

2019-01-01

## Indigenous Masculinities and the Tarascan Borderlands in Sixteenth-Century Michoacán

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INDIGENOUS MASCULINITIES AND THE TARASCAN BORDERLANDS IN  
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY MICHOACÁN

DANIEL SANTANA

Doctoral Program in Borderlands History

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Stephen L. Crites, Jr., Ph.D.  
Dean of the Graduate School

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2019

## **Dedication**

Para mi madre, Felipa, que siempre me ha apoyado

INDIGENOUS MASCULINITIES AND THE TARASCAN BORDERLANDS IN  
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY MICHOACÁN

by

DANIEL SANTANA, M.A., B.A.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

December 2019

## Acknowledgements

I would like to first acknowledge those in my immediate family who provided me with the mental strength and motivation to complete my Ph.D. Primeramente, gracias a mi madre Felipa por sus consejos, llamadas por teléfono y bendiciones que me han dado mucha fuerza durante este largo viaje. My sister Antonia and brothers David, and Damien provided me with unconditional love and moral support. My partner, Nathan Gutiérrez, also served as my coach as he pushed me to continue even when I already felt I was at my wits end. My close friends from Los Angeles, El Paso and Ciudad Juárez were also honorary family members who helped me on this journey: Jose, Alberto, Xitlalic, Liz, Gabby, Omar, Blanca, Ale, Danech, Allan, Christine, Maria, David, Ian, and Belinda.

I am indebted to the Mellon Foundation for awarding me with a fellowship to study Spanish paleography at the Newberry Library during the summer of 2017. As I began my first years of archival research, I continued to hear Dr. Carla Rahn Phillips' voice guiding me through each colonial document I consulted. I would especially like to thank the Department of History at UTEP for providing me with the Harper and Porter Dissertation Research Awards that allowed for my numerous archival research trips. I am also grateful to the Graduate School at UTEP who awarded me with a Dodson Dissertation Research Award for my archival studies. The College of Liberal Arts also supplied me with much needed funds for my last archival research trip as a Ph.D. student. The archivists I met over the years have been very courteous and resourceful, especially Rosa Lilia Retana Ramos and her colleagues at the Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad de Pátzcuaro.

I offer my sincere gratitude to my dissertation committee members for their feedback and suggestions on the various chapters of this dissertation. Dr. Ignacio Martínez, Dr. Leyva, Dr.

Núñez, and Dr. Shepherd each encouraged me to think about the ramifications of my project as it relates to contemporary issues. I thank the chair of my dissertation for his patience with me during the first years that I began to conceptualize the project. Various professors in the UTEP History Department also inspired my work. I particularly would like to thank Dr. Michelle Armstrong-Partida who motivated and inspired me to pursue the study of masculinities in a colonial borderlands setting. Dr. Cheryl Martin guided me in my initial archival investigations at the UTEP Special Collections. Dr. Selfa A. Chew, Dr. Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens, and Dr. Brenda Risch offered critical feedback on terminology and analytical approaches.

I received feedback from various colleagues I met outside of my campus who provided me with important suggestions. I thank my mentors who are also studying the Indigenous peoples of Michoacán for their companionship, resourcefulness, and critiques, especially Dr. Mintzi Martínez-Rivera, Dr. Carlos Paredes Martínez, and Dr. Angélica Jimena Afanador-Pujol. I would like to thank the members of the Southwest Seminar Consortium on Colonial Latin America, especially Dr. Dana Velasco Murillo, Dr. Zeb Tortorici, Dr. Kevin Terraciano, Dr. Erick Van Young, Dr. Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez, and Dr. Ananda Cohen-Aponte for your comments on a very rough sketch of the project. Notably, I would like to credit Dr. John Paul Nuño for inspiring me to think about “Indigenous borderlands.” I apologize in advance for forgetting to mention others who gave me critical feedback that informed this work. Given the wide extent of feedback I received, I should point out that errors and shortcomings of the work are my own.

The friends I have made in the Borderlands History Ph.D. program made this journey all the more bearable. I would especially like to thank Maria Vallejo, David Robles, and Freddy Jaimes for their companionship since the first year that I started this program. Thank you to Dr. Ian Lee and Belinda Lee for your friendship and encouragement over the years. The friends I

made as part of the Association of Applied Border History and the Sin Fronteras Border Farmworker Center kept me engaged and informed on local issues while pursuing my Ph.D.: Rosa Gomez, Cynthia Renteria, Angelina Martinez, Blanca Garcia-Barron, RaeAnn Swanson-Evans, Jenny Urban, Gene Morales, Jacobo Villegas, Pamela J. Angeles, Chantra Potts, Kathryn Guerra, Gabriel Solis, and Jose Miguel Leyva. I would like to thank my non-historian roommates who were experts in the fields of computer science, physics, and pharmacology for helping me to articulate my ideas to a wider audience: Reynaldo Martínez, Jesus “Chuy” Garcia, Valentín Becerra, and Adrian Chávez. Their friendship and curiosity regarding what exactly was I doing helped me to get a better grasp of my research questions and to answer the “so what” aspects of my research. Conversations with my colleagues in the Center for Metrics-Based Planning, Dr. Roy Mathew, Dr. Elsa Bonilla-Martin, and Erick Gonzalez, challenged me to communicate my theoretical ideas clearly and in a less jargon-laden fashion.

The friends and people I met in El Paso also helped me to preserve my sanity. Thank you to Dr. Susie E. Aquilina, a fellow Borderlands History Ph.D., for introducing me to Danza Azteca Omecoatl and Danza Azteca Tlaneztica who kept me grounded spiritually and culturally as I pursued my studies. A very special thank you to Gisela Sarellano for keeping the fire in the group going. The many work of many talented musicians and artists who became friends and acquaintances that I met in the borderlands and whose art inspired the writing of this dissertation: Jose Montoya, Dustin, Raul, Bryan, Victor, Ricky and Sydney. I apologize for anyone I left out but there is not enough space to mention the others who supported me along the way.



## Abstract

This dissertation studies the hypermasculine narratives related to the expansion of the Tarascan state and its borderlands in early colonial Michoacán. Colonial texts such as the *Relación de Michoacán* and the *relaciones geográficas* depict the ascendance of the powerful Uacúsecha dynasty whose solar deity and male rulers oversaw the conquest of the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin and succeeded in holding back the Mexica (Aztecs) from penetrating their territories. The dissertation pays particular attention to how contemporary political events, namely the Spanish conquest of Michoacán, endemic warfare in center-west Mexico, and political rivalries amongst Indigenous elites, influenced these accounts. Consequently, these narratives elaborated in colonial texts such as the *Relación de Michoacán* and *relaciones geográficas* seemed to portray a “patriarchal,” male-centered history of the Tarascan peoples that often overlooked the roles of Indigenous women. I problematize these androcentric narratives by analyzing them as a hypermasculine performance of Tarascan elites. I argue that during the sixteenth century, the Tarascan borderlands were sites where Indigenous hypermasculinities were constructed, reimagined, and performed in ways that were often superficial and reflected the contemporary political moments in which they were produced.

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## **Introduction: Indigenous Hypermasculinities and the Tarascan Borderlands**

Indigenous noblemen in sixteenth-century Michoacán witnessed the steady decline of their political power in the aftermath of the Spanish conquest. In 1530, the Tarascan principles observed the torture and execution of their hereditary ruler, the irecha known as the Cazonci, Tzintzicha Tangáxoan, who was sentenced to death by the conquistador Nuño de Guzmán. The Cazonci was dragged alive by a horse, tied to a stake, and burned. The humiliation of Tarascan noblemen and their subjects continued as they were conscripted into Guzmán's armies while locked in chains during his campaign to conquer the Nueva Galicia. After Guzmán's campaign concluded, most Indigenous noblemen continued to experience the steady decline of their power even after they were incorporated into the Spanish legal system as caciques, principales, and other administrative officials. Throughout the sixteenth century, these Indigenous elites gradually lost property, wealth, and political influence under the new regime. Only a few who were descendants of the Cazonci were able to amass significant amounts of wealth under Spanish rule such as his sons, Don Francisco Taríacuri and Don Antonio Huitziméngari, who both served as the governors of Michoacán. Whatever little political privileges and authority that most Indigenous elites in Michoacán had during the early colonial period was largely undercut by their Spanish counterparts who abused the encomienda and, later, the repartimiento systems to exploit the commoners, referred to as *maceguales*, in the silver mines and haciendas. Excessive tribute demands coupled with epidemics and virtual enslavement forced many of the Indigenous peoples in the Michoacán region to desert their towns en masse. Others were uprooted from their homelands to colonize and settle the Spaniards' Chichimeca frontier settlements. Moreover, a series of wars led by the Spaniards in the Mexican center-west throughout the sixteenth century contributed to their decline in numbers as Indigenous auxiliary forces from Michoacán fought in

the Mixtón Uprising of 1540-1542 as well as the Chichimeca Wars that lasted from 1550 to the end of the century.

In the midst of the death, destruction, and cultural genocide, this dissertation examines how colonial documents written in sixteenth-century Michoacán provide a window into how Indigenous noblemen came to terms with the fall of the Tarascan state as well as the Spanish conquest of the greater central-western Mexican region: by providing hypermasculine accounts of their ancestors. The most extensive of these colonial texts is the ethnographic account of the Tarascan people commissioned by the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, the *Relación de las çeremonias y ritos y poblaçión y gobernaçion de los yndios de la provinçia de Mechuacán hecha al yllustrisimo señor don Antonio de Mendoza, virrey y gocernador desta Nueva España por su majestad, étcetera* (henceforth referred to as the *Relación de Michoacán* and the *Relación*). The *Relación de Michoacán*, written from 1539-1541, describes the Pre-Hispanic history of the Tarascan people and their encounter with the Spanish. The manuscript was written by an anonymous Franciscan chronicler, most likely fray Jerónimo de Alcalá. The friar-chronicler wrote the text with the support of Indigenous informants as he resided in the Tarascan city of Tzintzuntzan and learned the language of the peoples of Michoacán known today as Purépecha.<sup>1</sup> The text describes a powerful pre-Hispanic polity whose rulers led wars of conquest in the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin and eventually expanded into most of the region known today as Michoacán as well as parts of Guanajuato, Queretaro, Guerrero, Jalisco, and the state of Mexico. As James

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<sup>1</sup> J. Benedict Warren, "Fray Jerónimo de Alcalá: Author of the *Relación De Michoacán*?" *The Americas* 27, no. 3 (1971): 307-326. While Warren identifies Alcalá as a likely candidate as the author of the *Relación de Michoacán*, other scholars are not so certain about his conclusion. See James Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest: Power, Politics, and the History of Early Colonial Michoacán, Mexico, 1521-1565* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2003), 49, fn. 4.

Krippner-Martínez argued in his analysis of this historical text, Indigenous informants challenged “the humiliation of the conquest” when they described the vast extent of the Tarascan polity.<sup>2</sup> He also observes that the Tarascan forefathers were depicted engaging in activities that resonated with Spanish patriarchal practices such as displays of male violence against adulteress women. In this process, the Tarascan nobles attempt to “recoup the honor that had been lost.”<sup>3</sup> Indigenous informants described Tarascan male predecessors who killed other men, went to war, and overcame numerous obstacles as they brought the Tarascan state to prominence. I add that these native informants who helped to produce these colonial texts constructed multifaceted notions of masculinity that were performed by nobles, warriors, and commoners in these pre-Hispanic narratives of conquest and frontier warfare. Yet, this dissertation emphasizes that these colonial Indigenous masculinities were a superficial performance as the codes of conduct supposedly practiced by these *principales* were often contradictory and rarely reflected the realities of how they conducted themselves on the ground.

This dissertation explores the intersections of colonialism and masculinity, which are both under-studied subjects in both borderlands and gender history. While the study of Indigenous masculinities in the early colonial and pre-Columbian Americas is an emerging field, it continues to be underdeveloped. As R. Todd Romero comments, most work on masculinities in early colonial North America focus mostly on European men—especially the English—instead of Indigenous people.<sup>4</sup> Many of these works center on the construction of European

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<sup>2</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>4</sup> R. Todd Romero, *Making War and Minting Christians: Masculinity, Religion, and Colonialism in Early New England* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 202-203; fn. 19.

colonialist masculinities. Also, while it is a common trope for Western gender scholars to make the general claim that European colonization enhanced male dominance in North America, such statements are rarely elaborated upon.<sup>5</sup> This dissertation seeks to address the gaps in gender and borderlands history by studying how Indigenous notions of masculinity were constructed through the sixteenth-century documents relating to the Tarascan borderlands by analyzing how Indigenous informants who helped produce these historical texts described the social, cultural, and political roles played by men charged with expanding the both the pre-Hispanic frontier and later the Spanish Chichimeca frontier.

There are two sorts of understudied borderlands that this dissertation investigates. The first refers to physical boundaries: the Tarascan borderlands as well as the Spanish Chichimeca frontier. Secondly, this investigation also studies the borderlands of gender, where both Spanish and Indigenous notions of masculinity intersected and constructed hypermasculine depictions of Tarascan society in Michoacán. I employ the term hypermasculinity in colonial Mexican and borderlands historiography to describe how pre-Hispanic histories of Indigenous men emphasized assertive qualities such as political power, boisterousness, and physical aggression in efforts to justify their positions of authority in family, politics, and warfare during the early colonial period. I maintain that this process was hegemonic since that the elevation of elite Indigenous males subsequently marginalized the roles that non-elite men, women, and commoners played in the expansion of the Tarascan state before the coming of the Spaniards. Indigenous noblemen who helped to produce these narratives largely stood to benefit from them

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Kimmel, *The Gendered Society*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 69.

throughout the sixteenth century. When *principales* validated their affiliation to the Indigenous nobles described in these colonial documents, they could retain their status as nobles which afforded them with access to various political privileges such as the right to collect tribute and exemptions from working in mines and haciendas. Non-nobles, such as “Chichimeca” and Matlatzinca soldiers, whose ancestors physically resided in the Tarascan borderlands in pre-Hispanic times, also sought out similar privileges by participating in campaigns such as the Chichimeca Wars. In short, I argue that during the sixteenth century, the Tarascan borderlands were sites where Indigenous hypermasculinities were constructed, reimagined, and performed in ways that were often superficial and reflected the contemporary political moments in which they were produced.

#### A “PATRIARCHAL” TARASCAN STATE?

This gender and borderlands history resonates with masculinities studies that speak to contemporary feminist concerns in exploring how colonialism links to patriarchy, male oppression of females, and masculinities. Initially, some scholars have expressed concerns that the study of maleness would divert attention from the study of women.<sup>6</sup> However, gender historians in other fields have pointed out that studying male attitudes such as patriarchy uncovers more about the history of women. The medievalist Judith M. Bennett points out that studying patriarchy is essential to both historians and feminists because it allows scholars to historicize patriarchy in the more distant past since most work discussing male oppression in feminist studies rarely discusses any period before the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> As such, my work also

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<sup>6</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), xvii.

<sup>7</sup> Judith M. Bennet, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 79-81.

contributes to the study of how patriarchal attitudes and beliefs are constructed in the context of borderlands and the sixteenth-century Tarascan world.

Interestingly, Krippner-Martínez states that it is evident that there were “preexisting patriarchal norms” within the Tarascan elite. After all, the *Relación de Michoacán* provides many depictions of men who dominated other women through physical violence and control over their sexualities by urging them not to commit adultery. He continues, “In emphasizing male dominance, the indigenous elites drew on an established patriarchal tradition whose particular features bore a strong resemblance to elite patriarchal norms within the invading culture.”<sup>8</sup> While I agree that these accounts do exemplify practices in which elite males exerted control over females, I find it problematic to use the term *patriarchy* to describe pre-Hispanic Tarascan elite culture. To describe Tarascan men in such a context, patriarchy first needs to be defined because it is not a self-explanatory term referring simply to male oppression of females. Patriarchy is a loaded term that comes with many cultural and Eurocentric associations that, I would argue, do not all fit neatly in an Indigenous Mesoamerican context. As Bennet observes, patriarchy could refer to the legal authority of fathers over their wives, children, and other dependents. Another definition of patriarchy points to the practice in which male heads of the households oversaw lesser males and all females. In sum, these definitions refer to patriarchy as male dominance and male supremacy in the domestic household.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, one can read “the patriarchy” when skimming through the countless stories of male elites who took on the highest positions of political authority in *Relación de Michoacán* while elite women appear to have mostly attended

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<sup>8</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 65-66.

<sup>9</sup> Bennet, *History Matters*, 55-56.

to various duties in the irecha's home. While this might lead some to assume that Tarascans also adopted a cult of domesticity akin to European customs, this is complicated by the power and titles of authority that noble women held outside of the home. As Bernardo Verastique observes, Tarascan noblewomen in the irecha's home could take part in public festivities and received distinguished titles as the guardians of his palace.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the nobility, commoner women had more freedoms such that they regularly took part in community activities and could practice divorce by simply moving out of her husband's home.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, this work problematizes the notion of "preexisting patriarchal norms" amongst the Tarascans by highlighting the realities of female power within the Tarascan state. I seek to demonstrate, however, that these sources do suggest that colonial patriarchal ideologies did begin to influence the ways in which Indigenous elites reimagined and performed their history and customs in early colonial Michoacán.

The notion that patriarchal societies existed in Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica has been challenged by other scholars who point out that men and women both held powerful and complementary roles and responsibilities in spiritual, public, and household affairs.<sup>12</sup> Mesoamerican gender customs did not reflect European public and private spheres in which men exercised roles in their community while women stayed in the home. Leah Sneider clarifies that these systems of gender complementarity created gender-based communal responsibilities.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bernardino Verástique, *Michoacán and Eden: Vasco de Quiroga and the Evangelization of Western Mexico*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 17.

<sup>11</sup> Helen Perlstein Pollard, *Tariacuri's Legacy: The Prehispanic Tarascan State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 178-179.

<sup>12</sup> Sharisse D. McCafferty and Geoffrey G. McCafferty, "Powerful Women and the Myth of Male Dominance in Aztec Society," *Archeological Review from Cambridge* 7, no. 1 (1988): 45-59.

<sup>13</sup> Leah Sneider, "Complementary Relationships," in *Indigenous Men and Masculinities*, eds. Robert Innes and Kim Anderson (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2003), 63-64; Susan Schroeder,

However, European colonials interpreted complementary female roles as a sign that Indigenous men were weak because they did not exert authority over their women.<sup>14</sup> Scott L. Mortensen points out that the imposition of European gender customs, or “colonial masculinity,” disrupted these established gender orders, especially because colonials saw female power in Native societies as a barrier to imposing colonial heteropatriarchal rule. Using violence, European colonials sought to commit “gendercide” on Indigenous customs by limiting female agency and criminalizing the actions of “third gender” peoples.<sup>15</sup> The above mentioned historical and theoretical works in Indigenous masculinities studies echo historian Mrinalini Sinha’s observation that masculinity is emerging as a useful category of historical analysis in studies of colonialism.

When reading colonial sources at face value, texts like the *Relación de Michoacán* appear to challenge or contradict the previously mentioned literature in Mesoamerican Indigenous gender studies that emphasize how Native cultures in Mexico generally saw men and women’s roles as neither greater, lesser, or subordinate to the other. Two recurring concepts that challenge the notion of patriarchal Indigenous gender customs in greater Latin American history are gender complementarity and gender parallelism. Gender complementarity, according to anthropologist John Monaghan, refers to how men and women’s roles complemented each other in ways that

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“Introduction,” in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, edited by Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 7-15.

<sup>14</sup> Sandra Slater, “‘Nought but Women’: Constructions of Masculinities and Modes of Emasculation in the New World,” in *Gender and Sexuality in Indigenous North America*, edited by Sandra Slater and Fay A. Yarbrough (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 39.

<sup>15</sup> Scott L. Morgensen, “Cutting the Roots of Colonial Masculinity,” in *Indigenous Men and Masculinities*, edited by Innes and Anderson, 42-45. Third gender often referred to men who lived as women or who did not fit into the categories of male or female.



were harmonizing instead of oppositional.<sup>16</sup> Susan Kellogg explains that gender parallelism describes the existence of “parallel lines of authority and institutionalized positions of leadership held by women and men” which often existed amongst urbanized Indigenous states such as the Mexica, Inka, and Tarascans.<sup>17</sup> In *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, Susan Schroeder notes that by embracing gender parallelism, these societies defined men and women’s roles in ways that were symbolic and practical since birth. For instance, boys received war instruments while girls received instruments for weaving and sweeping.<sup>18</sup> Gender roles in these societies did not always follow a male-female binary since third gender peoples in these Amerindian societies also participated as healers and religious officials. Third gender people is the term often used to describe biological males who took on roles as women in various Native societies who often performed sacred duties.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, except for one account of a warrior donning women’s clothing, these peoples were not recalled in the sixteenth-century documents related to the Tarascan domains.<sup>20</sup> In short, Indigenous male hegemony in Pre-Hispanic Tarascan and Nahuatl societies was neither absolute nor codified.

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<sup>16</sup> John Monaghan, quoted in Susan Kellogg, *Weaving the Past: A History of Latin America’s Indigenous Women from the Prehispanic Period to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Kellogg, *Weaving the Past*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Schroeder, “Introduction,” in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, 15.

<sup>19</sup> Pete Sigal, “(Homo)Sexual Desire and Masculine Power in Colonial Latin America: Notes toward an Integrated Analysis” in *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America*, edited by Pete Sigal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 12-13; Michael J. Horswell, “Toward an Andean Theory of Ritual Same-Sex Sexuality and Third-Gender Subjectivity,” in *Infamous Desire*, edited by Sigal, 36-38.

<sup>20</sup> Nuño de Guzmán, “Carta á su magestad del presidente de la audiencia de Mejico, Nuño de Guzman, en que refiere la jornada que hizo á Mechuacan, a conquistar la provincia de los tebles-chichimecas, que confina con Nueva España. 8 de Julio 1530,” in *Colección de documentos inéditos: relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de América y Oceanía, sacados de los archivos del reino y muy especialmente del de indias*, volume 13, eds. Joaquín

Gender historians interested in learning the history and customs of the Pre-Hispanic Tarascan state would notice the emphasis the *Relación de Michoacán* placed on male authority figures. Indeed, the text serves as a richest ethnographic and historical account of the Pre-Hispanic Tarascan state to date, albeit, one that privileged the roles of men. Women are almost absent in the text except appearing occasionally in the manuscript as priestesses, sexual partners, wives, cooks, spies, and assassins. Conversely, men appear regularly throughout the text as rulers, warriors, hunters, priests, and state officials who expanded the Tarascan frontiers and domains beyond the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. The contributors of the *Relación de Michoacán* depict a Tarascan society with gender norms that were largely patriarchal. As Krippner-Martínez observes, Tarascan informants describe customs where elite men exercised dominance over women, especially in marriage, by emphasizing consequences wives could face if they practiced adultery. According to the *Relación de Michoacán*, the consequences unfaithful wives faced was not simply domestic violence but another extreme: a death sentence inflicted on her as well as her entire family. Such depictions surely must have resonated with Spanish audiences if the intent was to portray the Tarascan elites as patriarchs. Consequently, Indigenous informants related the existence of “an established patriarchal tradition” amongst the Tarascans to the Spaniards in ways that “bore a strong resemblance to elite patriarchal norms within the invading [Spanish] culture.”<sup>21</sup>

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Francisco Pacheco, Francisco de Cárdenas y Espejo, and Luis Torres de Mendoza (Madrid: Imprenta de Manuel de Quirios, 1870), 367-368.

<sup>21</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 62-65.

## Layers of Androcentric Authorship in the Colonial Sources

It is important to underscore the multilayered nature of authorship in these colonial sources in order to make sense of the ways in which they projected androcentric, patriarchal values onto the Pre-Hispanic Tarascan peoples. For instance, the men who contributed to the production of the *Relación* were comprised of Tarascans from the Uanacaze and Islander factions as well as an anonymous Franciscan chronicler. Each of these co-authors had varied interests in mind when producing this text that was addressed towards the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza. The Uanacaze dynasty and the Isleños who lived on islands of Lake Pátzcuaro were among the primary lineages represented in the text who sought to provide a narrative of their own histories in ways that reflected ongoing tensions between these two groups. Nevertheless, they came together to produce the text in order to uphold their claims as the rightful Indigenous rulers of Michoacán.<sup>22</sup> They highlighted the conquests of their male rulers in these narratives. The anonymous Franciscan chronicler also had his own interests in mind when producing the text as he noticeably left out the role of clerical officials from the text, including the renown bishop of Michoacán Vasco de Quiroga. Instead, the anonymous chronicler highlighted the Tarascans' interactions with the friars and even devoted a section to how the Natives perceived the Christian monks as supernatural beings from the underworld.<sup>23</sup> This omission was likely due

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<sup>22</sup> Angélica Jimena Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán (1539-1541) & the Politics of Representation in Colonial Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 17-27. As a result, the Cazonci's Uanacaze relatives tolerated the seniority of the Islander Don Pedro Cuiniarángari as the Indigenous governor of Michoacán after Tzintzicha Tangáxoan's death despite the fact he was not a blood relative of the irecha. This allowed the deceased Cazonci's children to serve as governors of Michoacán after Don Pedro's death.

<sup>23</sup> Jerónimo de Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán* (Barcelona: Red ediciones, S.L., 2014), 197-198. According to the chronicler, the Tarascans were astonished that the friars dressed humbly and were not accompanied by women. They thought the priests were undead men who secretly went to the underworld at

to the fact that mendicant orders like the Franciscans came into direct conflict with the Church on numerous occasions. One of these conflicts revolved around the ability of Franciscans to provide religious instruction to Indigenous peoples, which was opposed by various clerical officials.<sup>24</sup> The absence of Quiroga and other holy officials for their roles in the evangelization of the Tarascans in the *Relación* is reflective of this conflict. In many cases these conflicts with the bishop were personal as some like the Franciscan Fray Maturino Gilberti was an opponent of Quiroga. He repeatedly accused the bishop of overworking the Natives and Quiroga accused Gilberti of heresy and for producing his dictionaries on the Tarascan language.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, this may have led the anonymous Franciscan author of the *Relación* to inscribe patriarchal, Christian-like qualities onto the Indigenous actors in his text.

The anonymous friar-chronicler of the *Relación* may be partly responsible for projecting a Tarascan worldview that embraced Spanish notions of patriarchy. While he states in the prologue to the text that he was only translating what the Native elders related to him, he also admits to including his interpretive voice to clarify Tarascan practices to his reader, the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, in this case, the pen of the Spanish chronicler alters the voice of the Indigenous informants. James Krippner-Martinez has observed that the friar-compiler and his

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night where they returned to their women. The monks were also believed to be mystical beings who did not have mothers and could see the present and future by looking at holy water.

<sup>24</sup> Martin Austin Nesvig, *Promiscuous Power: An Unorthodox History of New Spain* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018), 48-78.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-70. Gilberti went as far as to call Quiroga an egotist and instructed Natives not to listen to him.

<sup>26</sup> Eugene R. Craine and Reginald C. Reindorp, eds., trans., *The Chronicles of Michoacán (Relación de Michoacán)*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 8. *The Chronicles of Michoacán* is the first English language translation of the *Relación de Michoacán*. It should not be confused with the *Crónica de Michoacán*, which is a historical account of Michoacán that was written by fray Pablo Beaumont sometime before his death in 1778.

Native allies often described Tarascan customs and attributes in a manner that also reflected Christian values. Angélica Jimena Afanador-Pujol adds, however, that to argue that the friar was merely imposing European ideas into the text would be too simplistic since the Tarascans also set out to portray themselves and their men as morally superior, strong, and brave. Nobles from the Uanacaze dynasty who informed the accounts in the *Relación*, for instance, depicted the emblematic founder of the state, Tariacuri, as a religious devotee who was also a virtuous husband and conqueror that practiced sexual restraint and resisted the urge to indulge in drunkenness. Indigenous artists who produced the manuscript's images also contributed to these hypermasculinized discourses by depicting the ruler lighting fires for his god as he sat alongside his bow and arrow while his wife committed adultery with two men (fig. I.1). Such qualities may have resonated with the Franciscan author who also valued such qualities amongst the Tarascan Christian converts.<sup>27</sup> Both Spanish chroniclers and Indigenous informants, then, participated in the dual production of androcentric narratives of the pre-Hispanic Tarascan state.

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<sup>27</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 59-63; Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 114-117.



Figure I.1. Tariacuri prays while his wife commits adultery with two men. Source: Angélica Jimena Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán & the Politics of Representation*, Plate 20.

### Hypermasculinity and Tarascan Historicity

Indigenous informants reacted to their humiliation and feminization by Spaniards by placing male figures at the center of their history. Hypermasculinity, which I define in the following paragraphs, is a useful modern term for describing the process in which representations of male authority figures of the Tarascan state, such as the *irecha*, governing elites, noblemen, warriors, and male deities, were imbued with exemplary masculine attributes. These historical texts romanticize the Tarascan men as “founding fathers” of sorts. For example, as Roberto Martínez González highlights, the narratives in the *Relación de Michoacán* depict the Tarascan founding fathers from the Uacúsecha dynasty with “exaggerated” masculine qualities as young men who were Chichimec hunters and warriors with direct ties to the solar deity Curicáueri.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, these text ridiculed non-Uacúsecha enemies that did not possess these

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<sup>28</sup> Roberto Martínez González, “La dimensión mítica de la peregrinación tarasca,” *Journal de la société de américanistas* 96, no. 1 (2010), 39-45.

hypermasculine “Chichimeca” virtues (“Chichimeca” is discussed and deconstructed further in Chapter 4). Men were depicted as immature boys, feminized men, drunkards, deceivers, and enemies when they fell out of the norm of this Tarascan hegemonic masculinity.

Before continuing, I would like to clarify that the difference between *masculinity* and *hypermasculinity* in the context of this dissertation is that the former refers to a social construct and the latter describes a hegemonic standard of masculinity. This dissertation employs a social constructionist definition of masculinity to define it simply as the social customs and expectations that a given society places on the male body.<sup>29</sup> In this dissertation, masculinities (and femininities) are understood to be social constructs and, therefore, qualities and attributes are *not* understood to be universal across all societies and cultures around the world.<sup>30</sup>

Masculinity is, then, a dynamic social construct referring to one’s gender. For that matter, masculinity is also distinct from biological sex. To that regard, Kimmel adds that “‘Sex’ refers to the biological apparatus, the male and female; ‘gender’ is masculinity and femininity—what it means to be a man or a woman.” Masculinity, moreover, does *not* refer to the male *sex* but, instead, to a given culture’s expectations of what it means to be a male.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, Judith Halberstam emphasizes, masculinity is not a term that is restricted to men since women have also

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<sup>29</sup> I borrow my social constructionist definition of masculinity from Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 3-4. See pages 116-120 in Kimmel, *The Gendered Society*, for a discussion on social constructionist approach to defining masculinity and femininity. As Raewyn Connell makes clear, there are, in fact, multiple ways in which the term masculinity can be defined and these definitions vary according to approach. Here, I have relegated myself to taking a social constructivist approach to describing masculinity. For more see Connell, *Masculinities*, 67-71.

<sup>30</sup> Kimmel, *The Gendered Society*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

been described in masculine terms both historically and in the present as tomboys, butches, and masculine men.<sup>32</sup> The term masculinity is used interchangeably with the terms manhood, manliness, and maleness throughout this dissertation, which all also refer to the socially constructed expectations placed on male bodies (as well as female bodies exhibiting similar qualities).

The term “hypermasculinity” was coined by the psychologists Donald L. Mosher and Mark Sirkin and used today by gender scholars to study inflated male attitudes that they described as “macho.” These macho attitudes were defined and measured by three characteristics: (1) calloused sexual attitudes towards women, (2) homophobic beliefs, as well as (3) the perception of violence as manly and danger as exciting.<sup>33</sup> These three qualities of the definition resonate with this dissertation, first, because the men in the sixteenth-century documents studied in this dissertation relate disparaging views of women as adulterers, demonic, treacherous spies, and deceivers. Second, on rare occasions, some of these documents—particularly in the *relaciones geográficas* and the trial documents describing the trial of the Cazonci (referred to as the *Proceso* throughout this dissertation)—ridicule men who engage in homosexual sodomy. Third, the sources often cite moments in which Indigenous men demonstrate masculinity through violence, warfare, and other acts of danger. In sum, hypermasculinity refers to the projection of masculine qualities such as physical strength, dominance over women, and inclination towards violence. Men who fall out of the norm of this

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<sup>32</sup> Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 1-43.

<sup>33</sup> Donald L. Mosher and Mark Sirkin, “Measuring a Macho Personality Constellation,” *Journal of Research in Personality* 18 (1984) 150-163; Kimmel, *The Gendered Society*, 67, 108.



hegemonic masculine bravado were disparaged as effeminate, sodomites, immature boys, and people of immoral values.

Hypermasculinity, then, refers to a hegemonic standard of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinities, according to Connell and Messerschmidt, are the dominant standards of masculinities that often subordinate other notions of masculinity through various methods such as “discursive centrality, institutionalization, and the marginalization or delegitimization of alternatives....”<sup>34</sup> In this process, men seek to assert their power over other men and women not through force but by projecting exemplary masculine traits such as physical strength, intellect, or political authority. The school of hegemonic masculinity builds from the Gramscian tradition which elaborates how the state and bourgeoisie exhibit power over the masses, peasants, and proletariat through political institutions.<sup>35</sup> Instead of focusing on state power, hegemonic masculinities studies study how people—even those from marginalized groups—can assert their sense of superiority over others by projecting manly virtues.<sup>36</sup> In this sense, power does not refer to state authority but social, political, or physical qualities one possesses or may claim to possess to claim hegemony. As Foucault states, “Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex

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<sup>34</sup> R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (Dec., 2005): 846.

<sup>35</sup> James W. Messerschmidt, *Hegemonic Masculinity: Formulation, Reformulation, and Amplification* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 26.

<sup>36</sup> Kopano Ratele, “Currents against gender transformation of South African men: relocating marginality to the centre of research and theory of masculinities,” *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies* 9, no. 1 (2014): 30-44.

strategical situation in a particular society.”<sup>37</sup> In this dissertation, I describe hypermasculinity as a hegemonic tool used to assert one’s masculine power over others. Hypermasculinity was an exclusive quality, especially to Tarascan men who were warriors, political authorities, and spiritual figures. Yet, commoners and nonelites also held their own notions of masculinity and asserted them in subtle ways such as through challenging the authority of corrupt Tarascan and Spanish elites or by deserting armies headed to fight other Indigenous groups. Masculine authority was, then, contested and shifted amongst Tarascans in positions of power and those who were not. As best described by Foucault, power is “the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable.”<sup>38</sup> In short, this dissertation studies how colonialism influenced the ways Native men in positions of authority constructed ideals about what it meant to be an authoritative man in both their histories and historical present. Performing hypermasculinity allowed Indigenous nobles to attain privileged positions of power and authority during the sixteenth century. In the context of this dissertation, the term hypermasculinity is used to describe androcentric (male-centered) projections of Tarascan culture, history, and society in colonial texts produced during the sixteenth century.

Hypermasculinity is also a useful term to describe the gendered power struggles between colonized peoples and colonizers within the colonial establishment. Martin Austin Nesvig uses the term hypermasculinity to describe the political violence, public culture, and slanderous

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<sup>37</sup> Michael Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 93.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

statements made by Spanish men against Crown officials, missionaries, clergymen, and encomenderos against other opponents who threatened to undermine their authority in early colonial Michoacán.<sup>39</sup> Mrinalini Sinha uses the term to describe European colonization in nineteenth-century India in which British colonials elevated themselves as manly while feminizing the Bengali middle class. She observes that English depictions of the unmanly Indian were shaped by a specific historical moment “derived from the specific power relations” in which the Bengali middle class became increasingly educated in European universities and adopted British customs.<sup>40</sup> The Bengali men and intelligentsia who challenged unjust colonial laws, prompted a negative response from the British as well as other Indian men who chastised their adoption of “effeminate” English values.<sup>41</sup> Various concepts in her work applicable to the Tarascan context; First, regarding feminization, Tarascan elites used colonial documents to masculinize themselves while disparaging other men and women within the colonial system. Second, Sinha underscores how these hypermasculine depictions were shaped by both colonizers and the colonized, echoing how Spaniards and Indigenous peoples both co-constructed gender and patriarchal norms during the early colonial period. Third, Tarascan hypermasculinity was constructed as Tarascan elites faced their own power struggles under Spanish colonialism as their lands were taken and their subjects were conscripted into forced labor practices in the mines

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<sup>39</sup> Nesvig, *Promiscuous Power*, 96; *Ibid.*, 128. According to Nesvig, “The public assaults, insults, and slanderous statements... of a region like Michoacán took place within a hypermasculine world not only of clergy but of public political culture. In other words, public insult expressed a public ‘semiotics of power.’”

<sup>40</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, “Giving Masculinity a History: Some Contributions from the Historiography of Colonial India,” *Gender & History* 11, no. 3 (1999), 453-454.

<sup>41</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the late nineteenth century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 1-5.

and fields. The royal decrees passed throughout the sixteenth century reveal how they were compelled to prove their ties to Tarascan noble lineages in order to acquire political privileges. Fourth, Sinha also observes how the market forces of imperialism also shaped these colonial gendered depictions as the British depended on Indian men as cheap labor as well as troops to help retain British possessions overseas. Similarly, the Spanish relied on Tarascan *caciques*, *gobernadores*, and *principales* to ensure a steady supply of human labor from the commoners in their villages who worked in the mines, agricultural fields, as well as public works through the abusive *encomienda* and *repartimiento* systems.<sup>42</sup> Tarascan men were also conscripted to conquer and defend the Spanish colonial territories. The first campaigns began under Olid who used Tarascan forces to subjugate Colima in 1522 and later by Guzmán who forcefully took Tarascan conscripts in chains to take part in his campaign to conquer Nueva Galicia.<sup>43</sup> Thus, Tarascan hypermasculine rhetoric served as a useful tool for facilitating the Spanish exploitation of Michoacán while also serving the interests of Indigenous elites and, in many cases, their communities.

## HYPERMASCULINITY AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This dissertation draws on previous scholarship in the field of masculinities to highlight how Indigenous hypermasculinities were projected in pre-conquest narratives of the Tarascan

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<sup>42</sup> The *encomienda* was a colonial institution where Indigenous peoples were legally entrusted to a Spaniard and paid him with labor and/or tribute in return for Christian religious instruction. The *encomienda* system was later abolished in 1542 due to complaints of abuses of the native peoples under this system. See John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire: A Concise History of Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 45; A2-A3. The *encomienda* was replaced with the *repartimiento* system, which repeated many of the abuses under the *encomienda* system but under a different name. The *repartimiento* system still allowed for the conscription of Indigenous labor. See Ida Altman, Sarah Cline, and Juan Javier Pescador, *The Early History of Greater Mexico* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), 150-151.

<sup>43</sup> Ida Altman, *The War for Mexico's West: Indians and Spaniards in New Galicia, 1524-1550* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 28-30.

state relating to the expansion of its borderlands. It contributes to studies on gender and colonialism by decentering narratives of European colonials that, in previous decades, largely focused on white women in the frontier as well as European men.<sup>44</sup> Since the 1970s, masculinities scholarship produced in both the global north and global south have challenged essentialist notions that there was a universal “male sex role” in all human societies through case studies that have uncovered how human societies’ standards of what maleness is are multifaceted (plural), hierarchal and hegemonic, contradictory, and dynamic. However, RaeWynn Connell, a leading scholar in masculinities studies, has called on researchers to go further and study masculinities have transformed on a world scale by studying how hegemonic standards of masculinity have been globalized through processes such as European colonization.<sup>45</sup> This work contributes to this trajectory by studying how Indigenous notions of masculinities, instead of white “settler masculinity” were articulated in the midst of colonization. Unfortunately, there are no pre-conquest Tarascan texts that can be used as a point of reference to study Tarascan gender customs, although the lack of documentary evidence has been supplemented by archeological and anthropological studies.<sup>46</sup> Due to this limitation, the author does not assume that the Tarascans did not already have preexisting notions of masculinity that could also be described in modern terms as “hypermasculine” before the coming of the Spaniards. It is evident that the Uacúsecha did hold a dynastic custom where leadership was passed on to male descendants. Yet,

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<sup>44</sup> Durba Ghosh, "Gender and Colonialism: Expansion or Marginalization?" *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 3 (2004): 737-741; Clive Moore, "Colonial manhood and masculinities," *Journal of Australian Studies* 22, no. 56 (1998): 35-50.

<sup>45</sup> R.W. Connell, "Masculinities and Globalization," *Men and Masculinities* 1, no. 1 (July 1998): 3-23.

<sup>46</sup> Pollard, *Tariacuri's Legacy*, 178-180.

the sixteenth-century documentary records used in this dissertation were altered through the voice of the Spanish chroniclers and Indigenous informants who were Christianized and, therefore, make it impossible to ascertain the extent to which Pre-Hispanic gender customs were “purely Tarascan” just as early colonial texts relating to the Mexica are far from being “purely Mexica.” Nevertheless, this dissertation draws on previous works in the field of masculinities scholarship to relate how these Indigenous hypermasculinities in early colonial Michoacán were (1) multifaceted, (2) produced by both colonized and colonizers, (3) often superficial and contradictory, and (4) politicized.

The first element I discuss regarding Indigenous hypermasculinities in early colonial Michoacán emphasizes that the social expectations on what it meant to be a male in Indigenous societies—or any society during any time or place for that matter—are multifaceted and dynamic instead of singular; the plural form of the phrase Indigenous *masculinities* instead of Indigenous *masculinity* emphasizes this.<sup>47</sup> These notions of maleness varied according to occupation, life stage (e.g., child, adolescent, elder), and social class (e.g., noble, commoner, slave). As a comparable example, Sinha’s study of colonialism and masculinity in India, reveals how colonizers and colonized men were not a homogenous groups but, instead, were comprised of people who represented various backgrounds with varied interests who often formed alliances with each other.<sup>48</sup> Just as the English and Bengali differed according to class, gender, and status, Indigenous peoples and Spaniards in colonial Michoacán varied according to racial caste, gender,

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<sup>47</sup> Brendan Hokowhitu, “Taxonomies of Indigeneity: Indigenous Heterosexual Patriarchal Masculinity,” in *Indigenous Men and Masculinities*, edited by Innes and Anderson, 82; Sinha, “Giving Masculinity a History,” 454.

<sup>48</sup> Sinha, *Colonial masculinity*, 1.

occupation, and social status. Pollard's work has shown that Tarascan society was stratified amongst 4 social classes, with (1) the king and lords at the top, (2) followed by nobles known as *principales*, (3) commoners, and then (4) slaves."<sup>49</sup> In this dissertation, four broad categories of hypermasculinities are studied: expansionist masculinities, governing masculinities, female masculinities, and warrior masculinities. While these are the three categories examined, they are, by no means, meant to be exhaustive of the many standards of what it meant to be masculine in the Tarascan world since how these masculinities were practiced varied according to where one fell on the intersectional spectrum of caste, social class, gender, and occupation. Both the interior of the Tarascan state as well as its frontiers, moreover, were comprised of multiple Indigenous groups and distinct families who often worshipped different gods and spoke different languages.<sup>50</sup> For that matter, these different families and ethnolinguistic groups, who also included the Matlatzincas, Cuitlatecas, Otomí, Chontales, and Mazatecos, also had their own gender customs that were distinct from Tarascan gender customs. However, in this dissertation, I center on the projection of Tarascan hypermasculinities.

The second theme of the Indigenous hypermasculinities perspective used in this dissertation stresses that Spanish chroniclers and Indigenous informants both co-produced the Indigenous depictions of male hegemony as they are reflected in these documents. Indeed two centuries later, works such as Fray Pablo Beaumont's *Crónica de Michoacán*, an eighteenth-

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<sup>49</sup> Pollard, *Tariacuri's Legacy*, 60.

<sup>50</sup> See Carlos Paredes Martínez, "El oriente de Michoacán en la época prehispánica. Migraciones y población multilingüe," in *Unidad y variación cultural en Michoacán. Unidad y variación cultural en Michoacán*, eds. Roberto Martínez, Claudia Espejel and Frida Villavicencio (Zamora, Michoacán: El Colegio de Michoacán, UNAM-Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 2016), 45-66; Claudia Espejel, "Diversidad cultural en el reino tarasco," in *Unidad y variación cultural en Michoacán*, 89-116.

century colonial text that used both Spanish and Indigenous sources from the sixteenth century, reproduced such projections of the Tarascan men and their Chichimeca allies in the eastern frontier as a *belicosos* (bellicose) and as hard-working warrior societies.<sup>51</sup> In describing characteristics as hypermasculine, this framework does not suggest that Tarascan projections of maleness are complete inventions since non-Christian gender cosmologies emerge in the sources such as male association with fire and the sun deity Curicáueri and female associations with the moon and earth goddesses Xarátanga and Cuerauáperi. However, Indigenous men become overstated in the sources in ways that reflect European patriarchal practices as “kings” and as monogamous heads of their household. Tarascan men appear regularly in public and political spaces while women are often depicted enclosed in the home.

The sources, therefore, overlook Mesoamerican societal practices of gender complementarity in which Indigenous men and women both engaged in work at the home and in the community as opposed to practicing the divisions in early modern European society where women stayed at home and men conducted public affairs.<sup>52</sup> However, the archeologist and ethnohistorian Helen Perlstein Pollard points out that gender customs among Tarascan elites and commoners differed. Among the Tarascan elite, society was patrilineal as men dominated positions of public authority while their elite women practiced occupations in the home. Elite women, who included wives and daughters, practiced occupations within his palace and were supervised by the principal wife the *ireri*. However, the Tarascan elite household was far from

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<sup>51</sup> Fray Pablo Beaumont, *Crónica de Michoacán por Fray Pablo Beaumont* (México: Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación XVII, 1932), 50.

<sup>52</sup> Lisa Mary Souza quoted in Leah Sneider, “Complementary Relationships” in *Indigenous Men and Masculinities*, 53-66.



patriarchal since women were not forced to stay in the home. They also attended to public ceremonies as well as sacred rituals. Practices amongst commoners reflected gender parallelism in which both men and women engaged in work both inside and outside the home; “Women spun and wove cloth, processed food, marketed goods, and performed a wide range of significant economic roles within and outside the household.”<sup>53</sup> If patriarchy is an institution where men dominated women by secluding them in their homes, this was not a practice amongst Tarascan elites and commoners. This dissertation, therefore, rejects the notion of a preexisting patriarchy within Tarascan state, although the author does not claim that gender roles in Michoacán were egalitarian either.

Third, masculinities scholarship stresses that Tarascan hypermasculinities are superficial and contradictory. Whatever rhetoric was articulated on paper did not always mirror realities on the ground. While the *Relación de Michoacán* claimed that Tarascan principales adhered to rigid codes of conduct that stressed sobriety and monogamy, sixteenth-century court cases reveal complaints leveled against them for excessive drunkenness and engaging in sexual relations with multiple partners (both female and male). Aside from claims made about gender customs, historical claims made in colonial texts were also questionable. In a petition filed by Don Melchor Caltzin, he emphasized the role of his Nahua forefathers in assisting the ruler Tzitzispandáquare in the violent struggle that led to the consolidation of power of the Tarascan state in the city of Tzintzuntzan. In this the end of his testimony, he claimed that the Tarascans submitted peacefully to the Spaniards even though the *Relación de Michoacán* and *Proceso* underscore the violence of the Spanish conquest of Michoacán, thereby contradicting the claims

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<sup>53</sup> Pollard, *Tariacuri's Legacy*, 178-179.

of a bloodless subjugation. However, such fabrication served ulterior motives. In Caltzin's case, the petition led to Caltzin's access to political privileges for Caltzin under the Spanish crown, namely noble status, land, and labor.<sup>54</sup> Such inconsistencies in the sources are no surprise as Kathryn Burns's study of archives in colonial Peru, stresses that colonial documents do not reflect accuracy or transparency, "Rather, the point was to prevail, should one's version of what was right and just be legally challenged."<sup>55</sup> She is correct in describing archives as chessboards because the documents held legal bearing in colonial judicial courts. Texts such as the *Memoria of Don Melchor Caltzin* were the chess pieces used by Indigenous men to seek privileges and power within the colonial system.

A final point emphasized in this dissertation pertaining to Indigenous hypermasculinities is the observation made by First Nations gender scholars regarding how colonial masculinities served social and political purposes that worked in the interests of *both* the Indigenous elite and European colonizers. Scott L. Morgensen points out that colonialist masculinities often work in the favor of the colonial establishment.<sup>56</sup> However, Innes and Anderson's also observe that Indigenous men also benefit from male privileges under the new colonial order.<sup>57</sup> As this dissertation will demonstrate, Indigenous men who invoked their lineage to male leaders helped

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<sup>54</sup> Helen Perlstein Pollard, "Ruling 'Purépecha Chichimeca' in a Tarascan World" in *Political Strategies in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica*, eds. Sarah Kurnick and Joanne Baron (Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2016), 232.

<sup>55</sup> Kathryn Burns, *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 124.

