
Introduction

One October day in 1658, there was a great communal gathering at a field near the chapel of San Francisco in the indigenous town of Tepemaxalco, near Toluca. The people were there to plow and plant a new field, the products of which would be used to pay for improvements to the little church. There was a new head of the indigenous council that year. He was the one who orchestrated the event, and apparently some people were complaining about the trouble to which he was putting them all. "Perhaps it will be wondered at that the tribute field here at San Francisco was plowed," the new governor wrote in a record book he was keeping. "It was my yoke of oxen and my say-so. A few working men tilled the land and placed maguey plants belonging to them. Four of the rows of magueys are my property, and I placed them there, don Pedro de la Cruz, gobernador." Don Pedro was very insistent on the question of who was giving what. "People are never to say that perhaps they [the maguey plants] are the property of the whole altepetl. I sorted out the question of whose property they are. People were brought to swear." Don Pedro gave a long list of witnesses and then said, "Before all the witnesses of the working men and the women it was written down on this paper."¹

That fleeting moment in time crystallized a great deal. On one level don Pedro had moved far from the world of his precolonial ancestors. He was writing in the Latin alphabet on a type of paper that his ancestors had never known, and he was recording what was

1. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City, Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Archivo Histórico, Gómez Orozco 186.

being done to maintain a Christian chapel. Yet on another level he was merely marking and sealing the same kind of public agreement about land, agricultural tribute payments, and cooperative ventures that his people had been making time out of mind. In the old days, before the Spaniards came, the people would have come together to make public speeches about the communal arrangements they were making, and then a painter or scribe called a *tlacuilo* would have recorded the event by drawing certain glyphs on paper made of the maguey plant. Then the record would have been placed carefully in a reed basket kept by the chief. This time the written words reflecting the public pronouncements were deposited in a wooden box guarded by the indigenous governor. Don Pedro had been born about a hundred years after the Spaniards arrived. His grandparents' parents had been alive at the time the Europeans came. They might have been interested to see how closely their great-grandson's life resembled their own.

Attaining a realistic understanding of the effects of conquest has proven to be problematic. Paradoxical as it may sound, everything changed for the indigenous people, and at the same time nothing changed. On the one hand, the Spaniards achieved great power over many thousands of people, demanding regular payments of tribute, or tax, and insisting on the practice of their own religion of Christianity. Yet this extractive economy and Christian polity depended for its very existence on a kind of stability within the indigenous world at the level of the town, which the indigenous continued to call, in the language they continued to speak, the *altepetl* (meaning "water-mountain," because their ancient ancestors needed a water source and a defensible position). People do not entirely change the way they see the world or themselves overnight, or even from one decade to the next, and the Nahuas were no exception to this general principle.

It has been difficult for historians to determine what exactly indigenous peoples were thinking as the generations progressed, largely because they left few records revealing their own perspectives. After the Nahuas learned the Latin alphabet, they used it to write a great deal, but most of their writings were produced working in tandem with Spaniards or in response to Spanish legal demands and thus are of limited value in helping us to understand their more private worlds. Most of the preserved De la Cruz family papers, however,

were written by Nahuas, for Nahuas, in response to pressing indigenous issues. They are thus inordinately valuable. They do not reveal explicit internal musings or obvious emotions, the way European letters or diaries would. The Nahuas had no experience with that sort of genre and were hardly disposed to open themselves up more than usual in the wake of conquest. But the records the De la Cruz family produced, intended to function as a communal memory, do reveal more private thoughts than we might at first expect. In them we see a family at work over the course of generations, men and women, old and young. We see not only what they spent their time doing but also what they worried about, what they grew angry about, and even what moved them in church. In short, they offer a rare vision of what had and had not changed after a century of life with Europeans.

In this book a sampling of the De la Cruz family papers has been translated into English. In setting forth the most important element of the collection, the family's primary record book, begun by don Pedro, we have elected to present the original language as well. There readers will see Indians writing in their own language of Nahuatl, and then gradually, over the course of time, switching into Spanish. Readers will be able to observe generational change with their own eyes, even as the tenor of the writing remains, to a large extent, profoundly consistent with the past.

The Toluca Valley

The Toluca Valley lies just west of the Valley of Mexico, separated by a high range of mountains. It was originally populated not by Nahuas but rather by the Matlatzinca, an indigenous culture group belonging to the Otomanguenan-language family. A group of Nahuas called the Mexica (Me-SHEE-ka, the people known to us today as the "Aztecs"), together with their allies, invaded and conquered the region in the 1470s. After that, groups of Nahua colonizers from the central valley came to settle over the ensuing decades, and Nahuatl became the lingua franca. In the southern part of the valley, near a well-populated community called Calimaya, the Mexica seem to have established the much smaller altepetl of Tepemaxalco as a way of governing the locals. The Nahuatl names of some of Tepemaxalco's neighborhoods (or *tlaxilacalli*) reveal the types of migrants who arrived: "Place of

the Temple Lords," "Place of the Rulers," "Place of the Merchants," and "Place of the Mexica People." The new arrangements apparently generated a certain degree of ethnic conflict; some level of resentment would percolate through future generations. The De la Cruz family lived in Tepemaxalco, and they still distrusted people from Calimaya.²

The Spaniards first arrived during the period of the conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlan (1519–21) and shortly afterward established four administrative town centers: Ixtlahuaca, Toluca, Metepec, and Tenango del Valle (see map 1). The boundaries of these jurisdictions changed over time, and Toluca and its surroundings became part of the Marquesado del Valle, originally given to Hernando Cortés. Metepec and the nearby towns of Calimaya and Tepemaxalco—taken together, one of the most extended, populated, and wealthy concessions of the valley—were given in *encomienda* as a labor grant to Juan Gutiérrez Altamirano, a relative of Cortés. The surname "Altamirano" was adopted shortly thereafter by some leading indigenous inhabitants of Tepemaxalco.³

When the Spaniards came across the closely linked Calimaya and Tepemaxalco, they institutionalized a double altepetl: the two entities shared the same parish church and a pair of patron saints who gave them their Christian names: San Pedro for Calimaya and San Pablo for Tepemaxalco. However, they maintained separate governors (*gobernadores*) and town councils (*cabildos*), as well as distinct sets of tlaxilacalli. The eight tlaxilacalli of Tepemaxalco are known precisely through the tribute lists preserved by the De la Cruz family: Teocaltitlan Tlatocapan (or Teopanquiyahuac), Pasiontitlan, San Francisco Pochtlan, Tlatocapan, Mexicapan, San Lucas Evangelista, Santa María de la Asunción, and Santiago.⁴ In 1558 the Spanish authorities ordered the congregation of Calimaya and Tepemaxalco

2. García Castro, *Indios, territorio, y poder*, 44–50, 57–61, 114, 394–95. See also Hernández Rodríguez, "Historia prehispánica," in Rosenzweig et al., *Breve historia*, 19–62, and Gerhard, *Guide to the Historical Geography*, 174–78, 270–73, 330–31.

3. Hernández Rodríguez, "Conquista española," and Jarquín Ortega, "Formación de una nueva sociedad," both in Rosenzweig et al., *Breve historia*, 65–76, 77–139; García Castro, *Indios, territorio, y poder*, 106–7, 114, 117–20. On the history of the Toluca Valley, see Wood, "Corporate Adjustments."

4. The reconstruction of the tlaxilacalli of Tepemaxalco comes from Pizzigoni, *Testaments of Toluca*. In the same book we also find those of Calimaya, although we know fewer of them and we do not know the order: Pasiontitlan, Tlamimilolpan, Teopantongo, Teopanquiyahuac, and San Antonio de Padua.

into one urban center, tying them together even further, although the two would remain separate barrios, with independent governments, saints, and jurisdictions.⁵

As in the rest of the valley, Tepemaxalco's economy was based essentially on the cultivation of maize, favored by the altitude and cool climate. Livestock raising was also important. Besides being essential for local consumption, maize and other agricultural products largely fed the market of Mexico City and, to a lesser extent, the mining centers in the southwest: Zultepec and Tematzcaltepec. The indigenous communities also sent their tribute in the same direction.

The colonial authorities were present in Toluca through a *corregidor* (district administrative officer), and in Metepec and Tenango del Valle with *alcaldes mayores* (more powerful regional administrative officers). Tepemaxalco was placed under the *alcalde mayor* of Metepec. As for the Spanish population more broadly, the *encomenderos*, or recipients of *encomiendas*, were largely absent, living mainly in Mexico City. They and their families had been linked to Hernando Cortés and his closest associates and were now among the colony's most elite individuals. The Spaniards who actually lived in the valley were substantially smaller and relatively poorer farmers, living on the property of grander men or in indigenous villages nearby. At times they ran sweatshops or tanneries or acted as muleteers and small merchants, moving goods to Mexico City.

