are supplied in brackets. The original orthography has been respected throughout.

¹²These last three *cofradía* names are in Spanish.

¹³It is not clear how many children are meant here; later in the will, persons not named in this passage are referred to as children.

¹⁴More precisely "that my father had;" there is a *calque* here — *pia* used as *tener*. See Examination of the Documents below.

¹⁵This paragraph is garbled; apparently the testator has confused two orders.

¹⁶Apparently Juan Miguel had promised to make the shirts.

¹⁷The day and month are written in both Nahuatl and Spanish.

¹⁸Cf. the will of Don Julián de la Rosa in Arthur J. O. Anderson, et al., *Beyond the Codices*.

¹⁹See James Lockhart and Francis Karttunen, *Nahuatl in the Middle Years*.

²⁰There is much evidence, however, that some form of testamentary instrument was common among the Nahuas. One small piece of evidence: the practice of taking the testators orders at the actual time of death, apparent in these wills (see note 15 passage), was not common among Spaniards.

²¹For many of the general conclusions formulated here, I owe a debt to the seminar participants of UCLA Hist. 2011 "Indians in the Mexican North" (1986), and especially to the seminar director, James Lockhart.

²²For extensive discussion of fringes in colonial Latin America, see James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwarz, *Early Latin America*.

²³We know of course that Ramos had no children of his own. This makes it more likely that he might send for a nephew, but also possible that he would leave possessions to the children of local next-of-kin. For the general significance of nephews in colonial Spanish society see Peter Bakewell, *Miners and Merchants*.

²⁴For detailed discussion of past assumptions about, and more recent conceptions of, colonial "frontier" Mexico, see Michael Swann, *Tierra Adentro*.