<sup>56</sup> Morgensen, "Cutting the Roots of Colonial Masculinity," 39.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson, "Introduction: Who's Walking With Our Brothers?" In *Indigenous Men and Masculinities*, edited by Innes and Anderson, 11.

them to acquire political privileges within the Spanish colonial administration as governors and cabildo members. However, while some Native elites acquired political positions of power, this did not make them equals with the Spanish colonial administrators who held ultimate political authority. This skewed power dynamic echoes what Kopano Ratele describes as “hegemony within marginality,” which he used to describe the privileged positions of political elites in post-apartheid South Africa who were still subject to the ultimate hegemonic power of multinational capitalist interests.<sup>58</sup>

The Tarascan informants worked with Spaniards to produce these hypermasculine accounts for material benefits, especially to argue that they were the rightful rulers and descendants of what became the Spanish kingdom of Michoacán. Indigenous informants from the Uanacaze family employed the *Relación de Michoacán* to describe their ties to their founding fathers, the *Uacúsecha* (eagles) who were said to be descendants of wandering Chichimeca ancestors who came to the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. The Uanacaze were often depicted with bows and arrows in the images accompanying the *Relación de Michoacán* to emphasize their mastery in warfare and hunting; this is a feature also associated with the Chichimeca. Afanador-Pujol observes that in invoking Chichimeca lineage, they overshadow the role of founding mother from the local village of Naranjan who was not of Uacúsecha descent.<sup>59</sup> When Tarascan nobles conveyed their ancestral ties to these men, this helped to validate their claims as members of the traditional aristocracy which allowed them to attain positions of governance and authority such as Don Pedro Cuiniarángari as well as Tzintzicha Tangáxoan whose descendants would become

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<sup>58</sup> Ratele, "Currents against gender transformation," 31-39.

<sup>59</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 118.

the governors of Michoacán under Spanish rule. These links grew increasingly crucial as bitter power struggles erupted between these Indigenous elites. Men such as Constantino Bravo Huitziméngari, an illegitimate child of the deceased governor Don Antonio Huitziméngari, fought his half-brother's claim to the governorship after their father died in 1562.<sup>60</sup> The political coproduction of these early colonial sources also reveals that relations between Natives and Spaniards were not wholly antagonistic. As Krippner-Martínez observes, when elite male indigenes allied with the Franciscan chronicler of the *Relación de Michoacán* provided them with the ability to relate their version of the conquest. In turn, these religious officials gained the confidence of Tarascan informants in their efforts to convert them to Catholicism.<sup>61</sup> This alliance between natives and the Franciscans was crucial considering the often violent opposition the latter faced from the archbishop of Michoacán over jurisdictional authority.<sup>62</sup> Indigenous men, therefore, worked with Spanish colonial authorities to assert their lineage to the pre-Hispanic ruling elite in order to attain political positions of power and authority. Spaniards, in turn, benefitted from these alliances for their own political purposes.

While political power was a favored outcome for Indigenous men in the production of hypermasculinities, this did not mean that power relations between the colonized and the colonizers came into equilibrium. Within the spectrum of hegemonic masculinities, Indigenous

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<sup>60</sup> Rodrigo Martínez Baracs, *Convivencia y utopía: el gobierno indio y español de la "ciudad de Mechuacan," 1521-1580* (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2005), 297-353.

<sup>61</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 49.

<sup>62</sup> Nesvig, *Promiscuous Power*. Chapters 3 and 4 describe futile efforts by the Catholic Church to assert the authority of the archbishop and Inquisition in Michoacán along with the numerous violent confrontations that emerged from these conflicts; J. Benedict Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán: The Spanish Domination of the Tarascan Kingdom in Western Mexico, 1521-1530* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 83-96.

hypermasculinities would also be considered what Connell and Messerschmidt consider a *protest masculinity* as well as a *marginalized masculinity*. A protest masculinity refers to “compensatory hypermasculinities that are formed in reaction to social positions lacking economic and political power.”<sup>63</sup> To subvert their marginal political power during the early colonial period, Tarascan noblemen helped to construct historical narratives that centered on their male lineages, inherited political power, and boisterousness in order to acquire political privileges from the Spanish crown. Marginalized masculinities refer to qualities of maleness in a given culture that are trivialized and/or discriminated against due to unequal relations external to gender relations such as class, race, ethnicity, and age.<sup>64</sup> In this dissertation, then, Tarascan hypermasculinity is marginalized within the sixteenth-century colonial establishment due to the Tarascans’ marginal status as a conquered peoples. While Indigenous men could adopt Christianity, exercise European patriarchal practices, and acquire positions of political authority, they were ultimately marginalized as colonial subjects and as a non-white racial caste. As best stated by Hokowhitu, “Indigenous masculinities are both imbibed with privilege and denied; both performing colonial heteropatriarchy and resisting it.”<sup>65</sup>

In sum, the following are the five main ideas derived from masculinities scholarship that inform how Indigenous hypermasculinities were constructed and performed in sixteenth-century Michoacán:

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<sup>63</sup> Messerschmidt, *Hegemonic Masculinities*, 29.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Hokowhitu, “Taxonomies of Indigeneity,” 83.

1. There is not a monolithic of Indigenous hypermasculinity: there are multiple depictions of Indigenous hypermasculinities.
2. Indigenous hypermasculinities were co-produced and performed in colonial documents by *both* colonizers and Indigenous Peoples. These colonial Indigenous hypermasculinities contain elements of traditional Native practices but overstate the significance of the male body, often in ways that mirror European patriarchal practices.
3. The Indigenous hypermasculinities related in colonial documents are often superficial and contradictory.
4. The projection of Indigenous hypermasculinities in colonial texts often served as an attempt to attain power and influence within the colonial system in favor of Indigenous men.

This framework is used to highlight the motives and historical contexts that inspired the projection of inflated notions of Indigenous masculinity to Spanish audiences who could use these accounts to facilitate conquest or to place Indigenous men in positions of authority. The following literature review discusses how this dissertation will contribute to the existing borderlands scholarship related to gender and masculinities. Finally, this introduction will conclude with an outline of the chapters and the areas they will cover in this dissertation.

#### **GENDER IN COLONIAL AND BORDERLANDS HISTORY**

The literature in borderlands history largely continues to center on narratives of European notions of boundaries and space and how Indigenous peoples in North America contested them. As Babcock points out, this historical cannon ignores the realities that Native peoples had notions of territoriality, the “political control of territory,” with the exception of William Cronon

who examined this amongst the peoples who inhabited the Great Plains.<sup>66</sup> Studies of Indigenous borderlands—before the arrival of European colonizers—are, therefore, not new and are long overdue for discussion in the field of borderlands history. Ethnohistorians and archeologists in the United States have studied the Tarascan and Aztec frontiers since the 1980s. Notable works include Shirley Gorenstein’s study of the Tarascan border territory of Acámbaro as well as the essays studying the Aztec frontiers in *Aztec Imperial Strategies* published in 1996.<sup>67</sup> In Mexico, studies of the Tarascan and Aztec boundaries date back to the 1940s until the present.<sup>68</sup>

Nevertheless, borderlands historians continue to lag in producing scholarship studying Pre-Hispanic frontier zones. John R. Wunder and Pekka Hämäläinen make a similar observation in their critique of Adelman and Aron’s 1999 synthetic essay of the field. They point out how the borderlands scholars did not recognize that Indigenous people had their notions of empire (and, I would add, *territoriality*) in pre-conquest times: “They evidently believe empires are European and lead to nation-states; empires are never indigenous, nor is there such an entity as an Indian nation.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Matthew Babcock, “Territoriality and the Historiography of Early North America,” *Journal of American Studies* 50, no. 3 (2016), 518-519.

<sup>67</sup> Shirley Gorenstein, *Acambaro: Frontier Settlement on the Tarascan-Aztec Border* (Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology); Frances F. Berdan, Richard E. Blanton, Elizabeth Hill Boone, Mary G. Hodge, Michael E. Smith, and Emily Umberger, *Aztec Imperial Strategies* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 1996).

<sup>68</sup> Carlos Paredes Martínez, “Los pueblos originarios del oriente y la tierra caliente de Michoacán. Ensayo Historiográfico. (Época prehispánica y colonial),” in ...*Alzaban banderas de papel: Los pueblos originarios del oriente y la tierra caliente de Michoacán*, eds. Carlos Paredes Martínez and Jorge Amós Martínez Ayala (México, D.F.: Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, 2012), 18-67.

<sup>69</sup> John R. Wunder and Pekka Hämäläinen, “Of Lethal Places and Lethal Essays,” *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (Oct., 1999), 1229.

Archeologists and ethnohistorians studying the Tarascan and Aztec frontiers have uncovered the social and political significance of the pre-Hispanic polities and borderlands through perspectives that resonate with contemporary scholarship in borderlands history. For instance, Gorenstein cites historians of the North American frontiers to emphasize how the space between the Tarascans and Aztecs was a frontier instead of a boundary zone because their territories were unmarked and continuously shifting.<sup>70</sup> Michael E. Smith's essay on the Aztec border territories, referred to as "strategic provinces," underscores how these border territories experienced relaxed tribute demands and limited political control from the core city of Tenochtitlan in comparison to other subjugated areas that resided within the Aztec interior.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, the archeologist and geographer Karin Lefebvre has observed how the Tarascans exercised limited authority and control over subjects that lived in borderline territories such as Acámbaro.<sup>72</sup> Since the Tarascan-Aztec frontier zones were dangerous places to live due to constant threats of warfare between both Indigenous states, exercising limited control over the inhabitants not only encouraged them to remain loyal subjects but also prevented them from siding with the enemy. In this case, the Tarascan-Aztec borderlands illustrate the core-periphery relationships observed in borderlands scholarship in which the core regions ("the state") exercise limited dominance over peripheries. This relationship also speaks to works that have underscored how Indigenous groups living in the frontiers have been able to undermine state power through

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<sup>70</sup> Gorenstein, *Acambaro*, 5.

<sup>71</sup> Michael E. Smith, "The Strategic Provinces," in *Aztec Imperial Strategies* by Berdan, Blanton, Boone, Hodge, Smith, and Umberger, 137-150.

<sup>72</sup> Karine Lefebvre, "Acámbaro, en los confines del reino tarasco: una aculturación discreta (1440-1521 d.C.)," *Trace: Dinámicas Especiales en Arqueología* 59 (2011): 74-89.



negotiating control and also through manipulating power struggles between opposing political entities.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, while borderlands history has explored these themes in the colonial period, the field scarcely has done so in a Pre-Hispanic context. This work seeks to help fill this void by conducting a cultural history of the Tarascan borderlands with an emphasis on how sixteenth-century texts described Indigenous peoples' notions of maleness.

Perhaps the first work in the field of borderlands history describing a sense of masculine bravado in the frontier can be found in Frederick Jackson Turner. His 1893 essay described the movement of so-called independent Anglo "pioneers" who came in waves as farmers and "men of capital and enterprise" as they colonized the North American continent.<sup>74</sup> As Turner romanticized the Anglo-American, his student, Herbert Eugene Bolton, championed the roles of the Spaniards in the frontier. His 1917 essay describes these actors coming to the North American frontiers as missionaries, conquistadors, and presidial soldiers and, using the missions, they established a frontier institution that facilitated the conquest of Native peoples through religious conversion to Christianity, assimilation ("civilizing" them), and exploitation of their labor.<sup>75</sup> Of course, Turner, Bolton, and others who followed were not particularly interested in the subject of gender as historians and academics in other fields were in the last two decades of the twentieth century. David J. Weber observes that Bolton's students went on to publish various books on the Spanish and French frontiers from the 1914-1968. Notably, they were focused on

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<sup>73</sup> Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," *The Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (September 2011): 348.

<sup>74</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Report on the American Historical Association* (1893): 206-207.

<sup>75</sup> Herbert Eugene Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies," *The American Historical Review* 23, no.1 (Oct., 1917): 43.

narratives of Spanish and French colonists instead of Indigenous actors.<sup>76</sup> Similar to Bolton, John Francis Bannon's *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier* published in 1974 argued that Spaniards living in the North American borderlands should be recognized as remarkable frontiersmen just like their Anglo American counterparts in the United States.<sup>77</sup> Instead, they were seeking to highlight the roles Euro-American actors played in colonizing the North American frontiers.

It would not be until the 1980s that borderlands historians began to embrace gender as a mode of analysis in ways that potentially shed light into colonial masculinities studies. In 1987, Gloria Anzaldua's published perhaps one of the most influential works entitled *Borderlands/La Frontera* that would spark discussions of gender in Chicana/o and borderlands history as she discussed the U.S.-Mexico border in relation to Anglo dominance in the Southwest, patriarchy, homophobia, and racism.<sup>78</sup> In the previous year, Joan W. Scott's widely cited essay, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" urged historians in various subject fields to produce works that can historicize how human societies constructed sexual difference and gender inequality.<sup>79</sup> Medieval scholars, in particular, have contributed to numerous works studying how displays of independence, authority, aggression, and sexual virility reflected maleness in Premodern Europe.<sup>80</sup> Masculinity studies on the colonial and post-colonial world have also

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<sup>76</sup> David J. Weber, "Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands," *The American Historical Review* 91 (Feb., 1986), 69; 69, fn. 21.

<sup>77</sup> John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 238

<sup>78</sup> Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).

<sup>79</sup> Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1065.

<sup>80</sup> Masculinity, aggression, and independence as they are practiced by knights, students, and craft workers are discussed in Karras, *From Boys to Men*; In page 33 of Romero's, *Making War and Minting Christians*, he explains the importance of owning a home and mastering a trade as a measure of English male independence; The

thrived in the “Global South” regarding studies of masculinities in Africa, the Philippines, India, and South America.<sup>81</sup> However, historians of the borderlands and greater North America continue to lag behind the rest of the fields in producing works related to masculinities. Nevertheless, as the following survey of works concerned with gender in colonial borderlands history demonstrates, borderlands historians have produced other significant contributions regarding femininity and masculinity.

Borderlands scholarship concerning women has emphasized the roles they played in resisting Spanish violence and as subjects who needed protection from Native American enemies. Antonia I. Castañeda’s work on women in colonial California is perhaps the earliest scholarship in the field of history related to gender and the frontier as she discussed how women resisted Spanish authority. Namely, she discusses how missionaries sought to restrict Indigenous and mestiza women’s sexual and religious practices. These attempts were not always successful since they resisted these attempts through acts of violence and rebellion.<sup>82</sup> A similar observation can also be made about Tarascan noble women in *the Relación de Michoacán* who beat the Spaniards with sticks when they caught them stealing treasures from the Cazonci’s palace.<sup>83</sup>

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collection in Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent, eds., *Governing Masculinities in the Early Modern Period* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011) provides an extensive collection of essays on the importance of demonstrating authority, or governing masculinities; Works that detail the importance of displaying heterosexual virility and possessing male genitals include Edward Behrend-Martínez, “Manhood and the Neutered Body in Early Modern Spain” *Journal Social History* 38, no. 4 (Summer 2005): 1073-1093; Christian Berco, *Sexual Hierarchies, Public Status: Men, Sodomy, and Society in Spain’s Golden Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

<sup>81</sup> Raewyn Connell, “Margin becoming centre: for a world-centered rethinking of masculinities,” *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies* (2014): 1-15; Raewyn Connell, “Masculinities in global perspective: hegemony, contestation, and changing structures of power,” *Theory and Society* 45 (2016): 303-318.

<sup>82</sup> Antonia I. Castañeda, “Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769-1848: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family,” *California History* 76, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 1997): 230-259.

<sup>83</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 79.

Another work describing the intersections of violence and masculinity in the colonial borderlands is Ana María Alonso's *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier*. It studies how men from Spanish and mestizo communities, known as *serranos*, who lived in the Chihuahuan frontier developed a "warrior spirit" in which they saw themselves as defenders of their "civilized" women against the natives whom they referred to as savages.<sup>84</sup> While Alonso does not employ the term "hypermasculinity" herself, her book informs the discussion in this dissertation about how men in the Tarascan state developed their own hypermasculine attitudes in contrast to enemy groups such as the Mexica as well as other ethnic polities in pre-Hispanic Michoacán who opposed the Uanacaze bloodline.

Women in the borderlands, however, are not passive agents but also crucial elements in establishing negotiations, diplomacy, and power. Juliana Barr's *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* explores how Native American notions of kinship and gender were essential mediating factors in establishing peace accords in the Texas borderlands. A notable observation that the author makes is that the Spanish crippled their efforts at attaining peace because women in the frontier did not accompany them; the female presence signaled peaceful relations as opposed to war. Spanish rape and violence toward Native women also crippled efforts to end cycles of violence between the conquistadors and Indigenous peoples.<sup>85</sup> Barr's work is an essential contribution to borderlands scholarship in showing the significance of gender relations and military power in a frontier where Indigenous people exercised military

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<sup>84</sup> Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1995), 6-7.

<sup>85</sup> Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 64-68.

dominance over the Spaniards. Comparatively, the Tarascans also outnumbered the Spaniards within their domains, but political factions amongst the nobility crippled their efforts to respond to the Spanish invasion as a unified front. Nevertheless, they communicated peaceful intentions with the conquistadors by providing them with women during one of their first diplomatic encounters. These women communicated their tie through kinship by referring to the Spaniards as *tarascue*, or “in-laws.” In turn, the Spanish referred to their people as *tarascos* (Tarascans), which, for unclear reasons, was a term of embarrassment.<sup>86</sup>

Pekka Hämäläinen’s (2008) *Comanche Empire* adds to Barr’s discussion in showing how gender and empire building in the borderlands was also essential to keeping Indigenous peoples in power. He describes an Indigenous borderland setting where Native American power undercut the Spanish, French, Mexican, and Anglo-American colonial projects.<sup>87</sup> While the author’s work is not a gender history, per se, he communicates how Comanche notions of masculine honor influenced their military practices. Men who fought in battles and raids became recognized as distinguished warriors and marriageable men with access to women. These opportunities inspired young Comanches who wanted to prove their worth as husbands and providers to partake in dangerous expeditions against the Spanish, Mexicans, as well as rival Indigenous polities.<sup>88</sup> The exploration of such Indigenous warrior masculinities as they applied to men in the Tarascan borderlands is the subject of the fifth chapter in this dissertation.

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<sup>86</sup> Cynthia L. Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings: Authorship and Identity in the Relación de Michoacán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004) 29.

<sup>87</sup> Pekka Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 3.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 267-269.

Lastly, Todd R. Romero's, *Making War and Minting Christians: Masculinity, Religion, and Colonialism in Early Colonial New England* is one of the most recent texts that have explicitly studied Indigenous and European notions of masculinity in colonial North America. In his study of Narraganset and Puritan interactions in colonial New England, Romero observes that Indigenous and Anglo gender customs interacted in "counterpoint," meaning that while these two groups had distinct cultures that both held similar notions of when a male transitioned from boyhood to adulthood such as age, status, and physical accomplishment. Differences in masculine customs became evident as English colonists feminized Indigenous men because their women usually farmed, was considered a masculine task in the agrarian Puritan society. In contrast, Indigenous men engaged in hunting to demonstrate their masculinity, which the colonists viewed as a lazy, leisurely activity. Similarly, the Spanish described male authority figures—who the Tarascans referred to as the *irecha*—as kings (*reyes*), lords (*hombres*), priests (*sacerdotes*), and valiant men (*hombres valientes*). They also marveled at how their Indigenous allies in Michoacán were relatively skilled in archery, hunting, and warfare. Focused on the Native Americans and the English in colonial New England, Romero investigates how European and Native notions of masculinity and gender developed in counterpoint throughout the seventeenth century through missionary efforts and warfare. He shows that the English and Narragansetts both held similar standards of manhood in which various factors such as age, status, and physical accomplishment determined a male's transition from boyhood to adulthood.<sup>89</sup> Differences in masculine customs became evident as English colonists feminized Indigenous men because their women usually farmed, which they considered a masculine task in the

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<sup>89</sup> Romero, *Making War and Minting Christians*, 7-11

agrarian Puritan society. In contrast, Indigenous men engaged in hunting to demonstrate their masculinity, which the colonists viewed as a lazy, leisurely activity.<sup>90</sup> Romero's work informs our understanding of how Indigenous and European notions of masculinity in the borderlands might have held similarities but also how they differed culturally.

In sum, these recent works in colonial and borderlands history attest to the evolution of the field's incorporation gender as a useful category of analysis to describe relationships between men, women, Indigenous peoples, and Spaniards as they interacted through warfare, legal institutions, and imperialism. Despite these inroads, there is still much work to be done in the field. Except for Alonso and Romero's works, most of the aforementioned authors did not pay explicit attention to masculinities even in works where gender was an overarching theme. Borderlands history texts that do examine masculinity usually center on Spanish notions of patriarchy and how native people adopt, assimilate or resist them. They rarely discuss Indigenous notions of maleness.

#### **CHAPTER OUTLINE AND SOURCES**

The following chapters address distinct categories of hypermasculinities that emerge in colonial documents and how they were projected by Indigenous and Spanish men in early colonial Michoacán. The chapters use the sources previously mentioned in this dissertation such as the *Relación de Michoacán*, the *Proceso*, and the *Memoria de Don Melchor Caltzin*. Additionally, I employ the *relaciones geográficas*, a fifty-question survey commissioned by King Philip II that were written between 1575-1585. They were composed by the *alcaldes mayores*, *corregidores*, and *escribanos* with the support of local village elders and leaders. They

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 74.

provide rich ethnographic information on pre-Hispanic customs such as diet, governance, and religious customs. Additionally, I incorporate a series of royal decrees collected at the Archivo General de la Nación de México (AGN) that pertain to the former Tarascan frontier territories of Acámbaro and Taximaroa. I also use other decrees passed in the greater Michoacán region that were compiled and transcribed by Carlos Paredes Martínez, Víctor Cárdenas Morales, Iraís Piñón Flores and Trinidad Pulido Solís in 1994.<sup>91</sup> These decrees are useful in describing legal disputes and privileges relating to Indigenous elites in Michoacán. Another valuable set of archival sources that inform the gendered analysis in this dissertation are series of legal documents held at the Archivo Histórico Municipal de Pátzcuaro (AHMP). I also incorporate a series of published primary sources written by conquistadors, religious authorities, and crown officials. While most of these sources are not new discoveries in the literature pertaining to the Tarascan state, this dissertation conducts an innovative gendered analysis of these sources by showing how masculinities were performed and constructed in these colonial texts.

The first two chapters study how the narratives of the Tarascan borderlands and frontiers in the *Relación de Michoacán* and *relaciones geográficas* shaped the multifaceted hypermasculine depictions of the Tarascan noblemen in both the pre-Hispanic and early colonial period. Chapter 1 studies the construction of expansionist masculinities in which pre-Hispanic noblemen were portrayed strictly as esteemed fighters, warlords, executioners, and “valiant men” (*valientes hombres*). I argue in the first chapter that many of the qualities ascribed to the expansionist Tarascan “founding fathers” was used to convey the notion that the Tarascans were

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<sup>91</sup> Carlos Paredes Martínez, ed., “*Yo por mi visto...*”: *Mandamientos, ordenanzas, licencias y otras disposiciones virreinales del siglo XVI* (Morelia, Michoacán: Casa Chanta Ediciones, CIESAS, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas de Hidalgo, 1994).



also esteemed expansionists on par with their Spanish yet far more superior than the Mexica. As other historians have pointed out, these narratives served political purposes as the descendants of these powerful men utilized these narratives to underscore the significance of the men who came from the city of Tzintzuntzan, the formal capital of the Tarascan state. Throughout the *Relación de Michoacán*, Tzintzuntzan was simply referred to as “Mechuacán,” even though the Spanish recognized Pátzcuaro and, later, Guayangareo (present-day Morelia) as the *ciudad de Mechuacán*. In short, the first chapter examines how the hypermasculinization of Tarascan elites who descended from the city of Tzintzuntzan was a tool to invoke the political significance of the former Purépecha capital that lost its position as a place where governing authority once became concentrated.

The second chapter centers on how the Tarascan borderlands were sites where governing elites constructed their masculinity as loyal governors during the Spanish conquest of Michoacán. A gendered reading of the colonial sources related to the Tarascan-Spanish encounter shows how performing governing masculinity required a balancing act where Indigenous elites sought to portray themselves both as servants of their people as well as allies of the Spanish. Don Pedro Cuiniarángari, the only Indigenous informant mentioned by name in the *Relación de Michoacán*, was advisor to the Cazonci Tzintzicha Tangáxoan and his relation of events during the conquest echo his attempts to appear as a loyalist to both European and Indigenous actors, even though these groups had competing and conflicting interests. This chapter resonates with theoretical insights from anxious masculinities scholarship, which studies how pressures to conform to expected standards of manhood were often contradictory, idealistic, and literally provoked anxiety amongst the men seeking to conform to a particular masculine ideal. Historians have previously examined how the Cazonci, Don Pedro, as well as other high-

ranking Tarascan authorities were often depicted in disparaging terms as traitors, cowards, and incompetent men unable to balance conflicting loyalties. In Chapter 2, I argue that questions pertaining to loyalties played out in the narratives of the Tarascan border regions of Taximaroa and Cuinao. Don Pedro, who provided some of the most damning testimony against the Cazonci during his trial, dispelled notions that he was a traitor to the Tarascans by citing various loyal acts he committed in defense of Tangáxoan, beginning with his fated attempt to gather soldiers to fight the Spanish in Taximaroa. The Cazonci, who was depicted as a weakling by Don Pedro in the *Relación de Michoacán*, appears as a cunning strategist in the *Proceso*. The trial documents pertaining to his execution reveal that the Spanish for his suspected attempt of gathering soldiers to ambush Guzman's armies at Cuinao during the conquest of Nueva Galicia in 1530. The second chapter, then, discusses how events on the Tarascan borderlands informed the hypermasculine virtues inscribed into Don Pedro and Tzintzicha Tangáxoan as loyal governors instead of weak men and opportunists.

The third chapter centers on masculinized depictions of women who played roles in the expansion and defense of the Tarascan borderlands. It pays particular attention to how these exceptional women often appeared to be members of the elite as opposed to the commoner class. Interestingly, they were depicted with traits often ascribed to Tarascan men in the *Relación de Michoacán*. These powerful women emerge as boisterous, vocally assertive, and physically aggressive. This chapter suggests that the projection of female hypermasculinity in the frontiers, especially in the *Relación de Michoacán*, was a rhetorical tool used to exemplify the exceptionalism of the Tarascan confederation as a whole. Colonial texts related to political privileges reveal that during the sixteenth century, Tarascan noble women also benefited from ties to traditional ruling male elites as these kinship ties helped them to acquire some of the same

privileges as their male counterparts during the early colonial period such the ability to own land, to inherit wealth, and their ability to send legal petitions to the viceroy.

The fourth chapter examines the Tarascan warrior cult and how the Otomí and Chichimeca forces in the Tarascan borderlands facing Mexico embodied the hypermasculine characteristics of the ideal fighter. These fighters, who lived in Tierra Caliente region that includes what were once the Acámbaro and Taximaroa Tarascan borderlands territories, were essential elements who fought in alliance with the Spaniards during the so-called Chichimeca Wars and other uprisings that took place in the northern Mexican region such as the Mixtón War in 1540-1542 and the Chichimeca Wars. During this period, the Tarascan borderlands in the northeast became the Spanish Chichimeca borderlands. The sources emphasize that these men who served the Tarascan armies during the pre-Hispanic period were skilled warriors and archers who successfully held back Mexican forces since the reign of Axayacatl to Moteuczoma Xocoyotzin. The *relaciones geográficas* point out that the frontier territories that served the Cazonci, especially in Acámbaro, were not obligated to provide tribute to the Tarascan state and instead offered valuable military service. I suggest that these border territories sought to continue to receive the same privileges they had as frontier communities with relaxed tribute demands by emphasizing the continuing role their men played in providing military service as well as labor under Spanish rule. The men that fought for the Spanish in these battles that came from the Tarascan borderlands received access to political privileges that denied to Indigenous people and mestizos throughout New Spain such as the ability to use horses and carry weapons. As communities, they also petitioned in numerous occasions to relax demands to send repartimiento labor to work in the fields, the mines, and in the homes of encomenderos. The chapter suggests that the hypermasculine qualities placed on Otomí and Chichimeca warriors as boisterous and

committed fighters served as a method of advocating for the retention of their privileged status as frontier communities with relaxed tribute demands.

Chapter five studies how Tarascan understandings of how men should rule were outlined in the *Relación de Michoacán* and how Indigenous elites in the former Tarascan borderlands territories of Acámbaro and Taximaroa lived up to these expectations and how they did not, highlighting the superficial nature of Tarascan governing masculinities. While some of these Indigenous elites did not live up to Tarascan expectations, the chapter shows how these elites lived up to what Spanish colonial officials expected from them. Indigenous elites in living in what was then the Chichimeca frontier enforced the viceroy's laws, jailed suspected criminals who broke them, sent their subjects to fight in the Spaniards' wars, and attained political privileges for their services. However, Indigenous noblemen in the frontier were not mere pawns of the Spanish empire. They also used their authority as governing elites for public works, to file petitions for their subjects, and to protest the exploitation and mistreatment of their communities in repartimiento labor drafts. In the process, Indigenous elites in the frontier navigated both Indigenous and Spanish notions of governing masculinity in ways that often served their own benefit but also sometimes to the benefit of their own communities.

The concluding chapter in this dissertation offers a summary and reflection of the multifaceted nature of Indigenous hypermasculinities in the Tarascan domains. It also discusses potential areas to future research on gender and masculinities studies. Most importantly, it reflects on the significance of these ideas to contemporary efforts by Indigenous peoples, Purépecha scholars, feminists, and colonialists to decolonize and deconstruct how European colonization influenced Native notions of maleness.

## TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this dissertation, I have made several choices in terminology that are rooted in debates in the fields of Indigenous studies, Tarascan/Purépecha history, as well as borderlands history. Throughout this dissertation, I use the term “Tarascan” to refer to the peoples who lived within the domains of the Tarascan state during the pre-Hispanic period. While some scholars use the term Tarascan and Purépecha interchangeably, I do not do so as J. Benedict Warren and others have pointed out that the term *purépecha* was originally used to refer to only the working people or the commoner class. There is still no consensus for this debate amongst academics as some scholars continue to use the terms interchangeably or employ one over the other.<sup>92</sup> I sparingly use the term Purépecha to describe Tarascan culture and language. However, the preferred term I defer to in the majority of this project is “Tarascan.” When referring to the Nahuas who were inhabitants of the Triple Alliance of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan, I refer to them interchangeably as the Mexica, Mexicans, and Aztecs.

Also, in line with archeologists and ethnohistorians who study the Tarascan polity, I refer to their political organization as a “state” as opposed to “empire.” While I recognize that nation-states did not emerge until the eighteenth century, the term state is useful in describing their form of government. Pollard’s *Tariacuri’s Legacy: The Prehispanic Tarascan State*, for instance, maintains that its government was a state for how it was centralized and carried out administrative functions, justice, trade, economics, and religion from the central city of

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<sup>92</sup> Pedro Márquez Joaquín, ed., *¿Tarascos o P’urhépecha? Voces sobre antiguas y nuevas discusiones en torno al gentilicio michoacano* (Morelia, Michoacán, México: Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas: Universidad Intercultural Indígena de Michoacán: El Colegio de Michoacán: Grupo Kw’aniskuyarhani de Estudiosos del Pueblo Purépecha, 2007).

Tzintzuntzan.<sup>93</sup> I also use the term borderlands to refer to the Tarascan state's eastern border territories facing the Mexica. While Gorenstein points out that this region was a frontier, not a physical boundary, I use the term borderlands to highlight the social interactions that emerged in both the frontier zone. The "borderlands of gender" is also used as a metaphor to describe the Spanish and Tarascan influences in constructing Tarascan hypermasculinities. Lastly, I follow in the lead of First Nations studies and academics in capitalizing terms such as "Indigenous Peoples" and "Natives" when referring to the people whose descendants inhabited the Americas before the coming of the Spaniards.<sup>94</sup>

#### LIMITATIONS

The limitations in this study are that I base my observations on Indigenous masculinities solely on written historical documents. I acknowledge that this is problematic as such an approach does not address Tarascan and Purépecha customs that have been passed on through oral traditions. As such, this study may does not fully address recent works on Indigenous gender customs that study the additional gender categories that go beyond the male-female binary.<sup>95</sup> With the exception of Nuño de Guzmán's account of a male warrior who confronted the Spanish while donning women's clothing in Cuitzeo del Rio, I was unable to find any other sources that speak to the possibility of third gender categories. This is not to say that other gender categories

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<sup>93</sup> Pollard, *Tariacuri's Legacy*, 87-166.

<sup>94</sup> Jay Johnson, Renee Pualani Louis, and Albert Hadi Pramono, "Facing the Future: Encouraging Critical Cartographic Literacies in Indigenous Communities," *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 4 (1), 81, fn. 2.

<sup>95</sup> Pete Sigal, ed., *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). In this collection, the essays by Michael J. Horswell, Richard C. Trestler, and Pete Sigal each discuss the subject of third gender peoples, "transvestism," and "cross-dressing."

did not exist in Tarascan society; this means that the colonial texts I consulted do not provide such information. This study does not seek to articulate the notion that Indigenous cultures in early colonial Michoacán only recognized male and female gender identities.

The other limitations I would like to disclose about this work pertain to my approach, secondary sources, as well as the time period I have consulted. Firstly, this dissertation does not attempt to provide neither an extensive or concise history of the Indigenous nobility in early colonial Michoacán as this task has been accomplished by many established scholars in the field.<sup>96</sup> Secondly, the author of this dissertation had an extensive list of secondary source materials from Mexican scholars which included articles, books, reports, and theses that were suggested by Dr. Carlos Paredes-Martínez during the last year in which in which this project was concluding. I regret that I could not include all of the insights from these sources that would have otherwise made this project much richer. Lastly, with regard to time period, this dissertation is restricted to the study of sixteenth century documents so it does not consult rich texts produced also in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such as primordial titles and Fray Pablo Beaumont's *Crónica de Michoacán* written sometime in 1778.

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<sup>96</sup> For rich examples, see Delfina Esmeralda López-Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro en la época virreinal* (México: Universidad nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1965); Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*; Daniel Adrián Ortíz Macarena, "La nobleza indígena en el Michoacán colonial. Sucesión y transición política en el antiguo Tzitzuntzan Irechecua, 1520-1562" (Tesis para obtener el grado de Licenciado en Historia, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, 2019).

## Chapter 1: Expansionist Masculinities

The *Relación de Michoacán* (henceforth referred to as the *Relación*) conveys the tales of manly pre-Hispanic Tarascan warlords who overtook their effeminate enemies in the period before the Spanish conquest of Michoacán in 1530. These sources, written with the use of Native informants during the sixteenth century, depict the ascendance of the boisterous “founding fathers”—so to speak—of the Uacúsecha dynasty. These men were described as hardened Chichimeca warriors and hunters that received the blessing of their solar deity Curicáueri to conquer the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. One can credit this paternalist androcentrism, or the centering of male figures in these documents, as an attempt to cope with humiliation that their noblemen faced in the aftermath of the conquest of Michoacán. Tarascan noblemen, whose ancestors had previously conquered vast swath of territories in the region of Michoacán since the fourteenth century, suffered a humiliating defeat when the Spaniards suddenly brought their expansionist campaigns to a halt. Nuño de Guzmán not only insulted the Tarascan elites when he publicly executed the Cazonci, but he also placed the lords in chains as he forcefully took them along with him during his bloody campaign to conquer central-western Mexico in 1530. Don Pedro Cuiniarángari, the adopted brother of the Cazonci, whose testimony describes Guzmán’s excesses in the *Relación*, relates that the lords were placed in chains during the campaign due to reports that the Tarascans planned to assault the Spaniards when the expedition reached Cuinao.<sup>97</sup> Despite their dispirited state, the Tarascan lords took part in one of the Spaniards’ most violent imperialist *entradas* into western and northern Mexico that led to the countless deaths

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<sup>97</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 206-207; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 100.



and decimation of villages in what became the kingdom Nueva Galicia.<sup>98</sup> When Indigenous nobles, elders, and artists assisted the Spaniards in compiling documents such as the *Relación* as well as the *relaciones geográficas*, they also painted a portrait of a Pre-Hispanic Tarascan state that also expanded thanks to the efforts of its bellicose male rulers who fought to defend the Cazonci's domains. Like the Spanish, Tarascan attributed their conquests to their gods, to the military might of their rulers, and devotion to territorial expansion.

I suggest that the associations between Spanish and Tarascan conquests were not a coincidence and also reflect the traumatic memories of Tarascan peoples who were torn into a period of extreme violence in the Mexican center-west. The *Relación* was written during the pan-Indigenous uprising in the region of Zacatecas known as the Mixtón War (1540-1542) and a decade after Guzmán's campaign to conquer Nueva Galicia, while the *relaciones geográficas* (1579-1585) were composed twenty-nine years after the Chichimeca Wars commenced in 1550. The Indigenous noblemen who participated in the construction of these colonial texts were well aware of these campaigns considering that they may have either participated in them or were required to provide men who could contribute to these wars. These principals came to terms with their subjugation as subjects of New Spain when they vindicated the memories of their ancestral rulers as conquerors that were on par with the Spanish conquistadors. These narratives not only reflected the Tarascans' historical traumas of warfare but also a hypermasculinized history of the early Tarascan state that conveyed how the Uacúsecha were also devoted to conquest and imperial expansion in ways that mirrored the Spaniards' ongoing campaigns to take central-western Mexico.

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<sup>98</sup> Ida Altman, *The War for Mexico's West*, 20-56.

I argue that the Indigenous informants who helped to produce colonial texts related to the Pre-Hispanic Tarascan state, which included nobles, artists, and elders, sought to represent an “expansionist masculinity” in which their ancestors were portrayed as competent ruling men who demonstrated their abilities to govern based on their abilities to conduct warfare akin to their Spanish and Mexica counterparts who engaged in expansionist campaigns as well. These documents relate the foundations of the Tarascan state in the Late Postclassic (ca. 1350-1520) until the death of the penultimate *irecha*<sup>99</sup> (or “king”) of the Tarascan state Zuangua who died from smallpox. First, this chapter begins by describing the hypermasculine depictions of the early Uacúsecha- Chichimecas in the *Relación de Michoacán*. The second part describes how these expansionist *irecha* “founding fathers” followed in their predecessors’ lead when they conquered the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin under the seniority of Tariácuri. The third section relates how the expansion of the Tarascan borderlands was described under the reign of Tzitzispandáquare and his son Zuangua according to the *Memoria of Don Melchor Caltzin* as well as the *relaciones geográficas*.

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<sup>99</sup> Ortíz Macarena, “La nobleza indígena en el Michoacán colonial,” 17, fn. 8. The term *irecha* was used as the equivalent as the Spanish word for king, *rey*.

Table 1.1. Male Protagonists in the Second Part of the *Relación de Michoacán*

Hireti Ticátame	The first “Chichimeca” ruler who brought his people to the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin from Zacapu. He intermarried with the daughter of the lord of the village of Naranjan, thereby establishing an alliance with the local Islander population.
Sicuirancha	The son of Ticátame. He avenged his father who was killed over a dispute concerning a deer.
Pauácume II and Uápeani II	The sons of Curatame I who were both killed during an assault from the Islanders and principals of Curíngaro. Pauácume II was the father of Tariácuri.
Tariácuri	The primary protagonist in the second part of the <i>Relación de Michoacán</i> who succeeded in conquering the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin, especially with the support of his nephews and son.
Chupítani, Nuriuan, Tecaqua	The three priests who helped to raise Tariácuri and served as his advisors and messengers as he matured into adulthood.
Zétaco and Aramen	The sons of Uápeani II and cousins of Tariácuri who both helped to assassinate a rival priest named Naca, causing them to go into hiding. Both men are slain after Aramen was found sleeping with a principal’s wife.
Hirípan and Tangáxoan	The sons of Zétaco and Aramen who became separated from their fathers that went into hiding. They were later reunited with their uncle, Tariácuri, after the Chichimecas took Pátzcuaro. The gods Xarátanga and Curicáucri come to the cousins in a dream to tell them that they are destined to become rulers. Hirípan becomes the ruler of Ihuatzio and Tangáxoan rules over Tzintzuntzan.
Hiquíngare	Tariácuri’s son who accompanied Hirípan and Tangáxoan as a messenger and general of the Tarascan armies. He became a priest and ruler of the city of Pátzcuaro.
Tzitzispandáquare	He is briefly mentioned in the conclusion of part 2 as the son of Tangáxoan. This irecha was credited with making Tzintzuntzan the central governing city of the Tarascan state, thus taking away the authority from the cities Pátzcuaro and Ihuatzio.

*Note:* The original manuscript is kept in the Escorial Library in Madrid, Spain. Only a section of Part 1 of the original text remains.

## THE FIRST “CHICHIMECA” RULERS

According to the *Relación de Michoacán*, the chief priest known as the *petámuti* recited the narratives related to the founding and expansion of the Tarascan polity during sacred gatherings. The *petámuti* related the history of the Uacúsecha- Chichimeca dynasty during sacred festivals. As seen in Figure 1.1, he related these histories in the presence of all the Tarascan noblemen as he carried his staff and donned his sacred clothing. Notably, Dominique Elise Garcia notes that his attire in this depiction was reminiscent of Mexican claims to Chichimeca origins, as seen in the *Mapa de Cuauhtinchan*, which was also produced in the sixteenth century and showed a priest donning a staff and similar clothing. The *petámuti*'s attire in this context emphasized the Uacúsechas' claims of having Chichimeca lineage.<sup>100</sup> According to Nahua sources, the Chichimeca were understood to be less sophisticated hunter-gatherer groups who lived north from the Aztec provinces. Despite their alleged barbarity, Chichimecas were also stereotyped as hardened warriors, accomplished fighters, and skilled archers.<sup>101</sup> In the second part of the *Relación de Michoacán*, the chief priest provided a heroic retelling of the battles and hardships overcome by the so-called Uacúsecha- “Chichimecas.” His story portrayed these Tarascan founding fathers as sturdy hunters tied to their solar deity who confronted various hardships and conflicts with their neighbors in the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin.

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<sup>100</sup> Dominique Elise Garcia, “Materials of the Sacred: 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century Religious Materiality in Michoacán” (master’s thesis, University of California Riverside, 2012), 17-18. For a visual comparison of the *petámuti* and the Tolteca-Chichimeca in Aztec lore, see figure 8, page 80.

<sup>101</sup> Charlotte M. Gardie, “Discovering the Chichimecas,” *The Americas* 51, no. 1 (July 1994), 73.

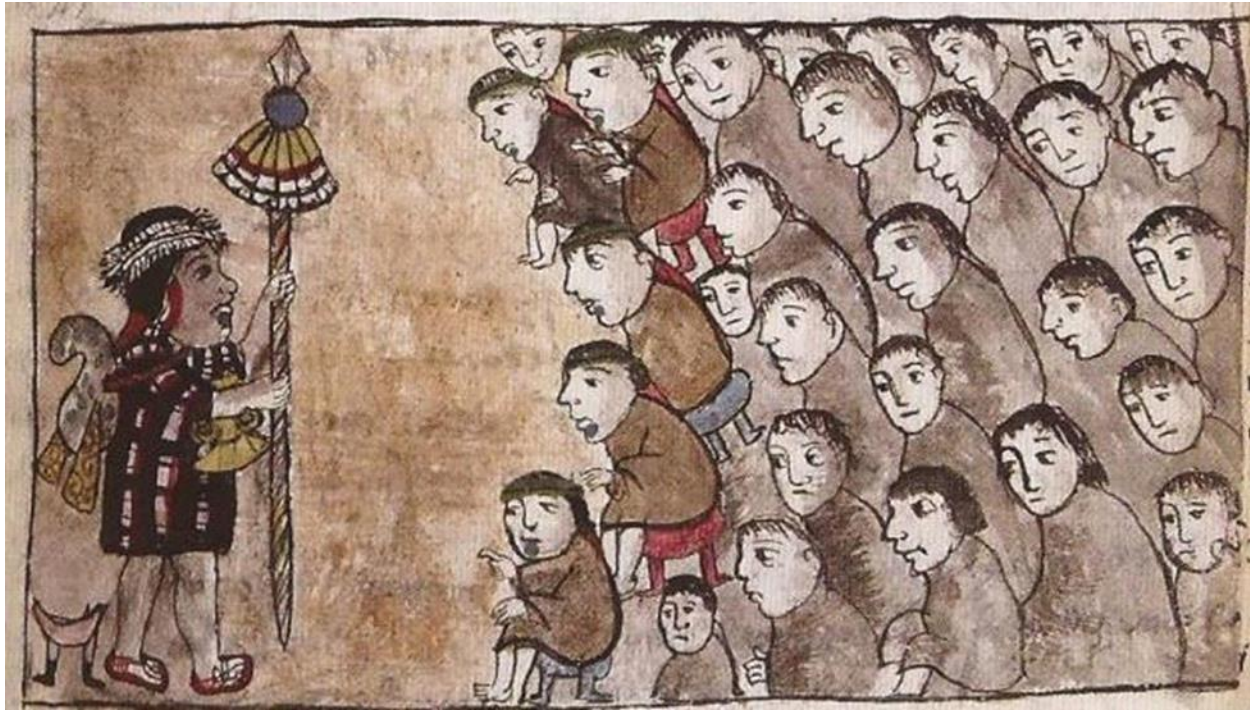


Figure 1.1. Image in the *Relación de Michoacán* that shows the petámuti speaking to the nobles and commoners. Source: Angélica Jimena Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán (1539-1541) & the Politics of Representation in Colonial Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), Plate 10.

The voice of the petámuti is used in the text to inscribe heroic qualities onto the Uacúsecha- Chichimeca hunters who introduced the masculine solar deity to the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. His narrative comprises the second part of the three-part *Relación* (unfortunately, only a fragment of part one survives), which tells the history of the first “Chichimeca” rulers from the Tarascan Uacúsecha dynasty who conquered the region of Michoacán during the Late Postclassic period.<sup>102</sup> The petámuti is one of the primary informants of the *Relación de Michoacán* that was not mentioned by name. While it appears that the petámuti solely informed these accounts of the

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<sup>102</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 54. It is likely that the first part of the text has since been lost and possibly destroyed due to efforts by the Church to destroy anything that may relate the non-Christian religious customs of the people they were trying to convert.

early history of the Tarascan state, Afanador-Pujol has pointed out that it is most likely that multiple Indigenous informants, or elders, comprised the petámuti narrative as one voice.<sup>103</sup> In this first part of the text, these first Tarascan leaders bear the traits of hardened “warlords” who came from humble origins and served their male gods. In a Tarascan context, the first noblemen—who appear literally as “founding fathers” of sorts—were Chichimeca hunter-gatherers who came to the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin and introduced the worship of a male solar deity. In the process, they marginalized the worship of the female goddesses that were traditionally revered by the local Purépecha populations.

Uacúsecha claims to Chichimeca ancestry are reminiscent of their expansionist Mesoamerican counterparts, the Mexica, who also claimed to hold ties to these groups who invoked ideals of athleticism and boisterousness. According to Fray Diego Durán in his *History of the Indies of New Spain* compiled in 1581, Mexica informants also described the Tarascans as their distant ancestors who were once part of their Chichimeca ancestors who migrated from Aztlan on their arduous journey to found the Aztec state. The legend states that the Aztec and Tarascan Chichimecas separated in Lake Pátzcuaro before completing their journey to the Valley of Mexico.<sup>104</sup> The Chichimeca, however, were not an ethnic polity but, instead, a general category that referred to unconquered northern groups that the Aztecs and Tarascans considered to be unurbanized hunter-gatherers. While these Chichimeca groups invoked images of barbarity and backwardness, the Aztecs also associated them with masculine traits such as athleticism and

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<sup>103</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 25-27.

<sup>104</sup> Grégory Pereira, Dominique Michelet and Gérald Migeon, “La migración de los purépecha hacia el norte y su regreso a los lagos,” *Arqueología Mexicana* 123 (2013), 56.

a mastery of bow and arrow marksmanship. Tarascan rulers who claimed to have descended from Chichimecas in both Aztec and Tarascan sources depict them with the bow and arrow.<sup>105</sup> As Charlotte M. Gardie explains, the Chichimeca were seen as “both the self and the other” because even though the Aztecs (and Tarascans) described these groups as uncivilized outsiders, they also represented the “positive attributes of manliness, virility and an ancient past.”<sup>106</sup> These hunter-gatherer groups were viewed as unsophisticated, yet they were admired as hardened warriors and distant relatives. Invoking Chichimeca lineage, therefore, implied that the Tarascan and Mexica civilizations descended from a culture of hardened men.

While the Tarascans and Mexica both imposed stereotypical masculine qualities onto the Chichimeca, it is important to note that the Chichimecas were not a monolithic ethnic polity. As Charlotte M. Gardie points out, there were no “Chichimeca people” ethnologically speaking since this was simply a term that Nahuas and Spaniards both used to refer to any group that was not urbanized or that made their living through hunting. For that matter, the term “Chichimeca” was not Purépecha. Chichimeca was a Nahuatl term most likely introduced into sixteenth-century texts relating to the Pre-Hispanic Tarascan state by Nahuatl-speaking translators who lived in Michoacán during the sixteenth century.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, the monolithic associations of the

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<sup>105</sup> Justyna Olko, *Insignia of Rank in the Nahuatl World: From the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2014), 137; Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 80.

<sup>106</sup> Gardie, “Discovering the Chichimecas,” 75.