As for the church, the Franciscans arrived in the town of Toluca first, establishing their main church in 1529–30 and a *convento*, a religious house, with four friars. They also founded conventos in Jilotepec (1530), Calimaya (1557), Metepec (around 1569), and Zinacantepec (1569), with just two friars each. Between 1537 and 1543 the Augustinians established themselves in Toluca as well as at Ocuilan and Malinalco; later they were also present in Capulhuac, Tianguistenco, and Zacualpan. Much later in the seventeenth century came the disalced Carmelites, the Mercedarians, and the hospital order of San Juan de Dios, who all built their homes in Toluca. The secular clergy arrived around 1535 and were much more dispersed

5. Jarquín Ortega, "Formación de una nueva sociedad," in Rosenzweig et al., *Breve historia*, 111–16, 124–26; Gerhard, *Guide to the Historical Geography*; García Castro, *Indios, territorio, y poder*, 145–53, 160–61, 438. See also Loera y Chávez de Esteinou, *Calimaya y Tepemaxalco*.

through the countryside, usually with one representative in a given town, often sent by *encomendero* families residing in Mexico City. Through the process of secularization, the secular church gradually replaced friars as heads of parishes, but the situation was always mixed in the valley, and this process did not become truly advanced until a relatively late date; in fact, it was only around 1756 that most friaries passed under the control of the secular clergy.⁶

Overall, the Spanish presence was limited to the main town centers, while the countryside remained quintessentially indigenous all through the seventeenth century. True, Spanish priests as well as small farmers, traders, and modest business owners, often with ties to Mexico City, started to live in proximity to indigenous communities and became the main vehicle for social and cultural change. But the rural areas remained, in effect, a kind of “Indian Country.” Thus Tepemaxalco, at the time of Pedro de la Cruz and later, was an indigenous altepetl run by indigenous officials, with a couple of Franciscan friars nearby in Calimaya and a priest and/or an *alcalde mayor* who visited every now and then. The documents of the De la Cruz family reveal fascinating aspects of life in Tepemaxalco.⁷ The people went about their business in their lovely valley, ever conscious of the looming Nevado de Toluca, their imposing snow-capped mountain, which had stood at the edge of their world time out of mind. Some elements of their lives had changed profoundly; others, however, had not.

Characteristics of the Documents

Today the most important family papers of don Pedro de la Cruz and his descendants are preserved in the archive of the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico City. These consist of a pair of books, numbers 185 and 186 of the Gómez Orozco collection. The first is a tribute roll book maintained by don Pedro de la Cruz from 1657

6. See Jarquín Ortega, “Formación de una nueva sociedad,” in Rosenzweig et al., *Breve historia*, 91–98, 122–23; Gerhard, *Guide to the Historical Geography*, 330–31; and Borges, *Religiosos en Hispanoamérica*, 22–23, 203–5, 221–23.

7. Lockhart, *Nahuas After the Conquest*, has details about the protagonists of these papers, the De la Cruz family (see especially 136–38 and 230–35). Lockhart studied the Toluca Valley quite closely in the chapter “Spaniards Among Indians,” 202–41, and also in “Capital and Province,” in Altman and Lockhart, *Provinces of Early Mexico*, 99–123.

to 1665, the first eight years of his governorship. He kept two types of records in the book. First, every year he copied out the names of each head of family presently living in each of the eight tlaxilacalli of Tepemaxalco (see document 2). Every adult owed three *tostones* (or 1.5 pesos) per year. Thus, married male heads of family owed six tostones, and widows or widowers owed three. Single adult men were also listed as owing three; there were few of these. Only the very rarest of single adult women lived on their own. Nobles were by no means excluded, but they paid no more than anybody else. In another part of the book, don Pedro made an entry every time someone came to pay tribute money over the course of the year. These were elected officials who bore the contributions of multiple people. Don Pedro would write out in words the amount being turned over to him, and then, given the largely illiterate population, he would draw a picture of the proper number of one-peso coins, half-peso tostones, and the smaller coins representing *reales* (worth one-eighth of a peso each) or *cuartillos* (one-quarter each) so that the person depositing money could be absolutely sure that the full amount was recorded (see document 2, deposits from 1658).

The second book was something altogether different, unique to the De la Cruz family (see document 1). Don Pedro began the book in 1647 to document contributions to local churches with which he was involved. At the time, he was collecting large amounts of money from the leading families in the area so that they could buy an organ for 400 pesos. He did not mention which church the organ was for. He was *mayordomo*, or steward, of the church of San Francisco in the tlaxilacalli of Pochtlan but also heavily involved in a chapel dedicated to San Juan, his father's name saint; in addition, in 1647 the church of the tlaxilacalli of Santa María de la Asunción, which was near his main residence, was undergoing renovations, so he could have meant that one (see map 2 for the churches). For a decade don Pedro desultorily kept the book as a record of various church expenses and of the ways that any needed funds had been raised. Then, in 1656, a great crisis exploded around him, in which a significant part of the population of Calimaya-Tepemaxalco decided to protest the tribute system and slipped away when it was to be collected.⁸ In 1657 don Pedro was

8. Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter cited as AGN), Mexico City, Indios, vol. 18, exp. 222, 1655, "Para que el alcalde mayor de Metepec no cobre de los naturales de Tepemajalco mas servicio real del que deben pagar en cada año, recibiendoles en

elected *gobernador* of the altepetl of Tepemaxalco. He apparently was to be the one to find a way to maintain peace. He took this larger role very seriously, and the next year the nature of the book changed.

Somewhere—perhaps on a trip to Mexico City, perhaps during a visit to an older relative—don Pedro had apparently seen a traditional set of Nahuatl historical annals. The *xiuhpohualli* (or year count) had long been part of Mesoamerican life; for generations, a long strip of calendrical dates paired with glyphs acting as mnemonic devices had inspired trained reciters to give performances of a people's history. A modernized version of the *xiuhpohualli* had taken on new life in the sixteenth century: students of the friars who had learned the Latin alphabet began to transcribe historical performances, or parts of performances, by their elders. Those written texts then circulated among indigenous intellectuals for generations, changing over the years as they were copied, abstracted, or expanded. After a symbol or notation for a given year, the writer would follow with events of interest to the entire altepetl—the governorship and other rotating offices on the indigenous cabildo, major meteorological phenomena, droughts, epidemics, and so on.⁹

In 1658 don Pedro, in writing his book of records, suddenly dropped back to 1607, when a once-renowned *gobernador* was

cuenta lo que tienen pagado según la certificación del contador de tributos" [Petition that the alcalde mayor of Metepec not demand from the natives of Tepemaxalco more tribute than that which they are bound to pay each year, receiving it in the account that they have fully paid, according to a certificate from the tribute accountant]; AGN, Indios, vol. 20, exp. 61, 1656, "Para que el alcalde mayor de Metepec guarde y cumpla el mandamiento de gobierno despachado al gobernador y alcaldes del pueblo de Calimaya y Tepemachalco para que no les cobre mas cantidad de lo que deben pagar al año de servicio real" [Petition that the alcalde mayor of Metepec keep and abide by the order sent to the governor and cabildo members of the (joint) town of Calimaya-and-Tepemaxalco, so that he not charge them more than the annual required tribute]. See also a later document: AGN, Indios, vol. 24, exp. 25, 1666, "Su excelencia manda a las justicias, gobernadores, y otros ministros de los partidos donde estuvieren indios que se hubieren ausentado del pueblo de Tepemajalco de la jurisdicción de Metepec y sus sujetos matriculados en ellos en la última tasación, den al gobernador y oficiales de república todo el favor y ayuda para cobrar a los naturales los tributos que están debiendo" [His Excellency commands that the judges, governors, and other ministers of the districts where the Indians were who had absented themselves from the town of Tepemaxalco, of the Metepec jurisdiction, and were its matriculated subjects at the time of the last taxation, give to the governor and officials of the republic all help and aid in order to receive from the natives the tribute payments that are still outstanding].

9. For the most recent study of the genre, see Townsend, *Annals of Native America*.

remembered to have died, and then he proceeded through the seventeenth century in true annals style, soon covering the 1640s and 1650s again, this time offering more than a record of a particular church's fund-raising efforts. Yet don Pedro was at heart an accountant, and the financial aspects of his community's experience continued to dominate his history even when he started to write about other arenas. In 1659 he began, for example, "Now on Friday, the 3rd of January, at four o'clock, there was a strong earthquake at the time of the [installation] ceremonies for don Pedro de la Cruz, gobernador. On Saturday, the 4th of January, there was another earthquake at one o'clock." But then suddenly don Pedro abruptly changed direction: "In the year 1659, I had been keeping the money of the *cantores* [church musicians] so that they could cover the cost of some trumpets and a guitar and a rebeck. All the money was spent. There is no more left of what I was keeping from the corn harvested in 1657, for which they got seven reales per fanega." In general, although the form of the book is that of a set of annals, with elegant, darkened writing marking the start of each new year, the substance of most of its content remains the community's finances.

Yet the De la Cruz family did understand the book to constitute a set of traditional annals, for the work continued past the life and work of one man, as annals (but not account books) were always intended to do. When don Pedro died, his son-in-law, together with his daughter, continued to maintain the book, and on their watch material more typical of the annals was included, along with financial accounts. In the eighteenth century a De la Cruz who was probably the latter couple's grandson took over the book, and after him came five more generations of interested family members. By the end—the last entry is dated 1842—the writers had largely lost sight of what kind of material would have been included by their ancestors, but they added entries nonetheless. They explicitly connected themselves to the past, and implicitly to the future, just as any reciter of a *xiuhpohualli* would have done in the early sixteenth century.