<sup>107</sup> Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 26. Stone’s literary analysis of the *Relación de Michoacán* explains that the use of Nahuatl terms such as “chichimeca” was possibly inserted into the text by Spanish chroniclers with Nahuatl vocabulary at their disposal; Since most documents concerning the Chichimeca in the Tarascan borderlands were written during the early colonial period by Spanish officials, clerics, and soldiers with preconceived notions of “chichimecas” from their Nahuatl informants, it is possible the Tarascans themselves may have not used this term to refer to the various allied and enemy hunter-gatherer groups who lived in their frontier territories. As Donald J. Brand notes, the Spaniards who initiated *entradas* and other incursions into northern Mexico settled the Michoacán and greater Mexican center-west region with Nahuatl-speaking indigenous allies who accompanied them and introduced Nahuatl words and

Chichimecas as a warlike ethnic polity may have also been informed by the Spaniards' own militaristic engagements with them during the conquest of Nueva Galicia, the Mixtón Uprising of 1540-1542, and Chichimeca Wars of 1550-1600.<sup>108</sup> Additionally, the "Chichimeca" were not just comprised of loosely organized hunters and migratory dwellers as some Spanish and Nahuatl sources might suggest. Some "Chichimecas" were also sedentary agriculturalists with complex political systems.<sup>109</sup> The "Chichimecas" who inhabited the regions north of the Tarascan and Aztec territories included a series of ethno-linguistic groups with their own distinct cultures and languages such as the Caxcanes, Guachichiles, and Pames. Archeological evidence reveals the complexity of groups like the Caxcanes who had complex architecture, material culture, and used a Mesoamerican calendar system tied to rituals, cosmology, and burial practices.<sup>110</sup> In short, while the "Chichimecas" may have been grouped as a single ethnic polity with boisterous qualities, they were not a unified nation but instead comprised of various ethnic polities with their own distinct languages and traits.

Despite the Tarascans' claims to "Chichimeca" lineage throughout the *Relación de Michoacán*, archeologists and historians have problematized the extent to which the Uacúsecha

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place names. Thus, even if official documents and correspondence related to the Michoacán region employed Nahuatl vocabulary for names of places and objects, it did not mean the natives from those areas necessarily used those terms themselves. The presence of the term "*chichimeca*" in the *Relación de Michoacán* and the *relaciones geográficas* then, may have been borrowed from the Nahuas. Stone and well as anthropologist Donald Brand point out that as the Spanish attempted to make Nahuatl the administrative lingua franca in the places they conquered, they also began to impose Nahuatl place names and phrases in the region as well. See Brand, "Ethnohistoric Synthesis of Western Mexico," 648.

<sup>108</sup> Altman, *The War for Mexico's West*, 100-105.

<sup>109</sup> Gardie, "Discovering the Chichimecas," 68.

<sup>110</sup> Angélica María Medrano Enríquez, "Rough People in a Rough Situation: Mixtón War (1541-1542) and Caxcanes," in *Preserving Fields of Conflict: Papers from the 2014 Fields of Conflict Conference and Preservation Workshop*, edited by Steven D. Smith (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2016), 60.



held any ties to these Indigenous groups who originated in northern Mexico. Helen Perlstein Pollard's archeological studies do not support Tarascan claims to Chichimec lineage. The material remains left by the Purépecha culture—such as pyramidal structures known as *yácatas*, chacmool sculptures, tools, vessels, and jewelry—were distinct to Michoacán (fig 1.2). Interestingly, Pollard's findings suggest that the Tarascans held closer ties to Toltec culture, although these sixteenth-century documents discussed in this chapter do not describe such Mesoamerican lineages. It is possible Nahuas, who lived in Michoacán during the sixteenth century, influenced the Tarascan informants who helped produced the *Relación de Michoacán* in their claims to Chichimeca lineage since their Aztec counterparts also traced their lineage to these northern Mexican groups.<sup>111</sup> For that matter, Afanador-Pujol observes that these alleged ties to Chichimec ancestry may have been a strategic way of appealing to Christian audiences since the Indigenous artists who produced the images that accompanied the *Relación de Michoacán* depicted their ancestors engaging in activities that were reminiscent of practices that Franciscans valued amongst the Chichimecas in the sixteenth century such as their mastery of bow and arrow marksmanship.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Pollard, "Ruling 'Purépecha Chichimeca,'" 230-232. Pollard points out that Nahua communities not only existed in Tzintzuntzan during the sixteenth century but also in other places such as Tancítaro and Uruapan.

<sup>112</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán & the Politics of Representation*, 124-126. Chichimecas were drawn wearing cotton clothing reminiscent of European garments while engaging in hunting activities that were also valued in Spanish society.



Figure 1.2. The yácatas in Tzintzuntzan. Museo de Sitio de las Yácatas, Zona Arqueológica de Tzintzuntzan. Photo by author.

In addition to the claims to Chichimec lineage, historian and anthropologist Roberto Martínez González emphasizes that the *Relación* attributed extreme masculine qualities onto the male founding fathers of the Tarascan state. They were depicted strictly as hunters and, not as fishers, as well as worshippers of masculine solar deities, instead of female terrestrial deities. The *Relación* claims that the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas were solely accustomed to eating wild game and only began to consume fish after intermingling with the “Islanders” that lived in the islands and villages in the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. For that matter, Martínez Gonzales observes, both the Chichimecas and Islanders appear in opposing and symbolic terms; Chichimecas are strictly portrayed as land dwellers who hunted wild game while their Islander counterparts were

known as farmers and fishers tied to the aquatic terrain. Moreover, the narratives only portray the Islanders playing feminine roles in matters concerning marriage and kinship such that they are the only actors in the *Relación* that provided the male Chichimeca rulers with wives.<sup>113</sup> In contrast, the Chichimecas were never depicted providing the Islanders with wives. The sexual and political associations in this meeting are implicitly phallogentric; The Uacúsecha-Chichimeca men emerge, literally, as the penetrators of the local Islander populations whose women give birth to the Tarascan ruling dynasties.

The accounts described in the first chapters of the second part of the *Relación* inscribe hypermasculine qualities onto the nomadic Uacúsecha-Chichimeca hunters who are characterized by their ties to the sun god who brought forth a new civilization through intermarriage with locals in the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. The manuscript begins with the story of the earliest Uacúsecha-Chichimeca descendant Hireti Ticátame. According to the petámuti's narrative, Ticátame led a group of wandering "Chichimeca" families close to a mountainous region near Lake Pátzcuaro, known today as Zacapu. Ticátame and his people introduced the worship of the deity of warfare and fire, Curicáueri. This entity ordered the Uacúsecha-"Chichimeca" families to conquer the surrounding land in his name. In this narrative, the Uacúsecha not only ushered in the dynastic rule of these elite men but also the worship of the male solar deity who provided them with the divine right to conquer the Michoacán region:

Empezaba así aquel sacerdote mayor: "Vosotoros los del linaje de nuestro Dios Curicaueri, que habéis venido, los que os llamáis Enani y Tzacapu hireti, y los reyes llamados Uanacaze, todos los que tenéis este apellido, ya nos hemos juntado aquí en uno...[Curicaueri] empezó su señorío, donde llegó al monte llamado Uringuaran pexo, monte cerca del pueblo de Tzacaputacanendan..." También es de borrado saber, que lo que va aquí contando en todo su razonamiento este papa, todas las guerras y hechos

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<sup>113</sup> Martínez González, "La dimensión mítica," 39-44.

atribuía a su Dios Curicaueri y no va contando más de los señores... “lo que se colige desta historia es que los antecesores del cazonci vinieron, a la postre, a conquistar esta tierra y fueron señores della...Y como la conquistaron, hicieron un reino de todo, desde el bisabuelo del cazonci pasado, que fue señor de Michoacán, como se dirá en otra parte.”<sup>114</sup>

The chief priest related: “Those of you from the lineage of our God Curicáueri, who have come, those who call yourselves Enani and Tzcapu hireti, and the kings called Uanacaze, all those who have this last name, are now gathered here as one”...It should be understood, that what is told here in the reasoning of the chief priest, all the wars and acts are attributed to his God Curicaueri and he does not say more about the lords...“in all his reasoning the chief priest, [Curicaueri] began his reign, where the mountain named Uringuaran, a mountain near the pueblo of Tzacaputacanendan...what can be deduced from this history is that the ancestors of the cazonci came, in the end, to conquer the land and they were masters of it...And after they conquered it, they made it all into one kingdom, since the time of the great grandfather of the past cazonci who was the king of Michoacán, as will be said elsewhere.”<sup>115</sup>

As Pollard observes, the solar deity Curicaueri was integrated as the “brother-in-law” of the local Purépecha female patron goddesses, Xarátanga, the lunar entity, and Cuerauáperi, the earth goddess.<sup>116</sup> This relationship implied the dethroning of the female goddesses from the central roles they used to play in the Michoacán region. Ticátame introduced Curicáueri to a local Islander lord from the nearby village of Naranjan, who then provided the Chichimeca leader with a wife. Together, Ticátame and his wife produced a son named Sicuirancha.<sup>117</sup> The men who

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<sup>114</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 21.

<sup>115</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 103-104. I utilize parts of Craine and Reindorp’s translation but include my own edits where it was felt that they did not transliterate effectively.

<sup>116</sup> Pollard, “Ruling ‘Purépecha Chichimeca,’ ” 228.

<sup>117</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 19-20; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 103-108. In this chapter, the petámuti relates the history of the first Chichimeca families who arrived to the village of Zacaputacanendan who brought the god Curicáueri with them. All conquests and wars were attributed to Curicáueri instead of the lords themselves. The leader of the Chichimecas was Hireti Ticátame, who was met by lord of the nearby village of Naranjan named Ziranzirancamaro. The lord of Naranjan declared to his people that Curicáueri would be the conqueror of the land and would be accompanied by the goddess, Xarátanga, described as the solar god’s sister. Ticátame was given a wife who represents the goddess. His wife is charged with preparing arrows,

succeeded Ticátame and Sicuirancha many generations later would become responsible for the expansion and consolidation of power amongst the Uacúsecha ruling dynasties who would expand their control over the Michoacán region.

In the text, the Tarascans' association with hypermasculine Chichimeca attributes is further embodied in the "founding father" Ticátame and his son Sicuirancha, who both were described as dedicated hunters protected by the solar deity Curicáueri. Ticátame's dedication to his hunting abilities and the worship of his god were the very qualities that led to his downfall in the text, which also prompted bitter relations between the Uacúsechas and their Islander counterparts. According to the narrative, the Chichimecas coexisted peacefully with the Islanders until Ticátame instigated a dispute with one of the noble families in Naranjan regarding a deer that he hunted and wounded but somehow escaped from him and ended up in another families' home. Previously, he asked the locals not to take his kill and he was outraged because he believed this agreement was violated. This led to an altercation in which Ticátame barged into the home of the suspected assailants whose family happened to be feasting on the deer. Ticátame wounded one of the men in the home he trespassed by shooting him with one of his arrows. When the hunter realized that his actions would have him killed, he took his family and his statue of Curicáueri and they moved to another village.<sup>118</sup> Eventually, Ticátame was hunted down and

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gathering blankets, preparing food, gathering firewood, and other tools for both Curicáueri and her husband Ticátame.

<sup>118</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 21-25; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 103-108. Ticátame told the messengers who brought him his the wife to tell their people not to take the deer he has hunted since he usually ties them up on a tree after catching them. Later, Ticátame followed the tracks of a deer that he captured and finds that it was taken by a chief called Zimzamban. A dispute over the deer ensued, which prompted Ticátame to shoot two men with an arrow at Zimzamban's household. Ticátame returned home to relate what happened to his wife. Both agreed to flee together with their child, Sicuirancha. Before departing, his wife retrieves her god Vazoriquare from her home village to protect her. The family arrived to the village of Zichaxuquero.

killed in his own home. Notably, the text relates his son Sicuirancha just happened to be returning home from a deer hunt during the assassination of his father, a detail which served to reinforce the child's Chichimeca hunting abilities. Sicuirancha found his home engulfed in flames and his mother weeping over his father's corpse. In the aftermath of the scuffle, the assassins also took Ticátame's statue of Curicáueri with them. According to the text, the solar deity used his divine powers to punish the assailants by making them sick, which allowed Sicuirancha to kill his father's murderers easily. The young lord then resettled the Uacúsecha- "Chichimecas" in Uayámeo, located in the northeastern region of Lake Pátzcuaro (fig 1.3).<sup>119</sup> In these two narratives, the *Relación de Michoacán* ascribed these men with masculine Chichimeca qualities as they demonstrated their competency in hunting, fighting, and allegiance to the sun god.

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<sup>119</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 25-27; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 108-111. In this point of the story, Sicuirancha is now an adult. Men from Zimzamban's village, referred to as Zizambaniecha, allied themselves with the men from the village of Cumachen to look for Ticátame. As Ticátame's wife went out to gather water, she was confronted by the men who asked her if she was the son of Sicuirancha. After being told that they came for her husband she wept and rushed to her home to warn her husband. The men surrounded their home and barged in. A battle ensued where Ticátame succeeded in killing and wounding some of them but was ultimately killed and dragged out of his home and the men took his statue of Curicáueri. As Sicuirancha returned home from a hunt, he found his home in flames and his father dead. Curicáueri sickens the men who stole him, allowing Sicuirancha to avenge his father and retrieve Curicáueri. Sicuirancha moves his people to Uayámeo, where they rule for many years. The line of secession following Sicuirancha's death is related: Pauácume; Uápeani; Curátame; Uápeani II.



Figure 1.3. “The Lake Pátzcuaro Basin (Based on a map by Cynthia Stone).” Source: Cynthia L. Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings: Authorship and Identity in the Relación de Michoacán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 5.

The chapter immediately following the Uacúsecha resettlement in Uayámeo then described an incident that forced the separation of the Chichimeca families in the region who, by then, intermarried with some of the local Islander populations. According to this story, the Islanders were at fault. A group of nobles—who were Islanders—angered one of the local gods. The Tarascan informants who related this supernatural event reinforced the spiritual superiority of their Uacúsecha-Chichimeca ancestors over the Islanders. According to the legend, Sicuírancha’s son and grandsons continued to rule over Uayámeo until a supernatural episode forced the families to leave the region. This tale concerned a nobleman and his two sisters who disrespected a temple dedicated to the moon goddess Xarátanga. Xarátanga was considered to be

the deity who the Islanders traditionally paid homage. In this case, not even elite Islanders paid her due respect. They became too drunk and mocked their goddess as they ate snake meat while attending to one of her temples. This made the three relatives ill to the point that their skin became discolored until they eventually turned into serpents. The Uacúsecha-Chichimeca families believed that these nobles—who likely experienced a horrid and deadly case of food poisoning—angered the gods. The Uacúsecha decided that their people had to flee from the cursed lands, and split into separate villages.<sup>120</sup> Their disrespect to the goddess insinuated that the Islander lords were somehow less dedicated to their deities in comparison to their Chichimeca counterparts whose noblemen, in contrast, were often portrayed as showing respect to their god Curicáueri by providing him with firewood and praying in his temples.

In the following chapter of the *Relación*, hunting and phallocentric kinship ties, once again, became associated with the Uacúsecha founding fathers. According to the narrative, the families that once separated became reunited after a group of Uacúsecha-Chichimeca lords hunted along Lake Pátzcuaro and encountered a fisherman who they discovered to be one of their long-lost relatives. In this story, the same kinship dynamics in which Islanders provided wives to the Chichimeca men followed. During their “reunion” they convinced the fisher to offer one of his daughters in marriage. The fisherman’s daughter married the son of one of the lords named Pauácume II, and they produced a son named Taríacuri—the would-be founder of the Tarascan state. The fisherman and his daughter were from the island of Pacanda and, through marriage, allied the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas and the “Islanders” once again. According to this chronicle, when the Islander’s fellow lords learned about the union, they also eagerly offered

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<sup>120</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 21-29; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 108-113.



their daughters in marriage to the Chichimecas, further reinforcing the Islanders' association with femininity in the Tarascan dynasty.<sup>121</sup>

In the following chapters, the petámuti's account introduces the mortal enemies of the Uacúsecha, the lords of Curíngaro, who instigate and inflict various injustices upon them. These conflicts contribute to the heroic depiction of these so-called Chichimecas by posing the relationship between the Uacúsechas and their enemies in the dichotomy of good versus evil, although it emerges more as a conflict between Islanders and Chichimecas. This association is made in the chapters describing how the rulers of the village of Curíngaro detested the Islanders' newfound alliance with the Uacúsechas because they saw them as primitive mountain dwellers who hunted with bows and arrows. According to the text, they feared that intermarrying with the Chichimecas would somehow make the Islander's children degenerate. Moreover, they resented that their god Curicáueri would replace the local Islander deities, who the Curíngaros saw as more superior. As a result, they convinced the Islanders to attack and banish the Chichimecas without provocation.<sup>122</sup>

The heroic qualities ascribed to the Uacúsecha as men who suffered numerous hardships in the early stages of their reign resonates in tales concerning the betrayals they suffered from the Curíngaros and Islanders. After the Chichimecas were violently displaced, their leaders Pauácume II and his brother Uápeani II resettled their people in the village of Tarimichúndiro, a district in Pátzcuaro. The Curíngaros, fearful that the Uacúsecha would soon retaliate, requested

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<sup>121</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 29-35; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 113-120.

<sup>122</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 33-35; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 118-120.

that they both settle the score by having their armies clash in the village of Ataquao. During the battle, Pauácume II and Uápeani II were injured but survived. As they recovered, messengers from Pacanda told them that their female relatives who were still living in the Island refused to eat and could not cease weeping because they were worried about them. The two Uacúsecha lords responded to this by agreeing to go and recover the women held hostage. However, three priests named Chupítani, Nuriuan, and Tecaqua warned them that this was an ambush that the Islanders plotted along with the lords of Curíngaro. Despite their warnings, the men fell for this trap on two occasions and the second instance resulted in the killing of Pauácume II and Uápeani II. With his father now dead, Tariacuri, whose parents came from both Uacúsecha-“Chichimeca” and Islander origins, was left orphaned and determined to avenge his forefathers just like Sicuirancha.<sup>123</sup>

### **Tariacuri’s Relatives and the Foundations of the Tarascan State**

Various scholars have written about the significance of Tariacuri as a central protagonist in the *Relación de Michoacán*, which is not surprising considering most of the surviving manuscript centers on him as a leading figure who succeeds in finally conquering the enemies of the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas. Esmeralda Lopez-Sarrelangue describes him as the founding

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<sup>123</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 35-42; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 120-129. The lords of Curíngaro convinced the Islanders to collude in an assault against the Chichimecas. The Islanders told Uápeani and Pauácume (the youngest brother, the father of Tariacuri) to come for their women on the Island who were in despair, refused to eat, and were concerned about them. A messenger relayed the message to the two lords who agreed to retrieve their women. As they departed, the three priests Chupítani, Nuriuan, Tecaqua warned them that it was a trap set from the lords of Curíngaro and urged them instead to send a runner ahead of them who could confirm whether an assault was imminent. The runners were attacked, confirming the assault which prompted the Chichimecas to turn back. The Islanders then convinced the Chichimeca lords to come for their women a second time, this time to a place called Xanoato hucatzio. Again, Uápeani and Pauácume were deceived into going despite warnings from the priests. The two lords were killed during the ambush. The three priests from Tarimichúndiro found the Islanders beating the bodies of the two men and scolded them for achieving their retribution. The men feigned ignorance, claiming the two were already dead when they found them. The priests give plumages and a golden necklace to the men in exchange for Pauácume (Tariacuri’s father) and Uápeani’s bodies.

member of the Tarascan “monarchy” that would rule for generations until the coming of the Spaniards.<sup>124</sup> In *Tariacuri’s Legacy*, Pollard calls him a “cultural-hero” and “legendary founder” who waged numerous wars and consolidated the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin into a centralized “Tarascan state.”<sup>125</sup> David Haskell sees Tariacuri’s actions, beginning with his alliance with the village of Zurunban, as the axis where all events in the text fall back upon concerning the Tarascan state’s formation.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, Tariacuri emerges as a figure who overcomes various obstacles in his determination to avenge his relatives who were killed by the Islanders and Curínguaros. His successful attempts to forge both peace and war ultimately led to Uacúsecha-Chichimeca supremacy over the region. However, Tariacuri was not the only male figure attributed to Uacúsecha dominance over the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. His cousins, elders, aunts, children, and nephews also played a role in overtaking the region through warfare and conquest, although his female counterparts who assist in these conquests are understated (fig 1.4).

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<sup>124</sup> López Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro*, 36.

<sup>125</sup> Pollard, *Tariacuri’s Legacy*, 3.

<sup>126</sup> David L. Haskell, “Tarascan Historicity: Narrative Structure and the Production of the Past in the Case of the Two Tariacuris,” *Ethnohistory* 60, no. 4 (2013): 651-652.

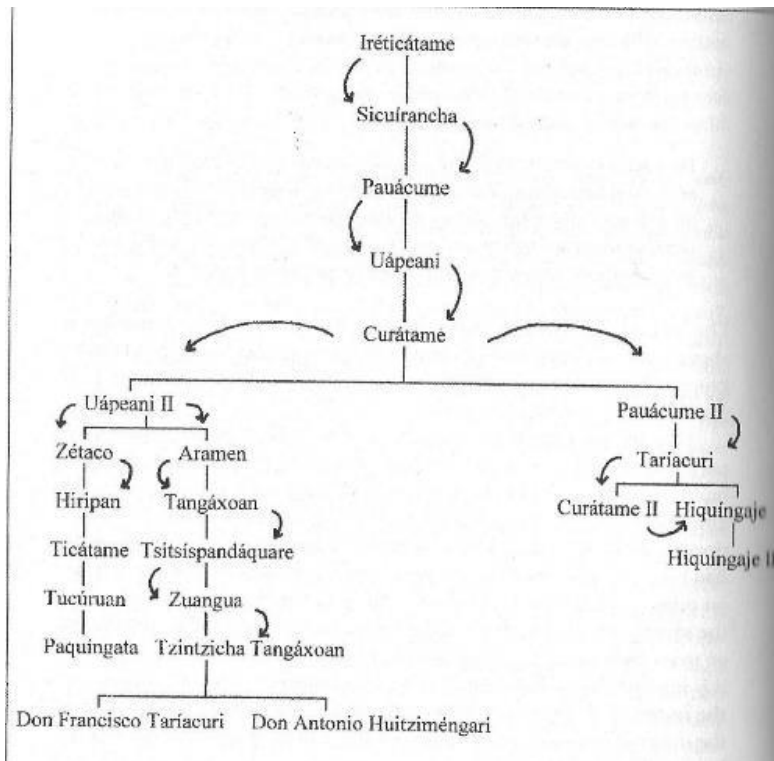


Figure 1.4. “Genealogy of the principal Uacúsecha lords. The curved lines represent political succession as head of the Uacúsecha. (Chart by Cynthia Stone).” Source: Cynthia L. Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings: Authorship and Identity in the Relación de Michoacán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 5.

Three of Tariacuri’s male advisors, the three priests named Chupítani, Nuriuan, and Tecaqua, appear throughout the second part of the *Relación*. Interestingly, these men are Tariacuri’s only group of advisors who are mentioned by name as all his female relatives who also served as advisors are simply referred to as aunts (*tías*) even though when one of them warned him in matters concerning enemy spies. According to the narrative, the elders helped to raise Tariacuri when he was an orphaned child and advised him to avenge his parents that were killed by the Islanders and Curínguaros. Interestingly, one is left to wonder if the Christian chronicler of the *Relación* sought to draw parallels between the three guides and the three men cited in Biblical mythology who cared of the newborn baby Jesus. In one part of the narrative, these three wise men serve as Tariacuri’s moral compass by separating him from his older yet

immature adolescent cousins Aramen and Zétaco who indulged in womanizing and drinking alcohol. The priests continued to serve as the irecha's advisors once he matured into adulthood and even served as his messengers.<sup>127</sup> Chupítani, for instance, was charged with speaking with the lord of the village of Pacanda so that the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas could collect sacrificial victims from his village who would be killed in honor of the new temples built by Tariácuri's son and nephews.<sup>128</sup> In the *Relación*, the three priests' contributed to the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas' dominance by serving as advisors to Tariácuri as he overtook the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin.

Other male figures who are shown playing important roles in assisting Tariácuri in the early phases of the Tarascan conquest of the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin were his burly and womanizing older cousins Aramen and Zétaco. Their first deed was to assassinate a priest named Naca, who was sent by the Islanders and Curínguaros to gather troops to kill Tariácuri and conquer the Chichimecas.<sup>129</sup> Aramen and Zétaco were tasked with intercepting this target by luring him into the woods under the false pretense of looking for a wounded deer. Aramen dealt the crippling blow that wounded Naca by shooting him in the back with an arrow. The two men took the wounded priest to Tariácuri, who ordered his execution and then mutilated his body so that it could be fed to the Islander and Curínguario lords. "Naca" was perhaps a befitting name in

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<sup>127</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 42-45, 99-103; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 129-132, 196-201.

<sup>128</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 100-102; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 197-199.

<sup>129</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 44-45; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 131-132. This assault was instigated by Tariácuri when he made the false impression that the Chichimecas were planning a collective assault against them when he lit multiple fires along the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. These fires were interpreted as a smoke signal signifying an impending assault.

this narrative, considering it is reminiscent of the Nahuatl term *nakatl*, meaning “meat” (which may suggest Nahua influence in the text as it is plausible that the Indigenous informants who related this story may not have had a known this person’s name and simply referred to him as *Naca* because he literally became the “meat” served to the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas’ enemies). The passage describes how messengers delivered Naca’s remains to a principal named Zurunban and deceived him and his women into thinking the flesh belonged to one of Tariacuri’s delinquent slaves (According to the text, members of the nobility engaged in ritual cannibalism by eating the human flesh of their enemies). Zurunban and his people were soon disgusted to learn that they were eating the Naca’s flesh after all, which caused them great disgust and attempted futilely to vomit his flesh.<sup>130</sup> The Islanders and Curínguaros retaliated with an assault against the Chichimeca villages, which forced Aramen, Zétaco, and Tariacuri to go into hiding. While Aramen survived the assault, he was later killed for sleeping with another nobleman’s wife. Zétaco also reportedly died around the time as his brother, but the reason why he perished is not specified in the *Relación de Michoacán*.<sup>131</sup> Zétaco and Aramen left behind two sons, Hirípan and Tangáxoan, who continued in their father’s footsteps by assisting Tariacuri when he waged war against his enemies.

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<sup>130</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 47-54; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 135-142.

<sup>131</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 54-58; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 142-146. Aramen, who frequented this tianguis (*tiangüey*) became acquainted with the wife of Caricaten, cacique of the Island of Xaráquaro and they both have an affair. Interestingly, the friar-chronicler of the *Relación* takes the opportunity to make a comment about women in this story, stating: “las señoras como son incontinentes.” Gossip spread amongst women who were jealous and eventually Caricaten learned about his wife’s affair and ordered Aramen’s execution. A group of old men are sent to Aramen’s house and he welcomes them with food. After going to retrieve them blankets, he was shot in the back but managed to escape but died while fleeing. The assassins apprehend his sisters, who are also executed.

Interestingly, the *Relación* placed greater emphasis on the contributions Tariácuri's nephews, Tangáxoan and Hirípan, on helping to expand the Tarascan state in contrast to his son Hiquíngare. Hiquíngare was the only one of Tariácuri's sons that was not disowned by the ruler. His brother, Curátame, was executed for becoming a drunkard while another, Tamapucheca, was disowned for being captured by the Islanders as a prisoner of war. According to the *Relación*, it was disgraceful if not a taboo for a noble to engage in incessant drunkenness or to be captured by the enemy.<sup>132</sup> In contrast to his brothers, Hiquíngare was supported by Tariácuri as a potential priest and ruler. He was declared as the future ruler of the city of Pátzcuaro while his cousins Hirípan and Tangáxoan were to rule over the respective cities of Ihuatzio and Tzintzuntzan. Yet, Hiquíngare only appears occasionally throughout the text as he accompanied his cousins Tangáxoan and Hirípan as they carried out the executions of Tariácuri's disobedient relatives and enemies. Subsequently, Hiquíngare appears to have a marginal role in the expansion of the Tarascan polity while his cousins served as executioners and war generals who carried out the assaults ordered by their uncle. Interestingly, in contrast to Hiquíngare, there is one chapter in the text exclusively dedicated to Tariácuri's daughter, who succeeds in assassinating one of the lords of the village of Curíngaro (See Chapter 3). However, while an entire chapter was dedicated to her in the *Relación*, her name was never mentioned once.

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<sup>132</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 105-108, 123-124; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 204-206, 225-227. The ransomed son of Tariácuri named Tamapucheca was spared even after it was thought that he was already dead and used as food for the gods. His survival placed him in despair because he neither had favor amongst the gods nor with his own father. The Islanders who captured him returned him home to Pátzcuaro after he became drunk and fell asleep. When Tamapucheca awoke, he became further troubled because it was a taboo for a prisoner of war to return home because they were already considered food for the gods or potential enemy spies. Aware of his impending fate, Tamapucheca again became drunk and was soon killed.

As other scholars who have studied the *Relación* have pointed out, the text's emphasis on Hiquíngare's cousins for their roles in conquering the Michoacán region, especially Tangáxoan, was likely reflective of political efforts to preserve the privileges of Tarascan nobles who ruled over Tzintzuntzan during the sixteenth century. After all, the text makes it clear that the founding father of the Tarascan state, Tariácuri, selected Tangáxoan to rule over Tzintzuntzan, which was then part of the Tarascan triple alliance that also included the cities of Pátzcuaro and Ihuatzio. However, Tangáxoan's son who succeeded him, Tzitzispandáquare, would later strip Pátzcuaro and Ihuatzio from possessing any governing authority when he made Tzintzuntzan into the central governing city, making him the sole ruler of the Tarascan state. Under Spanish rule, the terms of this rivalry shifted when the title of "ciudad de Mechuacán" was removed from Tzintzuntzan and awarded to Pátzcuaro after the bishop Vasco de Quiroga moved the Holy See to the latter in 1539. This effectively made Pátzcuaro the seat of governing authority in the Michoacán region, thereby dethroning the political significance of the former Tarascan capital. This raised many protests from Indigenous nobles seeking to retain power and privileges. As other authors have noted, the *Relación*, which was written while this shift in power occurred and takes a direct political stance on the matter by simply referring to Tzintzuntzan as "Mechuacán" while referring to Patzcuaro, which had the official title of ciudad as simply a barrio of Tzintzuntzan.<sup>133</sup>

The manuscript also emphasized Tzintzuntzan's political significance by praising feats of its first Tarascan ruler, Tangáxoan, as well as the acts committed by his father Aramen as they helped to defeat Tariácuri's enemies. During his assassination attempt on priest Naca, Aramen

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<sup>133</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 99.



was distinctly described as a valiant man (*hombre valiente*) for pursuing his target and shooting him in the back with an arrow.<sup>134</sup> In contrast, his brother Zétaco who also accompanied him during the assassination attempt appears to take no initiative and simply stood idly by worrying that Naca was fleeing from the brothers. In a similar fashion, Tangáxoan was also contrasted as the most courageous of his two cousins Hirípan and Hiquíngare as they carried out their execution orders. Their first assassination described in the text is against Taríacuri's son Curátame who was invited into a lodge to drink with the three men. When their target arrived, the three brothers argued over who should be the one responsible for killing him because they were reluctant to do so. Tangáxoan, who was elected by Hiquíngare to carry out the killing because he was "a valiant man," killed the drunken Curátame by striking him with a club in the neck.<sup>135</sup> In the accompanying image of the *Relación de Michoacán*, his burly features are emphasized as he is the tallest of the three men possessing a wide stature, bulging arms, and a large war club splattered in blood (fig 1.5). Tangáxoan followed his father's lead by taking part in another assassination order that is later depicted in the text. The second assassination was against Taríacuri's son-in-law, Hiuacha, who was also a drunkard that the Tarascan ruler despised. Again, while Tangáxoan was accompanied by Hirípan and Hiquíngare in this assassination mission, it was Tangáxoan who was credited with the killing of Hiuacha with a blow to the head from his war club.<sup>136</sup> The killing of these men not only brought glory to

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<sup>134</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 51-52; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 139.

<sup>135</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 103-105; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 201-203.

<sup>136</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 116; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 216.

Tangáxoan and his father but they are shown to be strategic acts that contributed to the Tarascan expansion over the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. When Aramen wounded and captured priest Naca, he helped to avert a large-scale assault against the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas by their enemies living in the islands as well as in the village of Curínguaro. Tangáxoan's killing of Tariácuri's son Curátame, whose mother was a noblewoman from Curínguaro, helped to weaken the village's political grasp over the region by eradicating one of its lords. Lastly, the killing of Hiuacha in the text was one of the stepping stones that allows the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas to conquer to the remaining cities in the Lake Patzcuaro Basin, thereby solidifying Tarascan superiority over the region. Tangáxoan, along with his male relatives Hirípan and Hiquíngare, reaped the benefits of the conquest by ruling over the cities of Tzintzuntzan, Ihuatzio, and Patzcuaro. Tzintzuntzan, which was associated with the legacy of its militaristic founding fathers Aramen and his son Tangáxoan, would become the central city where political power was concentrated.

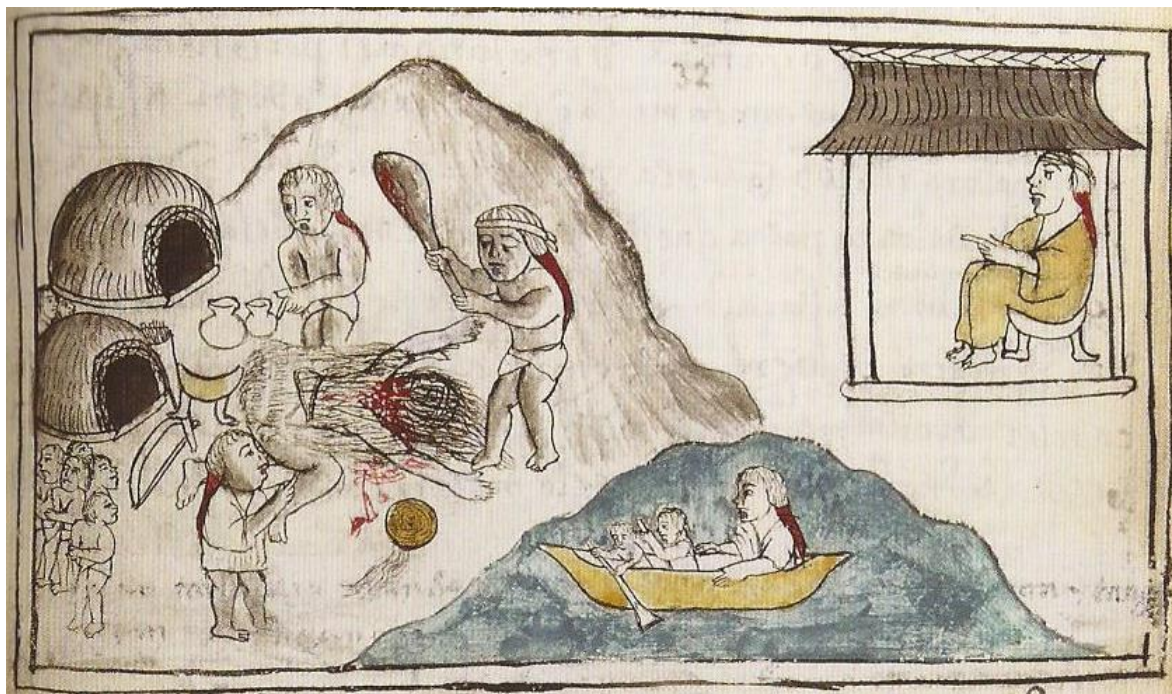


Figure 1.5. Tariácuri ordering Hirípan and Tangáxoan to kill his son Curátame. Source: Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán & the Politics of Representation*, Plate 17.

The *Relación de Michoacán* and its emphasis on Tzintzuntzan and its rulers seemed to avoid the political tensions that likely existed amongst Tarascan elites since none of Tariácuri's direct descendants were able to ultimately rise to power. As Hans Roskamp observes, when Tariácuri awarded governing authority to his nephews this represented a break from Tarascan noble tradition as rulership was only passed down from a father to his biological son. For that matter, Roskamp points out how the *Relación* delegitimized the authority of Hiquingare by making him the only one of the three rulers who did not receive a prophetic dream from the gods foretelling his political ascendance.<sup>137</sup> The gods that visited the two relatives as well as the places they governed bore symbolic and political significance. Hirípan was visited by Curicáueri, the deity of warfare and fire that was only recently introduced to the region by the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas. He was also appointed to rule over the sacred city of Ihuatzio, a traditional ceremonial center in the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. Tangáxoan, on the other hand, was visited by the traditional goddess Xarátanga whose worship in the region predated the Curicáueri cult. He rules over Tzintzuntzan which would become the capital of the Tarascan state. The Tarascan triple alliance, therefore, represented a union between the Islander and Chichimeca cults dedicated to Xarátanga and Curicáueri as well as a political union between two cities that bore spiritual and political significance. Yet, this alliance was short lived as Tzitzispandáquare soon consolidated all power in Tzintzuntzan. (See Table 2)

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<sup>137</sup> Hans Roskamp, "Memories of a Kingdom: The Tarascan and Nahua Foundation of Pre-Hispanic Tzintzuntzan, West Mexico," in *Mesoamerican Memory: Enduring Systems of Remembrance*, edited by Amos Megged and Stephanie Wood (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 126-127.

Table 1.2. The *Relación de Michoacán* and the Outcomes of the Rulers of the Tarascan Triple Alliance

	Hiquíngare	Hirípan	Tangáxoan
Relationship to Tariacuri	Son	Nephew	Nephew
Seat of rule in Tarascan triple alliance	Pátzcuaro	Ihuatzio	Tzintzuntzan
Receives prophetic dream declaring him a future ruler from:	(Receives no prophetic dream)	Curicáueri (Solar deity of fire and warfare)	Xarátanga (Moon goddess)
Succeeded by	Has many sons, although none lives long enough to succeed him.	Ticátame	Tzitzispandáquare
Outcome of descendants' power struggles, leading to the concentration of power in Tzintzuntzan	No further heirs after Hiquíngare. All sons are killed by Hiquíngare and Hirípan. One dies after being struck by lightning.	Hirípan's descendants live on until the coming of the Spaniards. It is not clear how they yielded authority to Tzintzuntzan.	Tangáxoan's son succeeds in establishing Tzintzuntzan as the central governing city of the Tarascan state with himself as the only Cazonci.

Indeed, Tariacuri and his “Chichimeca” ancestors left a legacy for their role in initiating the consolidation of the Tarascan state. Unfortunately, the *Relación* gives minimal attention to other actors, especially the women who also played supporting roles during his tenure as irecha from approximately 1300-1350 (the subject of the third chapter). The legacies of these Tarascan “founding fathers” was the creation of the Tarascan triple alliance that was successful in expanding the Purépecha dominion beyond the Lake Patzcuaro Basin. Another legacy they left for future leaders, at least according to the *Relación*, was an ideal standard of masculinity characterized by territorial expansionism. The ideal Tarascan expansionist articulated in the manuscript was a nobleman who came from hardened Chichimeca descendants, praised the solar deity Curicáueri, hunted, overcame his enemies, and contributed in the conquests of the

Indigenous polity. By the time of the Spanish conquest of the region under the reign of the Cazonci Tzintzicha Tangáxoan, the Tarascan domains encompassed most of the modern-day state of Michoacán and parts of southeastern Guanajuato, western Guerrero, and parts of the eastern Jalisco region.

### **THE TARASCANS, WORTHY OPPONENTS OF THE MEXICA**

In the mid-fifteenth century, the Tarascan Triple Alliance of Ihuatzio, Pátzcuaro, and Tzintzuntzan became compromised when the ruler Tzitzispandáquare came to power. During his reign, power was no longer shared between the three cities as Tzintzuntzan, “the land of the hummingbirds,” became the capital city of the Tarascan state.<sup>138</sup> Interestingly, as Haskell points out, the *Relación* attempted to depict Tzitzispandáquare’s triumph as an uneventful transition of power while leaving out details as to how his opponents were ousted.<sup>139</sup> The process in which he was elevated as the *irecha* was not related in the text. The 1543 *memoria* produced by Don Melchor Caltzin, an inhabitant of a Nahua barrio located within Tzintzuntzan, reveals that his reign was, by no means, insignificant. According to his account, twenty Nahua merchants who assisted Tzitzispandáquare in taking over the capital of Tzintzuntzan by force and were awarded servants, food, and land:

...It was then when twenty great merchants, who had people at their service, entered here in Tzintzuntzan...It was king Tsitsispanthaquare who slipped in...This way he struck them on the chest. And there he took them out. He demolished them in their houses...He gathered them in the territory. The poles with the severed heads were seen erected. The war club got them...Because of all this, the merchants were diligent, were large. They robbed, destroyed, they entered. And because of this they all collected a great fortune.

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<sup>138</sup> Martínez Baracs, *Convivencia y utopía*, 25-26. In the *Relación*, Tzintzuntzan is simply known as “Mehuacan” (“the land where there is an abundance of fish” in Nahuatl) but appears in other colonial documents as Huitzitzillan (the Nahuatl translation of Tzintzuntzan, meaning “the land of the hummingbirds” in Purépecha).

<sup>139</sup> Haskell, “Tarascan Historicity,” 646-647.

Every one received two servants, maize, textiles, orach, beans, chilli peppers...And they were measured a plot of land in the place where they live since a long time ago.<sup>140</sup>

The omission of Tzitzispandáquare's ascendance in the *Relación* may suggest that this was an event that Tarascan noblemen were not comfortable relating as it highlighted the internal power struggles amongst the Uacúsecha nobility that led to a violent coup d'état in favor of Tzitzispandáquare. Haskell maintains that Tzitzispandáquare rose to power by taking the throne from another family member by force, perhaps from one of his brothers who was next in the line of succession after his father, Tangáxoan.<sup>141</sup> As I explain in this section, Tzitzispandáquare, who served as the *irecha* from 1454-1479, was not only eventful in concentrating administration of Tarascan state into the city of Tzintzuntzan but also because he strategically settled the eastern Tarascan borderlands with the intended purpose of confronting any encroaching enemy Mexican armies. The series of successful campaigns and defenses on the Tarascan-Aztec frontier would be important in shaping Tarascan views of themselves as being on par with the Mexica in terms their military capabilities. However, as expansionists, the testimonies recorded by the Tarascans and their Matlatzinca and "Chichimeca" allies on the frontier, also relate how these men came to see themselves also as morally superior to the Mexica.

### **Tzitzispandáquare and the Forging of the Tarascan Borderlands**

Another of Tariácuri's legacies was not only his expansion of the Tarascan state but also his use of foreign allies from central Mexico, the Otomí-speaking Matlatzincas, who aided in his campaigns. The incorporation of Otomí and Matlatzinca allies on the frontier appears to have

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<sup>140</sup> Don Melchor Caltzin quoted in Roskamp, "Memories of a Kingdom," 12.

<sup>141</sup> Haskell, "Tarascan Historicity," 653-654.

intensified during the reign of Tzitzispandáquare. The various reports that were composed in response to King Philip II's fifty-question geographical surveys for New Spain, known as the *relaciones geográficas*, provide valuable ethnographic information on these groups who settled in the Tarascan borderlands facing Mexico. The *corregidor* (chief magistrate) who composed the report for Celaya, Cristobal de Vargas Valdes, provides a narrative of the first Otomí inhabitants who settled the Tarascan state's northeastern border territories at Acámbaro. The report recounts when four "Otomí" leaders, along with their wives and sixty followers, left the Mexican province of Xilotepec known as Hueychiapa due to unspecified reasons. They traveled to the region of Michoacán in order to meet with the emblematic founding father of the Tarascan polity, Tariácuri. Upon reaching him, the Otomí migrants asked to be incorporated as his subjects. After agreeing to take them in, Tariácuri directed them to settle towards the northeast in Guayangareo and allowed them to govern themselves so long as they yielded to his authority. Tariácuri also assigned a group of Chichimeca and Tarascan settlers to live alongside this Otomí community. Their village was named Acámbaro, meaning "the land of magueys."<sup>142</sup>

The Otomí, Chichimeca, and Tarascan communities who settled Acámbaro lived in a strategic province that would be used to guard the Tarascan's eastern frontier against the Mexica. Generations after Tariácuri's rule, other communities that were conquered or incorporated by the Tarascans were also designated to defend the other frontiers facing the Tarascan's enemies westward in the region of Jalisco, towards the coast of Colima, and northward facing the so-

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<sup>142</sup> José Corona Núñez, ed., *Relaciones geográficas de la diócesis de Michoacán 1579-1580*, Part 1, (Guadalajara: 1950), 58-60. The report cites that the location was named after a woman named Acanba who was married to a Tarascan leader. She lived there with him but drowned while bathing in a nearby river and so the settlement was named in her honor

called Chichimecas. The Otomís who settled in the Tarascan borderlands were one of the first of many waves of migrants who cut ties with groups in the basin of Mexico. They left the Xilotepec region when the Aztec Triple Alliance of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan, formed in 1430, reduced them into tributaries as the Mexicans expanded for political control of central Mexico. In protest to their marginal status, many of these Otomís left to form new alliances with the Tlaxcalans while others allied themselves to the Tarascans.<sup>143</sup>

The few narratives that mention these aforementioned events in the *relaciones geográficas* describe the efforts of the male leaders of these Otomí-speaking groups who were known as the Matlatzincas. These documents also attribute the settlement of most of these frontier communities to Tzitzispandáquare, the antepenultimate irecha who ruled from 1454-1479. The geographic surveys serve to fill in the gaps left by the *Relación*, which barely discusses Tzitzispandáquare's reign.<sup>144</sup> The *relaciones geográficas* cite that Tzitzispandáquare was largely responsible for securing the eastern frontier against the Mexica with his Otomí and Chichimeca subjects. The geographic surveys for Celaya, Taimeo, and Necotlan each describe the narratives of Otomí male leaders who were credited with guarding the Tarascan borderlands.

Interestingly, there are very few sources written from the perspective of the Aztecs that speak to their history of frontier warfare with the Tarascans which include *Book 10 of the Florentine Codex*, the *Codex Mendoza*, and Fray Diego Durán's *History of the Indies of New*

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<sup>143</sup> Pedro Carrasco Pizana, *Los Otomíes: Cultura e historia prehispánica de los pueblos mesoamericanos de habla otomiana*, edición facsimilar de la de 1950 (Mexico: Biblioteca Enciclopédica del Estado de México, 1979), 272-277.

<sup>144</sup> De Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 128; 131; Craine, and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 11; 232. He is only mentioned twice. On both occasions he credited to consolidating the political power of the Tarascan triple alliance of Pátzcuaro, Tzintzuntzan, and Ihuatzio into one seniority by making Tzintzuntzan the center of governing authority



*Spain (Crónica Mexicayotl)*.<sup>145</sup> The omission of Tarascan-Aztec warfare in most Mexican sources was likely due to several factors. On the one hand, Indigenous sources from central Mexico may have just been ignorant of events on the Aztec's western frontier facing Michoacán.<sup>146</sup> It is also possible that the Mexica chose not to mention their history of warfare with the Tarascans because they wanted to spare themselves the embarrassment of admitting that they were very close to losing most of their territories in Toluca Valley to the Tarascans. Anthropologist Donald Brand points out that, if it was not for the Spanish conquest, the Tarascans certainly would have conquered a large swath of the western Mexican territories.<sup>147</sup>

According to the *relaciones geográficas*, the groups who helped to fortify the eastern Tarascan frontier included various ethnic groups communities who are simply referred to as “Chichimecas” and “otomies” (Otomís). However, archeological and anthropological sources reveal that these settlements included various ethnic groups such as Matlatzincas, Cuitlatecas, and Nahuatl-speakers known as Tecos.<sup>148</sup> The *relaciones geográficas* pertaining to Cuseo, Taimeo, and Necotlan describe the presence of Otomí-speakers, the Matlatzincas, who were settled by Tzitzispandáquare in the eastern region and who engaged in numerous battles against

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<sup>145</sup> Hans Roskamp, “Los nahuas de Tzintzuntzan-Huitzitzilan, Michoacán: historia, mito y legitimación de un señorío prehispánico,” *Journal de la société des américanistes* 96, no. 1 (2010): 75-106; Susan Schroeder, *Tlacaélel Remembered: Mastermind of the Aztec Empire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 108-109.

<sup>146</sup> Helen Perlstein Pollard and Michael E. Smith, “The Aztec/Tarascan Border” in *The Postclassic Mesoamerican World*, eds. Smith and Berdan (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2003), 90. Pollard notes how Mexican sources did not relate trade relationships with the Tarascans.

<sup>147</sup> Donald J. Brand, “Ethnohistoric Synthesis of Western Mexico,” in *Archeology of Northern America*, Part 2, volume 11, edited by Gordon F. Ekholm and Ignacio Bernal (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 634.

<sup>148</sup> Gorenstein, *Acambaro*, 9.

the Mexican armies (described more in detail in Chapter 4).<sup>149</sup> Evidently, Tzitzispandáquare made use of foreign interventionists from central Mexico during his reign, beginning with the Nahua merchants who helped him to make Tzintzuntzan the seat of governing authority and later by utilizing Matlatzinca allies from central Mexico. While the geographic survey for Celaya relates that the first wave of Matlatzinca settlers populated the southeastern territory of Acámbaro during Tariacuri's rule, the second major wave of Otomí migrants came during Tzitzispandáquare's tenure. These communities likely intermingled with other Otomí-speaking communities who were native to the region, especially those from Taximaroa who inhabited the northeastern Michoacán region since the Toltec period.<sup>150</sup> Other Otomís came from the central Mexican regions of Xilotepec and other parts of the Toluca Valley who cut ties with the Mexican Triple Alliance of Texcoco, Tlacopan, and Mexihco-Tenochtitlan because the Mexicans reduced them from being allies to tributaries.<sup>151</sup> This is also reflected in the *relaciones geográficas* as the Otomí leaders Timax and Vçelo Apançe both took their people from central Mexico and settled in the respective Tarascan villages of Taimeo and Necotlan.<sup>152</sup> These incorporated groups, who also included "Chichimecas," participated in the expansion of the Tarascan frontiers west towards Jalisco, north into the Chichimecas territories, southeastward towards Colima, and also the eastern Mexican territories.

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<sup>149</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 1, 38, 42; *Ibid.*, Part 2, 48.

<sup>150</sup> Ramón Alonso Pérez Escutia, *Taximaroa: Historia de un pueblo michoacano* (México: Instituto Michoacano de Cultura, 1986), 45-47.

<sup>151</sup> Carrasco Pizana, *Los Otomíes*, 15, 272-277.

<sup>152</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 2, 38-39, 42.

The *relaciones geográficas* describe the male rulers responsible for governing and administering warfare in the Tarascan border territories and how they participated in the campaigns to expand to the Tarascan polity. The documents note entries westward into the Jalisco region, known as the Province of Avalos during the sixteenth century.<sup>153</sup> The Jalisco region, especially near Lake Chapala, was apparently desired for its salt resources as well as access to game such as turkeys, deer, rabbit, and fish. Here the Tarascans and their auxiliary forces fought groups such as the Cocas, Tecuexes, and Caxcanes who actively resisted the Tarascans.<sup>154</sup> At Jiquilpan and Perivan, the *irecha* appointed rulers known as Noxti and Pereche to conduct warfare with these groups with military backing from the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin.<sup>155</sup> The Tarascans also deployed subjugated groups who resided far in the northeastern territories of Lake Cuitzeo and Acámbaro to fight against the “Cochaechas” (Cocas) in the far west.<sup>156</sup> Forces from Tinguidín also harassed Colima in the southwest along the Pacific coast, apparently seeking the salt and cotton resources found there.<sup>157</sup> The Tarascans also fought Chichimeca enemies to the north with forces from the Chocandiran region.<sup>158</sup> Despite the efforts to take the Colima and

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<sup>153</sup> Altman, *The War for Mexico's West*, 11. The Pueblos of Avalos largely referred to the western Jalisco region. It is likely that the scuffles mentioned in the Avalos region referred to fighting in Colima and the Lake Chapala Basin that were attacked after the reign of Tariacuri. See Carlos Salvador Paredes Martínez, *Al tañer de las campañas: Los pueblos indígenas del antiguo Michoacán en la época colonial* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 2017), 110.

<sup>154</sup> Carolyn Baus de Czitrom, *Tecuexes y cocas: dos grupos de la región Jalisco en el siglo XVI* (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Departamento de Investigaciones Históricas, 1982), 27, 69.

<sup>155</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 2, 11-12, 30-33.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 52; Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 1, 61.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 91, 95.

<sup>158</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 2, 19.

the Lake Chapala Basin of Jalisco, these were regions that the Tarascans continually harassed but were never able to fully subjugate although the Tarascans claimed to have brought these territories under their authority. However, even before Guzmán launched his expedition to conquer Central Western Mexico in 1530, the Tarascans already lost control of its northwestern frontier territories in Lake Chapala by 1522.<sup>159</sup>

While the *relaciones geográficas* relate scant narratives of the Otomí and Chichimeca inhabitants from these frontiers, it is evident from other colonial Mexican sources written after the sixteenth century by Fray Duran and Fray Pablo Beaumont that these groups were elevated as esteemed fighters. Their military men were renown in their abilities to successfully ward off the Mexicans, especially during the First Tarascan-Aztec War (1479-1480) during the reign of the tlahtoani Axayacatl as well as in the Second Tarascan-Aztec War of 1515 that was waged by Moteuczoma II. Under Tzitzispandáquare, the Tarascan armies and their Chichimeca and Matlatzinca auxiliaries led incursions northward into the Lerma River facing Mexican tributaries and southeast towards the Balsas River region near present-day Guerrero. The objective was to take these lands, which contained valuable resource deposits such as copper, silver, gold, greenstone, and salt.<sup>160</sup> Tzitzispandáquare's conquests in the Toluca Valley, dating from 1455-1462, brought his forces face-to-face against Mexican-allied forces that included Matlatzincas, the Mazahuas of Xocotitlan, and the Xiquipilcas east of the Río Lerma. In these skirmishes, the

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<sup>159</sup> Brand, "Ethnohistoric Synthesis of Western Mexico," 637.

<sup>160</sup> Pollard, *Tariacuri's Legacy*, 167.

Tarascons and their allies overwhelmed the Mexican auxiliary forces by taking the lands in Xiquipilco that were previously conquered by Itzcoatl in the 1430s.<sup>161</sup>

These conflicts transformed into full-scale military engagements between the Tarascan and Mexica armies, beginning with a conflict that was instigated by the Mexican general Tlacaelel who sought to capture and execute Tarascan men in honor of a newly erected Mexican sculpture honoring the sun.<sup>162</sup> The precursor to this battle began in 1462, when the Tarascan and Mexican forces competed for control of Tollocan, a Matlatzinca stronghold that had previously repelled Tarascan invasions. Overtime, the Mexica succeeded in conquering Tollocan in 1472, enveloping this disputed territory.<sup>163</sup> During the reign of Axayacatl, the Mexicans engaged in various campaigns to push back the Tarascan presence, retaking lands in the central and western Toluca Valley.<sup>164</sup> From 1476-1477, the Mexican general Tlacaelel organized a military expedition to halt the Tarascan expansion once and for all by organizing some 32,300 warriors composed of the Mexica and their Tezcuano, Tepanec, Chalcan, Xochimilcan, Chinampanecan, and Otomí subjects who inhabited their side of the Toluca Valley border.<sup>165</sup> Tlacaelel's War under Axayacatl's rule was the Mexican's first major assault and counterattack against the Uacúsecha expansion under Tzitzispandáquare.

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 98, 169; Pérez Escutia, *Taximaroa*, 49-50.

<sup>162</sup> Schroeder, *Tlacaelel Remembered*, 108.

<sup>163</sup> Smith, "The Strategic Provinces," 139.

<sup>164</sup> Pollard, *Tariacuri's Legacy*, 169.

<sup>165</sup> Pérez Escutia, *Taximaroa*, 50.

At first, it appeared that Tlacaelel's forces would have no trouble defeating the Tarascan armies. Once the Mexican forces crossed into the sierra of Anganguero, they took Taximaroa easily as they faced a small, unprepared garrison. The Mexicans subsequently advanced onwards to the valley of Queréndaro, heading towards the Tarascan city of Tzintzuntzan, where they rested.<sup>166</sup> As Ramón Alonso Pérez Escutia relates, the small garrison the Mexicans defeated in Taximaroa was just a decoy. The Tarascans' allies who lived in the border territory of Taximaroa reported to the irecha when they noticed the Mexicans coming. Tzitzispandáquare's forces mounted to 50,000 warriors, largely comprised of Matlatzincas, who defended the eastern Tarascan borderlands. It became increasingly clear that the 30,000 Mexican allies were vastly outnumbered. If Tlacaelel's forces were overconfident that they would reach Tzintzuntzan effortlessly, they became rudely mistaken once faced with the Tarascans' massive multiethnic army. The Tarascans launched a successful counterattack at Matlatzinco (Charo), yielding a definitive victory for the Tarascans. As the Mexica began to flee, the Tarascan armies pursued them into two groups. The first column chased the Mexicans from Matlatzinco to Taximaroa and the other followed them all the way to the Toluca Valley. The Mexica forces were slaughtered once again on both occasions. The slaughter of tens of thousands of Mexican warriors represented a humiliating defeat for Axayacatl which reportedly left the ruler in despair and would not mount such an ambitious campaign into the Tarascan center ever again.<sup>167</sup>

In the aftermath of Tlacaelel's War, the Tarascans erected a chain of fortifications on the eastern border at Acámbaro, Maravatío, Taximaroa, Zitácuaro, Jungapeo, Susupato, Tuzantla,

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 50-51; Pollard, *Tariacuri's Legacy*, 169; Schroeder, *Tlacaelel Remembered*, 108-109.

Cutzamala, and Ajuchitlán. Within the chain of eastern Tarascan border territories, Perez Escutia observes, Taximaroa was the central stronghold, the “campamento al núcleo,” of the Tarascan borderlands. The Mexica followed suit in creating their own defensive garrison on their side of the Toluca Valley (fig 1.6). Into the sixteenth century, the two forces engaged in a series of smaller-scale military confrontations across the border into the early sixteenth century. Militarily, relations between the Tarascan and Mexican states were hostile.

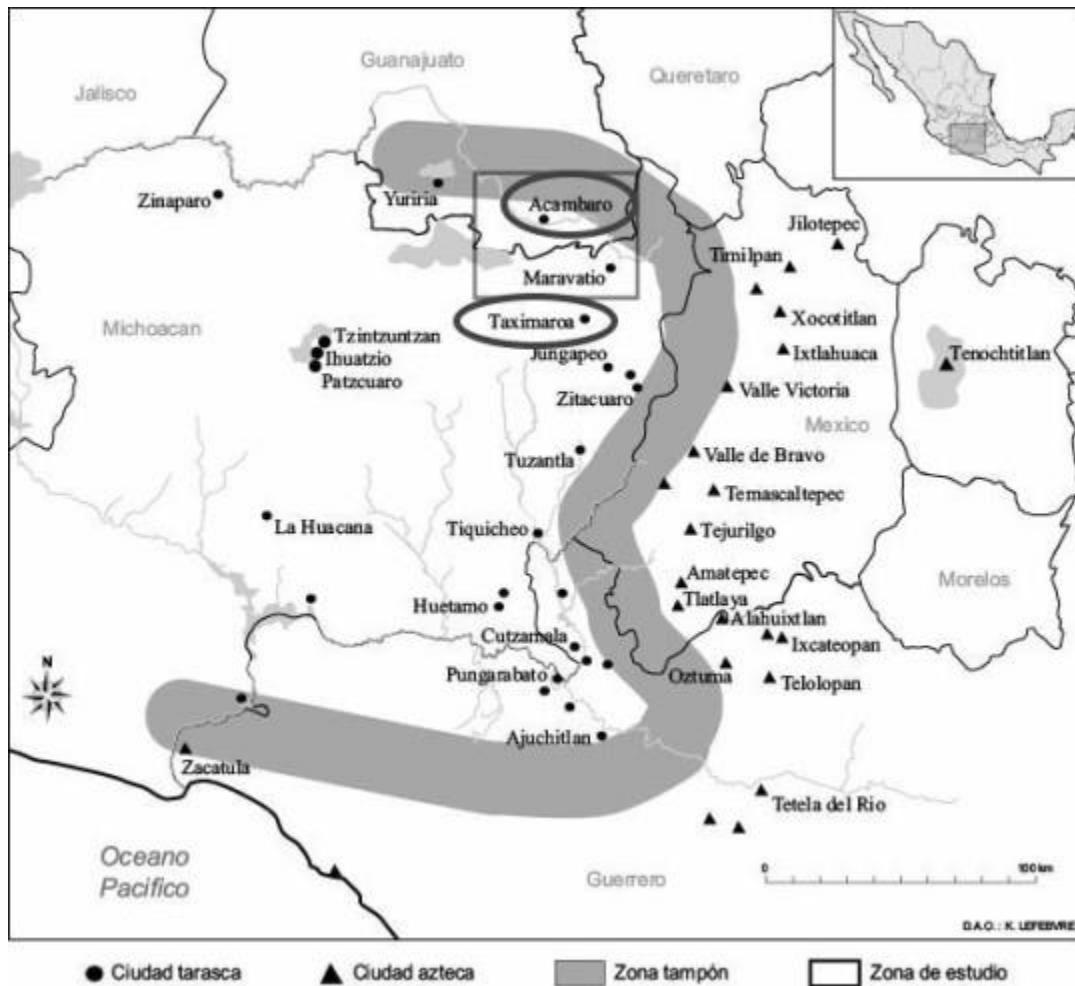


Figure 1.6. A map of the Tarascan/Aztec borderlands by Karin Lefebvre. Source: Karin Lefebvre, “Acámbaro, en los confines del reino Tarasco: una aculturación discreta (1440-1521 d.C.)” *TRACE* 59 (2011), 75.

Even though Tarascan and Mexican expansionist efforts conflicted with each other, the two Indigenous states maintained a complex economic and diplomatic relationship. Tarascan

officials remained highly suspicious of the *tlahtoani* and his messengers even as they continued to conduct trade and discuss politics with the Mexicans. As Pollard emphasizes, the previous assaults against the Purépecha state led to a “closed border” policy with the Mexica such that Mexican merchants and diplomats were not allowed to speak directly to the *irecha*. First, they had to present themselves at official “ports of entry” and request for permission to enter Purépecha territory. Before they could enter Tzintzuntzan, Mexican merchants and diplomats were required to go to Taximaroa. There, they were questioned and, if they were granted permission to enter, were escorted by a Tarascan official who placed them under constant surveillance. Communication with Mexican officials was indirect because they lacked Purépecha speakers in their own homelands so they had to rely on Otomí speakers as messengers who translated for them. For that matter, both the Mexicans and Tarascans also used Matlatzincas as spies since they were viewed with less suspicion because they inhabited both the Tarascan and Aztec states.<sup>168</sup> Lingering tensions became apparent when Tarascan officials refused to attend Ahuizotl’s induction ceremony as the *tlahtoani* of Tenochtitlan in 1486. Pollard notes that Tzitzispandáquare did, however, attend the ceremony in honor of the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan two years later.<sup>169</sup>

Another conflict surfaced between the two Indigenous polities occurred when the village of Oztuma, located in the Aztec borderlands in the northern Guerrero region rebelled sometime in 1487. The Aztecs retook this Chontal community whose ruler refused to pay tribute to the

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<sup>168</sup> Pollard, *Tariacuri’s Legacy*, 171.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.



Mexicans.<sup>170</sup> At the same time, the Mexicans began to conquer territories along the Pacific Coast, which was as interpreted as an apparent attempt to encircle the irecha's domains. Tarascan armies responded by repeatedly attacking Oztuma in a series of skirmishes that began in 1499 and continued unto 1520.<sup>171</sup> The *relaciones geográficas* for Sirandaro, Guayameo, and Cuseo note that the Tarascans held a military garrison at the village of Cusamala where they attacked Oztuma.<sup>172</sup> The Mexicans would not respond with a large military assault until over a decade later during the reign of Moctezuma II.

The infamous Tlaxcalan warrior Tlahuicole, whose name allegedly caused his enemies to flee according to Fray Pablo Beaumont, led the Mexica's second major campaign into Purépecha territory in 1515.<sup>173</sup> Accounts related to this battle emerges in Fray Alonso de la Rea's chronicle of the Franciscan orders in Michoacán written in 1643. The irecha was Zuangua, the son of Tzitzispandáquare. During Tlahuicole's six-month invasion, the Mexicans expected the Tarascan forces to crumble as they faced a series of unrelenting assaults in the eastern territories of Taximaloyan (Taximaroa), Maravatío, Tzitaquaro, Acámbaro, and Tzinapicuario.<sup>174</sup> The turning point of the Second Tarascan-Aztec War came when the Purépecha and their multiethnic forces replicated elements of the retreat strategy utilized during Tlacaelel's assault. Instead of facing the

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<sup>170</sup> Jay Silverstein, "Aztec Imperialism at Oztuma, Guerrero: Aztec-Chontal Relations During the Late Postclassic and Early Colonial Periods," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 12 (2001): 31-34.

<sup>171</sup> Pollard, *Tariácuri's Legacy*, 169-170.

<sup>172</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 1, 45.

<sup>173</sup> Beaumont, *Crónica de Michoacán*, Tomo II, 59-60; Moctezuma II spared Tlahuicole's life after he was previously captured by Mexican forces and, instead of executing him, put him in charge of leading the Mexican armies against the Tarascans at Taximaroa.

<sup>174</sup> Fray Alonso de Larrea in Paredes Martínez, *Al tañer de las campañas*, 115.

Mexica head on, the multiethnic force held at Taximaroa recoiled to the interior and allowed the Mexicans to enter the city, giving them the impression that they would enter unopposed. This time, the Tarascans purposefully left vast stores of alcohol so that the Mexicans would indulge themselves once in the city. Cervantes de Salazar, a chronicler who recorded accounts from those who were alive at the time of the assault, learned that the Mexica forces took the bait and sacked the city.

Two hours before the sun went down, the Mexican invaders in Taximaroa reportedly consumed all the food and liquor in the city, prompting them to fall into an intoxicated slumber. At night, the Tarascan forces reentered the city with little resistance. They once again slaughtered the Mexicans and left their corpses to rot in the open fields of the Toluca Valley. The littering of Mexican bodies, according to Cervantes de Salazar, struck great fear in the Mexica who never again tried to attack Michoacán. Moteuczoma II's failed six-month war on the Tarascan borderlands signified another crippling blow to the Mexica. From that moment onward, according to Pérez Escutia, the Tarascan and Mexican states maintained a mutual hostility and utilized their frontier populations on the borderlands to closely monitor the other.<sup>175</sup> In his *Crónica*, Beaumont pondered how it was possible that the Mexican armies, who had such a valiant general at their disposal, "could not make the Tarascans take even one step back...nor invade any of its frontiers...they were equals in military strength." At the time that he wrote his chronicle, he claimed that he could still see the bones of the dead Mexican warriors littered throughout the Toluca Valley in the fields between Maravatío and Tzitácuaro.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Pérez Escutia, *Taximaroa*, 51-53.

<sup>176</sup> Beaumont, *Crónica de Michoacán*, Tomo II, 60-61.

The third part of the *Relación de Michoacán* hints at how the irecha Zuangua retained his animosity towards the Mexicans even as the Aztecs were besieged by the Spaniards. During this tumultuous period, the Mexicans tried to forge a peaceful military alliance with the Tarascans. The Mexica were in desperate need of allies to combat the combined forces of Tlaxcalans, Spaniards, and other groups who were heading to conquer Tenochtitlan. Zuangua, who was suspicious of the Mexican embassies, allowed them to enter Tzintzuntzan but did not offer to support them. In 1520, however, he did send Tarascan emissaries to Tenochtitlan to hear Moctezuma II's pleas for help, which he still chose to ignore. Another group of Mexican messengers came in 1521, as the Spaniards surrounded Tenochtitlan. Again, the Tarascans turned down the Mexicans' request to provide them with military assistance. During this period, Zuangua died after having contracted smallpox—which was likely introduced from one of the embassies he sent to Mexico sometime before 1519-1520—and was then succeeded by his son Tzintzicha Tangáxoan.<sup>177</sup>

While they are only briefly mentioned in the *Relación de Michoacán*, Tzitzispandáquare and Zuangua both left their mark in the Tarascan polity as the rulers who successfully held back the Mexica presence in the Michoacán region. Tzitzispandáquare is noted for his assaults in Toluca and Xocotitlan and the text claims that Tarascan forces killed sixteen thousand men in these Aztec territories. The impact of Tzitzispandáquare's seniority endured during the reign of his son Zuangua as the text credits his fame to his father's accomplishments in conquering other

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<sup>177</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 28.

territories near Colima and Zacatula.<sup>178</sup> These two rulers are the last two who were credited with expanding the dominion of the Tarascan state.

### ***“The Spaniards Have Placed Skirts on Us”*: Tarascans Emasculate the Mexica**

The numerous tales of conquest related in the *Relación de Michoacán* and the *relaciones geográficas* provide insight into how the Tarascans borderlands were sites where gendered notions of expansionism, or expansionist masculinities, were constructed. Tarascan rulers often compared themselves, often in hypermasculinized terms, to their Mexican neighbors. While some of these comparisons were used to disparage the Mexica, others were more endearing. To illustrate this point, I describe three themes that emerge when studying these documents. The first is how these sources depict the Tarascans and Aztecs as equals in strength. Second, these sources demasculinize and feminize the Mexica, especially when these documents discuss the Spanish conquest of Tenochtitlan. Lastly, this section discusses the ways in which these documents depict the Tarascan rulers in ways that made them seem morally competent in comparison to the Mexica.

### ***Parallels Equals in Strength***

In the *Relación de Michoacán*, there are numerous parallels that can be drawn between the Tarascans and the Aztec mythologies. As mentioned previously, the Mexica and the Tarascans claimed to descend from Chichimecas who wandered the Northern Mexican region until they finally chose a place to settle and conquer. Second, both empires claimed to have conquered other groups in the name of a male deity who represented the qualities of warfare,

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<sup>178</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 128-129; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 232.

fire, and the sun. For the Mexica, this deity was Huitzilopochtli and for the Tarascans this was Curicáueri. Curicáueri is mentioned repeatedly throughout the text and, to a lesser extent, so are the female deities who represented the earth and the moon, which were Cuerauáperi and Xarátanga. The male solar deity, Curicáueri, was a recent addition to the Tarascan pantheon. Yet, he is portrayed as the central deity in the *Relación* while the goddesses appear to take a secondary role. In the manuscript, both the Tarascan and Mexican expansionist states were described as two polities that were blessed to rule through the divine right of the solar deity.

In various occasions, the voices of the Mexican ruler Moteuczoma and the irecha Zuangua are used to compare the might of the two Indigenous states. This occurs in the chapters describing how the Aztecs embassies to Tzintzuntzan in order to seek help from the Tarascans so that they could fight the Spaniards together. On two separate occasions in the text, Zuangua pondered why the gods had sent the Spaniards to conquer the Mexicans after receiving a series of troubling omens warning him that the Tarascans would face a similar fate. Zuangua wonders why these two Indigenous states that were “looked upon by the gods from the sky and sun” were now being looked upon unfavorably.<sup>179</sup> According to the *Relación*, Moteuczoma also made a similar comment when the Tarascan envoys visited Mexico.<sup>180</sup> Interestingly, the text states that these were Moteuczoma’s words, although Mexican historian Rodrigo Martínez Baracs points out that the Tarascans were likely speaking to one of his successors, Cuitláhuac or Cuauhtémoc, because at this point the Mexican tlahtoani in question was already dead as the Mexicans were

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<sup>179</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 176-177; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 62.

<sup>180</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 60-61; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 65-66.

being besieged by the Spaniards.<sup>181</sup> While this error could be attributed to the Tarascans' unfamiliarity with events in Tenochtitlan, one wonders if choosing Moteuczoma's voice was a conscious choice, considering that Moteuczoma was remembered by the Spaniards as a leader who yielded authority to them as opposed to Cuitláhuac and Cuauhtémoc who rebelled against them. It is likely that the Tarascans were trying to convey that they also considered negotiating with the renowned leader Moteuczoma just like their Spanish counterparts.

Zuangua and Moteuczoma's personages are used to elevate the Tarascan and Mexican leaders by declaring their power and might in equals terms. At the same time, both the tlahtoani and the irecha's voices are used to declare that these Indigenous states were strong but not strong enough to overtake the Spaniards. In the *Relación*, however, the irecha does not state that this was due to the military weakness of the Tarascan armies but because of divine fate; The Tarascan gods had already foretold of their eventual conquest from a foreign power, they simply had to yield and allow this invasion to unfold. This is, of course, an interesting rhetorical tool because, in practice, the Tarascans continued to resist the Spaniards even after they supposedly submitted peacefully to them in 1524. Yet, we learn in later documents such as those detailing the trial and execution of the last Tarascan irecha, the Cazonci, that the Tarascans killed numerous Spaniards and even planned full-scale military assaults to take them out (discussed in Chapter 2).

Evidently, there were political motives that led Tarascan nobles to depict themselves as being on par with the Aztecs. As David Haskell observes, in the early colonial period, Mexihco-Tenochtitlan became the seat of power for New Spain while Tzintzuntzan lost its repute.

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<sup>181</sup> Martínez Baracs, *Convivencia y utopía*, 111, fn. 24.

Apparently, there were Tarascan communities who were resentful about their position under the Spanish crown. The previously mentioned *Memoria of Don Melchor Caltzin* also echoes these sentiments. Haskell points out how Caltzin juxtaposes the violence of the Spanish conquest of Tenochtitlan with the supposedly peaceful conquest of Tzintzuntzan in order to insinuate that the Tarascans deserved better because, at least, they allegedly cooperated with the Spaniards without resorting to violence like the Mexicans did.<sup>182</sup> I add to Haskell's point by stating how don Melchor Caltzin also invoked his Nahua lineage in this text to distinguish between Nahuas in Michoacán who were more inclined to express obedience to the Spaniards and those from Tenochtitlan who were not.

### ***Feminizing the Mexica***

A second theme that emerges in these documents is how the sources often feminize and emasculate the Mexica. This is especially the case where the text describes how Mexican embassies were sent to Tzintzuntzan to speak to Zuangua. The *Relación* shows how the irecha rejected the Mexicans requests for military support each time as well as the language used to ridicule the Mexica. The text depicts the Mexicans as desperate and begging for someone to come to their rescue. In the text a captured Otomí spy allegedly confirmed with the Tarascans that the Mexicans were going from pueblo to pueblo finding someone to help liberate and defend them.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Haskell, "Tarascan Historicity," 642-643.

<sup>183</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 176; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 62-63.

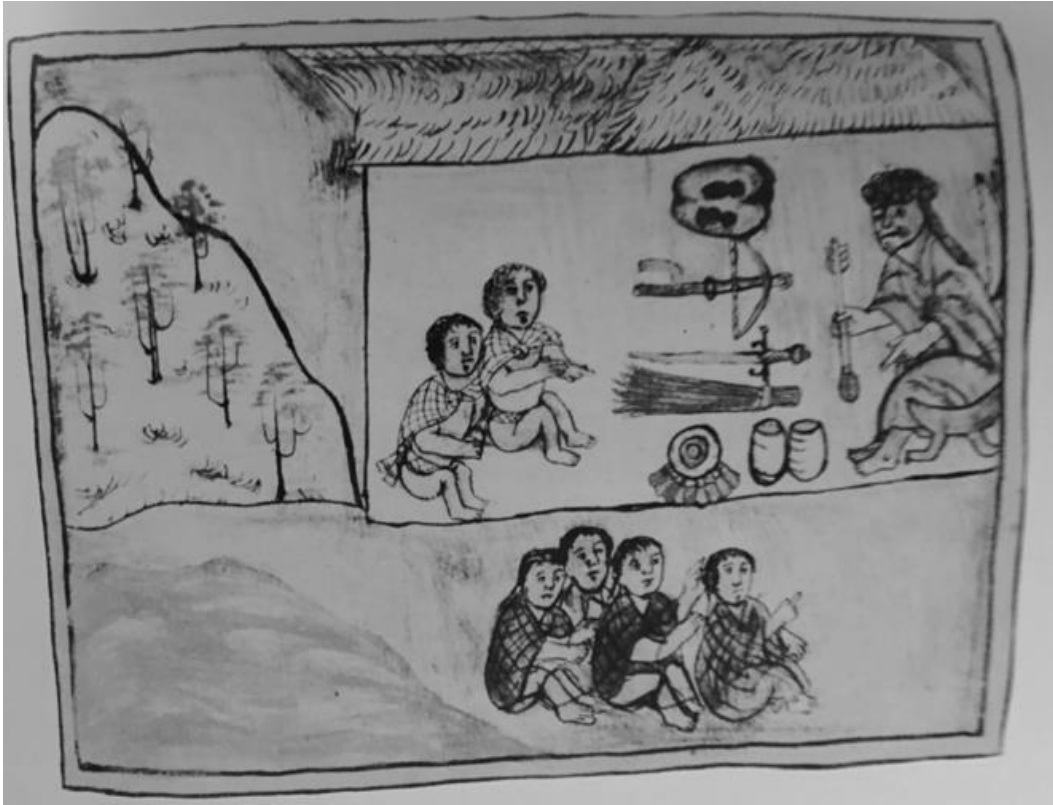


Figure 1.7. “How Moctezuma, Master of Mexico, sent a request for help from the Cazonci Zuanga [Zuangua].” Source: Eugene R. Craine and Reginald C. Reindorp, eds. and trans. *The Chronicles of Michoacán*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.

The implications of Tarascan superiority over the Mexica is perhaps most evident in the accompanying image in the *Relación* depicting two Mexican emissaries speaking to the irecha Zuangua (fig 1.7). Cynthia Stone’s analysis of the how the drawings of the *Relación de Michoacan* conveys cosmological spatiotemporal organization provides a useful framework for analyzing the image. Indigenous Mesoamerican pictorial traditions generally placed cosmological significance on representations of the numbers two, three, and four. Two refers to the duality of oppositional forces, especially those which were masculine and feminine. Three acknowledged the connections between the earth, sky, and underworld. Lastly, the number four



represented the four cardinal directions.<sup>184</sup> The above mentioned image reflects the duality of both the terrestrial deity Cuerauáperi and the solar deity Curicáueri. In the image, Zuangua represents the masculine energy of Curicáueri as he holds the bow in his hand, indicative of his lineage to the Chichimecas who were sent by the solar entity to conquer the Lake Patzcuaro Basin. While an anthropomorphized Cuerauáperi is absent in the image, her presence is implied in the opposite end of the painting that shows forests that are representative of the earth goddess. This image underscored that the Mexican messengers were speaking to the irecha who was not only a political figure but also the powerful representative of the boisterous solar deity.<sup>185</sup> The spatiotemporal placement of the objects in this image also seem to convey a semiotics of power. In the accompanying image that describes the Mexica emissaries asking the Tarascan leader for help, the envoys are drawn proportionally smaller in stature in comparison to Zuangua. Their deference to him is displayed in the manner in which they are literally positioned below him. While each of the men are gesturing to signify their involvement in dialogue, the Tarascan leaders' hand is the only one that clearly displays a pointing gesture. The Mexican envoys are also less elaborately dressed and detailed than the irecha, only wearing a cape and a loincloth while Zuangua is fully clothed and holding an arrow.

After their interaction, the irecha thanked the embassy for their message and send them gifts to take back to Mexico while also declining the offer to assist them. After the Mexicans leave,

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<sup>184</sup> Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 90-92.

<sup>185</sup> The significance of three is also represented in this image. Representatives of the earth (Cuerauáperi), sky (Curicáueri), and underworld are each shown in the image. In this case, the underworld is represented by Lake Pátzcuaro shown in the lower left of the image. Pátzcuaro, according to José Corona Núñez, is translated as “place of Blackness, of Fog,” which signified death or the underworld. Corona Núñez in Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 97.

the irecha then went on a tirade about how he did not plan on supporting the Aztecs in the first place due to their long history of conflict in the frontier. For that matter, he suspected that the Mexica were planning a trap to lure in the Tarascan soldiers and then execute them. He states that the Mexican messengers knew the real reason why he didn't accept their request for help and that they were not naïve little boys—or *muchachos*—to not understand the situation, stating, “*vayan estos naguatlatos e interpretes que les he dicho que iran, que no son muchachos para hacello como muchachos, y estos sabran lo que es.*”<sup>186</sup> It is important to point out, again, the emasculating connotations in the lexicon used to refer to the messengers to the likes of little children. In both European and Indigenous traditions, one was not considered a man upon reaching a certain age. Romero observes that in both European and Indigenous traditions, manhood was something earned, proven, and demonstrated through various acts and accomplishments.<sup>187</sup> Thus, it was considered a grave insult to refer to someone who was considered to have reached adulthood as a *muchacho*.

Last, we see how gendered language is used to feminize the Mexica in one of the chapters that takes place after the conquest of Tenochtitlan. Don Pedro, who then served as the Cazonci's diplomat, was given a tour of the ruins of the city by a group of Mexican escorts. In this passage, the Mexicans were emasculated in terms of both gender and age. The Mexicans described themselves as helpless children who were caught off guard when facing off against the Spaniards. Because the Spaniards conquered them, the Mexican men told Don Pedro that that the Spaniards placed skirts on them, which was a metaphorical way of communicating that they

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Romero, *Making War and Minting Christians*, 46-56.

were defeated. In the *Relación*, the associations of men wearing female dress, however, were not only meant to be metaphorical but also derogatory. Such derogatory feminization occurs in a separate chapter in the *Relación* where Tariácuri insulted the men of Curínguaró during a dispute with his wife, who was also from Curínguaró. In the text, Tariácuri engaged in a monologue where he equated the Curínguaros' dress, jewelry, armaments as female implements, stating:

Mira, mira, mujer, con estas [flechas] tengo de matar todos tus hermanos y parientes. ¿Cómo, son valientes hombres?... ¿No son mujeres? Y las guirnaldas de trébol que se ponen en la cabeza no son sino cinto de mujeres que se ponen por el cabello. Las orejas de oro no son orejas de oro mas de zarcillos de mujeres. ¿Por qué no se las quitan y se ponen zarcillos? Y lo labrado que tienen en las espaldas no es de valientes hombres, mas labores de mujeres. Y las camisetas que traen, no son sino antes de mujeres... los máxtilos que traen que no son máxtilos, mas sayas y fajas de mujeres. Y los arcos que traen no son arcos, mas telares de mujeres; y las flechas no son sino lanzaderas y husos de mujeres. ¿Son por ventura de valientes hombres? Yo los mataré y acabaré a todos.<sup>188</sup>

Look, look, woman, with these [arrows] I can kill all your brothers and relatives. How are they brave men? ... Are they not women? The clover garlands that they wear on their head are nothing but laces that women put on their hair. Their gold earrings are not gold earrings but tendrils worn by women. Why don't they take them off and wear tendrils? And what they have on their backs is not of brave men, but labors of women. And the t-shirts they bring, they [are for] women...the mats they bring that are not maxtiles, more sayas and girdles of women. And the bows they bring are not bows, but women's looms; and the arrows are nothing more than shuttles and spindles of women. Are they by chance of brave men? I will kill them and finish them off.

In these examples and images, we see the Tarascan informants and Franciscan author of the *Relación* emasculating the Uacúsecha enemies by feminizing them. In the process, they portray themselves as the manly warriors, capable of not only conquering the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin but also strong enough to hold back the Mexica.

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<sup>188</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 60-61.

### *Morally Superior to the Mexica*

The third theme that emerges in these documents are statements that perceive the Mexica as lacking many of the positive moral and spiritual qualities that the Tarascans seemed to possess. In one of the chapters of the *Relación*, Zuangua asserts that the reason why the Mexicans were being destroyed by the Spaniards was because they did not worship the gods properly like the Tarascans did by burning fires in their honor. Zuangua states, “Let [the Spaniards] kill the Mexicans, for many days they have lived wrong, they do not bring wood for the temples, we hear that only with songs, they honor their gods. What good are songs alone? How will the gods favor them with only songs? Here we work more.”<sup>189</sup> The *Relación*, however, is not the only source that inscribes superior moral qualities onto the Tarascans. The *relación geográfica* for the city of Pátzcuaro composed in 1581 describes Tarascans leaders with more humbling and endearing qualities than the Aztecs.

Apparently, the notion that the Tarascans were morally more sophisticated was also shared by some of the Spaniards who helped to produce the report, which included the alcalde mayor Juan Martínez and two Franciscans, Diego de Fuenllana and fray Sebastián Alemán. In the document, the Spaniards stated that the Tarascans were more caring and compassionate than the Mexicans and somehow even more sophisticated musicians and singers (“*gente carativa y mas compasible que los mexicanos y entre ellos muchos musicos de todo genero de musica y cantores*”).<sup>190</sup> The Spanish authors of the *relación geográfica* for Pátzcuaro also convey that the

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<sup>189</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 180; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 66.

<sup>190</sup> "Patzcuaro, 1581," 1581, *Relaciones Geográficas of Mexico and Guatemala, 1577-1585*, JGI XXIV-14, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.

Tarascans were more inclined to assimilate into Spanish customs which was evident in their incorporation Spanish dress, which they allegedly were more willing to do in contrast to their Mexican counterparts.

Another way this document distinguishes the Tarascans and the Mexicans is the way in which it depicts the Cazonci, Tzintzicha Tangáxoan. Tangáxoan is painted as a humble, composed man, yet one imbued with warrior-like qualities. It states that his name, Tzintzicha, stood for “one who erects fortresses because he built so many and because he was valiant in warfare...”<sup>191</sup> The Cazonci’s valiance is contrasted with the Mexica who he visits in Mexico City sometime after the conquest. It is said that during his stay, the Aztecs saw that he was dressed humbly, wearing what is described as soiled rags and worn out sandals. It is pointed out that this was a custom amongst Tarascan lords as whenever a ruler appeared in front of another, they were expected to symbolically yield their full authority and attention to them by not wearing extravagant dress. Nevertheless, the Mexica, who considered him an enemy, made fun of him by playing with the word Cazonci and referring to him as *caccolli* meaning “old sandal” in Nahuatl.<sup>192</sup> In this account, the Mexica implicitly appear as immature scoundrels who did not know how to demonstrate humility or how to pay proper respect. Yet, the image of the humbly dressed Cazonci who displayed exemplary manners in texts like the *relación geográfica* for Patzcuaro may have also resonated with Christian audiences. Afanador-Pujol observed how the images of humbly dressed Uacúsecha-Chichimecas from the Uanacaze ruling dynasty in the *Relación de Michoacán* appealed to Christian audiences because it imbued these men with

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

Christian-like qualities: “This classification served their descendants well, since an austere life, hunting prowess, and virtuous behavior had many parallels with Christian European beliefs and practices at the time. The exaltation of the Chichimec Uanacaze lords' moral virtues, as described in the text, depicted in the illustrations, and symbolized by Christian-like clothing, represented them as analogous to Christian princes and knights and thus worthy of rulership.”<sup>193</sup>

#### **CONCLUSION: THE TARASCAN, SPANISH, AND AZTEC EXPANSIONIST PROJECTS IN COMPARISON**

The Tarascan and Spanish authors who related the narratives of the expansion of the Tarascan state surely must have sought to appeal to Spanish colonials who were undertaking their own conquests of northern Mexico. The *Relación*, addressed to Antonio de Mendoza and happened to be written as the viceroy was in the process of quelling the Mixtón Uprising in 1540-1542 while the *relaciones geográficas* were written as the Spaniards expanded northward and engaged in the Chichimeca wars from 1550 to the turn of the century. In these accounts, Tarascans related the history of their own expansionists that appeared to hold many of the same ambitions as the Spanish and Aztec imperialists. They also conveyed having similar ideas about the men who were charged with leading these campaigns.

Read together, the *Relación de Michoacán*, the *relaciones geográficas*, and the *Memoria de Don Melchor Caltzin* relate a moment in which Tarascan political power was at its height under various powerful expansionist rulers. I argued that these narratives related a hypermasculine found of the early Tarascan state that depicted their men as warriors and fighters with superior moral qualities. The expansionist masculinities of these Tarascan male leaders

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<sup>193</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 126.

were demonstrated through their conquest of powerful enemies who included the local Islanders and Curínguaros in the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin as well as the Mexica in the Toluca Valley. Their rule was also justified as the will of their masculine solar deity, Curicáueri. The efforts of these leaders to wage war allowed for the expansion of the state to encompass much of the region that today comprises the contemporary Mexican state of Michoacán. This historical memory must have resonated with the Tarascan nobles who were likely demoralized by their humiliating defeat by the Spaniards who eventually conquered them. Additionally, these accounts resonated with the Spanish authors who helped to compose these narratives and praised the masculine feats of the Tarascan expansionists. The tales center on the heroic virtues of the Uacúsecha-“Chichimeca” hunters and nobles who overcame various obstacles in their rise to power. These leaders faced deceptions and betrayals from their presumed allies who included local villages and relatives, which led to many deaths and acts of warfare. The texts also praise the Tarascans’ Matlatzinca (Otomí) allies who left their home provinces in Mexico due to the tyrannical conditions imposed on them from the Mexica and, in exchange, came to the aid of the Tarascan state as one of its many auxiliary forces. The abilities of the Tarascans and their allies to overcome these adversities seem to have gained them favor amongst their gods, as the *Relación de Michoacán* often credits Curicáueri to their successes. Unfortunately, they appeared to lose favor with their deities who appeared to have abandoned them when confronted with the Spanish conquistadors, which is explored in the following chapter.

## Chapter 2: The Fragile Frontiers of Governing Masculinity at Taximaroa and Cuinao

Zuangua, the penultimate irecha of the Tarascan state, fell ill sometime after he dismissed the Mexican embassies who sought his support during the siege of Tenochtitlan. Zuangua likely contracted a contagion from the Aztec messengers who came into contact with infected Spaniards.<sup>194</sup> This pestilence was likely of many outbreaks that occurred during the early colonial period that was known to the Nahuas as *cocoliztli* and that the Tarascans called *tepari pamangarata*.<sup>195</sup> The *relación geográfica* for Celaya reveals that even territories on the northeastern periphery of Michoacán such as Acámbaro—once part of the Tarascan borderlands in pre-Hispanic times—also fell victim to the such pestilences.<sup>196</sup> Zuangua’s son, Tzintzicha Tangáxoan, was thrown into distress as he bore witness to his father’s death from the strange disease that also killed many of his relatives. Tangáxoan was further disconcerted because his father’s passing meant that he, as the oldest son, had to suddenly take up his father’s burden as the irecha.

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<sup>194</sup> Paredes Martínez, *Al tañer de las campanas*, 171-172. According to Paredes Martínez, these plagues that decimated Mexico’s Indigenous populations occurred at least eleven times per century during the colonial period and also took a heavy toll on Michoacán during the sixteenth century. These epidemics were a contributing factor to the decline of Comaja, Uruapan, Turicato, Huaniqueo and Erongarícuaro, which were subject to Michoacán. These five territories and suffered a thirty-two percent population reduction from 1524-1547 and another decrease of eighty-two percent from 1548-1632.

<sup>195</sup> Fray Maturino Gilberti, *Vocabulario en lengua de Mechuacan compuesto por el Reverendo Padre Fray Maturino Gilberti de la Orden del Seráfico Padre San Francisco* (Morelia, Mich, México: Balsal Editores, S.A., 1983) Hints at the symptoms of this mysterious disease, which the Tarascans called *tepari pamangarata*, can be found in the elaborate dictionaries composed by the Franciscan Fray Maturino Gilberti who lived and died in Michoacán from 1535 to October 3rd, 1585. *Tepari*, meaning “something hard on the body” (cosa así gruesa de cuerpo) and *pamangarata*, “exhaustion” (calsansio tal) might suggest smallpox since the tough lesions described on the body might suggest sores which led to eventual weakness and death among the affected.

<sup>196</sup> Corona Nuñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 1, 56-57. According to the 1570 report, Acámbaro numbered 2,600 people although it “was once more populous, and due to a pestilence, that occurred generally throughout New Spain four years ago, it diminished and fell in said quantity.”



Tzintzicha, who bore the distinctive title of “Cazonci,” was tasked with negotiating with the strange men, the Spaniards, who brought down one of their most powerful enemies, the Mexica. While he previously made peace with an envoy sent by Hernán Cortés in 1521, the Cazonci had a particular reason to be distraught in the following year. In 1522, a group of armed Spaniards and their Indigenous allies, led by Cristobal Olid, suddenly appeared in the border territory of Taximaroa. Tangáxoan assembled his council of advisors and made preparations to go to war with Olid’s armies. According to Don Pedro Cuiniarángari, who served as one of the Cazonci’s primary advisors, the Cazonci spoke to him before he sent him off to gather the warriors in Taximaroa, telling him, “Come here, for I hold you to be my brother in whom I must have confidence, for the old people, my relatives, are dead and on their way; they have gone a long ways and we shall follow them. Let us all die quickly and take our ravages of the common people.”<sup>197</sup> In this quote, recorded in the *Relación de Michoacán*, Don Pedro conveys that the new ruler continued to harbor anxieties concerning the deaths of his relatives as well as his own forthcoming demise.

In both the Cazonci’s interactions with the Spaniards as well as his own people, at least in the way it is told by Don Pedro in the *Relación*, one might come to the conclusion that Tangáxoan lacked competence as a ruler. In the *Relación*, Don Pedro claims that he was manipulated by an older lord named Timas who took advantage of his sorry state in order to convince him to kill himself so that he could join his relatives in the afterlife instead of dying at the mercy of the Spaniards. The plot would have been successful, it appears, if Don Pedro had

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<sup>197</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 71.

not intervened.<sup>198</sup> Yet, it is also evident that the narrative reflects Don Pedro's own frustrations and reservations about working with the Tangáxoan during his first few years as the Cazonci.

The Cazonci's seeming inaction and hesitancy in the *Relación de Michoacán* is sharply contrasted with how he composed himself with the Spaniards in the trial documents relating to his eventual execution, the *Proceso contra Tzintzicha Tangaxoan el Caltzontzin formado por Nuño de Guzmán Año de 1530* (henceforth called the *Proceso*). This legal text describes the various complaints that encomenderos living in Michoacán presented to the president of the first Audiencia of New Spain, Nuño de Guzmán, who was then in the process of initiating the conquest of Nueva Galicia. Among the most incriminating charges leveled against the Cazonci was that he ordered numerous killings of Spaniards throughout the Michoacán region. In some cases, he ordered some of these Spaniards to be imprisoned and then had them ritually executed in the temples known as the yácatas that the conquistadors referred to as *cues*. What was perhaps most offensive were reports that these men were executed in honor of the Tarascan deities and that both the Cazonci and Cuiniarángari were seen dancing in the skins of the deceased Spaniards. These idolatries were considered a grave offense, especially considering that both men were baptized respectively under the Christian names of Don Francisco and Don Pedro. What was most damning was that the while the Cazonci was being questioned, a Tarascan informant named Cuaraque approached the Spaniards and revealed that Tangáxoan planned a secret attack against the armies of Nuño de Guzmán in the northern Tarascan frontier territory of

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<sup>198</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 186-189; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 74-78.

Cuinao.<sup>199</sup> That the Cazonci secretly prepared such a sophisticated and coordinated attack with allies in the northern Chichimeca region while under close supervision by the Spaniards provides a contrasting view of the Cazonci as a cunning strategist as opposed to the coward he appeared to be in Don Pedro's account in the *Relación*.

In this chapter, I suggest that one way to read these contrasting views of the Cazonci is by studying how his displays of authoritative masculine behavior, or “governing masculinity,” were interpreted differently in these documents. This approach is informed by Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent's edited collection that studies the lived experiences and expectations faced by men in positions of authority in early modern Europe. They describe governing masculinities as “the varied ideals, practices, and characteristics of masculinity for men in positions of power, authority and governance...”<sup>200</sup> As a governing elite male, Tangáxoan was expected to live up to his expectations as the Cazonci on the one hand while demonstrating his allegiance to the Spanish crown on the other. Yet, as I will explain in the following sections, Spanish and Indigenous notions of rulership and the interests they represented were often contradictory and were literally anxiety-inducing for the actors involved and produced deadly outcomes. As best stated by J. Benedict Warren, this was “an impossible situation—two civil governments ruling the same people, in the same area, at the same time. Violence was inevitable.”<sup>201</sup>

Consequently, there is little evidence to suggest that a peaceful “middle ground” existed in early colonial Michoacán as violence was endemic during the first decade the Tarascans lived

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<sup>199</sup> Frances V. Scholes and Eleanor B. Adams, *Proceso contra Tzintzicha Tangaxoan el Caltzontzin formado por Nuño de Guzmán Año de 1530* (México: Porrúa y Obregón, S.A., 1952), 44-47.

<sup>200</sup> Broomhall and Van Gent, "Introduction," 2.

<sup>201</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 239.

under Spanish rule. According to Richard White, a middle ground existed when both Indigenous peoples and European colonials worked towards achieving cooperation or consent from each other without resorting to violence. Such a relationship required an understanding of mutual benefit from both parties.<sup>202</sup> Surely, the Tzintzicha Tangáxoan acquired some benefit by surrendering to the Spaniards as he continued to be recognized as the Cazonci. Hernán Cortés succeeded in acquiring the lands and mineral resources of Michoacán for himself as well as his fellow conquistadors. Nevertheless, tensions between Indigenous peoples and encomenderos led to violence in early colonial Michoacán: Indigenous people killed Spaniards who intruded their lands and sought to impose colonial rule while Spaniards inflicted violence on those who opposed them and virtually enslaved the Natives through the use of encomienda labor. Cortés may have negotiated the submission of the Tarascan state under the Crown but the Cazonci did not fully allow the Spaniards to use the labor of his people, to hold dominion over his territories, or to confiscate his treasures. Yet, Tzintzicha Tangáxoan was also fearful of an assault from the Spaniards and their Tlaxcalan allies who crushed their powerful Mexican neighbors in the east. As relations between the Cazonci and the Spanish encomenderos who intruded into his territories soured, violence ensued along with a conspiracy to uproot the Spaniards from his domains. Nuño de Guzmán's decision to execute the Cazonci further exemplifies the Spaniards' attempt not to reach a middle ground but, instead, to demand obedience and to seek complete political authority over the Indigenous peoples of Michoacán.

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<sup>202</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 52.

That the Cazonci struggled to come to terms with how he should rule and conduct himself also resonates with observations made in histories of anxious masculinities. This field, which has largely centered on how Englishmen expressed anxiety over their failures to uphold espoused patriarchal values in the home can also be applied to the case of the Cazonci and Don Pedro. Instead of examining patriarchal expectations in the family, this chapter examines how Tarascan males expressed anxieties about not being able to live up to both Spanish and Indigenous ideals about how they should govern. Don Pedro's depictions of the Cazonci in the *Relación* in which he almost committed suicide and became increasingly worried about his own safety reveals he had various apprehensions about his role in the new colonial order. At the same time, Don Pedro's observations about the Cazonci reflects his own attempt to explain how he comforted and stayed loyal to Tangáxoan while the ruler was in a vulnerable state. Even though he was the Cazonci's trusted advisor, Don Pedro was one of many Indigenous witnesses who provided damning testimony that led to the execution of the Cazonci: he admitted to the ruler's role in ordering deaths of Spaniards and also confirmed that Tarascan armies planned to assault the Spanish at Cuinao.<sup>203</sup> After the trial, the Cazonci was dead and Don Pedro lived and was appointed by the Spaniards as the governor of Michoacán, a move that created tensions between himself and the Cazonci's blood relatives who were still alive.<sup>204</sup>

As I will describe in the following section, various historians have offered various interpretations of the roles of the Cazonci and Don Pedro played during the Spanish conquest of Michoacán. Some portrayed both the Cazonci and Don Pedro as cowards for failing to launch a

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<sup>203</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 50-55.