The book also resembles ancient annals in that it is not a bound set of original legal records but rather consists of each writer's compendium of events. When don Pedro states, for example, "Here we place our signatures," he then signs all the witnesses' names himself, in his own handwriting. We are not seeing the original documentation of the land transfer or will or receipt for cash but rather don

Pedro's copy of what he deems important enough to include. Significantly, we can also see each generation's exact contribution to the volume. The handwriting and style alter notably with each generational changing of the guard; this is not a later copy prepared by one interested descendant in a seamless text, as we often find is the case for surviving annals. It is very clearly an original family record book maintained over multiple generations. Very possibly, more such family records will emerge in the future from local, village-level archives. Other scholars have already noted that the papers of local indigenous church officials sometimes bear a resemblance to the De la Cruz family papers.¹⁰ In the meantime, however, the book kept by don Pedro de la Cruz and his descendants is uniquely interesting.

In addition, much of his personality and life breathes through his last will and testament, as well as the testament of his son-in-law, don Juan, so the two documents are also presented here. Other aspects of their lives are revealed in the local church's baptismal records, kept in Nahuatl by Nahuas and only occasionally glanced at by a priest. These documents, together with the two family record books, bring the picture of don Pedro, his descendants, and the community of Tepemaxalco into focus and speak to us even today.

A careful reader can learn about life in a particular family; about community relations writ somewhat larger (including potential tensions around class, gender, and ethnicity); about the altepetl's interactions with the wider Spanish world; and even about notions of the divine. At no point is any writer in the volume obviously introspective or grandly philosophical, but listening carefully to every word nevertheless turns out to be profoundly illuminating.

The De la Cruz Family

The status of the De la Cruz family seems to have risen in the midst of the changes brought about in the Toluca Valley after the conquest. There is no evidence that the family had any sense of themselves as being descended from an important or ancient noble line; they were very interested in history and undoubtedly would have mentioned it if they had harbored such a belief. (After ten years in office as

10. Gómez García, *Anales nahuas*.

the governor, don Pedro did once refer to himself as the *tlatoani*, or ruler; that was as close as he ever came to using the ancient language pertaining to nobility in reference to himself.) Spanish records tell us that there was a Pedro de la Cruz from the region of Calimaya who became a successful muleteer in the late sixteenth century—an occupation open to leading indigenous citizens (unlike the professions, which explicitly excluded them). This man most likely launched the clan of successful De la Cruzes we find in the seventeenth century.¹¹ They held scattered lands, which had been typical of the rich before the conquest and continued so afterward. The wealthy don Diego de la Cruz, who lived in Tlatocapan, the leading or first-listed tlaxilacalli of Tepemaxalco, became the first De la Cruz to be elected governor in 1655, shortly before don Pedro did in 1657. Don Pedro was probably don Diego's nephew or else a cousin; he was not his son. Pedro and his family lived not in the leading neighborhood but in the tlaxilacalli of Pasiontitlan. Pedro's father, Juan de la Cruz, never became governor, though he did serve on the cabildo. In addition to extensive lands, Juan and his son possessed large numbers of oxen and mules, surely tying them to the Pedro de la Cruz who ran the original mule-train business.¹²

When don Pedro became governor in 1657, he would have been at least thirty, as it was not a position accorded the very young except in emergencies caused by demographic disaster. He was thus born no later than the 1620s: no wonder the detailed and even personal memories included in the annals section begin in the mid-1630s. For instance, when a great snow came on February 24, 1635, we are told that it was the day of San Matías, or Saint Matthias, the Apostle. The next year a little bridge had to be replaced. The villagers pushed the old one out into the water from the side where the church of San Francisco was, then set it ablaze. During the exciting years of his youth, don Pedro was receiving a Spanish-style education, probably

11. Lockhart, *Nahuas After the Conquest*, 136–38. García Castro notes the general pattern of old noble families falling into hard times and other elites rising to take their places after about 1580 (*Indios, territorio, y poder*, 172–83).

12. See the testaments of don Pedro de la Cruz and don Juan de la Cruz, included here as documents 4 and 5. The people residing in each tlaxilacalli are listed in the De la Cruz family volume delineating tribute payments (document 2). For treatment of the family through the years, see Pizzigoni, *Life Within*, 213–16. García Castro also has don Diego and don Pedro in his list of governors of Tepemaxalco (*Indios, territorio, y poder*, 417–18).

from the Franciscans of the convento of San Pedro and San Pablo in Calimaya, though conceivably from another educated Nahua. He learned to write in a fine, decorative hand. Nor was he alone in his studies: most of his peers—boys from other upper-level indigenous families—learned to sign their names with flourishes, to play various instruments, and to sing. Indeed, the sons of the leading families were often referred to as *cantores* in his writings, and, as musicians, they worked together not only to buy fine instruments for various local churches but also to keep the houses of worship in good repair. Don Pedro, who played the organ, truly loved music and was knowledgeable about it, once even ordering from Mexico City the score of a *villancico* (a sort of folk song) dedicated to San Pedro (his namesake saint).

When don Pedro was elected governor, he took on all the activities typical of the office. Not only did he chair *cabildo* meetings and collect and deliver the required tribute, but he also continued to take an active role in more enjoyable aspects of community affairs. Mostly, this meant that he continued to raise money for church improvements and for festival days and processions and took charge of buying what was needed for all of these. He also participated in public ceremonies commemorating land transfers. Indeed, it was in regard to one of the latter that he displayed a rare fit of pique. He and an entourage of relevant *cabildo* members had gone to the *tlaxilacalli* of San Lucas one Friday evening in 1660 for an event, and they were deluged with rain inside the church, the thatch roof apparently having thinned and rotted in places, as thatch often did. He had with him a large cloak, probably intended for use in the ceremony, and they used it as a sort of canopy to block the rain. “No one took care of it until Monday, when the *gobernador* himself removed it and spread it outside [to dry].” Most unluckily, a roaming band of pigs mauled it (“ate it up on him”) so that the event’s total cost to him personally, he complained, was “sixteen pesos, one real, plus one of his cloaks.”

Perhaps most important to don Pedro was the role he played in regard to preserving his people’s culture. Not only did he see to it that they held their own in the world of Spanish-style church art and music, but he also maintained what he clearly perceived to be a traditional book of both history (the segment of Nahuatl annals of the past) and history in the making (the record of public events that together composed the life of the *altepetl*). In this regard, he shared

his sense of what an elite indigenous man owed to posterity with contemporary Nahua nobles elsewhere in Mexico.¹³ History keeping had been one of the traditional duties of the indigenous elite since long before the conquest, and don Pedro, like others, seems to have been aware of this fact.

By the early 1660s, don Pedro's children were growing up (see figure 1). His wife, Ana Juana, was the daughter of Sebastián Jacobo of Tlatocapan, who sometimes served as a cabildo member.¹⁴ Pedro and Ana Juana had raised a daughter, Josepha Francisca, probably named for don Pedro's mother. She now married a local boy named Juan, who then took his wife's prestigious "de la Cruz" surname. Juan's father, Nicolás Gaspar, was a neighbor in Pasiontitlan; he was not a cabildo member at that time, but Juan's mother was María de la Cruz, almost certainly kin.¹⁵ In 1662 Juan himself was listed for the first time as a tribute-paying householder in the tlaxilacalli, so he and Josepha probably were married in that year or not too long before. Decades later Juan would give Josepha Francisca credit for having arranged their children's marriages. Had her own marriage likewise been arranged according to custom? Yes, don Juan even mentions in his will that his marriage had been arranged. But don Pedro and Ana Juana may well have made an arrangement to suit their daughter. The fact that the groom was a well-known neighbor whose father was not elite enough to have served on the cabildo indicates that Josepha Francisca likely had at least some choice in the matter. Over the years she would prove herself to be an active participant in her marriage and in the community, even adding notations to the book of history, albeit through a scribe.¹⁶

Meanwhile, it seems that don Pedro had other children out of wedlock. Such a step would have been entirely consistent with

13. See Zapata y Mendoza, *Historia cronológica*.

14. Based on the year in which her own daughter married, we can say that Ana Juana was probably born around 1635. The surviving birth records of her family's church begin in 1638, and, sure enough, in the late 1630s and early 1640s, we find several younger siblings born to her father, Sebastián Jacobo, and her mother, Ana Mónica. Archivo Parroquial de San Pedro y San Pablo de Calimaya, Bautizos 001, 1634–55.

15. The births of children to Nicolás Gaspar and María de la Cruz are recorded regularly throughout the 1640s. Archivo Parroquial, Bautizos 001, 1634–55.

16. Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, document 5, in combination with the De la Cruz family papers.

ancient Nahua practice; in the old days noblemen always had multiple wives. In the parish record of baptisms, someone named Pedro de la Cruz is occasionally listed as “father.” There could have been another man of that name, but one young woman, also named Josepha, was recognized as a sister by don Pedro’s legitimate daughter; she even arranged a marriage for her, according to her husband’s will. And one young man, Felipe de la Cruz, she referred to as a brother. Felipe began to work as a scribe in the 1660s and may even have helped his father write out parts of his book, given slight variations in the handwriting seen there. He took down his father’s will in 1667, when don Pedro had a scare and thought he was going to die; Felipe himself received nothing in the will, but he would have understood that. It wasn’t just a Christian practice. In preconquest days, as well, only a nobleman’s children by certain wives expected to inherit. Pedro’s and Ana Juana’s legitimate daughter, Josepha Francisca, and the three children she had given birth to by then were to have received everything.¹⁷

Between 1657 and the late 1670s, don Pedro continued to serve as governor, with two brief interruptions, one of six months and one of a year, both probably due to illness. Generally, in the Nahua world, office rotated regularly. Other governors of Tepemaxalco had, however, likewise served stints longer than a year or two: one even seems to have served for thirty years.¹⁸ Don Pedro was a well-known citizen who often served as a godfather when his friends and relations had children.¹⁹ Probably at least part of the reason don Pedro was able to hold onto power for so long lay in the fact that he regularly gave enormous donations toward community debts and projects. In 1666, for instance, besides being involved in resolving another crisis around some commoners’ nonpayment of tribute, he also donated 400 pesos to buy another organ, this time for the main church of San Pedro y San Pablo (see map 2).²⁰ But, despite his many activities, death did eventually catch up with him. In 1674 he petitioned for formal permission to establish a chapel he had been working on for years,

17. Testament of don Pedro de la Cruz, document 4.

18. The other notable case was don Baltazar de los Reyes, who was governor of Tepemaxalco from 1624 to 1654 (see García Castro, *Indios, territorio, y poder*, 417–18).