<sup>204</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 24-25.

full-scale assault against the Spaniards and for agreeing to submit to the authority of the Crown. Don Pedro, in particular, had been dismissed by some Mexican nationalist scholars as a mere opportunist and traitor to the Tarascan people for contributing to the Cazonci's death sentence. More recently, historians have begun to characterize Don Pedro as a survivor of Spanish brutality and a cultural broker. I offer a more nuanced approach to these interpretations by showing how Don Pedro and the Cazonci's actions were not mere acts of cowardice, opportunism or betrayal. Instead, I suggest that their actions on the eve of the Spanish conquest of Michoacán was an attempt to balance conflicting loyalties to the Spaniards and their Indigenous subjects. In other words, their actions can be read as imperfect attempts to come to terms conflicting notions of Tarascan and Spanish governing masculinities.

I demonstrate how Spanish and Tarascan notions of governing masculinity, which at first appeared to be on equal terms, were in fact at odds with each other during the Cazonci's tenure. I argue that the opposing interests these masculinities represented became much clearer in narratives of Don Pedro and the Cazonci's actions in the Tarascan frontier regions of Taximaroa and Cuinao. Tarascan and Spanish understandings about how these men should govern under the Spanish crown were misaligned, producing a fragile frontier where two competing notions of governing masculinities came to a breaking point. The Cazonci and Don Pedro were charged with the impossible task of aligning Spanish and Tarascan interests during the first nine years that the Spaniards subjugated Michoacán. As I discuss in the following sections, the Cazonci and Don Pedro's attempts to prove to the Spaniards that they were worthy governors, even though they had conflicting loyalties to both the Tarascan state and the Spanish crown, collapsed in the Tarascan borderlands. Both men represented the interests of their Indigenous compatriots in their attempts to wipe out the Spaniards on two separate occasions and on two separate Tarascan

boundary zones: Taximaroa and Cuinao. After the conquistadors uncovered their ploys, these men attempted to change strategies by portraying themselves as Spanish loyalists. However, the end result was the execution of the Cazonci while Don Pedro's life was spared due to fears that his death would provoke an uprising. The conflicting notions of Tarascan and Spanish governing masculinities was resolved with the symbolic killing of the Cazonci: it was an act of terror that demonstrated Spanish intolerance to any act of disloyalty from the Tarascans. To the Tarascans, Tangáxoan's death signified their full subjugation under the crown.

In the first section of this chapter, I provide historical background that relates the Cazonci's first encounter with the Spaniards and the events that eventually led to his execution. Second, I discuss how historians have characterized the role of Don Pedro Cuiniarángari as a traitor and the Cazonci as a coward. In the third section, I draw on examples from the *Proceso* and *Relación* to illustrate how Don Pedro and the Cazonci were charged with the impossible task of balancing Tarascan and Spanish notions of governing masculinities in the new colonial order. The fourth section focuses on how Don Pedro sought to prove his worth as a nobleman who was loyal to both the Tarascans and Spanish by providing his perspective events in the borderland of Taximaroa. The last section discusses how both the Cazonci and Don Pedro attempted to display their loyalties to the respective Tarascan ruling factions they represented, the Islanders and Uanacaze, when they organized the attack on Guzmán's armies in the frontier territory of Cuinao.

Table 2.1. Male Protagonists in the Third Part of the *Relación de Michoacán*

<b>Zuangua</b>	The penultimate irecha who learned about the coming of the Spaniards from Mexican messengers seeking his support and military aid. He refused to help the Mexicans and became troubled after learning about various omens foretelling the fall of the Tarascan state. His fears were confirmed when he learned that the Spanish and Tlaxcalans succeeded in conquering the Aztecs. He died from an illness (most likely smallpox) which he appears to have contracted from the Mexican or Tarascan messengers that visited him from Tenochtitlan.
<b>Tzintzicha Tangáxoan, the Cazonci (Baptized as Don Francisco)</b>	He served as the last irecha of the Tarascan state after his father died from smallpox. At first, it is stated that he peacefully received the Spaniards but then became troubled when Cristobal de Olid arrived to Taximaroa with an envoy of two hundred men. His adopted uncle Timas almost convinced him to commit suicide because it was believed that the Spanish intended to kill Tzintzicha. Don Pedro, who met with the Spaniards, convinced the Cazonci not to kill himself and instead to meet with the Spanish. The Cazonci, soon baptized as “Don Francisco,” was imprisoned numerous times for failing to provide adequate gold and provision to the Spaniards. In 1530, Tzintzicha was executed for ordering the deaths of Spaniards in Michoacán and for conspiring to lead an attack against Guzmán’s armies at Cuinao.
<b>Don Pedro Cuiniarángari</b>	He was the only informant mentioned by name in the <i>Relación de Michoacán</i> . As the text was being written, he was continually referred to as the acting governor of Michoacán. He was the Cazonci’s adopted brother and the son of a priest. He took part in the initial negotiations with the Spaniards and was beaten and jailed numerous times for failing to provide them with enough gold. He witnessed the execution of the Cazonci and was spared from being executed due to fears that his death would have caused Michoacán to be unruly
<b>Huitzitziltzi (Tashauaco)</b>	Don Pedro’s brother by blood who was also a war general. He helped to lead the first planned assaults against the Spaniards when Cristobal Olid arrived to Taximaroa. However, Don Pedro convinced his brother not to go forward with the assault because it was said that the Spaniards came in peace. Huitzitziltzi was later used by the Spaniards to conquer Colima and fought alongside Cristobal Olid’s forces.
<b>*Timas (potential protagonist?)</b>	Nobleman who was considered the Cazonci’s adopted uncle. According to the <i>Relación</i> , he sought to convince the Cazonci to drown himself in order to take his riches, although some historians suggest he initially may have sought to fake the Cazonci’s death. He is killed by Don Pedro for betraying the Cazonci.



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tzintzicha Tangáxoan's seniority as the *irecha* was induced with anxiety before it even began. In the *Relación*, Don Pedro describes how Tangáxoan was apprehensive when the elders insisted for him to succeed his father as the ruler of the Tarascan state. The Cazonci was hesitant, afraid and unwilling to take his deceased father's responsibility. He reportedly asked the elders to elect one of his younger brothers to take his responsibility. Eventually, Tzintzicha agreed to take the role of Cazonci as the corresponding text in the *Relación* reads:

Respondió Tzintzicha: “No digáis esto, viejos. Sean mis hermanos menores, y yo seré como padre de ellos, o séalo el señor de Coyoacan, llamado Paquinga.” Dijéronle: “Qué dices, señor? Ser tienes señor. ¿Quieres que te quiten el señorío tus hermanos menores? Tú eres el mayor.” Dijo el Cazonci después de importunado: “Sea como decís viejos, yo os quiero obedecer; quizá no lo haré bien; ruégoos no me hagáis mal, mas mansamente apartame del señorío.”<sup>205</sup>

Tzintzicha responded: “Do not say that, elders. Let it be my younger brothers, and I will be like a father to them, or perhaps choose the lord of Coyoacan, named Paquinga.” They responded: “What are you saying lord? You must be lord. You would want your lordship taken by your younger brothers? You are the oldest.” The Cazonci then having been importuned: “It will be as you say elders, for I want to obey; perhaps I may not do it well; I beg that you do me no harm, just gently separate me from the seigniory.”<sup>206</sup>

This passage captures the Cazonci's insecurities about his competency as a ruler and even implores the elders not to have him executed if he failed in his duties. In another passage, Tangáxoan asks the elders to remove him from office “gently” (*mansamente*) if he commits wrongdoings while being a drunkard.<sup>207</sup> One of the first acts the Cazonci regretted committing while drunk was that he ordered the executions of his blood brothers after Timas suspected them

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<sup>205</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 181.

<sup>206</sup> Translation adapted from Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 68.

<sup>207</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 48-49.

of sleeping with his women.<sup>208</sup> The Cazonci's refusal to have him executed resonates with the narratives in Part 2 of the *Relación* that clearly demonstrated how Tarascan men in positions of authority who failed to carry out their responsibilities were killed for their insubordination. Eerily, Cazonci appeared to foreshadow his death on charges of insubordination although the charges would come from the Spaniards.

During the Cazonci's first year in office, he formally met with envoys sent by Hernán Cortés on August 1521.<sup>209</sup> Cortés's men first met with Matlatzincas in Taximaroa, which was the traditional border territory that served as a "port of entry" for Mexican merchants and diplomats.<sup>210</sup> This group of Spaniards, led by a soldier named Porillas, related the *marques del valle*'s request to meet with the Tarascan ruler. The Cazonci approved Cortés's request to send a Spanish envoy to visit Tzintzuntzan, although he objected to allowing any of the Mexica to accompany the party. Instead, he demanded the Tlaxcalans to accompany the Spaniards, apparently still embittered by the Tarascans' previous military engagements with the Aztec state. Cortés approved this request and sent an envoy led by Antonio Caicedo that same year. When this group arrived, the Cazonci welcomed them with a display of his warriors' military might. He presented Tarascan soldiers decorated in black war paints and had them demonstrate their

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<sup>208</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 181; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 68.

<sup>209</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 29. Before this meeting took place, Warren points out that the first contact between Indigenous peoples and the Spaniards was recorded in the Tarascan borderland of Taximaroa. The *Relación* reports that a Spaniard riding a horse wandered into the territory during the feast of Purecoraqua and stayed in the village for two days and then returned to Mexico City.

<sup>210</sup> Pollard, *Tariacuri's Legacy*, 169.

marksmanship in front of the Spaniards by killing numerous deer, which they then gifted to them during their visit.<sup>211</sup>

Despite the Spaniards' claims that they sought peaceful relations with the Tarascans, Don Pedro's narrative in the *Relación de Michoacán* relates how the Cazonci grew increasingly anxious and troubled by their intentions when Cristobal de Olid suddenly appeared in Taximaroa with an expeditionary force of at least 174 soldiers on July 1522. This prompted the Cazonci to convene a council of advisors and lords.<sup>212</sup> The Cazonci interpreted the appearance of armed Spaniards and their Indigenous allies at the frontier as a sign of aggression. The council, which included the previously mentioned lord Timas, decided that they should mobilize their forces to fight against the Spaniards. After the council dismissed, Don Pedro's task was to go to the eastern Tarascan border territory of Taximaroa to learn about the Spaniards' intentions as well as to prepare the locals for war. In the process, he was captured by Olid's men and instructed to tell the Cazonci that the Spaniards simply wanted to meet with the Cazonci.<sup>213</sup>

According to the *Relación*, once Don Pedro arrived to the Tarascan capital, he found Tzintzicha and other members of the nobility dressed in precious metals and ceremonial garbs in preparation for their suicidal ritual. The text states that Don Pedro interrupted the ritual to deliver Olid's message and assured the Cazonci that the Spaniards came in peace. Timas then reportedly scolded Don Pedro and accused him of supplying information and called him a *muchacho*

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<sup>211</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 29-32.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 43. Unbeknown to the Cazonci, Cortés intended for Olid to simply inquire about the establishment of a Spanish colony in Michoacán.

<sup>213</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 183-186; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 68-73.

*mocoso*, or a “snotty-nosed little kid,” and attempted to persuade the Cazonci to proceed with drowning himself.<sup>214</sup> Cuiniarángari then states that he spoke to the Tzintzicha in private to warn him that his uncle was plotting his death so that he could take his riches. In the text, Don Pedro laments that the Cazonci did not seem to take his warning seriously, but then it is later discovered that Tzintzicha abandoned the ceremony and fled to Uruapan.<sup>215</sup>

During the Cazonci’s absence, the Tarascan nobles told Olid and Cortés that they could not meet with Tzintzicha because he was already dead. While Don Pedro visited Cortés in Mexico City, he was confronted about reports that the Cazonci was still alive. Don Pedro reportedly wept in front of Cortés, fearing they would kill him for deceiving the Spaniards but the conquistador assured him that he did not intend to harm him and requested for him to bring the Cazonci to speak with him in Mexico City. In Uruapan, Don Pedro ensured Tangáxoan that the Spaniards came in peace and escorted the *irecha* to Mexico City along with his brother Huitzitziltzi. During the journey, he recalled that Tzintzicha was in despair and accused his fellow noblemen of plotting his death, stating: “Maybe you did not tell me the truth when you told me the Spaniards were happy in Mexico City. I managed to escape the hands of those principals who were trying to kill me and now you want to kill me in Mexico City and you have lied to me.”<sup>216</sup> The Cazonci’s accusations were understandable, however, considering that Olid had aggressively demanded and confiscated large quantities of gold from him before taking him to see Cortés. When the party met Cortés in Coyoacán, and a celebratory banquet welcomed

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<sup>214</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 186; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 74.

<sup>215</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 186-189; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 74-78.

<sup>216</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 193; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 82-3.

them that reportedly lifted the Cazonci's spirits, assuring him that the Spaniards meant to form a peaceful alliance. Before attending the celebration, Cortés took the Cazonci to the location where one of Moctezuma's sons—most likely the last Mexican tlahtoani, Cuauhtémoc—was being held with his feet still burned. The Spaniards warned the Cazonci not to disobey the Spaniards; otherwise he would follow in the Mexican ruler's lead.<sup>217</sup> In Coyoacán, Cortés and the Cazonci discussed the terms of the Tarascan state's subjugation under the Spanish crown as lands in the Michoacán region were to be redistributed amongst Spaniards through the encomienda system while Tarascans were allowed to keep their traditional rulers.<sup>218</sup>

There were numerous reasons that prompted the Tarascans to submit to Spanish rule in 1522. One of the causes appears to be their attempts to come to terms with omens that foretold the fall of the Tarascan state. According to the *Relación*, a series of strange and supernatural occurrences foreshadowed the coming of the Spaniards. Interestingly, many of these prophetic events were similar to those described by Sahagun's Nahuatl informants who produced the Florentine Codex that was produced three years after the *Relación*. Similar to the Nahuatl, the

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<sup>217</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 191-194; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 79-84. At Coyoacán, Cortés confronted the diplomat that he received reports that the Cazonci was, in fact, still alive. As Don Pedro wept out of fear the Spaniards would kill him for providing misinformation, Cortés reassured him that he would not be harmed. Cortés ordered Cuiniarángari to present precious stones and a letter to Tangáxoan II requesting to meet with the Spaniards. After Cuiniarángari relayed this message to other leaders in Tzintzuntzan, he and his brother, Huitziltzi, along with two Spanish escorts, went to the Cazonci's hiding place in Uruapan and convinced him to speak with the Spaniards. Upon returning to Tzintzuntzan, Tangáxoan II did not first meet with Cortés but, instead, with Olid who constantly pressured him to supply him with gold and other precious metals. The Cazonci learned from fellow principales that Olid had already raided and stole many of his treasures while he was in Uruapan.

<sup>218</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 61-62. Encomiendas were lands granted to Spaniards, which were exploited for tribute and forced labor from the native populations that inhabited them. The Tarascan villages were allowed to retain their traditional leaders but they were expected to obey the encomenderos who held possession over their lands. Similarly, the Cazonci would continue to be recognized as the king of the Michoacán region even though he was subject to the Spanish crown.

Tarascons also recorded the appearance of comets in the sky, strange animals, and the mysterious destruction of sacred temples.<sup>219</sup> According to the *Relación*, temples burned and their rocky walls began to mysteriously collapse. Two comets appear in the night sky and various people reported strange dreams to the chief priest, the petámuti, in which they reportedly saw Christian women as well as chickens who dirtied their temples. A woman from the village of Ucareo related that she was taken at night by the Cuerauáperi and later Curicáueri to bears witness to a meeting between the gods who began to quarrel and despair because the humans would no longer worship them. In another incident, a fisherman reported that he captured a crocodile that wrestled him down. When he took the animal back to his home, it told him that he was actually a god in disguise and wanted the fisherman to tell the irecha Zuangua that all of his people were destined to die. Initially, Zuangua feared that these omens were a sign that the Mexicans, Chichimecas, or Otomí would conquer them and declared he would rather die before allowing his lands to be taken.<sup>220</sup> In these examples, the omens imply that the Tarascons had no choice but to surrender to the Spaniards because their gods foretold their collapse.

The primary reason that the Tarascons surrendered to Cortés was likely their fear of the military potential the Spaniards and their vast armies of Tlaxcalan allies. The *Relación* records that when Mexican emissaries first visited Zuangua, he was suspicious about their claims that they were being besieged by Tlaxcalans and strange men riding deer covered armor who used a device that sounded like lightning that killed large numbers of Mexican warriors in battle. Tarascan messengers confirmed these reports to Zuangua who became increasingly troubled and

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<sup>219</sup> Miguel Leon-Portilla, ed., *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, Expanded Updated Edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 3-12.

<sup>220</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 168-174; Craine, and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 53-60.

worried that the end of his own seniority would come by the hands of the Spaniards.<sup>221</sup> The Cazonci Tzintzicha Tangáxoan, Don Pedro Cuiniarángari, and other Tarascan officials were likely intimidated by the Spaniards after they witnessed the destruction of Tenochtitlan themselves when they were invited to visit the capital in 1522 to meet with Cortés to discuss the terms of their surrender. While in Tenochtitlan, these principals also witnessed the potential consequences they could face if they disobeyed the Spaniards after Cortés took the Cazonci to visit the last tlahtoani of the Aztec state, Cuauhtémoc, whose feet were burned and was awaiting execution.<sup>222</sup>

From 1522 onward, Michoacán found itself under the tyrannical rule of Spanish overlords and encomenderos overseen by Cristobal Olid. This tumultuous period was characterized by internal squabbles, rivalries, and mutinies amongst the Spaniards, who often dragged the Cazonci and other Tarascan officials into the crossfire. Olid, who had previously sacked Michoacán, embarked on a rogue expedition to establish a colony in Honduras that was free from Cortés's control. He took Don Pedro's brother, the famed general Huitzitziltzi, along with him and the noble perished at some point during the operation. In 1525, Cortés set out on his own campaign to put down Olid's rebellion. This paved the way for tyrannical rule in Mexico City under the co-lieutenancy of Gonzalo de Salazar and Peralmindez Chirinos.<sup>223</sup> The two

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<sup>221</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 174-178; Craine, and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 60-64.

<sup>222</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 184-196; Craine, and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 78-87.

<sup>223</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 103-105. These two forcefully wrested power from Alonso de Estrada and Rodrigo de Albornoz—the who Cortés originally left in charge but could not cooperate in their attempts to share power. Previously, Estrada and Albornoz did not have a productive relationship as the two men drew swords against each other during a meeting of the town council. As a response, Cortés decreed that the two men should be removed from office and replaced with Salazar and

lieutenants grew increasingly impatient during Cortés's absence since he was not heard from for nearly over a year and sought to declare him dead in order to confiscate his possessions in Michoacán. Many of Cortés's allies in Michoacán who opposed their rule were jailed, whipped, and in some cases executed. The Cazonci himself was arrested on two occasions during the Salazar and Chirinos regimes because they alleged that he was the cause of unrest in the province, although other witness testimonies revealed that the Cazonci was imprisoned so that he could reveal the location of his mines and treasures. In January 1526, a letter finally arrived from Cortés confirming that he was alive and would return. Subsequently, Salazar and Chirinos were removed from power and put in prison. However, their successors Alonso de Estrada and Rodrigo de Albornoz were no different in following in their forerunners' leads by stealing precious metals from locals as well as from the Cazonci's hidden treasure stores. Although Cortés had returned, he could no longer assure the protection of the Cazonci from the brutality of his fellow Spaniards since he was summoned back to Spain. Moreover, the authority he once held was transferred to the first Audiencia in 1528, which held the infamous Nuño de Guzmán as its president.<sup>224</sup>

Guzmán followed in the lead of his predecessors by repeatedly harassing the Cazonci about his hidden treasure stores while holding him under arrest on numerous occasions. He was known for his heavy-handed treatment of Indigenous people, especially while he served as governor of Panuco from 1525-1533, where he enslaved and jailed even those groups who were

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Chirinos if they could not settle the differences. However, Salazar and Chirinos, who first received this decree, simply removed the two men without providing them an opportunity to make amends.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 105-109.



allied to the Spanish.<sup>225</sup> The Cazonci was imprisoned three times under Guzmán's reign, the third being his last for this was when he was executed. On each occasion, Guzmán had the Cazonci tortured and chained and demanded gold.<sup>226</sup> He, along with Don Pedro, were continually subjected to multiple forms of imprisonment, beatings, and torture during Guzmán's draconian administration as president of the Audiencia of New Spain. The entire populace that once constituted the Tarascan state suffered the greatest brunt of this domination as encomenderos continued to demand excessive amounts of tribute and forced labor, especially in the silver mines. Guzmán's planned conquest of the so-called "Teules Chichimecas," which referred to the Indigenous groups that inhabited the western Mexican region that would later become Nueva Galicia, further exacerbated demands for slave labor and precious metals from the Tarascans. Michoacán, which served as the base of operations for this excursion, was required to supply the brunt the campaign's resources, which included food, weapons, shields, soldiers, as well as the ore and forced labor needed to fund it.<sup>227</sup>

Guzmán's impatience with Tangáxoan finally came to a breaking point as he initiated his expedition to conquer Nueva Galicia. Approximately on the fourth of January 1530, the Nueva Galicia campaign arrived in Tzintzuntzan from Mexico City and, three days later, Guzmán ordered the imprisonment of the Cazonci as well as Don Pedro Cuiniarángari.<sup>228</sup> The trial began with a series of statements collected from encomenderos in which they provided statements

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<sup>225</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 138-9.

<sup>226</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 147-151.

<sup>227</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 204, 214.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 215-219.

against the Cazonci. This then led to a series of interrogations of Tarascan informants, many of which conducted through torture. Among the most damning charges was that the Cazonci was responsible for some of the killings of approximately 26-46 Spaniards in the Michoacán region. These charges were confirmed during the interrogation of Don Pedro Cuiniarángari and other Tarascan informants, who also related that the Cazonci, along with other members of the Tarascan nobility, danced in the skins of the deceased Spaniards. Further, Don Pedro, along with a Tarascan informant named Cuaraque, testified that the Cazonci had indeed plotted to attack Guzmán's forces once his armies reached Cuinao. The Cazonci admitted to all these charges.<sup>229</sup> Juan de la Peña, who was chosen as his defense, practically did nothing to defend him. After the Cazonci provided his testimony responding to the initial charges placed against him, de la Peña only made general statements about his character and did not attempt to challenge any of the Spaniards' allegations with any solid evidence. He simply stated that Villegas's accusations were untruthful, inconvenient, and that the Cazonci should not be tried because he was "a good Christian," "god-fearing," and married.<sup>230</sup>

On February 14, 1530, Guzmán sentenced the Cazonci to death, ordered his belongings confiscated, and requested that his ashes to be deposited in the Lake so that his followers would not "carry them off to commit idolatry with them..."<sup>231</sup> While the *Relación* later mentions that the Cazonci's servants and relatives managed to gather some of his ashes after the execution, the previously mentioned accounts show that Guzmán was inclined not to allow Tzintzicha the right

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<sup>229</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 16-18, 19-23, 35-36, 44-58, 64-68; Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 221-233.

<sup>230</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 23.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

to proper burial in accordance to Tarascan customs. Don Pedro was spared at the expense of Rodrigo de Albarnoz who feared that Michoacán would be ungovernable if he was killed with the Cazonci. Instead, the surviving principal was named as the governor of Michoacán.<sup>232</sup> Yet, Daniel Adrian Macarena Ortiz calls attention to the fact that Don Pedro likely did not return to Michoacán to begin his post until 1532 since he was assisting Guzmán's armies in the conquest of Nueva Galicia. As governor, Don Pedro continued to serve as a mediator between the Indigenous elite, Spanish officials, Christian monks, and even the famed clergymen Vasco de Quiroga.<sup>233</sup> After Don Pedro's passing in 1543, the governorship was passed on to the Cazonci's children, Don Francisco, who served from 1543 but passed away shortly in 1545, and then he was succeeded by his brother Don Antonio Huitziméngari (fig 2.1).<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 205-206; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 99.

<sup>233</sup> Ortiz Macarena, "La nobleza indígena en el Michoacán colonial," 108-124; Quiroga, the bishop of Michoacán (who made the unpopular move of moving the holy see from Tzintzuntzan to Pátzcuaro) was inspired by the reading of Thomas More's acclaimed book *Utopia* and went on to found various village "hospitals" (*hospitales*) that sought to function as communes for Indigenous people.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 145-146.

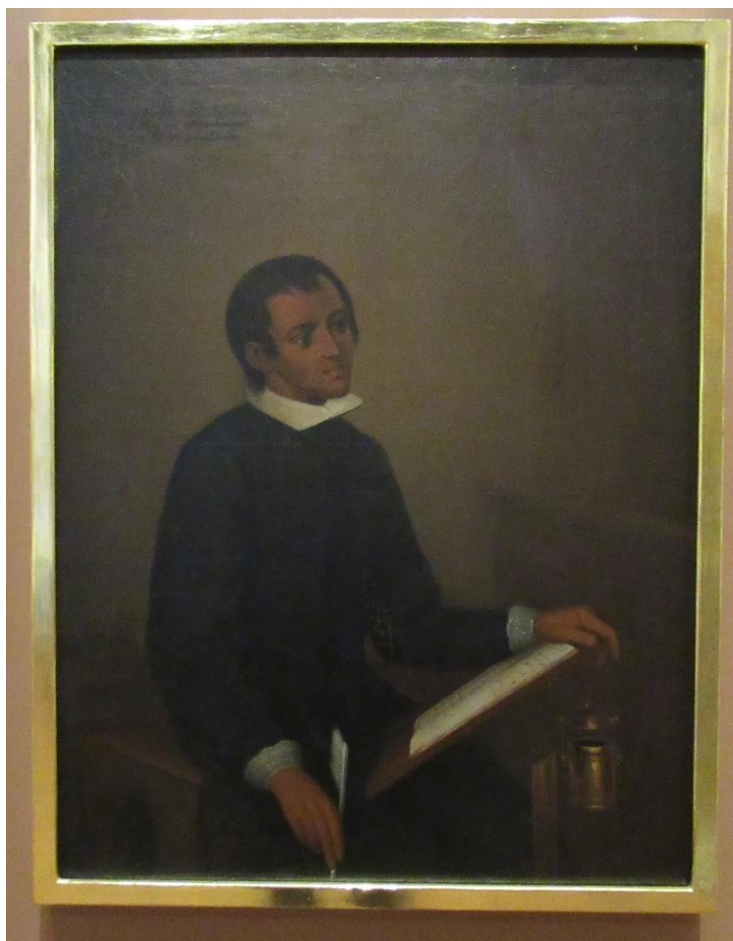


Figure 2.1. Portrait of Don Antonio Huitziméngari, son of the Cazonci Tzintzicha Tangáxoan. Source: Museo Regional Michoacano, Morelia.

#### **PERSPECTIVES ON THE SENIORITIES OF TZINTZICHA TANGÁXOAN AND DON PEDRO**

Historians of colonial Michoacán widely discussed the complex roles that Don Pedro Cuiniarángari and the Cazonci played during the conquest of Michoacán. The earliest interpretations of these Indigenous noblemen come from sixteenth-century writings from missionaries in New Spain such as Bartolomé de las Casas who described the Cazonci as a victim of Spanish brutality.<sup>235</sup> Franciscan missionaries in Michoacán also helped to inform some

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<sup>235</sup> Cynthia Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 168-169.

of the earliest endearing depictions of the Cazonci. Fray Diego de Fuenllana and Fray Sebastian Alemán are both named as informants who helped to produce the *Relación geográfica* for Pátzcuaro written in 1581. The men reimagine him as a valorous warrior, stating that he was named Tzintzicha, meaning “man who builds fortresses,” because built so many citadels and because he fought in many battles. These *relación geográfica* depicts the Cazonci as a modest ruler who demonstrated his humility when he first visited Hernán Cortés by not dressing lavishly and, instead, opted to wear worn-out sandals and peasant clothing. The text states that this was a custom amongst Tarascan lords for it was how they demonstrated humility and respect to other lords. However, the Mexicans made a mockery of the Cazonci for dressing in this way by referring to him as *caccoli*, meaning old sandal in Nahuatl, a play on the term “Cazonci”<sup>236</sup>

The native lord of the indians from this city and all of the province ruled during the time of Monteçuma lord of Mexico was Tangajuan who was called in this land Tzintzicha which means man who builds fortresses because he built many and he was very valorous in warfare and the Mexicans called him Cazonci meaning old sandal because when he went to see the marques in Mexico City he wore the habit of a commoner and was underdressed and torn which was how he demonstrated his obedience and he brought with him many principals who were well decorated in their custom with one hundred indians carrying gold and silver per their custom and since he was always an enemy of the Mexicans and they saw him dressed in old sandals they made a mockery of him calling him caccoli which means ~~old sandal~~<sup>237</sup> old cactle he was baptized and named don Francisco...

El señor natural de los indios desta dicha ciudad y toda la provincia que reino en tiempo de Monteçuma rey que fue de Mexico fue Tangajuan que por sobre nombre desta tierra llamaban Tzintzicha que quiere decir hombre que edifica fortaleças porque hizo edificio muchos y fue muy valioso en guerras y los mexicanos le llamaban cazonzi que quiere dezir al pargate viejo porque quando vino el marques le fue a ver a la ciudad de Mexico

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<sup>236</sup> It is not clear what the term *Cazonci* is supposed to translate as. Some scholars claim that the term may have Nahuatl origins while others believe it could be Tarascan. Baracs believes the term translates as the “man who builds many fortresses” or “man of hundreds of homes.” For a discussion on the debates pertaining to the term, see Martínez Baracs, *Convivencia y utopía*, 48-58.

<sup>237</sup> Paleographic note: The term “old sandal” (*alpargate viejo*) is crossed out in the original document

en habito de hombre plebeyo y bajo mal aderecado y roto mostrando asi rendirle la obediencia y llebo consigo muchos principales ricamente aderecados a su modo y cien indios cargados de oro y plata según es fama y como fue siempre enemigo de los mexicanos y le vieron de aquella suerte con unos alpargates viejos haciendo burla del le llamaban caccoli que quiere decir ~~alpargate viejo~~ cactle viexo este fue bautizado y se llamo don Francisco...<sup>238</sup>

These Franciscan missionaries who contributed to the *relación geográfica* for Pátzcuaro shared a positive depiction of the Cazonci who they described as holding the traits of a humble ruler versed in warfare. It should be noted that this portrayal of the Cazonci likely resonated with missionary efforts to portray him as an exemplary Christian convert, which was likely a rhetorical tool used to facilitate Christian conversion. Similar to this depiction of the Cazonci wearing humble dress, Franciscan missionaries also dressed in non-elaborate vestments. One of the Indigenous informants of the document, Don Julio Purata, may have also contributed to this Christian portrayal of the Cazonci. Purata, who was the governor of Pátzcuaro, is described as a principal who was assimilated in Castilian virtues (*ladino*) as he was fluent in both Purépecha and Spanish, which suggests he was educated in a Franciscan monastery since this was the only avenue for Tarascan nobles to attain such instruction.<sup>239</sup> In the next page of the same document, there is a clear intent to imbue the Tarascans with Christian virtues of sexual restraint, abstinence from drunkenness, and other “vices.” The corresponding passage reads: “The old men say that in the time of their infidelity that there was less vice and at thirty and forty years the men did not

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<sup>238</sup> JGI XXIV-14 Patzcuaro 1581, Relaciones Geográficas of Mexico and Guatemala, 1577-1585, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid. Two informants of the document include a Francisco de Sarria and another named is Diego de Fuenllana, described as a guardian of the convent of the Franciscan monastery who speaks the Tarascan language. The ethnicities of both men are unknown but it is likely both are Spaniards since the text does not explicitly describe them as “yndios” in contrast to Don Juan Puruata.

sleep with women and they did not eat and drink like today in which they are extremely given to vice and this can be attributed to their ill health.”<sup>240</sup>



Figure 2.2. A replica of Fray Pablo Beaumont’s painting copied from Cuini, a descendant of Tarascan nobles in Tzintzuntzan that depicts the Cazonci’s “peaceful” meeting with Cristóbal Olid in 1522 (c. 1770s). Source: Museo Regional Michoacano, Morelia.

Fray Pablo Beaumont’s *Crónica de la provincia de los santos apóstoles San Pedro y San Pablo de Michoacán*, written sometime in 1778, provides another example of Franciscans and

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid. “Dizen los antiguos que en tiempo de su infidelidad el vicio era menos y que de treinta y quarenta años no conocían los hombres mugers y no comían ni bebian como agora en que son extremadamente vicios y a esta se podría atribuir sus enfermedades.” In this passage, the illnesses (*enfermedades*) refer to the various plagues and diseases that inflicted the Indigenous populations of Michoacán.

Tarascons who both constructed images of the Cazonci with Christian attributes. Beaumont, who wrote his chronicle with various sources that were available in his time, also included pictographic images he copied that were shown to him by a man named Cuini who claimed to be a descendant of Indigenous principals in Tzintzuntzan. Hans Roskamp, who refers to these images as the *Codex of Tzintzuntzan*, remarks that these original painters carefully chosen these images in order to depict a peaceful conquest of the Tarascan state. For that matter, he emphasizes that the Cazonci is shown receiving Cristobal Olid, literally with an open arm, and the Tarascons who accompany him do not have any weapons (fig 2.2).<sup>241</sup> Another image that Beaumont included in his book was a copy of the coat of arms for Tzintzuntzan that was produced in 1593. The image depicts three Tarascan rulers, the Cazonci Tzintzicha Tangáxoan, his father Zuangua, and an unknown ruler, “Chiguacan,” dressed in elaborate Spanish attire, donning crowns and scepters. Tzintzicha, depicted on the lower right section of the image, is holding a cross and converting his people to Christianity while three Tarascan temples (*yacatas*) appear below him (fig 2.3).<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Hans Roskamp, "Pablo Beaumont and the Codex of Tzintzuntzan: A Pictorial Document from Michoacán, West Mexico," in *Códices, caciques y comunidades*, eds. Maarten Jansen and Luis Reyes García (Ridderkerk: Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas Europeos, Cuadernos de Historia Latinoamericana 7, 1997): 215-236.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 203-213. Roskamp underscores that the coat of arms is an example of how Indigenous elites and religious leaders the city of Tzintzuntzan sought to emphasize its claim as the rightful capital of Michoacán because it was once the seat of power before the Spanish conquest. Tzintzuntzan, Pátzcuaro, and Guayangareo (Valladolid) competed for the legal title as the *ciudad* de Mechuacan (“city of Michoacán”) in the sixteenth century. The title of *ciudad* allowed the cities to collect tribute from barrios and the ability to elect gobernador and cabildo officials. Tzintzuntzan was given the title of *ciudad* in 1534—four years after the killing of the Cazonci. Even though Tzintzuntzan was the traditional seat of power of the Tarascan state at the time that the Spaniards arrived there, the title of *ciudad* and the privileges that came with it shifted from Tzintzuntzan to Patzcuaro in 1538 and, eventually, to Guayangareo-Valladolid in 1576.





Figure 2.3. A reproduction of the coat of arms for Tzintzuntzan, originally produced in 1593. Source: Museo Regional Michoacano, Morelia.

While many of the depictions of the Cazonci were relatively endearing throughout the early colonial period, they became more disparaging in the histories written by nationalist Mexican historians in the mid-nineteenth century. Stone notes that after the *Relación* was discovered and published in 1869 in the archives of the Escorial library in Spain, less flattering images of the Cazonci began to surface in post-Independence Mexican histories. Inspired by Mexican nationalist tendencies, some such as Eduardo Ruiz panted Tangáxoan as a man with perverse inclinations and who was a weakling of a ruler for his failure to fight off the Spaniards. This is no surprise as the Cazonci stands in sharp contrast to other Uacúsecha protagonists in the *Relación* as the least composed leader. Stone has noted how the Cazonci was represented by Don

Pedro as an “immature, uncertain, [and] weak willed” especially when compared to his father, Zuangua.<sup>243</sup> In contrast, other historians have noted how the charges in the *Proceso* highlight the realities that the Cazonci and other nobles were far from being inactive and passive to Spanish colonizers.<sup>244</sup> After all, the trial documents reveal how Tangáxoan was a covert strategist seeking to take down the Spaniards.

More recent works have paid critical attention to the role played by Don Pedro Cuiniarángari as a traitor and opportunist. Some Mexican historians have gone as far as to solely attribute Don Pedro culpable for causing the disastrous ruin of the Tarascan state because he prevented the Cazonci’s forces from attacking Olid’s forces stationed in Taximaroa.<sup>245</sup> Others cite his testimony in the trial against the Cazonci as evidence of his betrayal. The *Proceso*, which was transcribed and published in 1952 by Frances V. Scholes and Eleanor B. Adams in 1952 reveals that Don Pedro provided damning testimony that led to the execution of the Cazonci, leading many scholars to interpret his rise to power as governor of Michoacán as that of an opportunist. With the Cazonci now dead, Krippner-Martinez observes, Don Pedro remained to fill the power vacuum as the Indigenous governor of Michoacán with the support of Spanish missionaries.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 168-169.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 178; Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 34.

<sup>245</sup> Salvador Mateos Higuera, “La pictografía tarasca” in *El occidente de México: Cuarta Reunión de Mesa Redonda, celebrada en el Museo Nacional de Historia del 23 al 28 de septiembre de 1946* (México: Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología, 1948): 166.

<sup>246</sup> Krippner-Martinez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 25.

Stone has pointed out how Don Pedro can, in many respects, been compared to Malintzin (Malinche) because he has been unduly berated overtime as an opportunist and traitor to his people.<sup>247</sup> Malintzin offers a more nuanced interpretation of “the many faces” of Don Pedro as a cultural broker seeking to help reconcile Tarascan and Spanish ways of live in order to ensure cultural survival.<sup>248</sup> She also offers a reinterpretation of Don Pedro’s quarrel with Timas in the *Relación*. She points out that Timas may not have actually plotted to kill the Cazonci but, instead, may have planned to fabricate the true nature of the Cazonci’s whereabouts by faking his death. These covert intentions are possible because, according to Don Pedro, the Cazonci and his women “escaped” the suicidal ritual and fled to Uruapan, yet the principals who were aware of Tangáxoan’s escape still told the Spaniards led by Cristobal Olid that the Cazonci was dead. It is possible, then, that Don Pedro described his version of these events in the *Relación* to cover the Cazonci’s and Timas’s true intentions. In other words, the Cazonci, Don Pedro, and the other principals may have collaborated in staging the ruler’s mock death while the ruler potentially organized a strategy to take out the Spaniards.<sup>249</sup>

The notion that Don Pedro was a cultural broker, however, should not dismiss the reality that his denunciation of the Cazonci in the *Proceso* was likely a product of factional disputes within the Tarascan state as well as his own intent to acquire power in the new colonial order. For that matter, Don Pedro was not from the ruling Uanacaze bloodline but was a descendant of

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<sup>247</sup> Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 160-161.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 186-187.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 173-178.

the Islanders of Xaráquaro who were conquered by the Cazonci's ancestors.<sup>250</sup> Ongoing tensions between the Islanders and Uanacaze may have influenced Don Pedro's decision to condemn the Cazonci. Afanador-Pujol highlights that his post as governor made him a very powerful man as he also became captain general, acquired enough wealth to help build a Franciscan convent, and married the Tangáxoan's wives. Sixteenth century legal records reveal that there were in fact tensions between Don Pedro and the Cazonci's surviving relatives. For instance, Tangáxoan's son Don Francisco Tariácuri presented a petition to the viceroy accusing Don Pedro of usurping lands. Despite these conflicts, Afanador-Pujol mentions that these men nevertheless tolerated Cuiniarángari's rule in an effort to preserve Indigenous rule in Michoacán.<sup>251</sup> This strategy was indeed effective since the Cazonci's sons were also appointed as governors of Michoacán after Don Pedro's passing.

Historians and scholars in various fields have helped to contextualize multifaceted images of the Cazonci and Don Pedro that have gone beyond sixteenth-century depictions characterizing them as victims of Spanish imperialism and nationalist Mexican scholarship detesting them as cowards and traitors. The *Proceso* reveals how the Cazonci and his fellow rulers were covert strategists who were in fact plotting against the Spaniards. Don Pedro, often chastized for "betraying" the Cazonci, has been reinterpreted in the scholarship as a cultural broker and intermediary figure in the *Realcion* but who credited himself for ensuring the supposedly peaceful conquest of the Michoacán region.<sup>252</sup> However, one cannot deny that his

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>251</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 24

<sup>252</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 5-6.

meteoric rise to power at the Cazonci's expense afforded him with various material benefits and brought him into conflict with Tangáxoan's family. In the following section, I provide a distinct method of characterizing Don Pedro and the Cazonci's actions in sixteenth century Michoacán as a conflict in opposing standards of governing masculinity instead of simply placing them in the categories of loyalists, cowards, or traitors.

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: THE *PROCESO* AND THE CONFLICT IN SPANISH AND TARASCAN GOVERNING MASCULINITIES**

Many of the traditional expectations placed on the Tarascan elites came into conflict with Spanish understandings of rulership. This culture clash can be observed in the trial documents describing the charges leveled against the Cazonci Tzintzicha Tangáxoan. Amongst the many charges leveled against him, the initial complaints filed by the encomendero of Uruapan Francisco de Villegas on January 26, 1530 were the following: (1) for keeping Indigenous principals of the subjected towns with him, which prevented Spaniards seeking out encomienda laborers from these leaders; (2) for continuing to receive tribute from them even though this was prohibited; (3) his involvement in the killing of Spaniards in Michoacán; and (4) committing homosexual sodomy.<sup>253</sup> Ten days later on February 5th, new charges were presented by a Tarascan informant named Cuaraque who announced that the Cazonci planned to attack Guzmán's armies at Cuinao. He also confirmed claims that the Cazonci executed various Spaniards, committed idolatries, and engaged in homosexual acts.<sup>254</sup> In this section, I discuss how the Cazonci, who was found guilty of all of these charges, may have been perceived by the

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<sup>253</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 14-15.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-47.

Spaniards as tyrant, traitor, and perhaps as a “perverse other” for committing these acts. However, as I go through each of Villegas’s initial charges listed in first part of the *Proceso*, I suggest that Tangáxoan was simply living up to his own peoples’ cultural expectations of how he, as the highest Tarascan authority figure, should conduct himself.

### **Keeping the Principals and Receiving Tribute**

One of the first charges presented by Villegas was that the encomenderos were unable to exploit native laborers because the Cazonci hid the lords of the villages, which made it impossible for them to order the collection of tribute from their vassals. If there were any principals in these villages, the accusation continued, they only served the interests of the Cazonci by “robbing them” (exacting tribute) and depopulating them so that they would not serve the Spaniards. the said Çaçonci has their lords, and if there are some in the pueblos, they are his caciques who rob the pueblos for him and depopulate them so that they do not serve the Spaniards...”<sup>255</sup> One witness, Miguel de Mesa, testified that when he was in Capula, he witnessed various Natives carrying and transporting large quantities of corn and clothing. When he approached these porters to ask where the tribute was going, they responded that it was for the Cazonci.<sup>256</sup> In hindsight, it was not atypical for the Cazonci to exact tribute from his subjects. The *Relación* mentions that officials known as the ocámbecha used to serve the Tarascan state in collecting tribute.<sup>257</sup> However, under the new colonial regime, tribute was only supposed to be

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<sup>255</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 14.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>257</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 11-12.

paid to the encomenderos. The Spanish encomenderos, then, took offense that the Cazonci was extracting tribute that they felt was entitled to them.

The fourth question in Villegas's interrogatory accused the Cazonci of knowing where all the locations of his silver and gold mines were and that he ordered his subjects not to reveal their locations or to give any ores to the Spaniards. For that matter, the Cazonci was accused of exacting tribute from these mines for himself.<sup>258</sup> The notion that the Tarascans held vast stores of precious metals and knew the locations of various mines, however, was a well-known fact amongst the Indigenous principals. The *Relación* stated that there was even a chief treasurer who was responsible for the collection of gold and silver products that were used for the religious celebrations.<sup>259</sup> The text records that since the Tarascans were first visited by Olid, that the Spaniards constantly pestered them to provide them with precious metals. Olid and his men even looted the house of the Cazonci and, in the process, received a beating from the women who guarded his treasures.<sup>260</sup> During his interrogation, the Cazonci likely reflected on these incidents when he told Guzmán that he and the other Spaniards were well aware that they had access to these ores. After all, Olid and Guzmán himself repeatedly harassed him for them.<sup>261</sup> The *Relación* also records that Guzmán scolded and even beat Don Pedro and the Cazonci on numerous occasions for not providing him with gold fast enough.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 14.

<sup>259</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 13.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-80.

<sup>261</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 22.

<sup>262</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 91-92.

The eighth question in Villegas's interrogatory raised the charge that the Cazonci was hiding the lords of the pueblos, in many cases against their will by placing them in stocks and even imprisoning them. The encomendero cited a case in which Juan de Ortega, who served as the judge and inspector of Michoacán, was forced to retrieve three lords from Puruándiro, Çaçan, and Capula who the Cazonci allegedly held against their will.<sup>263</sup> The Cazonci initially denied these charges, stating that he did not have the authority to call the lords and hold them against their will, declaring that although he was once a lord of the entire province of Michoacán, he now was like commoner (macehual).<sup>264</sup> For that matter, the Cazonci claimed he was complicit in assisting Carvajal during his inspection that led to the distribution of lands in Michoacán as encomiendas. He denied hiding the principals and keeping them with him so that they would not serve the Spaniards. When asked about a principal from Puruándiro who was found under his guardianship, the Cazonci stated he simply took him in after he fled out of fear of his encomendero, Juan de Villaseñor. Regarding the principal from Çaçan, he stated that this nobleman was not hiding. He was a resident of the city in which he resided and only returned to his home province after the judge bachiller Ortega ordered him to.<sup>265</sup> However, the encomenderos, as well as some of the Indigenous principals themselves, would testify that the Cazonci did hold many of these men. Pedro Muñoz states that he interrogated the principal from the pueblo of Santa Cruz because they found him in Pátzcuaro. He told the Spaniards that the

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<sup>263</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 15.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.



Cazonci forced him to stay there so that his people would not have to serve the encomenderos.<sup>266</sup> In his testimony, the encomendero Juan de Samano stated that when he Michoacán to provide military support in order to quell an Indigenous uprising, he found that one of the principals held under his encomienda was taken from him. After the principal was retrieved, Samano complained to the bachiller Ortega that the principal had marks on his arms signifying that he was imprisoned, tied up, and mistreated.<sup>267</sup>

While it is unclear why the Cazonci had these various principals imprisoned and held against their will, it is likely that he was exercising his authority as Cazonci for their insubordination. Witnesses such as Don Pedro and later the Cazonci would confirm that they were keeping these men away from the encomenderos so that their subjects would not provide tribute to them. It is possible that the men who were tied up, jailed, and held against their will did not initially obey orders. The Cazonci's policy entailed physically relocating the principals from their home villages where the Spaniards held encomiendas. It is possible that those principals who were taken and forcefully restrained may initially have not wanted to move from their villages, which forced the Cazonci to seek drastic measures to keep them. Pedro Muñoz's testimony which claims that he found a principal from the village of Santa Fe in Pátzcuaro suggests that those principals who complied with the Cazonci's orders were not imprisoned or tied up like the principal described by Juan de Samano. In the *Relación*, the imprisonment of principals is an ability solely granted to the Cazonci. As a supreme judge, he had the authority to punish deviant principals by sentencing them to jail, sending them into exile, and stripping them

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 34.

of their insignias of rank. Only if they committed serious crimes which included adultery with his wives or witchcraft, he would sentence principals to death.<sup>268</sup> It is no surprise, then, that the Cazonci would later exercise his authority to punish serious criminals by ordering the deaths of the Spaniards. It is possible, however, that he may not have considered the grave consequences that would follow for ordering these executions.

### **Killing the Spaniards**

The fifth question Villegas asked his witnesses was if they were aware about the various numbers of Spaniards who were killed under orders of the Cazonci and if they saw that the possessions of these dead men were in his custody.<sup>269</sup> Juan de Samano testified that he saw belongings of dead Spaniards in the pueblo of Eruquaro.<sup>270</sup> Another witness, Miguel de Mesa, testified that he saw the corpse of a dead Spaniard laid in an arroyo in the village of Tacanbaro. There, he also saw the belongings of Spaniards in the temples of the Cazonci. This sight prompted him to declare that “the said Çazonci ordered the killing of the said Spaniards because this witness believes that without his command the Indians would not have dared to do it.”<sup>271</sup> Don Pedro validated these charges when he was interrogated by the Spaniards. When he was first questioned, he initially admitted that the Cazonci ordered the deaths of four Spaniards and later admitted that he ordered many more deaths as he was tortured by Guzmán during a second round

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<sup>268</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 30-31.

<sup>269</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 14

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

of questioning.<sup>272</sup> Notably, during the second interrogation, he told the Spaniards that he did not report the Cazonci's actions to the Spaniards because he was "scared of the said Cazonci," indeed painting a much powerful image of Tangáxoan than the indecisive coward he portrayed him as in the *Relación*.<sup>273</sup> The charges of murder that the Spaniards used against the Cazonci made him appear more as a tyrannical authority figure.

While the Cazonci was solely charged in the *Proceso* for ordering the deaths of Spaniards, Don Pedro was still clearly an accessory to this crime. One witness stated that they knew that Don Pedro oversaw the imprisonment of a Spaniard who extracted gold from the Cazonci's mines and was never seen again.<sup>274</sup> When Pedro Muñoz testified that he went with a Juan Xuárez to burn the temples and sacrificial items in Pátzcuaro, they confronted Don Pedro and had him to reveal the possessions of the Spaniards the Cazonci executed. While Muñoz was in Pátzcuaro and encountered and interrogated the principal from Santa Cruz regarding the deaths of various Spaniards. After threatening to choke the principal, he told the Spaniards that the lords of Pátzcuaro ordered the execution of Juan Xuárez, a Spaniards who knew how to speak Spanish and Purépecha. After Muñoz reported this incident to the bachiller Ortega, various culpable principals were executed for the killings although Don Pedro and the Cazonci escaped persecution because they bribed the Spanish treasurer Alonso de Estrada.<sup>275</sup> It is unknown why the Tarascans and the Cazonci singled out certain Spaniards to be executed. One possibility is

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 32-33.

that the Cazonci ordered these executions because these men may have caused grave offenses against him that prompted him to execute them. One of the murdered Spaniards, Juan Xuárez, certainly offended the Cazonci and other authorities in Pátzcuaro when he assisted Pedro Muñoz in the burning of sacred temples in Pátzcuaro. In other cases, the Spaniards themselves may have simply angered locals, causing them to kill them as Miguel de Mesa claimed he saw the body of a dead Spaniard lain across an arroyo.

Perhaps what most offended the Spaniards were the accounts that the killings of the Spaniards were done in conjunction with practices they considered idolatrous. Cuaraque, the Tarascan witness who the planned attack against Guzman at Cuinao, testified that he witnessed the Cazonci, Don Pedro, and an elder named Coyuze dancing in the skins of the dead Spaniards in their temples.<sup>276</sup> Both Don Pedro and the Cazonci admitted to these charges and the Cazonci agreed to retrieve the skins of the dead Spaniards to the Spanish authorities.<sup>277</sup> The accounts of Spaniards ritually executed in the yácatas is reminiscent of the Cazonci's role as a sacred authority figure. The *Relación* proclaims that the Cazonci was also the representative of the solar deity, Curicáueri, and was charged with overseeing the festivals for the gods. Whether or not he had a direct role in killing of the Spaniards that were brought to him, his participation in activities related to ritual execution in honor of the deities was part of his duties according since the Pre-Hispanic era.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 50-54.

<sup>278</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 11.

Interestingly, the *Proceso* also reveals that some Spaniards had a vested interest in not bringing the Cazonci to justice regarding his murderous acts. Years before the trial, the judge Ortega previously issued a death sentence against the Cazonci for ordering the numerous deaths of Spaniards. However, Ortega's orders were not carried out because the Cazonci apparently bribed the treasurer Alonso de Estrada in order to avoid punishment.<sup>279</sup> A witness, Juan Hernández, said he witnessed when Ortega received a letter with orders telling him to leave the Cazonci alone.<sup>280</sup> Similarly, Cristóbal Romero insinuated that the Cazonci should have been amongst those executed when Pedro Sánchez Farfán denounced him as well as other Tarascans for engaging in homosexual sodomy. This complaint led to the executions of certain accused sodomites except for the Cazonci.<sup>281</sup> It is likely that the bribes he provided to Estrada exempted him from any serious punishments.

### **Charges of Homosexual Sodomy**

What is fascinating is that the witnesses in the *Proceso* were also asked if they were aware that Pedro Sánchez Farfán previously accused the Cazonci for sodomy. James Krippner-Martínez argues that in the process the Spaniards sought to portray the Cazonci as a “perverse other.”<sup>282</sup> The Tarascan witness named Cuaraque related that the Cazonci was known to congregate with certain groups of men who he “fornicates” with who included a young man named Juanico and another Guysaquaro. His account pointed out, however, that the Cazonci

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<sup>279</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 16-17.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>282</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 21-24.

raised little children who he engaged in homosexual acts with. It is stated that once he saw the ruler get drunk and place his tongue in Juanico's mouth.<sup>283</sup> The Cazonci's homosexual practices, however, were not distinct to Michoacán. Pete Sigal has pointed out that contemporary Spanish observers, including Dominican friars like De Las Casas, also bemoaned homosexual practices amongst Native men and boys as it was reminiscent of the Greek practice of pederasty.<sup>284</sup> For that matter, it appears that the same Juanico was also brought forth to testify against the Cazonci although the *Proceso* does not describe any details relating sexual acts. Juanico simply stated that it was rumored that everyone in the province knew that there was an attack planned against the Spaniards at Cuinao and that it was commonly known that the Cazonci ordered the executions of various Spaniards. Juanico also told Guzmán that he heard the Cazonci tell the children he raised—which were perhaps the same youths raised by the Cazonci that were mentioned in Cuaraque's testimony—that he danced in the skins of the Spaniards.<sup>285</sup> In including witness testimony that labeled the Cazonci as not only a sodomite but also—to use modern terminology—a potential pedophile, Spanish witnesses succeed in pathologizing the Cazonci as a man of questionable virtues.

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<sup>283</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 47.

<sup>284</sup> Pete Sigal, "The Cuiloni, the Patlache, and the Abominable Sin: Homosexualities in Early Colonial Nahua Society," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (2005), 562. Pederasty refers to the Greek practice in which men engaged in sexual relations with young boys who just reached the age of puberty.

<sup>285</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 64-65. That the Spaniards brought Juanico to testify against the Cazonci raises many interesting questions. The *Proceso* suggests that the witness readily provided incriminating information on the Cazonci without the need to be subjected to numerous tortures. This suggests that he may have either had resented the Cazonci himself or because he simply feared the Spaniards.

While the *Proceso* appeared to depict the Cazonci's homosexual acts as perverse anomalies, other court cases in Michoacán and scholarship describing pre-Hispanic sexualities other parts of Mexico and South America reveal that sexual practices between men were commonplace throughout the continents.<sup>286</sup> One document in “the city of Michoacán” (it is unclear at this point if the document is referring to Pátzcuaro o Guayangareo) written on November 19, 1566, describes the case of Juan del Vado who was put in jail for committing the “pecado nefando” or homosexual sodomy. According to the document, the alguacil, Francisco Garcia, discovered that Vado attempted to break free as he found three false keys, a wedge, and two knives under his pillow along with scrape marks on the prison bars. Through an interpreter, he was forced to admit that the keys were made by three blacksmiths named Marcos Acatl, Pablo Pitaqua, and Tomás Matzagua, who were also subsequently imprisoned. While the juicy details of Vado's sexual transgressions are not provided, it is possible to speculate that one of the three blacksmiths may have been one of the men who engaged in sexual relations with him. In the document, it is stated that the three men are also imprisoned but it is unclear if they were placed in jail for providing him the keys or if they were also previously under arrest for committing the same crime.<sup>287</sup> Perhaps these men were part of the “sodomitical subcultures” described by Zeb Tortorici, which is the term he uses to refer to networks of men who sought out other men for sexual encounters. A 1604 case studied by Tortorici in Valladolid, Michoacán (formerly Guayangareo) pertaining to two men who were caught having sex in a temascal revealed a

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<sup>286</sup> See Sigal, *Infamous Desire*.

<sup>287</sup> Caja 131, Exp. 4 (Rollo 112), 19 a 21 de noviembre de 1576, Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad de Pátzcuaro (AHCP).

network of sixteen other men who engaged in sexual acts with each other.<sup>288</sup> The prevalence of these same sex acts amongst both nobles and commoners in early colonial Michoacán demonstrates that these acts were not all pederastic or exclusive to the Tarascan elites.

In sum, a close reading of the *Proceso* seems to suggest that the Cazonci did not attempt to strike a balance between Spanish and Tarascan expectations of governance. His allegiance to the Crown appeared more superficial than sincere. Witness testimonies reveal that he was not a mere agent of the Spanish imperial project because he subverted the authority of encomenderos from exploiting his former subjects. He, in fact, continued to receive tribute from his people even though the Spaniards forbade him. He also did not shy away from plotting the deaths of Spaniards who challenged his authority. Since he did not fully represent the Spaniards' interests, he was ultimately executed. Don Pedro, on the other hand, claimed that he was only following the Cazonci's orders and even alleged that he was scared of him. At the same time, even during the Tangáxoan's trial, he actively sought out solutions that eventually led to him attain mercy from the Spaniards by providing condemning evidence against the Cazonci.

#### **CUINAO: WHERE THE CAZONCI AND DON PEDRO DISPLAYED BETRAYAL**

If the Cazonci and Don Pedro sought to convince Guzmán that he could bestow his trust in them as loyal subjects during their interrogations, their attempts were ill-fated. With just the testimony provided by Villegas's witnesses, Guzmán already prepared to sentence Tangáxoan to death. However, the Tarascan informant known as Cuaraque brought additional incriminating testimony that the Cazonci prepared men to fight the Spaniards at Cuinao. He revealed that upon

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<sup>288</sup> Zeb Tortorici, "'Heran Todos Putos': Sodomitical Subcultures and Disordered Desires in Early Colonial Mexico," *Ethnohistory* 54, no. 1 (Winter 2007), 35-50.



attacking Guzmán's armies, the Cazonci and his men would attack the Spaniards from the rear. He also provided the name of the captains assigned to lead the assault and described Don Pedro and the Cazonci's roles in coordinating the assault.<sup>289</sup> This testimony led Guzmán to order a new investigation that led to the interrogation of various Indigenous witnesses, including Don Pedro and the Cazonci, which were carried out through torture. While the Cazonci and Don Pedro initially were tried as murders of Spaniards, the new charges relating to the planned assault in Cuinao led Guzmán to punish them as traitors.

Various Indigenous witnesses were called to testify to the planned assault and the strategic alliance that the Tarascans recently made with Cuinao, a frontier territory. Notably, the *Relación* states that Cuinao was located in the northern frontier of the Tarascan state and when Tangáxoan became the Cazonci the province was at war with this enemy Chichimec territory.<sup>290</sup> Guanax, described as a Chichimec and *naguatlato* (speaker of an Indigenous and Spanish language), admitted to the attack on Cuinao and declared that its leader was a general named Çipaque. As he was tortured, he was admitted that the Cazonci recently made an alliance with Cuinao.<sup>291</sup> During his interrogation, Xacuípangua, a principal from the Tarascan village of Zanzan, also stated that Cuinao was once an enemy territory but came into alliance with the Tarascans with the intended purpose of fighting the Spaniards. The principal admitted that the people of Cuinao agreed to the attack Guzmán's armies so long as the Cazonci provided the corn

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<sup>289</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 45.

<sup>290</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *Chronicles of Michoacán*, 53.

<sup>291</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 47-48.

to feed the soldiers.<sup>292</sup> Don Pedro also admitted that he as well as the Cazonci secured an alliance with this frontier ally by sending warriors from the Tarascan village of Jacona to their aid. He also noted that other villages that were not under the jurisdiction of the Cazonci planned to participate in the attack.<sup>293</sup>

In the *Proceso*, Guzmán stated that the Cazonci and Don Pedro were both formally charged as traitors to the Crown for “committing many betrayals against this army and against your majesty.”<sup>294</sup> The Cazonci not only admitted to the assault planned at Cuinao but he also admitted to ordering the killing of various Spaniards and agreed to have his men present the skins of the dead Spaniards to Guzmán.<sup>295</sup> Don Pedro, also tortured, admitted to the various accusations leveled against him as well as the Cazonci including dancing in the skins of the dead Spaniards.<sup>296</sup> Many other Indigenous informants were questioned later as they were tortured and some admitted to the various denunciations placed against the Cazonci.

As a result of the Cazonci’s traitorous acts in the frontier, Guzmán ordered his execution. According to the *Proceso*, he was to be dragged alive by being tied to the tail of a horse, garroted, and then burned. After he was killed, his belongings were to be confiscated and his ashes thrown into the river so they would not be used for idolatries. As the Cazonci was being dragged alive by the horse, a crier was ordered to follow him and announce that he was punished

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 52

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 48-50.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 52-53.

“for being a traitor, idolater, and because he killed many Spaniards under his orders, he has been ordered to be dragged and burned because of this; for what he did he must pay.”<sup>297</sup> Notably, one is left to wonder if the crier spoke these words only in Spanish and not in Purépecha. In the *Relación*, the words spoken by the crier were remembered differently by the Tarascan informants of the text. In text’s version of how the Cazonci’s death transpired, the crier stated, “People, look! This stupid fool tried to kill us...Look at him, see the example. Look you low people for you are all stupid.”<sup>298</sup> Indeed, in the Tarascan’s version of the Cazonci’s execution, they conveyed the execution of the Cazonci as an insult to their people.

While the Cazonci was executed, Don Pedro was spared due to fears that his death would make Michoacán ungovernable.<sup>299</sup> Instead of killing him, he was given the title of governor of Michoacán. Ironically, however, his survival appears to have been a source of considerable anxiety for the principal who most certainly may have been considered to be traitor amongst his contemporaries. The *Proceso* reveals that he not only provided testimony that incriminated the Cazonci but he also named other witnesses that could testify against him. In one instance, he was ordered to appear during the torture and interrogation of the Cazonci’s son-in-law, Vice who was also known as don Alonso. While Vice denied knowing anything about the conspiracy in Cuinao, Don Pedro instructed him to tell the Guzmán what he knew about the assault. He even told the Spaniards that Vice was also amongst the many Tarascan principals who danced in the skins of

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 67-68.

<sup>298</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 99

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

the dead Spaniards.<sup>300</sup> Don Pedro did not provide any of these details in the *Relación*, which was produced a decade after the Cazonci's execution. According to his account of the trail and execution of the Cazonci, Don Pedro claimed that he was tortured by Guzmán only because he refused to provide him with more gold.<sup>301</sup> While it is very likely and possible that requests for gold were left out of the *Proceso*, Don Pedro's account of the events that led to the execution of the Cazonci in the *Relación* completely ignores his incriminating role in trial of the Cazonci and, consequently, obscures his role in providing the damning evidence that led to his execution.

Lastly, Don Pedro's accounts about the events that transpired once Guzmán and his armies reached Cuinao suggests that he continued to depict himself as a loyal vassal to the Spaniards even after the Cazonci's death. As the Spaniards took him along with other Tarascan principals to Cuinao, they were placed in chains and ordered to inspect the village. As Warren pointed out, it was likely that Don Pedro was amongst these men and perhaps used this opportunity to tell the people of Cuinao to call off the assault.<sup>302</sup> The *Relación* states that the twenty principals who performed reconnaissance on the village reported that it was abandoned and that only the bodies of several sacrificial victims remained. Upon hearing this news, the *Relación* states that Guzmán allegedly had been "convinced" that there was no attack planned after all and then continued his campaign to conquer Nueva Galicia. Don Pedro appears to have

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<sup>300</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 56-57

<sup>301</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 98.

<sup>302</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 235-236.

won favor with Guzmán as he reported that the he even had him brought to him on one occasion as a translator during his campaign.<sup>303</sup>

### **TAXIMAROA: WHERE DON PEDRO PERFORMED HIS (CONFLICTED) LOYALTIES**

As other scholars have pointed out, Don Pedro Cuiniarángari was conscious that his rise to power as the governor of Michoacán at the expense of the Cazonci attracted scrutiny from fellow Tarascan principals. As a one of the contributors of the *Relación*, he was provided with the opportunity to explain himself and his actions in the years that led up to Tangáxoan's death. While the text was only meant to be seen by the viceroy, it nevertheless reflects the memories that Don Pedro wanted to convey about the conquest. I suggest that he sought to portray himself as a competent governor who was worthy of displaying loyalty both to the Spaniards as well as to his fellow Spaniards. I focus on how he sought to accomplish this by providing a detailed account of his first role as a mediator in the Tarascan border province of Taximaroa. His retelling of his negotiations on the Tarascan borderland demonstrates how he sought to convince Spanish audiences about his intention to balance his allegiances between two political entities.

Don Pedro's recollection of events that transpired right before he was sent to Taximaroa begins by clearly displaying himself as an ally of the Cazonci. He points out that he was amongst the council of principals summoned by Tangáxoan in order to discuss what they should do when a group of armed Spaniards and their Indigenous allies led by Cristóbal Olid suddenly appeared in the frontier in 1522. He conveys that in this crucial moment that an affectionate relationship existed between himself and the Cazonci. When the Cazonci dismissed the council and ordered that the villages should prepare for warfare with the Spaniards, he reportedly told Don Pedro that

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<sup>303</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 100.

he considered him as his brother and held much confidence in him. After providing him with some motivational words of support, he then sent off Don Pedro to gather the war parties in Taximaroa. Don Pedro responded to the Cazonci by stating that he would carry out his orders and not fail him.<sup>304</sup>

On his way to Taximaroa, Don Pedro records an incident in which he was deceived by an Indigenous principal after meeting with war parties from the Tarascan border territories of Ucareo, Acámbaro, Araro, and Tuzantla. As he continued on to Taximaroa, he came across a principal named Quezequampare, who looked very flustered and tried to avoid him. After getting Quezequampare to speak to him, he told Don Pedro that everyone from Taximaroa was already dead, which prompted Cuiniarángari to investigate. Apparently, this incident led him right into a trap as a group of Spaniards and their Mexican allies captured the diplomat and took him to Olid for questioning.<sup>305</sup> The incident reflects how Don Pedro, an alleged traitor to the Cazonci, contrasted himself to others who double-crossed him during the Tarascans' first interactions with the Spaniards.

Don Pedro's skills as a mediator is then reflected in this passage as he describes how he was careful in choosing his responses to Olid's interrogation. When Olid asked why the Cazonci sent him to Taximaroa, Don Pedro replied that he was sent to "receive the gods" and welcome them to Tzintzuntzan. However, Olid did not believe his response and conveyed that he was aware that the Tarascans planned to fight him and his Mexican allies. Don Pedro continued to deny his accusation until finally Olid told him that he meant no harm and only wanted to speak

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<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 71-72.

with the Cazonci. He ordered Don Pedro to get the Cazonci to meet him at an alternate location and to bring him rich blankets as tribute. In an apparent effort to demonstrate his good will, Olid even had two Mexican soldiers publicly hanged because they burned some wooden fences located in the sacred temples of Taximaroa. While he was in Olid's company, Don Pedro also demonstrated his role as a cultural mediator when he described his first impression attending Catholic mass. He stated that when he saw the priest mumbling as he carried a chalice that perhaps he was like the Tarascan medicine men who looked into water in order to read the future. Don Pedro suspected that this was how they knew that the Cazonci planned to make war on Olid.<sup>306</sup>

During his return, Don Pedro also described how he was careful in his attempt to call off the attacks planned by the Cazonci. He had to be careful since Olid sent him back to Tzintzuntzan with ten escorts, half of whom were Otomís and the other five were Mexica. Before departing, he recalled speaking to an interpreter named Xanaqua who also advised him to not engage the Spaniards and that he should tell the Cazonci to hide his valuables because the Spaniards would rob them. Don Pedro appears to have followed Xanaqua's advice but had to be careful in making sure the escorts who accompanied him did not encounter any war parties. As he traveled back with them, he advised the escorts to stay back on one occasion as he went ahead to see if any groups of warriors awaited them. He reportedly managed to find a group of warriors led by his brother Huitziltzi and ordered them to disband along with the other parties. While speaking to his brother, he informed him that the Cazonci was growing anxious and that

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 72-73.

Quezequampare was wreaking havoc in Tzintzuntzan by spreading fear and false claims that the eastern territories were in ruins. Don Pedro then hurried on to Tzintzuntzan.<sup>307</sup>

Don Pedro brother Tashauaco, who is commonly referred to by his Nahuatl name Huitzitziltzi, is also another figure mentioned in the *Relación* who helps reinforce Don Pedro's loyalty to both the Cazonci and the Spaniards on the Tarascan frontier. While he is only briefly mentioned in parts of the *Relación*, Huitzitziltzi's rare appearances imply that he played a significant role as a military leader for the Tarascan armies both before and during the Spanish conquest.<sup>308</sup> This association is important for critics who may have questioned Don Pedro's loyalty to the Cazonci since his brother's status as a war general implied that his family served the Uanacaze leadership both politically as well as militarily. The chapter following Don Pedro's release from Olid's forces in Taximaroa showcases Huitzitziltzi's militarist abilities. As he returned to deliver the Spaniard's message to the Cazonci, Cuiniarángari described disbanding a group of eight thousand Tarascan soldiers led by a captain named Xamando as well as his brother Huitzitziltzi who were marching to confront Olid's forces.<sup>309</sup> Don Pedro's brother also emerges as a servant for the Spanish armies who partook in the conquest of Colima. The text emphasizes that while none of Olid's men died during this campaign, many of Huitzitziltzi's men were killed during the offense, signifying the sacrifice of Tarascan lives who fought in

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<sup>307</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 183-186; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 70-73.

<sup>308</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 191-193; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 80-83. Similar to Don Pedro, he also plays a role as a negotiator for taking part in diplomatic negotiations with the Spaniards. His first diplomatic act described in the text is when he first met with Cortés to discuss the Cazonci's fabricated death. He also later accompanies Don Pedro to Uruapan to retrieve the Cazonci and have him negotiate with the Spaniards. Lastly, he accompanies the Cazonci and Don Pedro to Coyoacán to meet with Cortés.

<sup>309</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 185; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 73.



service of the Spanish crown.<sup>310</sup> Notably, the details concerning the death of Don Pedro's brother is omitted, which may have been strategic considering that he died while serving under Olid who betrayed the Spanish armies when he sought to establish a separate colony in Guatemala.<sup>311</sup> Removing his later association from the rebellious Olid establishes Huitziltzi as a loyal servant of the Spanish crown. In these passages, Huitziltzi, in sum, is presented as a loyal servant to both the Cazonci as well as the Spaniards just like his brother Don Pedro.

#### **CONCLUSION: FRAGILE GOVERNING MASCULINITIES AT THE BREAKING POINT**

In this chapter I have discussed how both the Cazonci and Don Pedro Cuiniarángari partook in the impossible task of trying to balance two standards of governing masculinity when the Spaniards submitted the Tarascan state under their authority. Don Pedro appeared to describe Tangáxoan as fragile and indecisive Cazonci but the *Proceso* documents describes that the irecha was highly calculated, deceptive, and even willing to put up a fight against the Spaniards at Cuinao. Even after he submitted to Cortés, claimed that he would respect the encomenderos, and adopted Christianity, he continued to live up to his own standard of rulership as the irecha. He continued to attend to religious duties that honored the Pre-Hispanic gods, attended to warfare by planning the assault at Cuinao, ordered the deaths of Spaniards who were a nuisance to his subjects, and engaged in homosexual acts that the conquistadors deemed transgressive. The *Proceso* reveals that Don Pedro also lived up to his traditional duties by assisting the Cazonci as his ambassador, attending to religious duties, and helping to coordinate the assaults in the northern frontier. However, what distinguished him was that he supplied the testimony that

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<sup>310</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 196; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 86.

<sup>311</sup> López Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro*, 55.

contributed to his execution and also that he ascended as governor of Michoacán. A common thread in the literature on Pre-Hispanic Michoacán concludes that Don Pedro was indeed a mediator but also one who made opportunistic choices. As Cynthia Stone has warned, however, it would not be fair to repeat the same mistakes of past historians in dismissing him as a male version of Malinche.<sup>312</sup> After all, he was not a descendant of the Uanacaze ruling dynasty but was a descendant of the Islanders who lived along the Lake Pátzcuaro basin that were conquered by the Cazonci's ancestors. His loyalties were clearly with the Islanders who he considered his own kind, although, Afanador-Pujol notes, he also formed alliances with the Uanacaze who consented with his claim to the governorship because it ultimately allowed the Cazonci's children to also validate their status as the traditional rulers.<sup>313</sup>

In the midst of these conflicting loyalties, many misunderstandings occurred as even the highest-ranking Tarascan principals were not clear about what their relationship was to their Spanish overlords. They submitted, at least superficially, to the Crown but they also continued to resist their authority in subtle ways by averting the demands of the *encomienda* and secretly plotting their assassinations. The relationship was weakened first when Olid deliberately intimidated the Tarascans by stationing armed troops in Taximaroa. Finally, these fragile frontiers of Spanish and Tarascan standards of governing masculinity came to a breaking point when the Cazonci's attempted assault in Cuinao was revealed. The plot showed that the Tarascan rulers were not content with their skewed relationship with the Spaniards. Ultimately, these

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<sup>312</sup> Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 160-161.

<sup>313</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 24-25.

differences were sorted out and negotiated through numerous acts of violence, leading to countless deaths and dramatic political reconfiguration for the Indigenous peoples of Michoacán.

Subsequently, Tzintzicha and Don Pedro witnessed the humiliating and demoralizing defeat of their polity amid the Spanish conquest. As best stated by Warren, the subsequent distribution of encomiendas reduced the Tarascan state to a tributary province of Mexico City, which meant that “the Spaniards had achieved what the Aztecs had failed to do: they made Tenochtitlan-Mexico the capital and had reduced the kingdom of Michoacán to a tributary province.”<sup>314</sup> Tzintzicha conveyed his despair when he proclaimed during his interrogation that he had been reduced to the status of a commoner, or *macegual*.<sup>315</sup>

Yet, the *Proceso* conveyed that the Cazonci did simply resign himself in allowing the Spaniards to strip him of his power. His plot to engage the Spaniards at Cuinao was perhaps the Cazonci’s belated attempt to formally engage the Spaniards in battle. Certainly, this conspiracy highlights that he was not the coward he appeared to be in the *Relación*. His testimony in the *Proceso* reveals that it may have been an assault that he planned to carry out for some time. When he was interrogated by Guzman and asked about his role in causing the deaths of many Spaniards, he initially denied the charges, stating that if he wanted to kill Christians, he would

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<sup>314</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 74-80. As tensions with the Spaniards quelled after initial negotiations with Cortés, the Spanish initiated the process of surveying the lands in Michoacán so that they could be distributed as encomiendas. Antonio Carvajal, accompanied by five men, led the two-year expedition to survey the lands in October 1523. While Cortés hoarded many of the best lands in Michoacán for himself for years to come, he eventually rewarded title over these lands to various Spaniards. The encomenderos profited from the land by extracting tribute, looting precious metals from the local villages, and, mining. The encomienda system was littered with abuses, leading to numerous revolts and formal protests that were presented to the bureaucracy in Mexico City. Tarascan principales complained about rape, overwork, corporeal punishment, mutilation, and torture from the Spanish overseers and encomenderos. These abuses would influence the killing of Spaniards in the Michoacán region.

<sup>315</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 20.

have done so before they came to take their lands.<sup>316</sup> It was indeed an assertive statement from the Cazonci, stating that he could have killed the Spaniards if he had the chance. Rather, he perhaps also sought to convey that he regretted that he did not kill them when it was opportune.

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 22.

### **Chapter 3: Masculinized Women and the Myths of Male Dominance in the *Relación***

In the previous chapters, I have discussed the performance of Indigenous hypermasculinities in the Tarascan borderlands through narratives of territorial expansion (Chapter 1) and displays of loyalties (Chapter 2). Similarly, this chapter also discusses how Tarascan women also played roles in these physical frontiers. Most importantly, this chapter discusses the presence of the borderlands of gender in sixteenth-century colonial texts, namely the *Relación de Michoacán*. I describe how the *Relación* was a site where espoused notions of Tarascan “patriarchy” existed in tension with the realities of female power found in the same text. I use the borderlands of gender to describe how Tarascan and Spanish notions of male dominance and female subversion intersected, clashed, and contradicted in the *Relación* and other colonial texts. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter of this dissertation, Indigenous informants of the manuscript, as well as the friar-chronicler of the text, sought to portray the Tarascan ancestors as manly, boisterous, and patriarchal figures on par with the Spanish conquistadors. Thus, the projections of a so-called “patriarchal” Tarascan state in the *Relación* should be called to question. The *Relación* reflected Tarascan projections of masculine strength and authority on the one hand and moralistic Christian discourses on the other. Nevertheless, these androcentric narratives did not completely erase the realities of female power in the Tarascan state.

Uacúsecha men have taken center stage in the narratives of Pre-Hispanic Tarascan expansion as they fought with the Islanders as well as the village of Curíngaro. In the *Relación*, women are poorly represented in comparison to their male counterparts and were said to have been closely supervised by masculine authority figures. The second part of the text that describes Tarascan marriage ceremonies conveys that women’s primary functions were to obey their

husbands. It also conveys that unfaithful wives who committed adultery could be punished with the mutilation of their ears or even executed along with their families.<sup>317</sup> This resonates with Krippner-Martinez's observations that the Tarascan elites sought to portray the existence of pre-existing patriarchal customs among the nobility.<sup>318</sup> However, in this chapter, I problematize the inclination to describe Tarascan society as male-dominated because both Pre-Hispanic and early colonial texts also show the powerful and influential role women played in the Michoacán region. Women were not passive figures in the *Relación* but were also shown playing essential roles in helping to expand and defend the Uacúsecha frontiers and in some cases were described as possessing many of the masculine traits ascribed to Tarascan warriors. While the previous chapters have described how Tarascan hypermasculinity in the *Relación* and the *relaciones geográficas* emphasized the political authority of the men in the Uacúsecha nobility, powerful depictions of women also emerge in these colonial texts in ways that challenge or parallel the same strength, power, and authority commanded by their male counterparts.

In this chapter, I show how narratives of female authorities who included advisors, spies, assassins, and authority figures in the narratives concerning the expansion of the Tarascan state and its borderlands contradicts the myths of male dominance in Tarascan society. Sharisse D. McCafferty and Geoffrey G. McCafferty's article on the Mexica, "Powerful Women and the Myth of Male Dominance in Aztec Society," influenced these insights as well as the title of this chapter. These authors draw attention to how Aztec women carved spheres of power as healers,

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<sup>317</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 153-156; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 36-9.

<sup>318</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 65-66.

market administrators, textile makers, and goddesses.<sup>319</sup> This chapter is also inspired by María Guadalupe Chávez Carbajal's essay that described how elite Indigenous women in Pre-Hispanic and early colonial Michoacán continued to exercise power and attain distinction into the seventeenth century by entering nunneries and acquiring sizable donations.<sup>320</sup> Similar to their approach, I also provide examples of Indigenous women in Michoacán represented in various influential occupations such as assassins, spies, merchants, and priestesses to argue that Tarascan society was also not dependent on male dominance of females even into the sixteenth century.

First, I begin my elaboration of colonial Indigenous female masculinities as one of many projections of Tarascan hypermasculinity reflected in the *Relación*. I employ the term "colonial Indigenous female masculinities" to reflect how colonial sources depicted powerful women in the narratives of pre-Hispanic Tarascan history. I describe examples of masculinized Tarascan women in the sixteenth-century colonial texts whose power was so substantial that they were described as warrior-like and powerful. Second, I describe how the authors of the *Relación* attempted to depict a patriarchal Tarascan society and how these espoused ideas about male dominance were contradicted in the same text. Third, I provide various examples of both noblewomen and commoners in Michoacán, who continued to carve out their spheres of power and influence during the early colonial period. I conclude by discussing how the varied examples of powerful and influential Indigenous women in early colonial Michoacán during the pre-Hispanic and early colonial period challenge the notion of a patriarchal Tarascan society. I argue

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<sup>319</sup> McCafferty and McCafferty, "Powerful Women," 45-59.

<sup>320</sup> María Guadalupe Chávez Carbajal, "Visión y condición de la mujer en Nueva España: El caso de Michoacán," *Revista Historia y Espacio* 19 (2002), 5-19.

that the projection of female masculinities as well as female power in these colonial texts provides insight into the realities of female influence and authority in early colonial Michoacán, thereby problematizing the notion of pre-existing patriarchal customs based on female suppression in Tarascan society.

#### TOWARDS A STUDY OF COLONIAL INDIGENOUS FEMALE MASCULINITIES

“Female masculinity,” coined by J. Halberstam, refers to the female embodiment of masculine attributes, which are by definition, not restrictive to men. She also notes that, in the past two centuries, masculine women have existed as “a historical fixture, a character who has challenged gender systems for at least two centuries.”<sup>321</sup> I would add to her point that there are also examples of masculine women that subverted Spanish colonial gender expectations over five centuries ago in the Michoacán region. While examples of masculinized women in Halberstam’s work is evident in contemporary society through butches and tomboys, there are also comparable examples of masculinized women in early colonial Indigenous Mexican societies. One example is the depiction of the *patlache* in Mexica culture interpreted in Fray Bernardino de Sahagun’s *Florentine Codex* as a hermaphroditic woman possessing breasts, male genitalia, and sexual desire towards women.<sup>322</sup> In addition to physical characteristics, early colonial Mexican texts also relate figures of masculinized women engaging in acts of warfare. Kevin Terraciano has observed how the Mexican Annals of Tlatelolco recorded female

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<sup>321</sup> Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, 45.

<sup>322</sup> Pete Sigal, "Queer Nahuatl: Sahagún's Faggots and Sodomites, Lesbians and Hermaphrodites," *Ethnohistory* 54, no. 1 (2007): 24-25. While Sahagún describes the *patlache* as a hermaphroditic woman, Sigal points out that such gendered labeling is most likely a misunderstanding on the part of the Spanish chronicler regarding what this figure meant to Nahua cultures. After all, the Mexica did not have the same contempt and fascination with the so-called hermaphrodite that was reflective in European cultures. He concludes that, unfortunately, whatever the intended meaning *patlache* meant was lost in the translation.



combatants who physically engaged the Spaniards during the siege of Tenochtitlan even after their Tenochca male defenders had retreated. These Tlaltelolcan women attacked the invaders while they wore warriors' clothing and also took prisoners.<sup>323</sup> McCafferty and McCafferty also observe that Aztec women played supportive roles in the battlefield as there was a deity named Xochiquetzal, who protected females who used their "sharp tongues" to push hesitant soldiers into the battlefield. The authors also observe how in Aztec society, women who were pregnant—as well as the midwife-priestesses who assisted them during the birthing process—were described as warriors engaged in combat. Women who died giving birth received a distinct place in the afterlife as *cihuapipiltin*, which we sanctified entities who followed the sun as it crossed the skies.<sup>324</sup> In this section, I also relate how such depictions of powerful and masculinized Tarascan women emerge in sixteenth-century colonial texts, especially in the *Relación*. The first chapter of this dissertation demonstrated how Tarascan noblemen were attributed with qualities such as boisterousness, physical aggression, and imperial expansion, but there were also excerpts of women who also embodied these traits when they took on roles as assassins, spies, and military advisors.

In these narratives concerning the pre-Hispanic expansion of the Uacúsecha dynasty, Tarascan female masculinities exist in competition with Tarascan male masculinity because women who served in these positions of authority subverted—or had the potential to subvert—male power. The hegemonic nature of these power struggles between masculinized women and

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<sup>323</sup> Kevin Terraciano, "Three Views of the Conquest of Mexico from the *Other Mexica*," in *The Conquest All Over Again: Nahuas and Zapotecs Thinking, Writing, and Painting Spanish Colonialism*, ed. Susan Schroeder (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 31-32; Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears*, 136-137.

<sup>324</sup> McCafferty and McCafferty, "Powerful Women," 50-52.

authoritative men place these colonial Indigenous female masculinities within the spectrum of Tarascan hypermasculinities. Women who served as spies, for instance, provided military intelligence that could be used by either the Uacúsecha or their enemies to the detriment of other Indigenous noblemen. Similarly, a chapter in the *Relación* described a Uacúsecha female assassin who killed a nobleman from Curíngaro and thus contributed to expanding the Tarascan state's political power by eliminating a political opponent. Tarascan female masculinity is, then, one of many elaborations of Tarascan hypermasculinity.

### ***“Si yo fuera varón ¿no muriere en alguna batalla?”: Masculinized Women Warriors in the Pre-Hispanic Tarascan State***

A critical point Halberstam makes about female masculinities is that they are not mere imitations of maleness.<sup>325</sup> However, the colonial text I consult here (written by men), attempts to depict women associated with acts of violence as manly. The Spanish and Indigenous collaborators who produced the *Relación* often portrayed women engaged in acts of violence as if they were performing as men. For instance, in the second part of the chronicle, it is related that Tariacuri's wife from Curíngaro committed adultery against him, which led the Uacúsecha lord to find a new wife which, subsequently, prompted a military conflict between the Uacúsecha and the Curíngaros; After the Tarascan armies succeeded in killing their opponents Tariacuri remarked that his wife was a valiant man for causing the deaths of so many men:

“Yes my woman, the daughter of the lord of Curíngaro, was manly, such a valiant man he was, because now, being a woman, she caused the deaths of many of her brothers and uncles and grandfather. She gave on this day food for the gods and calmed their stomachs. What a valiant man my woman has become!”

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<sup>325</sup> Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, 1.

“Si mi mujer, la hija del señor de Curíngaro, fuera varón, muy valiente hombre fuera, que ahora, con ser mujer, ha hecho matar de sus hermanos y tíos y abuelo. Ha dado en este día de comer a los dioses y les ha aplacado los estómagos. ¡Valiente hombre ha sido mi mujer!”<sup>326</sup>

In this text, Tariácuri's voice is used to insinuate that his sexually unfaithful wife performed acts that were like those of a warrior because she prompted a military conflict that led to the killing of his enemies. She also contributed to the Tarascans religious and military code, which held that each enemy life taken and each drop of blood shed on the battlefield was considered food for the gods. In this passage, then, Tariácuri's estranged wife is placed on par with the male warrior classes, although, by no means were his remarks intended to be endearing. In this case, the warrior-like qualities that Tariácuri described were not meant to exalt his wife's prestige as a valiant man but, instead, sought to mock his enemies, the Curíngaros, as well as to chastise his wife for committing adultery.

These colonial Indigenous female masculinities are then, also distinct from other projections of Tarascan hypermasculinity because the women who embody these characteristics retain markers of their femininity such as dress as well as stereotypical notions that females were sexually licentiousness. One such example is an entire chapter describing one of Tariácuri's daughters (or one of “his women”)<sup>327</sup> who assassinated one of the lords of Curíngaro. Before carrying out this mission, the text often reminds the reader that she was amongst the irecha's most beautiful and well-dressed women. As she partakes in reconnaissance in the village of

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<sup>326</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 72; Craine, and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 163-164.

<sup>327</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 124; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 227. While Craine and Reindorp's translation of the *Relación de Michoacán* notes that the actor in question was likely Tariácuri's daughter, the Spanish version of the text suggest that it is also possible that the female actor may have also been one of his “women,” meaning one of his wives or servants.

Curíngaro, she draws the attention from other potential targets seeking her attention. The passage establishes that her beauty was what made her fit for the task as she was asked to seduce her target.

The case of the female assassin is exceptional, considering that the majority of the second part of the *Relación* describes the bitter rivalry amongst noblemen who fought for influence and control over the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. According to the narrator of this chapter, a priest of Curicáueri who learned about the event from his grandfather as they passed a point in the village of Curíngaro when he was still a child informed this story about the female assassin. The elder began the story by telling the young boy: “Here a lord of Curíngaro was killed by a woman...”<sup>328</sup> He describes that Tariácuri approached this woman during the festival of Unihizperánsquaro, where slaves were ritually executed and prayers commenced with the bones of enemy captives. He requested her to go to Curíngaro during the festivities and kill one of their lords after seducing him. Notably, he mentioned that she should carry out this dangerous mission because if she were a man, she would have died in warfare anyway: “Go there, because if you were a man wouldn’t you die a war and left somewhere dead?” (*Mátente allá, porque si fueras varón ¿no murieras en alguna guerra y estuvieras echado en alguna parte muerto?*). She replied that she would do so, agreeing that if she was a male, she would have died in warfare: “Sir, I would like to die, going ahead of you; because if I was a man wouldn’t I die during some battle?” (*Señor, yo quiero morir, e ir delante de ti: porque si yo fuera varón ¿no muriere en alguna batalla?*)<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 125; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 228.

The female assassin, described as the “woman from Pátzcuaro,” successfully infiltrated one of the dances held by the Curínguaros and flirted with a lord named Candó throughout the night. She began by getting in between him and his wife and taking him away to dance. While Cando took turns dancing with various women during the festivities, he continually returned to dance with her. The text states how Candó and the female assassin repeatedly squeezed hands (*apretábanse las manos*) and used various descriptive adjectives suggesting they made many turning gestures (*tornó, tornaron, vueltas*) reminiscent of coital acts as they danced. For that matter, according to the account, the attendees danced “naked” (*bailaban desnudos*) wearing only a piece of cloth along their loins. Her beauty did not go unnoticed as Candó’s brother Huresqua asked, “Who is that woman you are dancing with?” The lord replied with a lie by stating she was his wife’s sister.<sup>330</sup>

As the night continued, the Curínguario noble became increasingly concupiscent and inebriated as he drank *puzqua* (pulque?), an alcoholic drink. Suddenly, the woman from Pátzcuaro told Candó that she had to depart back home and repeated what Tariácuri instructed her to say: that she only came to bid farewell to one of her brother’s slaves who was supposed to be executed that night.<sup>331</sup> The lord was persistent and asked to escort her:

Candó said, “It is midnight. Are you not afraid?” She replied, “No, sir, I should go, what do I have to do here?” Candó said, “I want to go with you.” She said, “Sir, for what reason do you go?” Candó replied, “Let’s go I will go with you for a while, I will go to get wood for the temples.” She replied, “Let us go lord.”

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<sup>330</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 126; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 229.

<sup>331</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 126; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 230. According to the *Relación de Michoacán*, it was a custom that when a captive was taken to be sacrificed that women would dance with him.

Díjole Candó, “Es media noche. ¿Cómo no habrás miedo?” Dijo ella: “No, señor, mas ireme, ¿qué tengo de hacer aquí?” Díjole Candó: “Vamos que yo iré contigo un poco, e iré por leña para los cúes.” Dijo la mujer: “Vamos Señor.”

In this manner, the assassin convinced Candó to follow her and lured him to a secluded area. They treaded towards a large boulder, where he got “to know her” (*conciola allí*), and then she waited for him to fall asleep. The assassin then unwrapped the knife she had hidden under her blankets and used it to cut her skirt up to where her knee was so that she could run away much faster. Then, the text continued, she used one arm to grasp the dagger and the other to hold Candó’s head so she could stretch out his neck. Then, the woman from Pátzcuaro “put the knife through his throat and cut it and cut off his head and she did it so fast, he could not make a sound” (*puso la navaja por la garganta y corriola y cortole la cabeza y hizolo tan depriesa, que no pudo dar voces*). The assassin then fled only holding the victim’s head by the hair while leaving the rest of his body behind. She traveled to a village known as Piruen and left his head on an altar of a temple that held enemy captives. After delivering this news to Tariácuri, he praised her by stating she had given food to the gods. What is left of this passage (the middle portion of the page is missing) concludes the story in stating, “This is what these people say happened in Curínguaro, the village of their enemies. And I recorded it here according to their account and manner that they told it to me” (*Esto dice esta gente que aconteció en Curínguaro, pueblo de sus enemigos. Y así lo puse aquí según su relación y manera que me lo contaron*).<sup>332</sup> Through killing the lord from Curínguaro, this woman contributed to establishing Uacúsecha power over the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. As other examples in this chapter will relate, she was also not the last female figure to do so.

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<sup>332</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 127; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 231.

The passage mentioned above depicts the female assassin with virtues that were typically used to describe the “valiant men” in the other chapters in the *Relación*. She was described as a brave warrior who agreed to carry out the killing of the enemy without hesitation. The assassin is directly imbued with male qualities when she stated that she would have also risked her life to die in warfare if she was born as a male. The bravery of her act is implied when she did not appear hesitant to respond to her father's plea to sacrifice herself during this mission. Moreover, she was also one of the few women in the text depicted carrying a weapon to execute an opponent. Similar to Tariácuri's wife, she also gave sustenance to the gods for her role in killing an enemy of the Uacúsecha. Like most women in the *Relación*, however, she is not mentioned by name, but the obscurity of her name did not imply that she was considered insignificant; She was remembered as a hero among the other Tarascan noblemen and religious authorities as this story was passed down from a grandfather of a male priest of the solar deity Curicáueri. The image in the *Relación de Michoacán* that accompanies the description of this event also portrays her with male-like qualities (fig 3.1). Like the other men in the image, her hair was also drawn short, and her face is adorned with earrings. These could be gold earplugs, which is an insignia distinctly worn by men who distinguished themselves as nobles and warriors, or they could also refer to golden earrings typically worn by women.<sup>333</sup> As the central subject in this painting, Tariácuri's daughter is proportionally larger than the other men in the drawing, and she holds up a knife along with the decapitated head of the dead Curíngaro lord. In the image, her stoicism resonated as she presented the trophy to Tariácuri while her face maintained a gesture of indifference.

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<sup>333</sup> Ricardo Carvajal Medina, "La guerra en el Michoacán prehispánico en el Posclásico Tardío. Economía política, estado y sociedad tarasca" (Tesis para obtener el grado de Licenciado en Historia, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, 2019), 480-481.



Figure 3.1. "A Lord of Coringuaro was killed by a Daughter of Tariacuri." Source: Eugene R. Craine and Reginald C. Reindorp, eds. and trans. *The Chronicles of Michoacán*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.

The narrative of this Tarascan female assassin also reflects Halberstam's assertion that female masculinities are not the antithesis of femininity or male masculinity. Instead, such depictions can result in the blending of femaleness and masculinity in ways that "produce wildly unpredictable results."<sup>334</sup> Despite that this female assassin has the masculine qualities of a male warrior who killed a target without fear or hesitation, her beauty and seductive qualities is used to underscore her femininity. In the accompanying image of this narrative, she has short hair like a male but retains the physical markers that distinguish her as a woman, such as her shawl that hangs above her shoulders as well as the short skirt that she cut above her knee to ensure her hasty escape from Curíngaro.

In addition to Tariacuri's wife and the female assassin mentioned earlier in this chapter, the *Relación* contains various examples of powerful women who also possessed masculine traits.

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<sup>334</sup> Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, 28-29.



Noblewomen charged with guarding the Cazonci's belongings, for instance, did not shy away from attacking a group of Spaniards who they found stealing the irecha's gold. When the women who served the Cazonci caught the Spaniards led by Cristóbal Olid stealing treasures from his palace, they reportedly chased them down and beat them with canes. The Spaniards did not fight back and instead fled the village. When the principals of the town returned, they were scolded by the women who shamed them for allowing the Spaniards to steal from the houses of the Cazonci. In the passage, the women question why they wore lip plugs as these were insignias of rank that were supposed to distinguish them as "valiant men." Instead, these women emerge as the more valiant figures because they attacked the men with brute force even though the Spaniards had their swords in their possession.<sup>335</sup> In this passage, the Tarascan noblewomen perform and exercise the masculine traits their counterparts did not demonstrate such as physical aggression, strength, and political authority.

These female masculinities permeate in the narratives of other powerful Tarascan women who included governing elites. The text describes the presence of a female ruler named Quenomen who took over the lordship in Tzacapu after her husband passed away. Notably, the text records that she performed roles reserved for men such as gathering firewood for the temples. She also decorated herself as a warrior by wearing black bands on her face and carried a shield and a war club to spark fear in those who opposed her. According to the *Relación*, this sparked a sense of outrage in the irecha Taríacuri, who remarked that these tasks were the

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<sup>335</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 190; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 79. According to the *Relación*, "The women began to dishonor them by telling them why did they wear the lip plugs of valiant men, if they were not to defend the gold and silver that those people took, did they not have shame for wearing the lip plugs" (*las mujeres empezáronlos a deshorrar diciéndoles que para qué traían bezotes de valientes hombres, que no eran para defender aquel oro y plata que llevaba aquella gente, que no tenían vergüenza de traer bezotes*).

business of men and prompted him to ask, “Where is it the custom for old women to wage war?” (*¿Dónde se usa que las viejas entiendan en las guerras?*) He protested that her duty was to not to conduct warfare but to attend to children. He concludes his protest in stating that she should be killed, dismembered, and thrown into a river.<sup>336</sup> This example provides a clear case in which the authors of the *Relación* despised masculine women for attempting to place themselves on par with other male authority figures by adopting their customs and dress.

### **Women in Warfare**

Powerful women in the texts could also face ridicule even when they played supportive roles for Uacúsecha noblemen on the battlefield. These female advisors could also supply him with information on military intelligence. Chávez Carbajal observes that these female advisors, described as *tías* (aunts) are noted to have supported Taríacuri by providing him with advice in personal and political affairs.<sup>337</sup> In one chapter, one of Taríacuri's aunts interrupted one of his meetings because she learned that a lord named Tzintzuni was a spy sent on behalf of the Curínguaros. The allegation prompted Taríacuri to argue with her, and dismissed her accusation as mere gossip, prompting her to walk away angrily because he ignored her warning that was later discovered to be accurate.<sup>338</sup> Secondly, in the first instance where Taríacuri learned about his wife's infidelity, he was reportedly devastated and refused to eat. One of his *tías* responded by issuing him a lengthy retort in which she urged him to stop moping, live up to his fame as Taríacuri, and to seek a new wife. The noble responded by taking his aunt's advice and sought

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<sup>336</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 91; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 187.