19. There are several references to Don Pedro acting as a godfather in the Nahuatl records of the Archivo Parroquial, Bautizos 001, 1634–55.

20. See AGN, “Su excelencia manda.”

dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe, and that same year he stopped writing in his book.²¹ He breathed his last somewhere between that point and September 1678, when another man, don Juan Martín, was explicitly mentioned as being governor (and don Pedro's son-in-law had taken over the book).

The preceding year had been a dreadful one for the family. In June 1677, when don Pedro's son-in-law, don Juan, was celebrating the festival of his name-day saint, he was attacked and beaten by a group of men. Had he angered someone? Or was he simply a tipsy man with a full purse? He did not say. In either case the sight of him after the beating apparently triggered a stroke in his mother-in-law, don Pedro's widow, doña Ana Juana. We are told only that her problems began then, that she was still and silent for a week and then died. Don Juan would always remember his wife working to prepare her mother for burial and then watching her be placed in the ground. Don Juan soon traveled to Toluca to file charges against his attackers and receive medical attention. He remained there for a long time, first growing worse but eventually better. While he was away, the smallpox epidemic that was beginning that year apparently struck Tepemaxalco. He does not say so exactly, but simply that before he could return, Josepha's brother Felipe died, as did his sister Catarina and another brother-in-law, as well as his beloved mother, María. The family—undoubtedly the whole town—had been decimated. "It all happened in that same year," he said tersely, trying to come to terms with the rapidity of such calamitous erasure without succumbing to self-pity. He struggled against oblivion. "Here let it be known," he wrote. (The sentiment was a typical refrain in the book, but here the words took a form different from the ubiquitous "here it will appear," with which he paired the phrase.)

When it seemed matters couldn't be worse, an old friend, don Lorenzo López, who had served on the cabildo with don Juan, was for

21. AGN, Indios, vol. 25, exp. 19, 1674, "Que el alcalde mayor de este pueblo de la jurisdicción de Metepec y el padre ministro de doctrina informe del caudal de don Pedro de la Cruz, gobernador del mismo pueblo para poder resolver sobre la licencia que pide para fundar una hermita a la santísima Virgen de Guadalupe" [An order that the alcalde mayor of this pueblo in the jurisdiction of Metepec, and the priest who ministers to the parish, investigate the wealth of don Pedro de la Cruz, governor of the same pueblo, in order to resolve the question of giving him the permission he requests to found a chapel dedicated to the most holy Virgin of Guadalupe]. Earlier, he referred to his project in his 1667 will.

some reason arrested by an *alcalde* from the more powerful town of Calimaya (a man named Francisco de la Cruz, ironically) and imprisoned in Metepec; the *alcalde* named Francisco continued “speaking calumnies.” Don Juan chose to ask the Franciscan *guardián* (head of the convento) to intervene; the friar would have known don Lorenzo personally, as he had recently served as the *maestro de capilla* (choir master) of the town’s main church. We cannot know what the argument was about, but don Lorenzo was released and a year later again served as *maestro de capilla*.

In 1682 don Juan was elected governor and later that decade served for another three years. He pursued activities similar to those of his father-in-law, but he mentioned his wife far more often than don Pedro had ever mentioned his (although don Pedro certainly did respect his wife, leaving her as his executor). Indeed, in the new generation the book seemed to belong to both husband and wife, in that Josepha at one point even dictated an entry (about the death of her maternal grandfather, whom she herself shrouded, just as she did for her mother). By now it was the late seventeenth century, and Mexico was in full baroque swing. In 1683, under don Juan’s leadership, the altepetl launched a lavish renovation of the main convento’s church, even bringing in a Spanish craftsman and his assistants. Don Juan went to Mexico City to make the initial arrangements, and later, after the painters were installed in his home, doña Josepha sent another man back to the city to buy ingredients that it turned out she needed to prepare Spanish-style food for the guests—cinnamon, saffron, olives, olive oil, and so on.

Don Juan died in 1691—or at least his last will and testament is dated then. He was proud that he had done his duty as governor: “I did well in completing the quota of tribute collected.” He owed nothing and forbade anyone from complaining, “for all the books are there in which are designated what was spent as expenses.” His wife Josepha was already dead, but he left behind him five children by her—Jacinto, Josepha, Juana, Pedro, and María—all of whom were well provided for. He was also survived by a second wife, Melchora María, and several children by her. Don Juan’s eldest son, Jacinto, died only two years after his father, without any surviving children, but years later, his wife, Polonia María, left almost everything to a nephew, Francisco Nicolás de la Cruz, who became governor in the

De la Cruz Family Tree

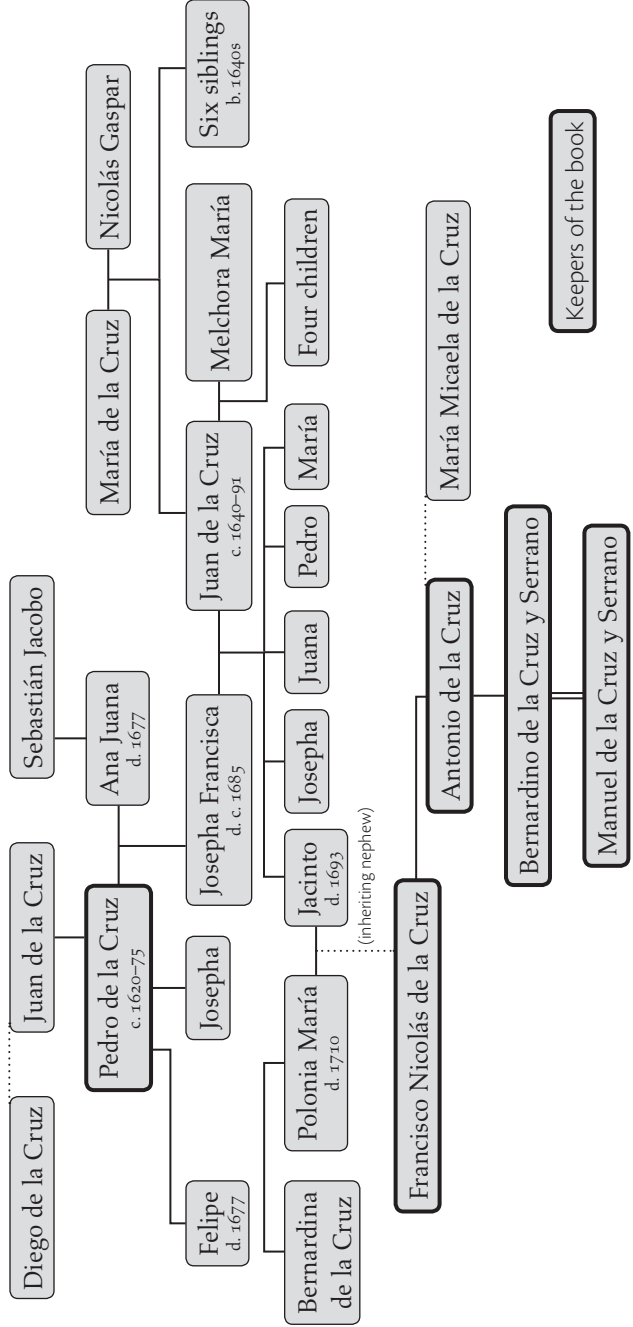


FIG. 1 De la Cruz family tree. Diagram by the authors.

1740s and added a bit to the book.²² His nephew don Antonio de la Cruz served in the 1770s and likewise added a few notes. A son or nephew of Antonios, don Bernardino de la Cruz y Serrano (the Serranos were a long-standing indigenous line from the tlaxilacalli of Santiago) served in the 1790s and early 1800s. And a grandson of his, Manuel de la Cruz y Serrano, was still commenting in the margins and translating pieces from the Nahuatl into Spanish in the 1840s. The eighteenth-century don Bernardino referred to himself as a “descendant of the conquistador don Pedro de la Cruz y Serrano”—which showed a certain misunderstanding of the situation, but a misunderstanding mixed with a genuine family reverence for don Pedro with which the latter would certainly have been pleased. Nineteenth-century Manuel referred to don Nicolás de la Cruz as his grandfather’s grandfather and proudly commented on his contributions to the commonwealth (see figure 1). The book had become a sort of family history—it was no longer a record of the entire altepetl—yet the family’s engagement with the wider world was still what mattered to the writers. In the world they knew, the church bells that their family had long tended to the maintenance of, for instance, rang joyously and sometimes dolorously throughout the town, and they were glad of it.