<sup>337</sup> Chávez Carbajal, "Visión y condición de la mujer," 6-7.

<sup>338</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 72-73; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 164-165.

out a new wife from the master of the village of Taríaran.<sup>339</sup> Her advice prompted one of the battles between the Uacúsechas and Curíngaros. It would not be the last instance in which women played roles in matters of warfare in sixteenth-century texts.

Into the early colonial period, the Spaniards were also able to attest to the presence of female authority figures who used their influence to initiate diplomacy as well as to wage war. In her book that discusses the conquest of western Mexico, Ida Altman highlights how Spanish conquistadors and their Indigenous allies interacted with female leaders as they began their conquest of Michoacán and the greater central-western Mexican region. Notably, these *caciqas* were from the Coca, Tecuexe, and Caxcan territories who were enemies of the Tarascan state from the nearby Lake Chapala Basin. When Nuño de Guzmán began his campaign to conquer Nueva Galicia in 1530, he wrote that during his *entrada* into Tonalan that the ruler of the town was an old woman who agreed to negotiate peace accords with the Spaniards. The elder also warned Guzmán that although her village formally declared peace with the Spaniards that her daughter was rallying men together to prepare them for war against Guzmán's forces.<sup>340</sup> The depictions of women serving various roles as chiefs and warriors attest to the role masculine women played in the political and militaristic cultures of Indigenous people in Michoacán and the greater western Mexican region.

The *Relación* also describes the presence of female spies who risked their lives like their male counterparts who engaged in hand to hand combat. The earliest mention of female spies in the *Relación* describes the wife of a lord from Curíngaro named Curazapi that was sent to spy

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<sup>339</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 65-70; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 155-162.

<sup>340</sup> Altman, *The War for Mexico's West*, 37.

on her Uacúsecha-Chichimeca nephews Pauácume and Uápeani. The two men accordingly figured out she was a spy and sent her away.<sup>341</sup> Just like their male counterparts, female spies engaged in one of the most difficult and most dangerous tasks as they traversed behind enemy lines. Before Tarascans engaged in warfare, spies had to enter the enemy village and memorize the layout of the town. During this process, the spies were also responsible for placing objects such as bloodied arrows, eagle feathers, and balls of fragrances across the enemy territory to curse the village. The capture of spies, whether they were male or female, could have resulted in their capture, torture, and eventual death.<sup>342</sup> For female spies such as Curazapi, their task must have been equally dangerous as those performed by their men.

In the *Relación*, supernatural women also contributed to acts related to warfare. Like the male gods, goddesses convinced Tarascan noblemen to engage in militaristic campaigns to conquer their enemies. The nephew of Tariácuri, Tangáxoan, relates that he had a dream where the goddess Xarátanga urged him to engage in wars of conquest so she could be worshiped again. In exchange, she said she promised to provide him with a home, granaries, food, jewelry, elders, women, and a prosperous city. The goddesses sometimes directly intervened in supporting the Uacúsechas by killing the relatives of their Curíngaro enemies. One tale related that a goddess named Auicanime disguised herself as an impoverished old woman and visited the home of a principal from Curíngaro named Hopótacu. The deity targeted this man because his father, Tzintzuni, was identified as a spy by one of the Tariácuri's aunts. During her visit,

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<sup>341</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 37-39; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 123-125. The Curíngaros asked her to verify whether or not the men were dead after wounding them in a previous battle.

<sup>342</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 22.

Hopótacu was not home but instead was drinking alcohol with his fellow lords and father. While he was away, Auicanime approached his wife and convinced her to buy an unusually large mole that was, in actuality, their son. The wife, not knowing that it was her baby, cooked him and fed her child to her drunken husband, who soon realized it was their child. When both parents were shocked to discover that the mole was their son, Hopótacu reacted by killing his wife in a drunken rage by shooting her with an arrow. Tzintzuni confirmed to his son that the elder was the deity, Auicanime, who was hungry and sought the flesh of his child and wife.<sup>343</sup> The story conveyed that the female goddesses could come into the mortal world—whether in dreams or as incarnate people—and proved to be just as violent, confrontational, and combative as their male counterparts.

### **Priestesses**

Priestesses also embodied many of the same powerful roles as their male priests, such as the *petámuti*, who administered justice. Priestesses also functioned as judges when they determined the fate of enemy captives by either deciding whether they should be killed ritualistically or adopted as slaves during a dance known as the *Paracala Vazange*. A priestess that represented the goddess Cuerauáperi led these ritual executions while accompanied by four other female priests. If a captive fainted during the dance, it meant that the goddess possessed them to indicate who should be executed ritualistically. The priestess who represented the goddess was also responsible for executing delinquent slaves by having their severed hearts thrown into the hot springs of the village of Araro as an offering to the goddess. Another

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<sup>343</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 110-111; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 209-211.

powerful deity recognized in the *Relación* was Cuerauáperi. While Curicáueri was the solar deity responsible for conducting warfare, Cuerauáperi was the mother of all the earth gods and was responsible for causing famines as well as destruction.<sup>344</sup>

Women also played roles as powerful mystical mediums of the gods and goddesses. One chapter describes how the goddess Cuerauáperi possessed one of the servants or wives of a lord in the village of Ucareo by providing her with a drink that placed her in an entranced state. The woman soon found herself in attendance at a meeting of the gods who were quarreling over the decision made by the goddess who announced that the gods would receive no more offerings in their temples. According to the *Relación*, this vision was initially interpreted by the Tarascans as a prophecy that the Mexica or the Chichimecas would soon conquer them. This premonition was later interpreted as the prediction that signaled the Tarascans' spiritual conquest by the Spaniards, whose imposition of Christianity overhauled the worship of the Tarascan deities. When the woman awoke, she found herself beneath the foot of a tree and, while she was still entranced, she was welcomed by her fellow lords who asked her to relate what she had seen. While she was still in her hallucinogenic state, this Tarascan oracle was given blood and alcohol as she related her visions.<sup>345</sup> Blood was considered food for the gods and goddesses in the *Relación*, so when the men fed this to the woman possessed by Cuerauáperi, they recognized her as the embodiment of the goddess and fed her accordingly.

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<sup>344</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 18; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 16. Cristina Monzón, "Los principales dioses tarascos: un ensayo de análisis etimológico en la cosmología tarasca," *Relaciones XXVI*, 104 (2005): 151-153. Monzón identifies Cuerauáperi to be amongst one of the three principal female creators in Tarascan mythology responsible for selecting sacrificial victims.

<sup>345</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 168-174; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 53-60.

## REIMAGININGS OF A PATRIARCHAL TARASCAN STATE

The previously mentioned tale relating to Tariácuri's unfaithful wife is exemplary of how some masculinized women in the *Relación* were described as social deviants by the Christian chronicler and his Indigenous informants, especially when they challenged the power of male authorities. Indeed, as Halberstam observes, female masculinities are often vilified.<sup>346</sup> A similar observation can be made about Tariácuri's wife who was judged by the Spanish friar-editor and his male Indigenous informants as an unruly woman because she did not accept her place as the wife of Tariácuri and reacted to her disillusionment by challenging his authority through sexual infidelity, spreading false information about him, and also deserting him for extended periods of time when she visited her home village of Curíngaro. In the text, she was openly defiant and reduced her husband to an emotional state in which he became saddened, did not eat, and even protested angrily to her father during a feast in which he blamed him for providing him with a bad wife.<sup>347</sup> Tariácuri's first wife thus posed a challenge to his male authority. He responded by waging war with her village and killing her relatives. To portray the Tarascans as powerful patriarchs, the *Relación* attempted to demonstrate that male authority in the household was reinforced through social customs, marriage, and sexuality; I suggest, however, that these claims should be read with suspicion considering that these assertions were often contradictory. In hindsight, the *Relación* often conveys a rhetorical reimagining of how male authority was supposedly established in Pre-Hispanic times, but it did not always reflect this reality. The short

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<sup>346</sup> Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, 9. Halberstam was referring to how contemporary heterosexist, feminist, and heteronormative critics pathologize masculine women as suffering from "misidentification and maladjustment, as a longing to be and to have a power that is always just out of reach."

<sup>347</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 59-60; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 147-149.

glimpses of masculine and powerful women in the *Relación* are often overshadowed by narratives of male-centric cultures centered on noblemen, especially in the third part of the text, which describes Tarascan families, society, and marriage customs.

### **“Honor,” Violence, and Controlling Women’s Bodies**

Krippner-Martinez argues that male dominance over women was embodied by the legendary *irecha* of the Tarascan state, Taríacuri, to reclaim a sense of lost honor that was taken from the male nobility after Nuño de Guzmán killed the Cazonci. Tarascan informants subsequently used the text to relate to the Spanish that they could also have the potential to govern as patriarchal aristocrats. He states, to this regard, that Tarascan notions of “honor” resonated with notions of “honorable” men in Spanish culture even though, problematically, Krippner-Martinez does not define what constitutes male “honor” or an “honorable man” in his work. This needs to be clarified since *honor* was a European concept. He does allude, however, that honor was something that could be “lost” if Tarascans noblewomen remarried when they became widows.<sup>348</sup> In this dissertation, the term *honor* is used sparingly and only in specific contexts because this term referred to a specific code of ethics derived from monarchal European traditions. Latin Americanists concerned with honor in colonial Latin America observe that it, despite its never consistent and multifaceted definitions, *honor* generally referred to attempts to maintain respectful appearances that would not warrant humiliation, shame, and public scrutiny.<sup>349</sup> In the case of the Tarascan nobility, *honor*, then, would refer to their social standing,

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<sup>348</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 65-66.

<sup>349</sup> Lyman L. Johnson and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, *The Faces of Honor: Sex, Shame, and Violence in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 3.



which was contingent on the extent to which they gained respect from other elites, their vassals, as well as the Spaniards during the early colonial period. Indigenous nobles also had to portray themselves as patriarchal figures who could exercise control over their women through acts of violence to convince the fellow Spaniards that they were “honorable” men. Thus, the text conveys that when Tarascan men failed to exert power over women, this was a sign of “dishonor.” Subsequently, this led to the portrayal of women in positions of limited authority.

The projections of chauvinistic Tarascan customs emerge in accounts regarding the Pre-Hispanic justice system. Angélica Jimena Afanador-Pujol notes that the Spanish editor and Indigenous informants and painters who coproduced the *Relación* emphasized that Indigenous officials were just as concerned as the Spaniards in persecuting witches and adulterers, especially those who were women. On the one hand, she observes, these elaborate descriptions on the punishment of male and female transgressors through acts of body mutilation were reflective of Tarascan associations with the body and social transgression. Convicted witches could be punished by having knives stuck in their mouths and eyes and then had their bodies dragged to death and covered with rocks. On the other hand, punishing adulterers and witches surely must have resonated with the Christian religious concerns of the anonymous friar-editor who composed the text since he denounced idolatry and polygamy in the preface of the manuscript.<sup>350</sup>

In cases of adultery, punishments followed a gendered double-standard when the judge, the *petámuti*, issued adulteresses with the death penalty. In some cases, guilty parties, whether males or females, could have suffered the same consequences since the *petámuti* could order

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<sup>350</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 72-83; Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 31; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 101-103.

them to have their ears cut. In this manner, members of the public could identify them and shame them. Despite the negative consequences a person could face for committing adultery, the text states that once a person was found guilty of adultery four times, they were sentenced to death.<sup>351</sup> However, the text implies that the luxury of being given no more than three chances to commit adultery without execution was a privilege reserved for men. Newly married women were warned not to commit adultery because doing so would lead to execution after the first offense. Interestingly, these sexual double standards concerning female adulteresses are also related by sixteenth-century ethnographic accounts relating to the Nahuas. While the Nahuas generally ascribed adultery as a form of filth and bodily pollution regardless if the transgressor was male or female, an image in the *Florentine Codex* depicts a woman awaiting execution for committing adultery.<sup>352</sup> In sum, the *Relación* suggests that in the Tarascan justice system, the *petámuti* was a supreme male authority who had the power to enforce a husband's authority over his wife just like in European patriarchal legal traditions. The text shows that a Tarascan husband's authority was enacted through acts of violence such as mutilation or a death sentence. However, as I will relate, a husband's authority was far from unilateral.

### **The Myth of Patriarchal Tarascan Marriages**

Another method in which the *Relación* attempts to portray Tarascan noblemen as exemplary Christian patriarchs through depicting them in monogamous relationships. Monogamy was important to establish patriarchal authority because, in European traditions,

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<sup>351</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 19-20; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 101-103.

<sup>352</sup> Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 90-91.

patriarchy required a husband to exert his authority over his wife.<sup>353</sup> However, European colonists often absconded Native peoples for possessing over multiple wives as this ran contrary to the notion of the domestic household with just one husband and one wife.<sup>354</sup> The governor of Michoacán, Don Pedro Cuiniarángari, appealed to the expectation of monogamous marriage when he described one of his unions as an example of how Tarascan nobles married. Krippner-Martinez concurs that his account is used to purport the false claim that Tarascan nobles were monogamous because it was one way of allowing Don Pedro to demonstrate his worth as governor of Michoacán. After all, the passage concerning his marriage concludes in declaring him and his wife as vassals of the Spanish crown.<sup>355</sup> The notion of monogamous marriage amongst the Tarascans is contradicted in the chapter relating the women who took care of the Cazonci's home. The manuscript states that these women were given to him by the caciques from the villages under his jurisdiction and that he produced many children with them. While one of the Cazonci's women known as the *yreri* was his "common-law" wife, she also oversaw the women of his home who included cooks, weavers, guardians of his treasures, slaves, and overseers (see Appendix 2).<sup>356</sup> In ethnographic accounts related to marriage, the *Relación's* Franciscan chronicler imposes European standards of patriarchy amongst the Tarascans even when these claims are inconsistent in the same manuscript.

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<sup>353</sup> Bennet, *History Matters*, 55-56.

<sup>354</sup> Romero, *Making War and Minting Christians*, 62-63; 83. Polygynous practices were interpreted by English colonists, for example, as uncontrolled male sexual indulgence.

<sup>355</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 61-62.

<sup>356</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 137-139; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 18-19

The same passage in the *Relación* that describes the women in the Cazonci's home attempts to propert the notion that the household was male-headed. It records that an old man was charged with guarding all of the women in the Cazonci's home, although his role appears marginal since there were women below him who oversaw other females engaged in specific roles. For that matter, the document reveals that there were at least twenty-one women in his home were the primary authority figures (See Appendix 2). The *chuperipati*, who was the chief guardian of the Cazonci's treasures, held the same office held by the women who beat the Spaniards for stealing the irecha's precious metals. As mentioned previously, these women even scolded the men for taking no action. There was also the *pazapeme* who supervised all the female slaves and the *quateperi* who was in charge of all the women who gathered and produced seeds, footwear, fish, corn pulp, blankets, and salt for the palace of the Cazonci.<sup>357</sup> These passages in the *Relación* suggest that the irecha's household was not male-headed since women were primarily responsible for overseeing it.

Passages in the *Relación* that describe arranged marriage ceremonies amongst the elite purported the notion that these families prioritized the male voice by emphasizing the role of male advisors in these ceremonies.<sup>358</sup> In these elaborate and ritualized ceremonies, elite fathers and priests acted as advised future brides by instructing them about their duties. During a marriage ceremony, a priest advised these women to give full obedience to her husband and to

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 33-34; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 120. These arranged marriages were political customs amongst the elite. Daughters married off to other elite families served efforts to build political alliances. For instance, the *Relación* narrates that when the Islanders of Pacanda gave their daughters to the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas, this resulted in an alliance between them.

provide blankets for his guests when they visited his home.<sup>359</sup> While arranged matrimonial unions emphasized the advisory role played by fathers and male priests, these marriages did not exclude female figures. When the daughters of the *irecha* were married off to the lords of his provinces, they were adorned with new clothes and jewelry and escorted to the home of their marriage partners while accompanied by female relatives who carried their belongings. Noblewomen in a household could also play roles as decision-makers in arranged marriages. When a lord was interested in marrying one of the daughters of another noble, he sent a messenger to deliver a marriage proposal and gifts to the parents of his potential wife. Fathers did not have the ultimate authority to decide whether their daughters should be married off as they were expected to consult with their wives and other women of their household.<sup>360</sup> Despite the limited agency of the daughters of noblewomen in the arranged marriage process, these unions do not emerge as a process solely controlled by male authorities since other women in these households participated as attendants and advisors. For that matter, the text shows that noblewomen who were not happy with their marriages divorced by leaving their partner's house.<sup>361</sup> Thus, while it may appear that noble families were male-headed, these men were also required to share power with wives and women of the household.

The description of marriage practices amongst the commoners, known as the *purépecha*, also challenges the claim of male-dominated Tarascan households. While marriage in noble

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<sup>359</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 153; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 36.

<sup>360</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 155-157; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 38-40.

<sup>361</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 58-62; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 146-151. Tariacuri's wife from Curinguaro returned to her parents' home after her unhappy marriage with the *irecha*.

families was political, the *Relación* describes unions amongst the common people as “those who marry each other for love” (*los que se casan por amores*). They were less elaborate and provided more freedom for women to choose their marriage partners and to initiate divorce. Similar to Tarascan elites, male commoners who were interested in taking a woman as a marriage partner was still expected to speak with her parents. Also, both the families of the husband and wife were required to provide gifts. Unlike Tarascan noble families, however, children were not required to have a priest assist in their marriage ceremonies. The father of the married daughter, like the priests in noble marriages, provided advice to their daughters and emphasized that they should not commit adultery. While such marriage arrangements were considered a formality amongst commoners, the editor of the *Relación* also noted that sometimes commoners married without the approval of their parents. In some cases, they just lived together and made "an agreement among themselves."<sup>362</sup> Amid commoners, then, fathers and husbands also did not exercise supreme authority over a woman’s ability to choose a marriage partner.

Regardless of the importance, the *Relación* placed on marriage in Tarascan society, nobles and commoners alike did not live up to colonial patriarchal and Christian expectations that urged couples to marry. There are numerous cases in the latter half of the sixteenth century in Michoacán related to the punishment of unmarried couples known as *amancebados*.<sup>363</sup> Indigenous authorities accused in these cases included the governor of Tzintzuntzan and an

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<sup>362</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 157; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 40.

<sup>363</sup> The term *amancebados* insinuates acts of concubinage but was also used to refer to unmarried couples. See Linda Tigges, ed., and J. Richard Salazar, trans., trans. *Spanish Colonial Women and the Law: Complaints, Lawsuits, and Criminal Behavior. Documents from the Spanish Colonial Archives of New Mexico, 1697-1749* (Spanish/English Edition. Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2016), 109, fn. 32.

assistant parishioner. Commoners could also be punished for living as a couple without receiving the sacrament of marriage.<sup>364</sup>

### **Sexuality and Patriarchy**

In matters concerning sexuality, the *Relación* also attempts to show that Tarascan men exercised a strict moral code in which they did not tolerate the sexual infidelity from their wives. When nobles and commoners married, the female partners in these marriages were advised by their fathers and priests to be faithful to their men because if they committed adultery, it could result in her execution. The text also adds that a woman's entire family would also face death for raising an adulteress.<sup>365</sup> The penalties placed on female sexual infidelity emphasizes that women in both noble and commoner families were expected to restrict their sexual inclinations towards their husbands under the perjury of death, or at least, that was what the Christian and Indigenous coauthors of the *Relación* sought to portray.

As mentioned previously, the punishments for sexual infidelity described in the manuscript follow a gendered double standard that ultimately provided more advantages for men guilty of committing the same offenses as women. This pattern emerges in the passages concerning divorce amongst commoners. When a wife and husband quarreled, they were required to seek counsel with the chief priest, the *petámuti*. If a quarrel resulted from the wife committing adultery, she could face the death sentence. On the other hand, when a husband was found to be sexually unfaithful, he could be excused from being punished and even request to

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<sup>364</sup> Rodrigo Martínez Baracs and Lydia Espinosa Morales, *La vida michoacana en el siglo XVI: Catálogo de los documentos del siglo XVI del Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad de Pátzcuaro* (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1999), see cases 274, 303, 352, 359, and 365.

<sup>365</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 153-156; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 36-9.

take a new wife if he could prove that his wife mistreated him. Another way commoner women could separate from abusive husbands was if their parents intervened by taking them out of their husband's home. Wives could also take the initiative in seeking separation if they found that their husbands were sexually unfaithful to them by consulting with "doctors" known as the *xurimecha* who conducted a corn grain-dropping ceremony to determine if the women should remain with their husbands. If the grains united at the bottom of the gourd dish filled with water, the priest determined that they should stay married. If not, he determined that they should divorce.<sup>366</sup> These diverse modes of attaining separation appear to have been a privilege reserved for commoners since the friar-editor of the *Relación* does not mention any practices of divorce that were specific to the Tarascan nobles. Yet, the process of divorce amongst Tarascan women ultimately appeared to be a more strenuous process for women than it was for men. While commoner women had access to seeking the counsel of their parents, priests, or the *xurimecha* to dissolve their marriages, they had little recourse when accused of being adulterers. Such accusations, it is claimed, placed her life at the mercy of the *petámuti* who could order her execution. Men, on the other hand, rarely appear to be suspected of adultery and were not threatened with death for committing such acts. The only exception where men could receive an immediate death sentence was if they were caught sleeping with one of the Cazonci's women.<sup>367</sup>

Premarital sex was also another arena where Christian-like customs surfaced in the *Relación*. Male authorities urged women not to engage in premarital sex before marriage because it was considered a disgrace to their mothers and fathers. After another man asked a father for his

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<sup>366</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 159-160; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 42-44.

<sup>367</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 148; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 30.



daughter's hand in marriage, the woman was asked a series of questions by her parents who inquired where they had met. They sought to make sure that their daughter had not been "known" by the male who wanted to marry her. If they discover that she did engage in sexual intercourse with him, her father could club her for disgracing him.<sup>368</sup> When a daughter engaged in premarital sex, the *Relación* states that she was considered to have insulted her parents by making them an embarrassment to the public. One example provided in the text relates a case in which both a mother and father scolded their daughter for engaging in premarital sex. However, the passage only features the words that were spoken by her father. He conveys that his daughter's acts led to his tarnished reputation. Interestingly, the oration conveys the father's sense of disgrace to his daughter through metaphors associated with the body:

“Yo que soy tu padre no andaba de esta manera que tú andas; gran afrenta me has hecho; echando me has tierra en los ojos.” Quería decir, no osaré parecer entre la gente ni tendré ojos para mirallos, porque todos me lo darán en la cara, y me afrentarán por esto que has hecho.

“I, who am your father, did not do this kind of thing that you have done; you have insulted me greatly, you have thrown dirt in my eyes.” He wanted to say, I do not dare appear among people, nor do I have eyes to face them, because everyone will put it in my face, and will insult me because of what you have done...<sup>369</sup>

In this quote, the father metaphorically states that his daughter soiled his eyes, making him unable to face criticism he would receive from others in public. He distinctly states that his daughter threw dirt in his eyes. In sixteenth-century Nahuatl accounts, dirt was an allegorical representation of mockery as well as sexual impurity.<sup>370</sup> In many ways, this reference to dirt

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<sup>368</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 158; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 41-42.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> Burkhardt, *The Slippery Earth*, 90. According to one legend, the Mexica's enemies, the Colhuas, mocked them by throwing dirt on their new temple. Regarding sexuality, Nahuatl girls who were

mirrors Spanish notions of honor in which men sought to maintain appearances through reputation. In Craine and Reindorp's English translation of the same passage in the *Relación*, they translate the insult felt by the father as a "great dishonor," which is not an inaccurate translation if honor—in this case—refers to one's social repute.<sup>371</sup> For the parents to reclaim this lost "honor," the text states that they had to disown their daughter because they considered her heart soiled by her lover. After her parents disowned her, she could marry her lover by being escorted to his house by her relatives, who also disassociated themselves with her. The parents could also punish the man who had sex with their daughter by going to his home and taking away his possessions.<sup>372</sup> Nevertheless, again, the stakes for a woman to commit sexual transgressions in Pre-Hispanic Michoacán emerge as evidently riskier. They could face corporal punishment and disownment from their own families. Their male partners might risk losing their physical possession, but their reputation, or "honor"—including that of his family—remained intact. In matters concerning sexuality, then, the *Relación* attempts to paint a portrait of a Pre-Hispanic Tarascan society with a rigid moral code where men restricted female sexual practices.

The *Relación* warned that the lack of male supervision over women's sexualities led to social ruin and destruction. Noticeably, such narratives must have resonated with the Franciscan chronicler who might have equated these events with the fall of the Biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah that were destroyed by the Christian god due to its inclination to vice. However, there

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charged with taking care of the temples were warned not to engage in sexual relations while in service because doing so would cause their flesh to rot. If dirt was found in the mirrors of the temples (known as the eyes of the solar deity Huitzilopochtli) it was interpreted as a sign that these women engaged in forbidden sexual relations.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

are also Nahuatl accounts about the destruction and conquests of cities attributed to moral and sexual vices. As Louise M. Burkhardt relates, the fall of Tula was attributed to its ruler's engagement in sexual practices with his sister or the deity Tezcatlipoca who was disguised as a woman.<sup>373</sup> In the *Relacion*, the conquests of the Lake Pátzcuaro region led by Tariacuri's son and his nephews also attributes sexual excess to destruction. The *irecha* related that the Uacúsecha would soon subjugate the surrounding towns because they were engulfed in power struggles and sexual vices. In the *Relación*, Tariacuri states that Hetúquaro, an Otomí town that was captured by the Tarascans, would crumble because the children of its lord competed to take their father's place after he passed away. During this struggle, the sons hosted various dances where attendees indulged in sexual acts. The presence of pregnant little girls who were said to have grown "breasts as large as women because of the pregnancy" and wandered about the town carrying their offspring signified the town's impending ruin. According to the story, drunken female elders also engaged in lascivious acts at the sacred temples of this village. The text alleges that because there were no old men to supervise and contain these women, and sexual excess was rampant. These lustful actions prompted the gods to curse Hetúquaro with a drought, leading to widespread starvation and the abandonment of the town, leading another village to enslave its people.<sup>374</sup> Similarly, the fall of the town of Tariaran occurred after a blind noblewoman known

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<sup>373</sup> Burkhardt, *The Slippery Earth*, 75. According to different accounts of this legend, the ruler and priest of Tula known as Huemac and also as Quetzalcoatl was tricked into becoming drunk and had sex with his sister or possibly Tezcatlipoca disguised as a woman. In another version he prompted his daughter to become sexually lascivious. This was a taboo because priests in Tula were expected to be chaste. Eventually, the ruler was forced out of the city as his followers also followed by committing immoral acts. This eventually led to the fall of Tula. On page 90, Burkhardt mentions how the "sexually corrupt" ruler Moquiuhix who ruled Tlaltelolco was defeated by Axayacatl.

<sup>374</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 88-89; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 183-184.

as Mauina dressed as the Goddess Xarátanga and seduced men that passed through the market area.<sup>375</sup> In each of these cases, uncontrolled female sexuality caused by the lack of patriarchal supervision was ultimately attributed to the fall of entire villages.

Nevertheless, the notion that female sexuality had to be restricted was contradicted in other parts of the *Relación*. For that matter, members of the Uacúsecha nobility also seem to have openly engaged in recreational sex with numerous women. In a passage describing when Tariácuri was still a child, it is related that his older cousins Aramen and Zétaco took him along with them on their shoulders as they drank and mingled with women. When the three elders who cared for Tariácuri learned about this, they scolded the cousins for setting a bad example. They told the cousins that if they should decide to continue to frolic with women that they should not take Tariácuri along with them and, instead, that they should engage in these acts in a village called Uacanámbaro:

“Mira, señor Zétaco y señor Aramen, vosotros bebéis vino y os juntáis con mujeres; íos con vuestra gente a un lugar llamado Uacanámbaro, allí beberéis a vuestro placer vino y os juntaréis con mujeres, y allí no habrá quien os diga nada ni haga mal. Íos y a aparatos del que ha de ser señor, porque quizá nos le hagáis a vuestras costumbres.”

“Look, lord Zétaco and lord Aramen, you drink wine and you run around with women; take your people and go to a place called Uacanámbaro, and there you may drink wine to your pleasure and you may run around with women, and there will be no one there to say anything to you or to do you any wrong. Go and leave off setting a bad example for he who is to be master, so that he may not be accustomed to your ways.”<sup>376</sup>

On the one hand, this quote corroborates the notion that gendered double standards applied to Tarascan noblemen in the *Relación* such that they suffered limited consequences for committing

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<sup>375</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 91-92; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 187. Because she has not been reprimanded by her family members, it was said that there would be no master in Tariáran and would eventually be conquered by the Tarascans.

<sup>376</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 44; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 130-131.

sexual transgressions. While these men were verbally reproached for their sexually promiscuous activities, they were ultimately excused and told to engage in these acts elsewhere. On the other hand, the text also highlights the existence of a place where males and females could practice sexual freedom without scrutiny. The elders relate that Uacanámbaro was a place where flirting, drinking, and recreational sex was common. For that matter, men who went embraced instead of restricted female sexuality.

Other ethnohistoric sources suggest that Tarascan society was more sexually liberal than the *Relación* would suggest. It is likely is that Indigenous nobles and the Spanish editor who co-produced the *Relación* likely attempted to depict a Pre-Hispanic society where native men possessed the same patriarchal traits as their Spanish counterparts, which included embracing monogamous sexual practices. Yet, statements by Spanish observers in sixteenth-century Michoacán who complained about polygamous practices amongst the commoner and elite classes contradict the notion that Tarascan society was monogamous and highly restrictive of female sexuality. Unlike Spanish monastic traditions, the Indigenous peoples of Michoacán did not seem to have a notion of sexual abstinence. In the prologue to the *Relación*, the friar-editor complained that the only way the Tarascans could convey the concept of chastity was through paraphrase.<sup>377</sup> Concerning polygyny, other sources corroborate that noblemen had multiple wives. In the *relación geográfica* for Chilchota written in 1579, the Corregidor Pedro de Billela, along with a trilingual Indigenous informant named Joaquín report that it was not uncommon for Indigenous nobles living in Villella's jurisdiction to have had at least two or three wives in Pre-

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<sup>377</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 14; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 6.

Hispanic times.<sup>378</sup> The geographic report for Asuchtilan also describes polygamous practices amongst the general populous, although the author of the report, the corregidor Diego Garces, uses this to emphasize his assertion that the Tarascans and Cuitlatecas under his jurisdiction were ill-mannered, miserable ingrates (“*yngratos y desgraciados*”). He states that they took pride in engaging in vices of the flesh which led them to commit adultery and incest, especially when they were drunk.<sup>379</sup> Also, Tarascan sexual customs were far from heteronormative such that people did not only engage in sexual acts involving members of the opposite sex. In the *Proceso*, a witness named Cuaraque testified that the Tarascan ruler was known to have regularly engaged in sexual acts with various young men.<sup>380</sup> Evidence of communities of men who had sex with men, described by Tortorici as sodomitical subcultures, also existed in Michoacán into the early seventeenth century.<sup>381</sup> These accounts of polygamy and homosexuality, in sum, refute the notion that Tarascan culture was sexually restrictive and always heterosexual, meaning that women likely had greater sexual freedoms than the *Relación* might have portrayed. However, the accounts of polygamous practices also must be read carefully as they also might reflect Christian moralistic concerns about sexual indulgence.

The emphasis on sexual restraint was likely influenced by the moralistic Christian dogmas of the Franciscan chronicler of the *Relación*. Other Franciscan chroniclers in Mexico

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<sup>378</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 1, 23.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, Part 2, 66. According to the text, he describes them as overtly inclined to vice especially sex, adultery, incest, and misdeeds, especially when they were drunk (“...son demaçiadamente viçiosos en el viçio de la carnalidad y cometen millares de adulterios y ynçestos y malefiçios, y mas si están borrachos, que es cosa que mucho apetecen y lo tienen por onrrroso”).

<sup>380</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 47.

<sup>381</sup> Tortorici, “Heran Todos Putos,” 51.

who wrote and recited sermons written in Nahuatl to Aztec converts in the latter half of the sixteenth century preached that sexual desire was sinful and had to be resisted. While they agreed with Nahua converts that sexual practices should be approached in moderation, the friars ultimately valued chastity.<sup>382</sup> The mendicant orders echoed the 1563 Council of Trent's view that people who were virgins or who led lives of sexual abstinence ultimately had happier lives than those who were married.<sup>383</sup> During this period, the Jesuits embraced a Christian masculinity that embraced sexual restraint and what Edward Behrend-Martínez describes as a spiritual, soldier-like discipline. The Spanish Crown, influenced by these Christian humanist ideologies, also expressed concerns with curbing male sexuality during the early colonial period. The Church echoed these anxieties by allowing Inquisitorial authorities to persecute Spanish men who committed sexual crimes such as sodomy, fornication, bestiality, and adultery.<sup>384</sup>

While such policies to curb nonprocreative sexuality were directed at both men and women, European medical and religious texts called attention to the need to curb female sexuality. Widely accepted Aristotelian and Galenic discourses in the fifteenth and sixteenth century held that women were infertile men who could not produce semen because, according to humoralistic medicine, their bodies were naturally cold while men's bodies were hot which enabled them to produce semen. Galenic ideas further proposed that the vagina was merely an

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<sup>382</sup> Burkhardt, *The Slippery Earth*, 134.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>384</sup> Edward Behrend-Martínez, "'Taming Don Juan': Limiting Masculine Sexuality in Counter-Reformation Spain," *Gender & History* 24, no.2 (August 2012), 334-345.

inverted penis and that women were essentially incomplete men.<sup>385</sup> This logic followed that women, as incomplete men, longed for male semen and that their bodies physically depended on it to bring heat to their cold bodies.<sup>386</sup> Patricia Simons observes that these medical and religious texts warned that men had to restrict their sexual urges because they risked weakening their bodies from losing too much semen, which was believed to be composed of the male spirit. On the other hand, Hippocratic and Galenic theories warned that retaining too much semen could upset one's humoral balance.<sup>387</sup> Thus, in both sixteenth-century religious and medical discourses, sexual restraint was encouraged.

Claims in the *Relación* that Tarascan men exercised strict control over women's bodies should be read with suspicion since the rhetoric espoused in this colonial text was inconsistent. In hindsight, Tarascan noblemen and the friar-chronicler of the *Relación* used a patriarchal lens to record and reimagine male supremacy in Pre-Hispanic Tarascan society. They attempted to convey that Tarascan households were male-headed even though women helped to supervise others in the home and participated as decision-makers in marriages. The text also asserted that fathers and husbands exerted power over women by punishing sexual transgressions such as premarital sex and adultery with disownment and death. However, the narrative concerning Tariacuri's unfaithful wife shows how even though she was known for her sexual infidelity to the Tarascan ruler, she was never reprimanded with death threats even after sleeping with other men. In the words of Tariacuri, this woman indeed proved to be a "valiant man" not only because she

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<sup>385</sup> Patricia Simons, *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 129-142.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, 158-163.



provoked him to kill her fellow villagers but also because she undermined his authority. As the following section demonstrates, however, women were not mere victims of male control and violence. They were also influential figures even after the Spanish conquest.

#### **FEMALE POWER AND AUTHORITY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

The depiction of patriarchal Tarascan society is not only contradicted in the *Relación* but also other sixteenth-century texts such as the *relaciones geográficas* and legal documents on powerful and influential Indigenous women in Michoacán. Some of these were observations made by Spaniards during the conquest of central-western Mexico. Legal texts provide insight into noblewomen who advocated for the retention of privileges the Spaniards gave to their sons as descendants of the Tarascan elite. Court documents also reveal how female merchants also continued to hold social and economic influence in their communities.

#### **Masculinized Women in Early Colonial Michoacán**

Narratives of Indigenous female masculinities in the colonial period were not always meant for relating stories of exceptional women. Spaniards sometimes cited evidence of powerful women and goddesses to complain that Native peoples in Michoacán and the greater central-western Mexican region lacked patriarchal authorities and lacked civility. In other words, the Spaniards sometimes utilized powerful and masculine female figures to suggest that Indigenous peoples lacked cultural sophistication. The deployment of Indigenous female masculinities in the sixteenth century was, then, contingent on which group of actors cited them and each of these served different purposes.

Accounts of masculine women sometimes served as rhetorical tools to justify the Spaniards' efforts to conquer the greater Western Mexico region, which included Michoacán. One example is a rare report of a male dressed in women's clothing who played an active

fighting role in the battlefield in the territories that were previously under the jurisdiction of the Tarascan state. In a letter Nuño de Guzmán wrote to the Spanish Audiencia on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1530, he described his campaign to conquer western Mexico and recorded his encounter with a male performing as a woman in battle. This combatant took part in the resistance to the Spanish invasion when Guzmán's expedition reached Cuitzeo, located in the central-eastern region of the contemporary Mexican state of Jalisco along Lake Chapala, which was a former Tarascan border territory.<sup>388</sup> The fierce battles at Cuitzeo between the Spanish, their Indigenous allies, and these so-called "Chichimecas" resulted in a victory for the Spaniards and ended with the capture of the fighter whose skills impressed them because he or she was the last warrior standing. However, whatever admiration the Spanish soldiers and Guzmán may have felt for this warrior was quickly overshadowed by disgust because they deduced that this was simply a man wearing women's clothing.<sup>389</sup> Interestingly, this warrior's story is unique because it is the only colonial Mesoamerican account describing a "male" warrior that was raised as a woman and engaged in fighting while wearing women's clothing.<sup>390</sup> He states that during an interrogation, he asked the fighter why "he" wore a woman's habit and "confessed" that "he" was brought up as a woman since he was a child, and that was how she made her living. Despite this knowledge, Guzmán tried her as a sodomite male who wore feminine clothing and ordered her execution by burning her alive.

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<sup>388</sup> Altman, *The War for Mexico's West*, 36-37; Baus de Czitrom, *Tecuexes y Cocas*, 64-66.

<sup>389</sup> Guzmán, "Carta á su magestad," 367-368.

<sup>390</sup> Richard C. Trexler, "Gender Subordination and Political Hierarchy in Pre-Hispanic America" in *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America*, edited by Pete Sigal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) 76.

The lexicon employed in Guzmán's letter provides insight into how he and his fellow Spaniards contextualized this Coca warrior according to Iberian understandings of masculinity, sexuality, and sin. While the letter suggests this person was recognized as a woman by her Indigenous compatriots, Guzmán describes her as a man disguised as a woman. He also equated her feminine dress with engagement in sexual acts with other men; This is evident because the conquistador ordered her to be burned, which was the recommended method for executing men found guilty of engaging in homosexual sodomy in the Iberian world as early as 1497.<sup>391</sup> Contemporary Christian writers detested the engagement of same-sex sexual acts as unspeakable evils, referring to them as the *pecado nefando* ("the nefarious sin"), which they believed could lead to social ruin.<sup>392</sup> Men and women convicted of the crime of homosexual sodomy could face death in this ritual manner through burning, as this punishment was a reference to the Biblical tale of the fiery destruction of Sodom in Genesis.<sup>393</sup> As Pete Sigal explains, this rhetoric also permeated in Spanish colonial discourses that depicted sodomy as contamination that spread quickly in less civilized societies and, therefore, only civilized cultures eradicated sodomitical

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<sup>391</sup> Federico Garza Carvajal, *Butterflies Will Burn: Prosecuting Sodomites in Early Modern Spain and Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 42. It should be noted, that in early modern Spain and colonial Latin America, the notion of sodomy was not synonymous with homosexual acts. For that matter, any sexual acts that did not lead to procreation such as masturbation, bestiality, and anal sex were considered unnatural and sins against nature. See Zeb Tortorici, "Introduction: Unnatural Bodies, Desires, and Devotions," in *Sexuality and the Unnatural in Colonial Latin America*, edited by Tortorici (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 6-7.

<sup>392</sup> Sarah Salih, "Sexual Identities: A Medieval Perspective" in *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe* edited by Tom Betteridge (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 116-117.

<sup>393</sup> N.S. Davidson, "Sodomy in Early Modern Venice," in *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Betteridge, 67-68.

practices.<sup>394</sup> In this manner, Iberians equated heterosexuality as a marker of civilization while they associated sodomy with savagery. Yet, Tortorici also notes that despite the supposed criminalization of sodomy in early colonial Mexico that punishments of individuals who engaged in homosexual acts were also inconsistent.<sup>395</sup> Nevertheless, Guzmán's intolerance towards this woman warrior was, then, reflective of attitudes stemming from Iberian beliefs that associated men dressed in women's clothing with sodomy. In the case of men performing as women, the Spaniards may interpret these masculine women as sexual deviants.

When Indigenous women performed impressive feats of labor and strength, on the other hand, Spanish observers offered a variety of reflections. In some cases, this rhetoric sought to depict Tarascan men as lazy and weak. In the *relación geográfica* for Chilchota, the corregidor Billela uses the claim that the Tarascan women were hardier and more laborious in comparison to their male counterparts.<sup>396</sup> However, Spanish observers did not always make such disparaging comments about the laboriousness and strength of Tarascan women. In the geographic report for Asuchitlan, the corregidor Diego Garces expresses his admiration in female merchants that swam regularly across a large river that separated their towns. He reported that they carried substantial burdens with them as well as their children as they traveled to sell their goods in the market place. He marveled that they were able to "pass even things that were of great weight and volume" (*pasan hasta cosas de peso y bolumen*) with such ease.<sup>397</sup> Notably, Garces records that

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<sup>394</sup> Pete Sigal, "Gendered Power, the Hybrid Self, and Homosexual Desire in Late Colonial Yucatan" in *Infamous Desire*, edited by Sigal, 122-123.

<sup>395</sup> Tortorici, "'Heran Todos Putos,'" 57-58.

<sup>396</sup> Corona Núñez, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 1, 22.

<sup>397</sup> Corona Núñez, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 2, 76-77.

the merchandise they carried were implements used for fighting and warfare, such as shields and slings. In both of these examples, the Spanish observers perceived that their Tarascan women could demonstrate physical strength, especially through their work and labors.

### **Persisting Accounts of Powerful Elite Women**

Tarascan women continued to demonstrate their strength in political affairs in the sixteenth century as advocates who invoked their status and ties to their elite forefathers to preserve and expand their wealth and privileges. These legal battles responded to the various ways that Indigenous elites began to lose privileges under the Spanish crown. Baracs observes that the Indigenous elite of Michoacán increasingly lost power after the death of the governor Don Antonio Huitziméngari on October 9, 1562. Huitziméngari was one of the few direct male descendants of the Cazonci Tzintzicha Tangáxoan. After the governor passed, the Spanish crown increasingly began to restrict the wealth and influence of the nobility through a series of visitations in which Spanish officials closely monitored tribute lists and *cajas de comunidad*. Moreover, tribute, which was initially counted based on approximated population size, was now based on specific numbers, causing demands for payment to be more excessive than they previously were.<sup>398</sup> The demands of repartimiento labor were also based on exact population sizes, meaning that the forced labor system also was just as demanding as tribute demands.

Like their male counterparts, some Tarascan noblewomen also found themselves forced or coerced into working for the Spaniards in mines, fields, haciendas, as well as their homes and demanded to be excluded from the repartimiento on the basis that they were people of higher status. Isabel Diaz, who lived in Tancítaro, invoked her ties to elite relatives to request that she

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<sup>398</sup> Martínez Baracs, *Convivencia y utopía*, 258-259.

be relieved from labor drafts. A 1582 ordenanza notes her status as a single woman and as the daughter of Indigenous principals. The decree states that she felt she should not be obligated to perform such labor because it was work that should only be done by men and “people that were of little fortunate and quality” (*personas de poca suerte y calidad*). For that matter, the ordenanza states, she felt entitled to this exemption for the mere fact that she was noblewoman: “She asked to be reserved from these and other personal services because she was a principal she was exempt” (*pidiendo la mandase haber por reservada de ellos y los demás servicios personales de que por ser principal es exenta*). Her petition was granted based on her elite status, exempting her from engaging in labor that the noblewoman felt should have been reserved for commoners.<sup>399</sup> On July 1591, Doña Beatriz de Castilleja, successfully invoked her ties as a descendant of the lords of Michoacán to request that her family in Pátzcuaro receive a governor's salary of one hundred pesos and seventy-five fanegas worth of corn. Another ordenanza passed earlier that year cited that Castilleja also owned land, which she planned to use to raise five hundred mares.<sup>400</sup>

Interestingly, there was also a case where a male elite claimed lineage to a Tarascan noblewoman to reap the benefits of his noble status. A September 1591 case describes a complaint by Antonio Ximénez Acatli, who protested that other Tarascan nobles mistreated his family by refusing to acknowledge their status as nobles. The decree cites his petition in which he complains that other Tarascan noblemen used his children and nephews as servants due to the malice and contempt that they held against him and treating them as if they were *maceguales*

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<sup>399</sup> Paredes Martínez, “Y Por mi visto,” 183.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 246-247.

(commoners). He asserted that his aunt was Doña Ana Ocelo, who was the mother of Constantino Bravo Huitziméngari and that his family should, therefore, reap privileges as nobles by being treated as such. However, the viceroy in this ordenanza did not immediately grant him this privilege but, instead, ordered an investigation to verify whether he was indeed a noble.<sup>401</sup>

The tensions related in Acatli's case provides another case in point where female authority figures were able to play roles in subverting the power of other men who threatened their family's political influence. A three-decades-long rivalry emerged after the death of the governor of Michoacán, Don Antonio Huitziméngari in 1562. His death led to the emergence of a political faction that supported his illegitimate son Constantino in his claim to governorship instead of his father's legitimate son don Pablo Caltzontzin who was still a child. There was also a faction that supported Caltzontzin; notably, don Antonio's legitimate wife Doña Maria was one of the primary protagonists who supported her son's claim to the governorship.<sup>402</sup> While Acatli's dispute and the rivalry between the Constantino and don Pablo's political factions were only three decades apart, they demonstrated how noblemen also depended on ties to noblewomen like Doña Ocelo and Doña María in efforts to secure their power. Others, like these female principals, actively invoked her authority as an elite woman to advocate for her son's position in the Indigenous government.

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<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 369. The outcome of this case was likely because Constantino was an illegitimate child of don Antonio Huitziméngari, which called his elite status to question because his mother Doña Ocelo was not the deceased governor's legitimate wife.

<sup>402</sup> Martínez Baracs, *Convivencia y utopía*, 261-262.

## **Pulqueras: The Influence of Indigenous Female Merchants in Early Colonial Michoacán**

Similar to the Aztec women in McCafferty and McCafferty's article, Tarascan women were recognized for possessing influence in the marketplace as merchants. Yet, their economic power could make them susceptible to legal disputes that put them into conflict with other men. In the middle of the sixteenth century, there is evidence that Indigenous women in Michoacán also occupied positions of social and economic influence as vendors. In Pátzcuaro, one of the former capitals of the Tarascan state, attempts to crack down on the illicit sales of alcohol revealed many cases where Indigenous female merchants were targeted. These women were charged with violating the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza's order in 1557, in which he sought to crack down on excessive drunkenness in the province of Michoacán, especially among Indigenous caciques, alcaldes, or alguaciles who set poor examples. These orders were read in public marketplaces in their Native language.<sup>403</sup> In February 1578, this crackdown on vice was also replicated by officials living in the pueblos of Guayangareo-Valladolid, Puruándiro, Guecaro, and Santiago in Michoacán who ordered the punishment drunkards and amancebados.<sup>404</sup> As the following cases demonstrate, some of these Tarascan principals in Pátzcuaro responded to the decree by turning in various commoners who violated the law from 1570-88. In the historic archive of the city of Pátzcuaro, five of four legal documents concerning the sale of *pulque*<sup>405</sup> related to Indigenous women

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<sup>403</sup> Archivo Histórico Municipal de Morelia (AHMM), Fondo Colonial (Siglo XVI-XVII), Ramo: Gobierno I, Caja 1, Expediente 2C, 1557. According to the document, perpetrators were supposed to be punished with thirty days of service in the monasteries. A second offense called for sixty days of service in the monastery. The third offense should have resulted in one hundred lashes and, if they were Indigenous principals, they would also have their titles stripped.

<sup>404</sup> Caja 3bis, Expediente 54, febrero de 1578, AHCP.

<sup>405</sup> Pulque is an alcoholic drink derived from the liquid of the maguey plant produced in Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica that was largely consumed in the high plateau regions of Mexico. According to Rodolfo Ramírez Rodríguez, the term *pulque* likely was a Castilian corruption of the Nahuatl term *poliqui octli*, meaning



punished for selling the foamy, alcoholic beverage. The cases related to these *pulqueras*, reveals how Indigenous female merchants in Michoacán, like their Nahuatl counterparts, also used their trade to make a living and attracted a regular flow of clients.

The earliest case concerning the prohibition of pulque in Pátzcuaro dates to 1570 and concerns two women. The first was a mestiza named Isabel Gutiérrez who was denounced for selling the drink publicly at her home as well as an unnamed Black female slave who sold the drink in her master's home. What was perhaps worst offensive, the notary records, was that these women committed the offense on a Sunday, which was when Catholic mass was heard. One witness, Diego González, confessed to visiting Gutiérrez's residence, where he got drunk with his friend Juan. Another witness named Tomás Tescate attested that many other people frequented her establishment. Both men also admitted to visiting the home of Pedro Pantoja, where a black female slave served pulque from a large container that was in Pantoja's kitchen.