Community Relations

In the late 1650s and early 1660s, there were approximately 185 heads of household recorded as tribute payers in don Pedro’s roll book. The number varied slightly from year to year, as elders died and young people married and set up households. It is probably safe to use the typical multiplier of five to determine a rough population count of something like 1,000 people, of whom we can assume about half were males. In don Pedro’s annals-style book, over the course of the 1650s and 1660s, he mentions slightly more than 50 individual indigenous men as officials on the cabildo or in one of the churches

22. The heir named Nicolás de la Cruz could conceivably have been the father of the Nicolás de la Cruz who began to write in the book, but the timing makes this unlikely. See testaments of don Juan de la Cruz (1691; document 5) here, as well as Jacinto de la Cruz (1693) and Polonia María (1710) in Pizzigoni, *Testaments of Toluca*.

or as possessors of obvious wealth or the title “don.” Some of these were clearly related as fathers and sons or as brothers; they were not necessarily all heads of household. (His own son Felipe de la Cruz, for instance, was mentioned as a scribe when he was too young to have a house of his own, and in fact he tragically died young in the epidemic of 1677–78.) So it seems that in a particular decade, roughly 50 out of 500 men in the area were local notables, or what the Spaniards called *principales* in their documents. Scanning the list of householders in the account book produces a comparable result: approximately 1 out of 10 of them is recognizable as a sort of *principal* after reading don Pedro’s annals-style book. The *pipiltin*, or nobles of the ancien régime, are also often thought to have constituted about 10 percent of the rural population.

The *principales* owned land and oxen. They were the ones elected to the *cabildo*, rotating the positions available among themselves over time. A number are mentioned as artisans and many as musicians. They were all educated to some extent in the Latin alphabet, as they could sign their names, and at least some of them could surely read the European musical scores don Pedro bought for them. Indeed, the *cantores* are occasionally referred to in the text as *teopantlaca* (church people), a term that at least in the sixteenth century definitely implied a church education. Although such men went to the fields on communal-labor draft days, when they were planting or harvesting lands whose produce was dedicated to a particular chapel or church, it is likely that they did so more as supervisors and organizers than as laborers; we cannot be sure of this, however. Some may well have been active farming men themselves.

Don Pedro regularly called the nonprincipales *tlapaliuque* (literally, “vigorous persons,” but conveying the idea of working men). He used the term *macehualtin* (the old term for commoners, used in opposition to *pipiltin*) only a single time (though later in the century his son-in-law would use it more). So don Pedro thought and spoke of the common men around him as those who did physical labor. He tells us that they owned no oxen and could bring only their digging sticks to communal-labor projects. In a couple of cases, it is clear that an impoverished individual also owned no land, but most of the *tlapaliuque* did apparently have plots to call their own. In earlier times the *tlatoani* would have distributed communally held land to individual families who needed it; apparently those allotments, no

matter how small, were now understood to be the private property of individual families.

In the families of the working men, women definitely pulled their weight. It has long been understood that Mesoamerican gender roles were complementary, almost never set up in competition with each other or with any sense of an adversarial relationship at home. Interestingly, this record teaches us that in public or communal-labor projects, it was likewise understood that men and women each had their appointed tasks. On the day in October 1658 with which this book opened, the working people present as witnesses were not only men but also women. The women's names were not all listed as the men's were—it is quite possible that don Pedro did not even know all their names—but he noted their leader: “The *cihuatepixqui* was Juana Hernández.” A woman by that name is listed as a widow in the 1658 tribute notebook. The concept of a *cihuatepixqui* (literally “woman keeper or guardian of people”) must have descended from an older era, for it certainly was not common in the rather patriarchal colonial era, and indeed, the term appears only rarely in the Nahuatl-language records produced under the auspices of the Spaniards. Interestingly, the working women may well have ceded authority most often to a woman from a relatively prominent family, for this Juana had a Spanish-style last name, not typical for most rural working peoples, and that particular last name was shared by two men who held *cabildo* posts in the early 1650s (Pedro and Francisco Hernández). The notion of relatively elite women leading the women just as elite men led the men could not have been utterly foreign in this region, for at one point, in 1683, don Juan de la Cruz referred to himself as “don Juan de la Cruz, gobernador, with doña Josepha Francisca, *gobernadora*.” Gender parallelism may have run deep in some ways. In local wills testators, including don Pedro, often referred to their love and devotion of the “*santosme* and *santasme*” (literally “the male and female saints”).

Everywhere we turn in the texts we seem to see evidence of the cooperation or reciprocity that remains a signal feature of Nahua village life to this day. Anthropologists have illuminated a world in which this cooperation is both voluntary and obligatory, as one's behavior in this regard forms the heart of one's reputation in the eyes of peers. A man who holds office has the responsibility not merely of contributing heavily to communal projects but also of

motivating others to do likewise. His own reputation is at stake, but it is understood that his motivation for acting cannot merely be self-aggrandizement.²³

Despite the picture we glimpse in the De la Cruz family papers of people working together, it is nevertheless undeniable that there were some visible tensions between the two social groups—the *principales* and the *tlapaliuque*. In his text don Pedro mentions constantly that he and his cohort are paying for everything, or nearly everything, or contributing most to a communal day of labor, thanks to their oxen; he equally regularly insists that the entire *altepetl* should not attempt to take credit for what he and a few other generous souls have done. One early comment in 1656 is emblematic of numerous others: “Concerning how the corncrib was built: People are never to say that perhaps the *altepetl* did it, for only we *cantores* bestirred ourselves. We built the corncrib. We spent two pesos, two reales, to pay the carpenters. . . . People are never to say that perhaps the working men did it, because they only helped thatch it, and only a few hauled wood.”

It is impossible to believe that don Pedro would have harped so on this theme if there weren't at least occasional complaints on the part of working men that the *principales* did not do enough, but, when we consider the context, it becomes abundantly clear why don Pedro so constantly trumpeted his own role. He had become governor, we must remember, in the midst of a great tribute crisis, in which the people of Tepemaxalco were resisting payment. On the final pages of the tribute notebook, he recorded the fact that in that very year, he purchased 360 sheep for the community, presumably to help them pay their debt to the state. Looking at the annual records in that same notebook, we see that the people almost never managed to scrape together all that they owed. Presumably, don Pedro himself had to pay the difference; otherwise, he would have gone to prison (as indigenous noblemen elsewhere often did, for that very reason). In his will he is careful to explain that he does not owe any leftover tribute.

Don Pedro was nothing if not accurate; he did not always claim credit. At one point he specifically acknowledged that he had not paid

23. Magazine says succinctly, “We [in urban America] live together as subjects in a world of objects, while they [in Nahua village life] live in a world of persons, mediated by objects” (*Village Is Like a Wheel*, 5).

for everything: “We bought three granaries, their price twelve pesos and two reales. The money came from the little tribute field San Juan has at Pelaxtitlan. And one corncrib was purchased by Sr. don Pedro de la Cruz, gobernador. It is his property. People are never to say that maybe all three are his property.” He even sometimes implicitly criticized his children for being grudging toward the working people. “Don Pedro de la Cruz gave 120 pesos to [the church of] Santa María de la Asunción. People are not to get upset. His children and grandchildren are not to dishonor the agreement.” Years later his son-in-law don Juan would similarly warn his own son not to try to get back property the family had gifted to cousins.²⁴ These perorations are very much in keeping with some mid-sixteenth-century documents from Tetzco, in which living people argue about the nature of a gift made by a long-dead figure, and hostility to commoners had absolutely nothing to do with it.²⁵ So most likely don Pedro’s style is as revealing of a cultural desire to render communal contribution matters completely clear as of a need to argue with potentially critical or complaining tlapaliuque.

Some might want to read don Pedro’s defensiveness as a desire to cover up his own abuse of the less fortunate or even theft, on his part, of communal monies; certainly our modern interests in class tensions and corruption prompt us to raise this issue. However, given the context, it is impossible to believe that don Pedro was robbing his community in any way or that anyone at the time seriously thought he was. Everyone would have known he was paying the shortfall. Of course, it is true that the six-tostón tribute weighed much lighter on his shoulders than on those of the working people, but in their face-to-face community, in which most people knew most other people personally, they probably did not blame him for that. Don Pedro might conceivably have siphoned off some of the profits from the fields planted on behalf of the various churches. But such acts would seem counter to the nature of a man who poured hours into keeping detailed records and who ended up donating substantial amounts of money to various churches when their associated tribute fields did

24. Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, document 5. On the tradition of perorations in the corpus of testaments from the Toluca Valley, see Pizzigoni, *Testaments of Toluca*, 21–22.

25. “Unsigned Nahuatl Materials and a Letter,” in Anderson and Schroeder, *Codex Chimalpahin*, 184–239.

not produce enough. Living in the vibrant second half of the seventeenth century, not far from Mexico City, it makes perfect sense to think that he could have made his fortune off the mules we know he possessed, without any need to rob his neighbors, many of whom he was bonded to by ties of blood and affection.

And therein, perhaps, lies the strongest evidence that we are not really seeing deep class tensions—that is, that don Pedro's book indicates that the *principales* and the *tlapaliuque* were not separated by an absolutely impermeable barrier. That there were social distinctions seems beyond question. But a man could change his status over the years. In 1658 one Nicolás Gaspar was listed as a witness for the *tlapaliuque* on the question of whose *maguey* plants were being sown in the newly plowed field belonging to San Francisco. But in 1669, seven years after his son married don Pedro's daughter, and he himself had attained a certain seniority, he was suddenly elected as an *alcalde* and later given the title "don." His child Juan could take his wife's surname "De la Cruz" and serve as governor toward the end of his life. In a related vein, it was customary for well-to-do families to take in orphan girls (who were sometimes probably merely poor, not literally orphaned, as the word could mean either) to do domestic work, and the families exhibited a definite sense of responsibility toward these girls, helping them with their marriages and leaving bequests in their wills.²⁶ There wasn't much that was terribly new in this regard. Traditionally, in preconquest times extensive polygyny among the Nahuas' leading families had created a world in which almost all noblemen were tied to several commoner families, and success in battle or in trade had made it possible for boys from commoner families to rise into the ranks of the nobles.

There is greater evidence of tensions between polities than between rich and poor; when different polities masked older ethnic differences, then tensions could be rife, but when they did not, then even in this regard peace generally reigned. The *altepetl* of San Pablo Tepemaxalco contained, as we know, eight constituent parts, or *tlaxilacalli*, and the people within them were mostly interrelated, both literally and figuratively, in such intricate ways that they rarely seem to have defined themselves in opposition to one another. The

26. Such young women appear in the De la Cruz papers in 1669 and 1683 and again in the 1691 will of don Juan de la Cruz.

eight political divisions were the organizing rubric of the tribute roll book and seem to have been divided according to geography—that is, if one’s main residence fell within a certain physical territory, then one paid tribute in, for instance, Pasiontitlan. But someone, like don Pedro, who paid tribute in Pasiontitlan could find that his residence was very near the church of Santa María de la Asunción and that he often worshipped there. His wife could be from another tlaxilacalli, and so his children could have cousins in several. No wonder the people in don Pedro’s book do not appear to harbor hostility to one another based on the tlaxilacalli to which they belonged. Only one time in all his pages did don Pedro lodge a complaint on this basis: in 1665 he said the people of Santa María de la Asunción had got off almost scot-free in preparing for a feast day, paying a small sum rather than contributing labor—and they had nevertheless assumed it was acceptable for them to watch (and enjoy) the bullfights along with everybody else, though others had done much more.

On the other hand, San Pablo Tepemaxalco truly bridled in its relationship with San Pedro Calimaya, the other altepetl with which it made up the greater altepetl that was the town of Calimaya, as the Spaniards called it. Before the coming of the Europeans, we remember, Tepemaxalco was founded by Mexica conquerors to help govern the region. At the time of the conquest, it must have been particularly galling for the once-dominant Tepemaxalca people to find themselves declared by the Spaniards to be a junior partner in the greater altepetl of Calimaya. Those feelings did not entirely disappear, even if people no longer remembered the preconquest origins of the mutual resentments. In 1667 don Pedro complained bitterly that the people of Calimaya paid nothing toward some new furnishings for the main church of the convento of San Pedro y San Pablo, for which the two subaltepetl were supposed to share responsibility. However, the most painful references to Calimaya occur in the 1680s, during the watch of Juan and Josepha. A hated man named Francisco de la Cruz, whom Juan calls an *alcalde*, must have been from San Pedro Calimaya, for if he had been from Tepemaxalco, he would have been named as a *cabildo* member somewhere else in the Tepemaxalco record. This man, we remember, had a friend of don Juan’s arrested in the 1670s in a move that don Juan clearly understood to be partisan.

It is possible that Francisco was trading on his connections with and knowledge of the Spanish world, for not long before that, in 1672, he was mentioned as being the person who translated for a Spanish census taker. Even all these years later, San Pedro Calimaya was the more populous and therefore senior partner in the pairing, and so the people of San Pablo Tepemaxalco may have been extremely sensitive to the idea—and probably the fact—that the former had greater influence with the Spaniards. Indeed, their fraught relationship may explain don Pedro's and later don Juan's extreme generosity toward the convento's church. Years later, in 1696, a Calimaya man named Francisco de la Cruz, almost certainly the same old enemy, would be ordered by the state to cease and desist in his efforts to interfere with Tepemaxalco's cabildo elections.²⁷

Certainly, there was no love lost between the two political units. In 1683, representatives of each went to Mexico City to pick up a quantity of gold that was being donated by the leading hacendado of the area, the Conde de Santiago Calimaya, for a new altarpiece. Neither group could trust the other to bring the treasure home: they split it in half there and then, so each altepetl could bear its own half back to town. Later, after the artwork was completed, they agreed that the people of San Pedro Calimaya would be responsible for cleaning the bottom half of a large new statue, and those of San Pablo Tepemaxalco the upper half. Politics in the old, pre-conquest world had consisted of endless efforts to keep alliances alive, interrupted by crises that tore them asunder. The potential for rage directed at one's neighbors was always present, most especially, as in the case of Calimaya, when one did not really know those neighbors personally.

27. AGN, Indios, vol. 33, exp. 90, 1696, "Se ordena a la justicia de Metepec no permita que el indio Francisco de la Cruz se entrometa en las elecciones de gobernador que pretenden hacer los naturales de los pueblos de San Lucas, Santa María de la Asunción, Santiago y San Francisco Cuajustengo, sujeto a la cabecera de San Pablo Tepemaxalco" [It is ordered that the court of Metepec not permit the Indian Francisco de la Cruz to insert himself in the election for governor that the natives of the towns of San Lucas, Santa María de la Asunción, Santiago, and San Francisco Cuajustengo, subject to the town of San Pablo Tepemaxalco, are trying to hold].

A Place in Spain's Empire

Looming over the lives of the people of Tepemaxalco was the fact that they were required to make not insubstantial annual payments into the coffers of the Spanish state. This reality had become such a basic part of their lives by the middle of the seventeenth century that there is little attention focused on the fact in the text, and were it not for the tribute roll book that Pedro de la Cruz kept alongside his annals-style book, we might imagine that he rarely thought about the matter. We would be making a mistake, however. Even in his annals-style book, he mentions three times in fifty years (1619, 1630, and 1672) that a census taker “came to count people.” We are to understand that officials came from Mexico City to check on population counts so that the annual tribute required could be adjusted. The amount that don Pedro was responsible for collecting (1.5 pesos per adult) was substantial for poor farmers who did not have the oxen required to plow large fields and who lived mainly in a noncash economy; we get a sense of what things cost and how much artisans were paid in the pages of the De la Cruz papers, and this was an amount of cash it would not have been easy for them to come up with.²⁸

Still, the De la Cruz family papers are not primarily a record of the transfer of wealth from indigenous hands to Spanish ones. Much more than this, they constitute a record of the gradual increase of Spanish influence in the lives of the people of Tepemaxalco. Don Pedro referred to the use of the Spanish court system to settle indigenous quarrels only once in all the years he wrote, but in the late 1670s, after his death, his son-in-law don Juan almost immediately had recourse to Spanish authorities twice in quick succession to settle local disputes. After he was attacked and beaten up, he traveled to Toluca to file a legal complaint, as we have seen, and then, when Francisco de la Cruz from San Pedro Calimaya was “speaking calumnies” against a friend, he waited until the *guardián* of the convento

28. Another way of understanding the impact of tribute for the inhabitants of Tepemaxalco is to consider that the official salary for a day of work in the mines of the area was one-and-a-half reales, and that roughly 50 percent of private contracts for all sorts of jobs in the region did not reach even half a real for the day (García Castro, *Indios, territorio, y poder*, 238–39; his calculations are based on a sample of contracts from the early seventeenth century found in notarial archives).

visited Tepemaxalco the next week and asked him to intervene. In the realm of art and culture, it is clear even in the earliest pages of the manuscript that the Christian church dominated the people's creative outlets, but, at first, the people seemed to play instruments and paint archways in tiny local churches mostly to suit themselves. Yet by the 1680s they were contributing their time, energy, and cash toward an extravagant renovation of the Franciscan convento's church in a project in which Spaniards were directly involved. That was the moment when altepetl representatives traveled to Mexico City, where they met with the area's largest hacendado, the Conde de Santiago Calimaya, who gave them a donation of 300 pesos worth of gold to be used to make the new altarpiece. They bought gypsum and other needed materials, hired Spanish artisans, and eventually even agreed to cook Spanish food for the visiting master painters.

Similarly, in the linguistic arena, we move from a writer who uses few loanwords to writers who use several (verbs like *costarse*, "to cost," which don Pedro had managed very well without), until, finally, in the early nineteenth century, a young Spanish-speaking De la Cruz sets himself the task of translating parts of his grandfather's and great-grandfather's text.²⁹ He can still do so, with relatively few misunderstandings, but it is clear that his own grandchildren will have lost such ability, since they are obviously no longer hearing the language from even the family's oldest members. The De la Cruz family gave no evidence of feeling oppressed. But it nevertheless remains the case that they were increasingly motivated to rely on Spanish authority figures, to decorate their churches to compete with the chapels of Europe, and to speak the newcomers' language rather than that of their ancestors. Given that they lived within the Spanish Empire, and in a relatively highly trafficked zone, it would be impossible that it should be otherwise.

Yet, although we see increasing Spanish influence, as expected, what is perhaps more interesting is the regional and individualistic flavor, even the uniqueness, of the text itself, fitting no single genre, indicating that people's creativity was not stifled, that they continued to assert themselves in unpredictable and sometimes subtle ways.

29. For more on loanwords in the text, see the appendix, which addresses language and orthography.

And this is very much in keeping with what we know of local indigenous society throughout the Toluca Valley.³⁰

Religion

A passionate commitment the De la Cruz family shared across generations was service to the church, in various forms. It all started with music played during mass or for religious festivals and processions. In fact, don Pedro began his public career in the community as an organist, helping with the purchase of an organ and wind instruments for a local church in 1647. Back then he put in 40 pesos of a total 410 pesos that were needed, but this was just the beginning: as governor almost twenty years later, he contributed 400 pesos to buy a new organ worth 500 pesos for Tlatocapan Ahuatitlan, and in 1673, shortly before stepping down, he alone donated an organ to the main church of the convento for the remarkable amount of 650 pesos. All the way through he helped the cantores acquire trumpets, a guitar, and a rebeck, as well as a music score, since he paid for a *villancico* of San Pedro, as mentioned above. His enthusiasm for religious music might have persuaded his father, don Juan de la Cruz, to support the purchase of the organ back in 1647 very generously: he gave 110 pesos toward the 410 total, more than double the amount put down by the governor at that time. Or we may well see in this a genuine interest in music that was transmitted from father to son.

Don Pedro gave more than music to the religious celebrations in Tepemaxalco. As governor, he was ready to supply plenty of expensive candles for processions, especially during Lent and Easter, as well as for the consecration of churches, chapels, and their important art works. In 1664–65 he gave four pounds of regular candles and two pounds of taper candles for the consecration of the side altarpiece of the Virgin in the church of the tlaxilacalli of Santa María de la Asunción, but in fact this was just a small contribution compared to all the rest. He was behind the whole enterprise and paid for the carpenter who executed the work, the material, a bell for the church, the wine, and other essentials for the celebration; he also participated in the purchase of a litter by the local *cofradía* (confraternity). The

30. See Pizzigoni, *Life Within*.

items were treasured for years. While the side altarpiece is no longer there, today's church of the Virgen de los Angeles is still a vibrant building in the community, splendidly decorated and displaying a statue of the Virgin now at its central altar. And a litter similar to the one used by the local *cofradía* can still be seen in the little museum of the main church of Calimaya (see figures 2, 3, and 4).³¹ Don Pedro did not fail to take note in his book that, while the people of the *tlaxilacalli* of Santa María contributed only 21 pesos to the festival, he himself gave a total of 120 pesos. The celebration must have been quite a spectacle, with bells ringing, candles lighting up the church, and even bullfighting for two days. Just four years later don Pedro did something similar, though with even more grandiosity, judging by the money he spent. Another side altarpiece of the Virgen (indeed, another Santa María de la Asunción) was consecrated, this time in the main church of Tepemaxalco, and the image, the carpenters who worked on it, the candles, the gunpowder for the fireworks, and the roan horses were all paid for by him: "It was the gobernador don Pedro de la Cruz who donated it [all]," a total of 300 pesos, more than double the money he presented before. Certainly he had learned a great deal during his early days as *mayordomo* of the church of San Juan, when he kept the accounts of the expenses of the church and the celebration of the patron saint for the then governor don Diego de la Cruz. Now his accumulated experience and the resources at his disposal magnified his deeds.

Don Pedro also made active interventions in favor of the main church of Calimaya-Tepemaxalco and its convento. The list of his donations is as impressive as the list of his gifts to smaller, local churches, and some of them probably still exist. Today the main church of Calimaya is more modern, but to its left we find the church now called the Tercera Orden de San Francisco (see map 2). It is the oldest one in the whole town and contains a variety of colonial paintings and statues. At the center of its altar, our eyes glimpse a statue of San Francisco, and it may well be the very one that the indigenous parishioners were contemplating in the late seventeenth century,

31. We were able to see these elements thanks to the efforts of a deeply knowledgeable resident of Calimaya, Julio César Gómez Hernández.



FIG. 2 Interior of the church of the Virgen de los Angeles in Calimaya, in what was once the tlaxilacalli of Santa María de la Asunción. Photo: authors.



FIG. 3 Statue of the Virgin in the church of the Virgen de los Angeles. Photo: authors.



FIG. 4 Seventeenth-century litter surviving in the museum of the main church of Calimaya. Photo: authors.

thanks to the contribution of don Pedro de la Cruz to the cult of this saint (see figures 5, 6, and 7).³²

Don Pedro never slowed down. In 1674, most likely the last year of his governorship, he gave money for the doors of the chapel of San Juan as well as for fixing the church of San Francisco. Furthermore, “the mules of the gobernador don Pedro de la Cruz worked to transport the sand and mud, and he paid those who worked.” We have also mentioned how in that same year he petitioned for a chapel dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe to be built in Tepemaxalco, offering to cover all the expenses, for a total that remained untold. The permission was granted, conditional on a thorough check on don Pedro’s resources. The fact that later in the document we find

32. When we visited in October 2017, the main church of Calimaya was closed in the aftermath of the earthquake that had shaken central Mexico a month earlier. See Loera y Chávez de Esteinou, *Memoria india*, for the Church of the Tercera Orden and more.



FIG. 5 Facade of the church of the Tercera Orden de San Francisco in Calimaya, the original church attached to the Franciscan convento. Photo: authors.



FIG. 6 Interior of the church of the Tercera Orden de San Francisco. Photo: authors.



FIG. 7 Statue of San Francisco in the church of the Tercera Orden de San Francisco. Photo: authors.

references to such a chapel proves that he delivered what he had promised (see map 2 for the site of the modern Capilla de Gualupita, as it is called).³³ Over a time span of roughly twenty years, don Pedro put at least 980 pesos in building, repairing, and adorning the churches of his altepetl and providing the essentials for the festivals of dwellers and visitors alike. Adding this to the 1,090 pesos spent on organs alone, we come to a staggering amount. Whether he was a beloved official we cannot say, but he was certainly an energetic and devoted one.

What we have seen so far tells us of a rather clear choice that don Pedro made in terms of religious offerings: he seems to have been more interested in ambiance or overall emotional experience than in Christian doctrine specifically, as musical instruments and building maintenance and decoration definitely took priority over masses or specific images of saints, for instance. Indeed, saints make only brief appearances in don Pedro's account, often connected to a bigger project, such as the side altarpieces of the Virgin: the money for the image of Santa María de la Asunción was just a part of what he gave for the whole altarpiece and the festival for the consecration. Besides Santa María, Santiago, San Francisco, and Santo Cristo mentioned earlier, during his time as organist and then governor he referred to images of saints on only two other occasions. Once in 1654 he donated a San Juan, and the other time, in 1668, he mentioned a statue of the Virgin, a Jesús Nazareno, and the angel he paid to have painted on the cupola of the same church. Unconnected to don Pedro, we find a reference to an image of San Antonio and a Holy Cross, while more detailed citations of saints occur after his governorship. A close reading of all this material scattered through the De la Cruz document with a focus on saints reveals some aspects worthy of note.

The most prominent images are those of the Virgin and Christ, treated like any other saints, just more popular, and mentioned in different versions: Santa María de la Asunción, Virgen de Guadalupe, Santo Cristo, Jesús Nazareno, and Santo de Jerusalén, as well as the Holy Cross. All this is very much in line with the practice across the Toluca Valley and beyond.³⁴ As for the other saints, those who

33. See AGN, "Que el alcalde mayor."

34. On Marian devotions and the beginning of the cult of Christ in Spain, see Christian, *Local Religion*, 21–22. On the predominance of the Virgin and Christ among

correspond to the patron saints of the various tlaxilacalli of Tepemaxalco are certainly present: San Francisco, Santiago, San Juan, and Santa María de la Asunción, besides San Antonio, from a tlaxilacalli of Calimaya, as well as the patron saints of the double altepetl, San Pedro (for Calimaya) and San Pablo (for Tepemaxalco). A curious story hides behind the images of San Pedro and San Pablo, the locally renowned *pleito de los santos*, or “brawl of the saints.” It seems that when the Spanish unified Calimaya and Tepemaxalco they put on the main altar in the parish church a wooden statue of San Pedro and San Pablo, one piece with each saint on one side. From that central position, only one saint at a time could face the congregation, and there lay the problem: Who should it be? Each community thought of themselves as having priority, so when the people of Calimaya entered the church they would turn the image to have San Pedro in plain sight, while those of Tepemaxalco would hurry to turn it to San Pablo any time they could. One day the parish priest, tired of this competition, took a saw and cut the statue in two, separating the saints by their back and putting them in two niches. They can still be found this way today in the church of the Tercera Orden de San Francisco (see figure 8).³⁵

The De la Cruz family was from Pasiontitlan, whose name was from not a conventional patron saint but the passion of the Christ, and this may be behind the generous donation that don Pedro made for a monument for Holy Week. Otherwise, he and his family show devotion to various patron saints across the tlaxilacalli but not to the most obvious one for Tepemaxalco: San Pablo. In fact, it was San Pedro who was at the center of the family’s attention, with an image in the house that was passed down to his son-in-law Juan de la Cruz. When his turn came, don Juan transmitted the same devotion and at least one image of San Pedro to his eldest children, Jacinto and Josepha. In public don Juan showed great support for both saints of the double altepetl, as testified by all the work and

the Spaniards, see Zárate Toscano, *Nobles antes la muerte*, 168, and Ragon, *Saints et les images*, 363 (also among mestizos). On the popularity of these cults among indigenous people in central Mexico, see Gruzinski, *Guerre des images*, 285–86.

35. The story is reported in Loera y Chávez de Esteinou, *Memoria india*, 41–47. She mentions that the story has been passed down orally for centuries, and the details (i.e., the name of the parish priest or when the separation happened) are not known. Our local guide in 2017, Julio César Gómez, also referred to the story.



FIG. 8 Statues of San Pedro and San Pablo in the church of the Tercera Orden de San Francisco. Photo: authors.

resources he put into the *retablo* (altarpiece) of San Pedro and San Pablo in 1683. But in the privacy of his testament, among the numerous sacred images that populated his house and were passed on to his children, the town's patron saint of San Pablo is nowhere to be found. Thus, don Juan offers a remarkable example of why the idea of the cult of patron saints needs to be reconsidered. While the patron saint certainly had an important role in community celebrations and identity, it seems that behind the door of the household, personal choices and preferences, as well as the names of family members, played a key role in deciding which sacred images were venerated. The Spaniards could divide a town and declare who was to worship which patron saint, but they could not ensure that the

people would truly devote themselves to that saint more than to others of their choosing.³⁶

One aspect concerning the saints is the connection they had with land, an intriguing trait of indigenous society across central Mexico that is not seen in the Spanish counterpart. A couple of references in the De la Cruz text point to a fascinating possibility, while the analysis is backed by a wealth of examples in indigenous testaments.³⁷ San Juan, a favorite saint for don Pedro de la Cruz as well as for Tepemaxalco more generally, is said to have a little tribute field at Pelaxtitlan, from which money came in 1660 to buy two corncribs to store the saint's harvests. Over twenty years later don Francisco Nicolás, past alcalde of Tlatocapan, left a plot of land to the Virgin of Guadalupe, to be planted with her magueys.³⁸ In practice a community or an individual would donate a piece of land to a saint, with the expectation that either the group or a family member would cultivate it, with the harvest sold and the profits put into the worship of that saint or another religious deed. This way a saint became a de facto owner of land and, in many cases, inherited a parcel like any other family member or individual connected to the testator. The purported words of don Pedro invoked by a relative more than a century later, in 1795, speak directly to this: "I, don Pedro de la Cruz, gobernador of Tepemaxalco [have passed? or lent?] to señor Pascual López this land to break and sow for a few years, and when he leaves it, the lord Santo Santiago the Apostle will get it, and from tomorrow onward nobody is to take it away from him."

The details regarding the saints in the De la Cruz papers allow us a glimpse into the materiality of sacred images in people's lives. They were usually painted, either on a church wall, like Santiago

36. This argument was first made in Pizzigoni, *Life Within*, 170–71 (see also Wood, "Adopted Saints," 278–79), and more recently in Pizzigoni, "Church and at Home," in Nord, Guenther, and Weiss, *Formations of Belief*, 106–25. Saints different from the patrons were also present, in smaller numbers, such as San Bernardino and Santa Clara, as well as numerous angels. In the examples we have from the Toluca Valley, angels are treated like saints in representation through sacred images and worship. See Pizzigoni, "Where Did All the Angels Go?," in Cervantes and Radden, *Angels, Demons, and the New World*, 126–45.

37. See Lockhart, *Nahuas After the Conquest*; Wood, "Adopted Saints"; and Pizzigoni, *Life Within*.

38. Other references that may give away possession of land on the part of a saint include San Francisco's 1679 tribute corn that gave money to buy the church canopy.

the Apostle or the angel on the cupola, or else on a lienzo or canvas, like San Francisco at the central altar of the main church. That they could also be statues is revealed by the fact that individuals donated clothing and ornaments for them, as in the case of Santa María de la Asunción and Jesús Nazareno, both in the main church. Here details are lacking, but normally the statues were of stone or wood. Any of these images would have cost thirty pesos minimum, judging by the fragmentary information in the document—quite a significant sum, if we consider that the common value of smaller images that individuals kept in their home was three to six pesos, while sums around twenty pesos were deemed unusual.³⁹

Finally, there are two references to a retablo, typically a complex vertical structure behind an altar that mixed both painting and sculpture. In fact, the two side altarpieces of the Virgin mentioned earlier could well be considered a sort of retablo, with statues or sculptures. And the church of the Tercera Orden de San Francisco that still stands to the left of the main church of Calimaya preserves a fine example of one to this day (see figure 9). Thanks to the rather meticulous account of governor don Juan de la Cruz, we know that behind the retablo of the holy sacrament and San Pedro and San Pablo, again in the main church of Tepemaxalco, there were at least two painters, one gilder, and over a month of work. Among the essentials required there were three pounds of *bol de castilla* (a compound used for gilding), four pounds of gypsum to make plaster, 3 pesos worth of glue, dyes for 7 pesos, and papier-mâché for the flesh of the angels, as well as food for two craftsmen. Apparently, don Diego Castillo, master painter, and Miguel de Blancas (probably less skilled, since he had no title) were of Spanish descent, considering the title *señor* as well as some of the food they ate: saffron, Castilian oil, olives, vinegar, garlic, cinnamon, and shrimp. They were both given 120 pesos, while another craftsman, known only as Tomás, was given 7 pesos for gilding and no food, perhaps because he was a local or completed his task in a short period. These are valuable, rare details, for, generally, information about church artisans is often lost in the historical record.

39. On canvases, statues, and prices, see Pizzigoni, "Church and at Home," in Nord, Guenther, and Weiss, *Formations of Belief*, 106–25. Notice the different language used for Santiago and San Francisco in the De la Cruz document, on which the assumption that the former is painted on the wall is based.

Their work must also have involved some maintenance of the main altar, given that toward the end of the entry for the year the cleaning of a statue of Santo Cristo, and of San Bernardino and Santa Clara on the tabernacle (*sagrario*), is mentioned. All together, the community put a great deal of money into this enterprise, and it came from the 150 pounds of gold that don Juan de la Cruz, together with three officials, collected from Conde de Santiago in Mexico City. But the governor invested his own money as well, at least 80 pesos and three weeks' worth of food for the master painter. And an investment it certainly was, given that through it don Juan perpetuated the De la Cruz family as committed and devoted rulers of their altepetl.⁴⁰

A walk down the alley of the main church of Calimaya-Tepemalco in one of the celebrations allowed the people to contemplate these beautiful works of art, shining even in the darkness by the light of ever-present candles or silver lamps. Such images would accompany their devotees for generations, as the examples of San Antonio and Santa María de la Asunción illustrate. Set up in the main church in 1654 and 1669, respectively, they were still there in 1691–93 and 1710, when don Juan, his son Jacinto de la Cruz, and later Jacinto's wife, Polonia María, asked to be buried in front of them. Many of these images, and the churches that guard them, have been preserved to today. They are more than preserved, as a matter of fact: they are still at the center of lively celebrations and heartfelt worship, as the statues of San Pedro and San Pablo show, especially during their feast on June 29.

Nor was it just the visual element that lasted. Even the accompanying world of sound remained somewhat familiar as time went by. As long as the De la Cruz family members kept their record, the making and recasting of bells for the chapel of the Virgin of Guadalupe took up much ink, almost certainly an activity that increased in importance over time, given that to this day there is an active workshop for bell making in Tepemalco.⁴¹ And then there was the music, still very much at the center of the De la Cruz family a century and a half after don Pedro and beyond. On August 7, 1809, the last

40. The other reference to a retablo is a very short one, for the blessing of the retablo of San Antonio, and in this case it may imply just a small painting, not the full structure.

41. Personal communication from our guide, Julio César Gómez Hernández, October 2017.



FIG. 9 Retablo in the church of the Tercera Orden de San Francisco. Photo: authors.

complete entry of the document, don Bernardino Cruz y Serrano paid for the repairs to the organ of the church of Guadalupe.⁴² Whether he could actually play it, as don Pedro once did, is not clear; however, don Bernardino showed the same zeal as his predecessors toward religious music and perhaps even a bit of self-righteous irritation concerning the family's perennial communal duties. He noticed that it was not the first time that the organ needed repairing, and the person who did it "charged for his work forty-five pesos, on top of all the materials that I gave him, so for all it was sixty pesos." It would seem that in Tepemaxalco's spiritual life, as in its sociopolitical arrangements, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

42. Clearly, the chapel started by don Pedro de la Cruz with his 1674 petition became a landmark of the Tepemaxalco community, and its people were still providing resources for its fixing and additions in 1809. AGN, "Que el alcalde mayor." Moreover, a *cofradía* based at the chapel is mentioned in the litigation papers among which the testament of don Juan de la Cruz was found; in the year 1772 it is said that the chapel was founded by don Pedro de la Cruz and that the Virgin could count on land that was hers for over forty years. AGN, Tierras, vol. 2533, exp. 5, 1772-73, "Autos seguidos a pedimento de Felipa de la Cruz, vecina de Calimaya, contra Antonio de la Cruz, mayordomo de la *cofradía* de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en el pueblo de Tepemajalco, fundada por Pedro de la Cruz" [Proceedings following the request of Felipa de la Cruz, resident of Calimaya, against Antonio de la Cruz, mayordomo of the confraternity of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in the pueblo of Tepemaxalco, founded by Pedro de la Cruz].