This case reveals that the sale of pulque likely provided these women with social and economic leverage despite their marginal positions in society. Gutiérrez was a widow, which implied that selling pulque helped her to acquire funds to support herself. The unnamed Black slave belonging to Pantoja likely used her earnings for her own needs and perhaps paid a portion to her owner. Both women also had a stable flow of patrons who frequented both establishments despite the prohibitions imposed on alcohol. Neither of these men bothered to report the women, except for Diego González and Tomás Tescate, who were summoned by the *alcalde mayor* Diego López de Miranda. As for Pantoja, he surely must have noticed the men who regularly

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“decomposed drink.” See Rodolfo Ramírez Rodríguez, “El Maguey y el Pulque: Memoria y Tradición convertidas en Historia, 1884-1993” (Tesis para obtener el grado de Licenciado en Historia, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 2004), 3-4.

came to his home to purchase the pulque served from his kitchen. No other details can be found in the case, as the surviving document is incomplete.<sup>406</sup> Both women likely faced the same fate as pulqueras in the Pátzcuaro who were discovered making the drink: they were fined and whipped in public.

Indigenous female merchants who sold pulque in public spaces also contested power with Native principales who were not reluctant to turn them in to royal authorities. The alguacil of Pátzcuaro, Diego Garcia de Hoyos, filed two out of the five pulque cases found in the Pátzcuaro archives in 1575. Garcia de Hoyos surely was aware that his attack on local taverns made him unpopular. In both documents, he emphasized that his denunciations were not made out of malice, he simply wanted to see that justice was served. For that matter, he urged for the punishment of the perpetrators according to the law, which meant a one peso fine and fifty lashes in public.<sup>407</sup>

The confessions of the women tried in these cases were related through an interpreter who provided insights into their lives as women simply trying to make a supplemental income. Magdalena Hiquipo described herself as a macegual (commoner) and a silk spinner. She confessed to the crime but stated that she only sold pulque out of necessity (*por tener necesidad*), which implied that this helped to supplement her income. While she did not know her age, the notary reports that she appeared to be thirty years old. The second case describing Ana Oche does not provide such details. She also confessed to the alguacil's accusations but, in contrast to Hiquipo, Oche was over fifty years old. While the women tried in both cases were not

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<sup>406</sup> Caja 131, Expediente 4, 6 de junio de 1570, AHCP.

<sup>407</sup> Caja 3, Exp. 32, 14 de marzo de 1575, AHCP; Caja 3, Exp. 36, 14 de mayo de 1575, AHCP.

adolescents but mature adults, this did not spare them from a lighter sentence; Both women received punishment with a fine and fifty lashes.<sup>408</sup> If these sentences were carried out, it surely must have contributed to the alguacil's unpopularity which is evident in the fact that he did not accuse any more women of this crime in future cases.

Indigenous women who practiced the illicit trade in the safety of their homes also caught the attention of Tarascan officials. On March 9, 1588, the alguacil Juan de Pozas denounced one male and three females for selling the foamy alcoholic concoction in Pátzcuaro. This case shows that some of the perpetrators may not have been aware that selling or making the drink was illegal; Alternatively, it shows that they may have claimed not to know of its illegality in an attempt to defend themselves. Catalina Cujana<sup>409</sup> said that she was not aware of the prohibition to sell pulque but, regardless, declared she did not sell it but made it for her own personal use. Similarly, Mateo Vitzaqua also stated he only made "a little bit" (*un poco*) of the drink for himself and denied selling the drink in public since he was aware that the drink was illegal. Madalena Yurisquntzintzu claimed that the pulque in her possession was given to her by her sister so that she could drink it whenever she wanted to take a rest (*siesta*). Out of the four accused, only Catalina Ynqua admitted to selling the drink publicly. Similar to the women in the 1575 cases, Ynqua and Cujana were both mature women over the age of thirty. The three women, in this case, may have sold pulque to help their families make a living as neither of them declared having an occupation. Ynqua and Cujana also disclosed that they were married, which

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<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

<sup>409</sup> Paleographic note: Her last name is later spelled as *Cuxa* (Pronounced "Cuja") in the same document. It is likely that Cuxa was an abbreviated spelling of her name.

implied that their male partners provided the primary mode of income for their home. All four of the accused in this case also received punishment with a fine and fifty lashes.<sup>410</sup>

These sixteenth-century accounts of influential women in the Michoacán are by no means exhaustive but provide an entry point for observing various moments where women also held qualities typically attributed to Tarascan men such as strength, boisterousness, governing authority, and political influence. Their social influence also contests the notion that Tarascan society was purely patriarchal in both the Pre-Hispanic and early colonial period. Narratives of masculinized women in both of these periods demonstrated that they were a force to be reckoned with; The female guardians of Tzintzicha Tangáxoan's treasures, as well as the warrior dressed in women's clothing in the northwestern Tarascan border region, openly clashed with Spanish men through brute force. In political matters, elite women used their status to petition the viceroy and other colonial authorities to demand exemptions from the repartimiento and to challenge attempts to strip them of their wealth. In the marketplace, nonelite merchant women were frequented by various men who frequented their establishments and provided them with a stable income, even in the illicit pulque trade.

## CONCLUSION

The realities of female power in Michoacán before and after the Spanish conquest problematizes the notion that Tarascan society held pre-existing "patriarchal" customs of male dominance. Narratives of powerful and masculinized females relate that women also participated

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<sup>410</sup> Caja 4, Exp. 41, 9 de marzo de 1588, AHCP. Cujana reported that her husband was Juan Tanga. Ynqua reports that she was married but, due to the ambiguity in the notary's handwriting, it was unclear if she declared that her husband worked as a *cajaseero*, or cashier, or if his name was Capaseero or Capaseco. In the interrogation, the notary records that Mateo Vitzaqua appeared to be in his twenties and fails to mention Madalena Yurisquntzintu's age.

in political diplomacy, warfare, and made important decisions in their household, although the editor and informants of the *Relación* attempted to portray that these were roles that were typically reserved for men. Masculine female authorities including women who took on roles of lords, military advisors, warriors, spies, assassins, possessed spiritual mediums, supernatural entities, and priestesses relate that women did not play inactive roles in the pre-Hispanic histories of the Tarascan state. Many of these women such as Taríacuri's first wife and the female lord in Tzacapu were portrayed as villainous, mainly because they challenged the authority of Uacúsecha men. On the other hand, others like the assassin from Pátzcuaro and Taríacuri's aunts, are venerated when they served the interests of Tarascan noblemen by killing enemy targets and providing military intelligence. This pattern likely reflects biases of the male editor and male Indigenous informants who informed these texts since they also may have perceived female authority figures as threats to their power.

The *Relación* communicated the imagined past of a so-called "patriarchal" Tarascan society where men exercised control over women in matters of marriage and sexuality. They allegedly exercised paternalistic power through acts of violence that targeted adulteress women. Yet, the women in these accounts were not merely victims of male control. Their voice was also considered in the household and they held the power to leave abusive marriages. While the *Relación* claimed that Tarascan men were highly weary of female adulterers, unmarried couples, and pre-marital sex, these claims hardly seemed to mirror realities on the ground as Spanish observers reported that these men were engaged in polygamous practices and were tried as amancebados.

A final contribution in this chapter was to theorize how colonial Indigenous female masculinities existed within the spectrum of Tarascan hypermasculinities because of the nature

in which these manifestations of power challenged other male authority figures. These women were also depicted as warriors, leaders, and spiritual mediums. In terms of hegemonic power struggles, accounts of these manly Tarascan women highlighted tensions and power struggles with Spanish and Indigenous men. Spaniards who wrote the *relaciones geográficas* described the presence of strong, manly women to contribute to stereotypes that Tarascan men were sluggish because their women were more laborious. Conquistadors like Nuño de Guzmán used accounts of men performing as women to justify their conquest by portraying them as uncivilized for engaging in practices he considered sodomitical. The *Relación* chastised the presence of female authority figures, likely because this insinuated that women could also compete with Tarascan principales for political posts as noblewomen were indeed recognized as principales in early colonial Michoacán such as the female relatives of the Cazonci. In many ways, these women all appeared to have encompassed the traits of the so-called “valiant man” which is often mentioned throughout the *Relación*. The valiant man, as the next chapter relates, was a characteristic primarily ascribed to the warrior classes because they were boisterous, did not display fear, and demonstrated a willingness to face their enemies without retreating. Many of these women proved that they were not only able to engage in physical confrontations but also in conflicts that were political and social.

#### Chapter 4: Warrior Masculinities in the Tarascan Borderlands

Tarascan soldiers who were incorporated into Spanish armies in 1530 during Nuño de Guzmán's campaign to conquer Nueva Galicia were viewed with immense suspicion. Although they were referred to as *indios amigos* ("friendly Indians"), they were treated more like enemies during this campaign due to the suspicion that the Tarascans would betray him.<sup>411</sup> Before he continued, Guzmán imprisoned of the Cazonci, Tzintzicha Tangáxoan, when the expedition reached Tzintzuntzan in 1530.<sup>412</sup> The *Proceso* documents relating the trial and execution of the Cazonci shows that among the various charges leveled against him was his conspiracy to ambush Guzmán's forces once they reached Cuinao.<sup>413</sup> To ensure that they would not betray him, Guzmán ordered that the Tarascans auxiliaries participate in the campaign while they were in chains, treating the Tarascan forces like prisoners instead of allies. A report from Garcia de Pilar describes that when Guzman's campaign reached Aguacatlan, he witnessed, "up to one thousand Indians from the province of Michoacán, and many principales from there in chains..."<sup>414</sup>

These documents relate that the Spaniards were suspicious of their Indigenous allies who could potentially revolt against them during the turbulent periods of sixteenth-century warfare. It is no surprise these colonial texts emphasized that the Tarascan warriors seemed inclined towards violence considering that the Spaniards suspected the warriors of violently turning against them during the Cuinao affair. Tarascan nobles like Don Pedro Cuiniarángari, who

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<sup>411</sup> Altman, *The War for Mexico's West*, 28.

<sup>412</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 215-216.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, 228-229.

<sup>414</sup> Garcia de Pilar quoted in Altman, *The War for Mexico's West*, 48-9.

served as governor of Michoacán under Spanish rule, helped to produce colonial documents relating to Pre-Hispanic Tarascan customs such as the *Relación* and he was surely conscious of Spanish perceptions that he his people were boisterous and potentially untrustworthy, especially due to his collusion in the failed Cuinao assault. Moreover, the Spaniards were familiar of Tarascan competencies in warfare as they fought alongside them to quell Native uprisings such as the Mixtón War and the Chichimeca Wars that occurred in the territories north of Michoacán. As they fought with enemy “Chichimeca” groups, the Spaniards also fought with Tarascans who both claimed Chichimec lineage and also had allied Chichimeca forces at their disposal who inhabited the Uacúsechas’ former borderland territories such as Acámbaro and Taximaroa. In the battles that took place in the “Gran Chichimeca” regions, the Spaniards indeed provided various accounts in which they marveled over the Chichimecas’ mastery of the bow and arrow.<sup>415</sup> These accounts mirror the ways in which the Tarascans also described these groups as distinguished archers since Pre-Hispanic times in the *Relación* and *relaciones geográficas*.

The narratives related to Pre-Hispanic warriorhood in Tarascan state also replicate many of the stereotypes the Spaniards had about the Tarascans as unruly and boisterous Chichimecas. However, instead of simply emphasizing their inclination towards violence, the *Relación* and *relaciones geográficas* also underscore how these masculinities were articulated through a warrior cult centered on spiritual values, a mastery of the bow arrow, and a strict code of conduct that emphasized loyalty and a willingness to fight to the death. When examining the narratives pertaining to the Tarascans and their Otomí and Chichimeca counterparts who fought in the

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<sup>415</sup> Alberto Puig Carrasco, "La frontera chichimeca a través del mapa de la relación geográfica de San Miguel y San Felipe de los Chichimecas," *Memoria del 56º Congreso Internacional de Americanistas 2018* (Salamanca: Historia y Patrimonio Cultural, 2018): 664.



eastern frontier facing Mexico-Tenochtitlan, their forces also performed their valor in warfare through religious devotion, the taking of enemy captives, displaying obedience, demonstrating a mastery of the bow and arrow, and invoking their ties to the Uacúsecha dynasty. Through overstating these positive attributes in their warrior classes, the Tarascan noblemen who informed these accounts also responded to the humiliation and disempowerment they faced when their forces served under Guzmán in his campaign to take Nueva Galicia. Tarascan warrior hypermasculinities can, then, be described as what Messerschmidt describes as *protest masculinities*, which are “compensatory hypermasculinities that are formed in reaction to social positions lacking economic and political power.”<sup>416</sup> In other words, these Indigenous informants, who were often members of the elite with declining political influence, responded to their disempowerment by exalting the valor and memory of their Pre-Hispanic warrior classes. Altman notes that during this campaign, the Tarascan and Mexican auxiliary forces, which included nobles among their ranks, surely must have felt degraded as they were forced to engage in a multitude of labor-intensive tasks during the expedition which including building bridges, making rafts, moving artillery and carrying burdens.<sup>417</sup> The Tarascan informants who informed these early colonial texts sought to reclaim the dignity of their warrior classes who were humiliated and viewed with suspicion during the periods of turbulent warfare during the sixteenth century.

The discrepancies in Spanish and Indigenous perceptions of Tarascan warrior qualities, therefore, represented multiple agendas. For the Spaniards, these warrior qualities resonated with

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<sup>416</sup> Messerschmidt, *Hegemonic Masculinity*, 29.

<sup>417</sup> Altman, *The War for Mexico's West*, 31-32.

their views that Indigenous warriors in the Mexican center-west needed to be pacified because they were unruly people. For Indigenous informants, these representations served to counter the claim that their warrior classes were unsophisticated brutes who could not be trusted. In this chapter, I identify a multitude of Tarascan warrior masculinities, demonstrating that there was not a monolithic standard that described the Tarascan warrior cult. Here, I describe multiple standards of warrior masculinities that emerge in the narratives of the Pre-Hispanic Tarascan borderlands. The chapter shows how these masculinities each sought to portray distinct, idealized qualities amongst the Tarascan and their Otomí, Matlatzinca and Chichimeca forces.

I argue that the hypermasculine portrayal of these Indigenous fighters served to counteract Spanish assumptions that Tarascan warriors were unruly and untrustworthy like the other Indigenous groups the Spaniards fought in central western Mexico during the early colonial period. First, I provide historical context to the documents consulted in my analysis to point out how these depictions of Indigenous warriors were influenced by the turbulent periods of Indigenous warfare that took place north of Michoacán's frontier territories. Second, I outline how Indigenous informants counteracted the Spaniards' negative stereotypes of the Tarascan warrior classes by providing an elaborate description of their codes of conduct practiced by their warrior classes. The third and fourth section describes how their Tarascan counterparts, the Otomí and so-called Chichimecas, were also depicted by the Spaniards and the Mexica in derogatory lexicon describing them as unsophisticated, bellicose (*belicosos*), and land-dwelling Chichimecas (*tebles-chichimecas*, *teochichimecas*). I then describe how Native-informed sources challenged these insulting depictions of Matlatzinca and Chichimeca warriors who served the Tarascan state by showing how they also exemplified the qualities of loyalty, religious devotion,

and archery. Lastly, this chapter concludes by summarizing the attributes that contributed to the construction of these Tarascan warrior hypermasculinities.

### **HISTORIES OF WARRIORHOOD WRITTEN IN THE SHADOWS OF WARFARE**

The ethnographic accounts of Pre-Hispanic Tarascan warriors reflect the traumas, violence, and endemic of warfare that characterized sixteenth-century central-Western Mexico. Colonial texts such as the *Relación de Michoacán* (1539-1541) and *relaciones geográficas* (1579-1580) were written during periods of extreme violence in the central western Mexican region (present-day Aguascalientes, Colima, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, and Zacatecas) where Spanish forces conquered and confronted several Indigenous warriors who fought alongside them as well as those who conspired and revolted against them. Spanish and Indigenous warfare characterized early colonial central western Mexico as Nuño de Guzmán initiated his campaign to take Nueva Galicia in 1529, followed by the Mixtón War of 1541-1542, and the Chichimeca Wars that lasted from 1550 to the end of the sixteenth century.

As discussed in previous chapters in this dissertation, the *Relación de Michoacán* was written sometime from 1539-1541 and was informed from the accounts of Don Pedro Cuiniarángari and other anonymous Tarascan informants. During this time period, these men not only witnessed the conquest of their homeland but also the subjugation of other Indigenous groups that inhabited the greater Mexican central western region beyond Michoacán that also included present-day Jalisco, Colima, Nayarit, Zacatecas, and Guanajuato. As early as 1522, Tarascan forces under Don Pedro's brother, Tashauaco (Huitziltzi), assisted Cristóbal de Olid in the conquest of Colima. Olid's initial reason for going into Colima was to retrieve Juan Rodríguez de Villafuerte who Hernán Cortés ordered to be imprisoned for leading a failed unauthorized expedition to conquer Zacatula that led to the death of at least three Spaniards and

various Indigenous allies. In the aftermath of these events, the Spanish and their Indigenous allies who included the Tarascans claimed victory. Notably, the Spaniards turned a blind eye when their Native auxiliary forces brought their idols with them to the battlefield and sacrificed a number of captives taken after the engagement.<sup>418</sup> Don Pedro also testifies in the *Relación* that the conquest of Colima under Olid and his brother did not result in the death of Spaniards but did result in the ritual executions of enemies from Colima.<sup>419</sup> While the Tarascans proved their worth to the Spaniards led by Olid in this initial expedition, they lost confidence in Nuño de Guzmán who uncovered the Cazonci's plot to assault his armies in Cuinao as he began his conquest of Nueva Galicia in 1530. Nevertheless, Tarascan forces continued to be essential in later expeditions to quell rebellions and uprisings, especially during the Mixtón War of 1540-1542, which occurred at the same time that the *Relación* was prepared.

According to Alberto Puig Carrasco, the Mixtón War was "...a rebellion that overtook Nueva Galicia with a force not seen since the times of the conquest [of Tenochtitlan]" In the midst of the Mixtón Uprising, the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza established a line of fortifications along the Chichimeca frontier in 1541 in a region that was neither conquered by the Aztecs or Tarascans. The "Chichimecas" who led this uprising were comprised of the Caxcanes and Zacatecos.<sup>420</sup> Philip Weigand denotes that origins of the uprising can be traced to Guzmán's campaign to conquer Nueva Galicia a decade earlier. In 1530, the conquistador's men burned the village of Teúl, which was a gathering space for various Caxcan ethnic polities. One of their first

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<sup>418</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 65-67.

<sup>419</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 86.

<sup>420</sup> Puig Carrasco, "La frontera chichimeca," 658-659.

formal engagements occurred when the Caxcanes drove the Spaniards out of the village of Nochistlán, located in the Jalisco region.<sup>421</sup> When the Spaniards first settled Nochistlán—which was the first of many failed settlements known as Guadalajara—this was considered an affront to the Caxcanes because their territory was intruded.<sup>422</sup> The Mixtón War would be one of the first of many pan-Indigenous uprisings in central-Western Mexico. The call to warfare was spread by the Zacatecas nation to the Caxcanes and other Chichimec groups. Their message, known as the *tlatol* urged them to reclaim their territories from the Spaniards and to reject Christianity in favor of their traditional religious practices.<sup>423</sup>

Medrano Enriquez identifies two key sites during the Mixtón Uprising: the Cerro del Mixtón and the Peñol de Nochistlán. The first confrontation between the Spaniards and Caxcanes occurred on April 9, 1541 with forces led by Cristóbal de Oñate and Miguel de Ibarra. On Palm Sunday, April 10, 1541 an eclipse occurred and the Caxcanes used it to surprise the Spaniards and ambushed them, killing 13 Spaniards and 300 Indigenous peoples, forcing the Spanish to retreat. The Caxcanes then attacked Guadalajara on September 28 but were overcome by the viceroy's armies who pursued them to Nochistlán, Coima (Tototlán), and, finally, the Cerro Mixtón. The Caxcan forces took refuge on high cliffs, or mesas, known as *peñoles* which were used as fortresses and were difficult to access especially because they were surrounded by rough

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<sup>421</sup> Philip C. Weigand, "Territory and Resistance in West-Central Mexico, Part 2: The Rebelión de Nueva Galicia and Its Late Postclassic Prelude," in *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: The Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition*, eds. Andrew Roth-Seneff, Robert V. Kemper, and Julie Adkins (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015), 85.

<sup>422</sup> Medrano Enríquez, "Rough People in a Rough Situation," 60. The Spaniards' constantly moved the capital of Nueva Galicia, known as Guadalajara, to Tonalá in 1533, Tlacotán in 1535, and Valle Atemajac in 1542.

<sup>423</sup> José Francisco Román Gutiérrez, "Indigenous Space and Frontier in Sixteenth-Century Nueva Galicia," in *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty*, edited by Roth-Seneff, Kemper, and Adkins, 153-154.

terrain. The terrain was so dangerous, Caxcan defenders who refused to submit to the Spaniards committed mass suicide in the Peñol of Nochistlán by leaping from one of the cliffs that were 30 meters high. Mixtón was the final site of the battle in which Indigenous forces were defeated by the viceroy, leaving thousands dead and, according to fray Antonio Tello, over 300 that were captured.<sup>424</sup>

Less than a decade after the Mixtón War concluded, the Chichimeca Wars commenced in 1550, again in the Zacatecas region. At this point, the Tarascans' northern frontier territories became the Spanish Chichimeca frontier, which began west in the Lake Chapala Basin and extended east to the former Tarascan-Aztec borderlands of Acámbaro and Queretaro.<sup>425</sup> The Chichimeca "Wars" were not a full-scale war in a traditional sense but still resulted in a vast number of casualties, deaths, and kidnappings. The "*guerra chichimeca*" referred to the series of uprisings and assaults that occurred on the roads that were led by groups who previously submitted to the Spaniards and accepted Christian evangelization.<sup>426</sup> Violence and excesses were rampant and committed by the Spaniards, their Indigenous allies, as well as the Chichimecas. Maps in these geographic reports depict images of enemy Chichimecas hung around various roads. In some engagements, the Chichimecas scalped monks and wore their skins like helmets during military engagements.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Medrano Enríquez, "Rough People in a Rough Situation," 60-63.

<sup>425</sup> Philip W. Powell, *La guerra chichimeca (1550-1600)* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1977), 166.

<sup>426</sup> Puig Carrasco, "La frontera chichimeca," 664.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*, 664-666.

The *relaciones geográficas* consulted in this essay were completed from 1579-1580, three decades after the Chichimeca Wars already commenced. They were compiled by Spanish officials and sometimes religious authorities with the support of Indigenous men who included elders and principals. Puig Carrasco reminds scholars that part of the intended purpose that the Spaniards produced the *relaciones geográficas* was to attain knowledge and reconnaissance of the regions subject to their dominion.<sup>428</sup> Francisco Quijano Velasco notes that the region north of Nueva Galicia was not demarcated by the Spaniards until the advent of the Chichimeca Wars.<sup>429</sup> Such intelligence would help them to effectively prepare a strategy in case of a military confrontation. Román Gutiérrez observes that the Spaniards' commercial interests fueled their need to quell Indigenous uprisings in the region. The Chichimecas' military assaults prevented the Spaniards from exploiting silver deposits in Nueva Galicia.<sup>430</sup> In the midst of these conflicts, the Spaniards utilized allied Tarascan, Otomí, and Chichimeca allies to fight them. In 1561, they ordered these allies to settle the village of San Miguel, which served as a buffer zone and oversaw the enemy territory inhabited by the Guachichiles.<sup>431</sup>

Ortíz Macarena observes that the descendants of the Cazonci also directly participated and benefited from the campaigns to combat the Chichimecas. Don Antonio Huitziméngari's *relación de méritos* written sometime in 1553-1554 indicated that he participated in the Chichimeca War by sending Tarascan and Otomis forces who helped to found the villas along

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<sup>428</sup> Ibid., 660.

<sup>429</sup> Francisco Quijano Velasco, "«De estas partes y nuevos reinos»: la conformación de Nueva España y sus fronteras (1519-c.1550)," *Intus-Legere Historia* 13, no. 1 (2019), 105-106.

<sup>430</sup> Román Gutiérrez, "Indigenous Space and Frontier," 147.

<sup>431</sup> Puig Carrasco, "La frontera chichimeca," 664.

the frontier that enabled the Spaniards to access the mines in the Zacatecas and Guanajuato region.<sup>432</sup> He notes that he participated in three campaigns from 1551-1553 that led to the capture of 300 Chichimecas. Due to his acts on the frontier, Huitziméngari was financially compensated after presenting his *relación de méritos*. In 1557, Otomí generals from the Xilotepec and Queretaro regions also participated in the war and each were also awarded with special privileges for their service such as the ability to ride a horse and the right to bear arms.<sup>433</sup> Into the turn of the century, Indigenous men in Michoacán continue to receive these honors for fighting against the Chichimecas. In 1591, the Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza awarded Pedro Parexe from Zirosto with a license to dress in Spanish clothing, to carry a sword, and to mount a horse for serving as an Indigenous general in the Spanish war against the Chichimecas.<sup>434</sup> Indeed, Indigenous elites in Michoacán benefited from the spoils of the Chichimeca Wars by acquiring recognition for their military service from the Spaniards. They also sought to prove the worth of their military service in the narratives of their ancestors who defended their own frontiers before the coming of the Spaniards.

#### TARASCAN WARRIOR MASCULINITY

Spanish observers and chroniclers who discussed the conduct of Tarascan warriors in both the pre-Hispanic and the early colonial period describe a warrior cult that placed a value on combat, devil-worship, death, and destruction. In his prologue to the *Relación*, the friar-editor of the text complained that the Tarascans lacked moral virtues and that their society was mostly

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<sup>432</sup> Ortíz Macarena, “La nobleza indígena en el Michoacán colonial,” 39.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 156; Powell, *La guerra chichimeca*, 167.

<sup>434</sup> Paredes Martínez, “*Y Por mi visto*,” 266.



characterized by idolatries, death, and warfare.<sup>435</sup> In the geographic survey for Pátzcuaro, composed in April 1581 by the *alcalde mayor* Juan Martínez with two Franciscans and the Indigenous governor Don Juan Puruata, reported that in Pre-Hispanic times the Tarascan warriors engaged in warfare in order to “sacrifice the hearts of the Indians that they captured in wars, offering them and covering [their idols] in their blood)” (*sacrificar los corazones de los indios que prendían en las guerras ofreciéndose los [a sus idolos] y rociándolos con su sangre*).<sup>436</sup> Spaniards who were accompanied by Indigenous allies as they conquered the Nueva Galicia region in 1530 commented on the excesses Tarascans committed in warfare, which, for that matter overlooked the role the conquistadors played in propagating such violence. An anonymous account by one of the Spaniards who accompanied the expedition claimed that Guzmán attempted to stop his Indigenous *amigos* from setting fire to all the villages they overtook, but he failed because the auxiliaries simply could not resist the urge to cause such destruction, which caused many victims to be burned alive.<sup>437</sup> In these vignettes, the Spaniards paint a bleak picture of a Tarascan warrior society centered on violence, human sacrifice, the veneration of non-Christian idols, and the relentless pillaging of their enemies.

In contrast, Indigenous elites who informed the chapters in the *Relación* highlight other qualities displayed by their warrior classes that were not solely defined through committing acts of violence such as devotion to their deities, their adherence to a code of conduct that valued

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<sup>435</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 13; Craine, and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 6.

<sup>436</sup> JGI XXIV-14 Patzcuaro 1581, *Relaciones Geográficas of Mexico and Guatemala, 1577-1585*, NLBLAC.

<sup>437</sup> Manuel Carrera Stampa, ed., *Memoria de los servicios que había hecho Nuño de Guzmán, desde que fué nombrado gobernador de Pánuco en 1525* (México: José Porrúa e Hijos, 1955), 102-103.

obedience, and, lastly a mastery of the bow and arrow. On the one hand, Krippner-Martínez points out, many of these qualities, such as religious piety, reflected Christian values that the Franciscan editor of the text emphasized when writing about the Tarascans.<sup>438</sup> On the other hand, Afanador-Pujol comments, the *Relación* was also used by Indigenous informants to project themselves as morally equal to the Spaniards as well as to highlight their strength and bravery.<sup>439</sup> Like their Spanish counterparts, the Tarascan nobles sought to portray that their fighters immersed in a warrior cult that placed a value on religious devotion and a code of conduct that emphasized obedience, fighting without retreat, and sexual abstinence. Distinctly, however, the mastery and appropriation of the bow and arrow was also invoked as an implement of warfare that represented bellicosity, political authority, and spiritual power. Tarascan warrior hypermasculinities, despite their multifaceted depictions, were articulated in these colonial texts as being rooted in religious devotion, numerous codes of conduct, acquisition of honorable insignias, and a mastery of the bow and arrow.

### **Religious Devotion**

The chapters in the *Relación* describing prewar ceremonies attended by warriors and the Cazonci's subordinates provide a window into the spiritual characteristics that shaped the ideal Tarascan warriors, who are referred to in the text as *valientes hombres*. In the Tarascan dictionary composed by Fray Maturino Gilberti, they were known as *purecuti*, meaning fighter

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<sup>438</sup> Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, 59-63.

<sup>439</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 114-117.

as well as soldier (*peleador, soldado*) and *qhuacarati*, or warrior (*guerrero*).<sup>440</sup> Before initiating a battle, according to the friar-editor of the *Relación*, all the warriors and caciques subjected to the Tarascan state gathered in the city of Tzintzuntzan during the religious festivals known as Hanzuánsquaro and Hiquándiro. There, they listened to speeches from the Cazonci, his captain general, and the caciques who advised how they should perform in the frontlines.<sup>441</sup> These accounts describing the gathering of soldiers provides insight into how a Tarascan fighter's actions, regalia, weapons, and insignias were tied to religious devotion to the deity of warfare.

According to the *Relación*, during the feast of Hiquándiro Tarascan warriors were told that it was their obligation to collect firewood for the temples where they prayed for the gods Curicáueri as well as the female deity Xarátanga who assisted them in battle.<sup>442</sup> Fire and firewood emerge numerous times throughout the text distinctly as metaphors for maleness. As Martínez and Valdez observe, men who fought to the death and died in battle were cremated, again emphasizing associations of fire with men in the warrior classes.<sup>443</sup> In the *Relación* it is stated that Tarascan men in positions of authority, like the warrior classes, were expected to collect wood for the temples. When a woman named Quenomen became lord of Tzacapu after her husband passed, this led Tariacuri to disapprove of her authority on the basis that he did not believe women should collect firewood and exclaimed, "Where is it a custom where old women

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<sup>440</sup> Fray Maturino Gilberti, *Vocabulario en lengua de Mechuacan*, paleographic transcriptions by Augustín Jacinto Zavala, Clotilde Martínez, and J. Benedict Warren (Zamora, Michoacán: El Colegio de Michoacán, Fideicomiso Teixidor, 1997), 137.

<sup>441</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 140-147; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 20.

<sup>442</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 144.

<sup>443</sup> Roberto Martínez and Iván Valdez, "Guerra, conquista y técnicas de combate entre los antiguos tarascos," *Tzintzun: Revista de Estudios Históricos* 49 (2009), 38.

do not bring firewood for the temples, which is the job of men?" (*¿Dónde se usa que las viejas ni las mujeres hagan traer leña para los cues, que es oficio de los varones?*)<sup>444</sup> According to Cynthia Stone, firewood in the text is “the symbol of masculinity par excellence” as Uacúsecha cosmologies placed men as representatives of the solar deity Curicáueri who provided fire and warmth while the female deity Xarátanga was the earth mother who swept away impurities. The men in the *Relación* who failed in attending to this spiritual obligation were usually traitors, men who deserted the armies in times of war, engaged in black magic, committed adultery, engaged in drunkenness, or committed other crimes. The men who are described as good husbands in the text receive this distinction because they symbolized the fulfillment of the cosmic order when they fulfilled their complementary roles as fire keepers. By failing to contribute to this obligation, disrupted the cosmic order for failing to fulfill their roles as fire keepers.<sup>445</sup> Warriors who did not fulfill their obligation in collecting firewood for the temples were emasculated in the *Relación* as societal misfits because they did not fulfill their spiritual duties.

The editor and informants of the *Relación* also describe how Tarascan warfare was ritualized and connected to providing sustenance for the famished gods. In the temples, combatants were expected to pray with the priests in the temples who invoked the gods to inflict illnesses on their enemies. As they prepared to attack a village, spies snuck into the enemy territory and placed curses on the land by distributing balls of incense and insignias of warfare such as eagle feathers and bloodied arrows. After the spies and priests completed their hex upon

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<sup>444</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 91; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 186-187.

<sup>445</sup> Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 118-119.

their adversaries, Tarascan warriors assaulted them, taking women, children, and elders as captives. The warriors, further, reinforced their relationship with these spiritual mediums by taking these captives to the priests. Some of these prisoners were enslaved while others were executed. According to the text, those who were ritually executed were regarded as food for the gods and the deities rewarded them by protecting the Tarascan fighters in future battles.<sup>446</sup> The association between the killing of enemies and sustenance for the gods is also observed when a female assassin sent by Tariácuri to kill a lord in Curinguaro delivered the severed head of her enemy to an altar in the village of Piruen. After committing this act, Tariácuri praises the woman and declares, "You have given food to the gods."<sup>447</sup> In these descriptions, the informants of the *Relación* depict a sophisticated Tarascan warrior cult that stood in contrast to the Spaniards' portrayals of their conduct during the Nueva Galicia campaign in which it was said that they indiscriminately went about burning villages.<sup>448</sup> Instead, Tarascan warriorhood is shown as a ritualistic endeavor that involved prayers, setting curses, as well as wounding and killing captives.

Captives taken in attacks conducted by the Uacúsecha could either be enslaved or executed in honor of their deities, yet, the images and text in the *Relación* prioritize depictions of captives killed for ritualistic purposes. They show dead bodies laid out with their bodies stretched out, their hearts extracted, and blood splattered across the temples.<sup>449</sup> However, one

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<sup>446</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 140-147; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 20-23.

<sup>447</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 127.

<sup>448</sup> Carrera Stampa, *Memoria de...Nuño de Guzmán*, 102-103.

<sup>449</sup> Martínez and Valdez, "Guerra, conquista y técnicas de combate," 33-34.

should view such accounts with suspicion as they mirrored the Spaniards' often sensationalized claims about the Mexica who extracted the hearts of disputable number of victims and then offered them to their gods. For that matter, Pennock observes, European colonials used the rampant claims of "human sacrifice" in order to depict Amerindian peoples as uncivilized and barbaric.<sup>450</sup> Despite the claim that Tarascans sacrificed victims by using knives to extract their hearts, there is little archeological evidence to support that ritualized killings were carried out in this way although there is evidence that suggests knives were stuck into victims' heads and ribs.<sup>451</sup> For that matter, when a Tarascan warrior who took an enemy captive, it was described as one of the most valued feats that they could accomplish. Instead of killing enemies head on, their main objective was to wound them so that they would be easy to capture and take back to their temples for adoption or execution.

The taking of enemy captives not only bore religious significance in warfare and ritual execution but it also signified maturity, bravery, and an homage to the celestial deities. In Mesoamerican traditions, men who took enemy captives were considered accomplished warriors. Sandra Slater observes that Aztec men who accomplished this task were allowed access to particular hairstyles and dresses that distinguished them for committing this feat.<sup>452</sup> When Tarascan warriors captured enemy fighters, they also received titles of distinction. Amongst the Tarascan elite, when a son took his first prisoner in warfare, he received the title of

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<sup>450</sup> Caroline Dodds Pennock, "Mass Murder or Religious Homicide? Rethinking Human Sacrifice and Interpersonal Violence in Aztec Society," *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 37, no. 3 (141), 276-302.

<sup>451</sup> Martínez and Valdez, "Guerra, conquista y técnicas de combate," 26-27.

<sup>452</sup> Slater, "Nought but Women," 43.

*quangapahua*, meaning “the warrior of the morning.” Alvaro Ochoa S. and Gerardo Sanchez point out that this title bore religious and cosmological significance because it referenced Tarascan mythology that associated the planet Venus as a warrior who warded off the darkness of the night sky and allowed for the light of the morning to prevail. Venus was known as the *Hozcuaquangari*, or the “bright star, the morning star” as well as the “warrior star” because he waged a daily war against the darkness. Each night, Hozcuaquangari was said to have shot down the stars with his arrows, causing the darkness to flee and allowing daylight to emerge.<sup>453</sup> In taking enemy captives and defeating their enemies, the Tarascan warriors emulated the warrior star by warding off the darkness and allowing the light of Curicáueri to rise above the Uacúsecha domains.

## **Codes of Conduct**

### ***To Be A “Valiente Hombre”***

In the three previous chapters of this dissertation, sixteenth-century texts depicted Uacúsecha male elites and Tarascan women who engaged in acts of violence to demonstrate their authority, especially when they were related to warfare. This resonates with hypermasculinities scholarship which has studied hypermasculinity is often performed through acts of violence.<sup>454</sup> In these documents, warriors performed masculinity through acts of valiance, physical aggression, and displays of bodily strength. Men and women who acted as warriors or who displayed warrior-like qualities when they confronted their enemies with physical aggression

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<sup>453</sup> Álvaro Ochoa S. and Gerardo Sánchez, eds. *Relaciones y memorias de la provincia de Michoacán, 1579-1581* (Morelia, Michoacán: Universidad Michoacana Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1985) 220, fn. 5.

<sup>454</sup> Mosher and Sirkin, “Measuring a Macho Personality Constellation,” 150-163; Kimmel, *The Gendered Society*, 67, 108.

were described as valiant men (*valientes hombres*). Since documents describing these traits, such as the *Relación de Michoacán*, were edited by a Franciscan friar and informed by Tarascan noblemen, it is not clear if the cultural associations placed on the so-called brave men were Spanish, Indigenous, or a blending of both. The term *hombre valiente* was appropriated from the ideals of Spanish moralist discourses in New Spain which, Carvajal cites, placed central importance on male heroic qualities that included “gallantry, honor, veneration, and worship for his Prince.”<sup>455</sup> Fray Maturino Gilberti’s dictionary of the Tarascan language published in 1559 relates that the Tarascans also appear to have had a similar conceptualization of this concept known as the *qhuangari*, which he translates as “valiente hombre.”

The phrase *valiente hombre* is used throughout the *Relación* to describe those who performed acts of violence during warfare. In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I noted that the *Relación* described Tariacuri’s cousin Aramen as a valiant man when he wounded priest Naca who was conspiring an uprising against the Uacúsechas. His son Tangáxoan was also called a *valiente hombre* for his role in killing Tariacuri’s disobedient son Curátame as well as his defiant son-in-law Hiuacha. Chapter 2 That Tzintzicha referred to Don Pedro Cuiniarángari as a valiant man when he ordered him to kill the traitorous lord Timas. The *relación geográfica* for Pátzcuaro proclaimed that Tzintzicha was a man who was valiant in warfare. Chapter 3 describes women, like the assassin from Pátzcuaro, who were depicted as brave warriors when they contributed to the killing of enemy targets. Tariacuri even described his adulteress wife as a valiant man because her acts prompted the execution of warriors from her village in Curíngaro after they led a failed assault on the Uacúsecha. What each of the associations about the “valiant

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<sup>455</sup> Garza Carvajal, *Butterflies Will Burn*, 17.



man” have in common is their association with Tarascan warriors who displayed a killer instinct, a willingness to confront an enemy through physical violence, and engagement in acts of warfare. However, these aggressive qualities are only a starting point to understanding the multifaceted ways in which Tarascan warriors’ masculinities were constructed and articulated by Spaniards and Indigenous peoples during the sixteenth century.

### *Evading Enemy Capture*

On the other hand, to be captured was an act that brought about shame, reflecting one of the many codes of conduct in Tarascan warrior cult. Similarly, Slater describes that in the Mexica warrior cult a fighter who was captured was considered weak because he did not fight to the death. A warrior who was captured not only lost their valor in the battlefield but also in society and, therefore, became a disgraced man.<sup>456</sup> These ideals were also reflective amongst the Tarascans as can be seen case in a passage in the *Relación* concerning the capture of Tariácuri’s son Tamapucheca who was taken by enemies when he went to village of Itziparámuco. In his state of misery, Tamapucheca drank excessively until he fell asleep but, to his surprise, he awoke and found that he was returned to his father in Pátzcuaro. Tariácuri, however, did not welcome his son but, instead, was furious because he assumed his son was already dead and used as food for the gods. The return of a captured enemy, it is shown, was a taboo because the return of a captured warrior meant that the gods would be famished and unable to consume the dead captives. Subsequently, Tariácuri ordered the execution of his son along with the men who returned them to him. According to the friar-editor of the *Relación*, this was commonly practiced as Tarascan customs prevented people captured in war to come back home, otherwise they would

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<sup>456</sup> Slater, “Nought but Women,” 43.

be killed once they returned. The passage adds that this convention prevented prisoners from providing information to the enemy.<sup>457</sup>

### ***Women and Sexuality in the Battlefield***

Among other codes of formalities, the *Relación* depicts the ideal Tarascan soldier as one who practiced sexual moderation and abstinence from women during warfare. During war preparation ceremonies that took place during the feast of Hiquándiro, Tarascan soldiers were instructed to practice sexual restraint in when as they engaged in military obligations and preparations. In the chapter, “How they destroy or attack villages” (*Cómo destruían o combatían los pueblos*), an account the cacique from Xacona, a subjected Tecuexe territory located on the western Tarascan borderlands, scolds the soldiers for seeking out sexual encounters with women instead of praying in the temples while the war preparation festivities were taking place. The leader from Xacona describes these acts of dishonor in telling the men:

See to it that you do not become a laughing stock, for if you do not capture or kill the enemies, let it not be that you were ill-prepared because you were with the women in our villages, because of the sins you committed with them, and for not entering in prayer in the house of the priests, and not entering them voluntarily to do penance, for you thought it more important to join the women... do not turn your head back towards your women to whom you are married nor at your old parents; strengthen your hearts; let us die, for all death is the same, whether we die in the villages or here in battle. Where should you go? This is why you are men. Do not break faith with these words.

Mira que no os halláis como de burla, si no cautiváredes o matáredes los enemigos, no será sino por el olvido que tuvistes con las mujeres en vuestros pueblos, por los pecados que hicistes con ellas, y por no entrar a la oración en la casa de los papas, y no entráboles de voluntad para hacer penitencia, y teníades en mucho juntaron con las mujeres...No volváis la cabeza a vuestras mujeres con quien estáis casados, ni a vuestros padres viejos. Esforzaos vuestros corazones; muramos, que toda es una muerte, la que

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<sup>457</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 123-124; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 225-227.

habíamos de morir en los pueblos y la que muriéremos aquí. ¿Dónde habéis de ir? Por esto sois varones. No quebréis estas palabras.<sup>458</sup>

In this account, sexual indulgence is interpreted as an act that contributed to a soldier's failure in the battlefield because it meant he neglected his spiritual preparations for war, which is used to infer that he was also likely to be a coward who runs away from battle, only to return disgracefully to his family. As the cacique's oration demonstrates, men that did not pray and who did not practice sexual abstinence when war preparations took place were emasculated as indulgent, cowardly men. The notion that these men should practice sexual restraint also implied from the claim that they were expected to distance themselves from women in times of war. As Tarascan men took part in war preparations, the *Relación de Michoacán* states, "No woman goes with them" (*no iba ninguna mujer*). The *Relación* claimed that men conscripted into war efforts were completely independent of females by purporting male warriors had to secure their own provisions, which included food, drinks, clothing, and weapons because no women could accompany them.<sup>459</sup> It is also stated that nobles were also not exempted from this expectation. In the chapter concerning how new caciques were elected and chosen, it is said that the Cazonci instructed them to prioritize matters of warfare over lust for women.<sup>460</sup> In the text, the Tarascan battlefield is described strictly as a masculine space that was ultimately devoid of women, although, this idea was contradicted later in other passages in the *Relación*.

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<sup>458</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 145-146; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 27. Notably, the Franciscan chronicler's voice emerges when he refers to their carnal acts as sins (*pecados*) and prayers as penitence (*penitencia*).

<sup>459</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 141; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 22.

<sup>460</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 150-151; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 32.

As Chapter 3 discussed, the male-centric rhetoric of the Tarascan warrior cult should not be taken at face value to imply that women were never involved in warfare. Such statements are contradicted throughout the *Relación* as Tarascan women participated in warfare as assassins, spies, and advisors. There is also an account of a person who today could be referred to as a “transgender” female fighter in Cuitzeo, located in the northeastern Tarascan frontier at Lake Chapala, who participated in the battlefield while wearing women’s clothing. In his letter to the Audiencia of New Spain dated written on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1530, Guzmán describes that his forces encountered the combatant during the Nueva Galicia campaign and commented that she fought courageously and was ultimately the last combatant standing:

...Among these people who defended themselves in this islet, fought a man in the habit of a woman, so well and courageously, that this was the last person that was taken, and everyone admired to see so much heart and effort in a woman, because it was thought that it was so was because of the habit worn, and after being taken, it was discovered that it was a man, and wanting to know the reason why he wore a woman's habit, [he] confessed that since he was little he had become accustomed to it and made a living with the men through this occupation, whereupon I ordered that he be burned and so it was.

...Entre esta gente que en esta isleta se defendió, peleó un hombre en ábito de muger, tan bien y animosamente, que fué el postrero que se tomó, de que todos estaban admirados ver tanto corazon y esfuerzo en una muger, porque se pensaba que asi lo era por el ábito que traia, y despues de tomado, bióse ser hombre, y queriendo saber la causa por qué traia ábito de muger, confesó que desde chequito lo havia acostumbrado y ganava su bida con los hombres al oficio, por donde mandé que fuese quemado y asi lo fué (sic).<sup>461</sup>

Interestingly, however, the above-mentioned incident would be the only recorded Mesoamerican account relating to a “man” engaging in combat while performing as a woman in the battlefield.<sup>462</sup> What these contradictory accounts highlight, however, is that the Indigenous

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<sup>461</sup> Guzmán, “Carta á su magestad,” 367-368.

<sup>462</sup> Trexler, “Gender Subordination and Political Hierarchy,” 76. Colonial Spanish accounts generally credit berdaches to contributing in the acts of warfare but that they did not partake in the act of warfare; they carried

informants and friar-editor of the *Relación* attempted to portray the Tarascan battlefield as a strictly male space.

### ***Obedience to Superiors***

These accounts written in the *Relación* also conveyed that Tarascan soldiers were expected to display obedience to their superiors by following orders and not deserting their squadrons. Interestingly, these harsh codes of conduct mirrored many of the same disciplinary tactics used by the Spaniards who took Tarascan forces with them as they conquered the Nueva Galicia region only ten years earlier. An anonymous account from a Spaniard who took part in the campaign stated that the Spaniards made sure their Indigenous allies from Michoacán would not desert their armies by first chaining their lords and principals to each other by the neck, including the Cazonci Tzintzicha (baptized as “Don Pedro”) who was, then, still alive.<sup>463</sup> Similarly, in the *Relación* it is claimed that disobedient Tarascan soldiers and the principals governed them could be punished severely if they ran away from battle. These insubordinate men could face dire consequences that included corporal punishment, execution, public humiliation, and the stripping of their positions of authority. In the passage concerning the feast of Hiquándiro, soldiers are warned that their caciques would face consequences if they failed to follow orders or if they deserted their squadrons. Like the Spaniards who reprovved disobedient lords by chaining them at the neck, the Tarascans also claimed that they punished unruly soldiers by restraining them with stones and poles tied to their necks.<sup>464</sup>

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provisions, carried the wounded, but did not bear arms. He finds the account of the Cuitzeo warrior as the exception to this custom.

<sup>463</sup> Stampa, *Memoria de los servicios que había hecho Nuño de Guzmán*, 97.

<sup>464</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 144; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 25.

In other acts of disobedience, these men could be stripped of their insignias, banished, and publicly humiliated. In the section entitled “Concerning the Administration of Justice by the Cazonci” (*De la justicia que hacia el cazonci*), insubordinate men and their families are publicly disrobed and stripped of their markings of distinction. The Cazonci, who carried out these rulings, had the lip-rips, earplugs, and other jewelry removed from the dishonored men while their wives were stripped of their clothing and forced to roam naked. After they were banished, the Cazonci confiscated their property. Disgraced men that were less fortunate to flee with their lives not only faced execution but also were disallowed the privilege to both a proper trial and burial. Instead, the Cazonci sent a messenger to kill him without warning and sometimes ordered to leave his body out for the wild animals to eat.<sup>465</sup> Therefore, warriors could lose face through public humiliation, the loss of respectable insignias, and death for failing to uphold their obligations as men of the warrior class.

### **Acquiring Insignias of Rank**

In order to demonstrate that they were exemplary men who followed these codes of conduct by engaging in warfare, these warriors had to show that they maintained the dress and symbols that distinguished them as fighters from the various social classes. Insignias of rank distinguished the Tarascan warrior classes who included commoners, spies, and spiritual mediums as well as members of the nobility who included caciques, their sons (the princes and lords), and the Cazonci’s captain general (*angátacuri*).<sup>466</sup> According to the text, commoners wore cotton breastplates while more distinguished warriors and members of the nobility wore

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<sup>465</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 30-31; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 138-139.

<sup>466</sup> Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 223.

elaborate cotton shirts, which is illustrated an accompanying image in the *Relación* that describes the prewar speeches given by the chief priest.<sup>467</sup> The image, however, depicts the commoner classes wearing loincloths instead of breastplates. It does show the decorated cotton doublets worn by the nobles, which cover most of their upper torsos. Additionally, the nobility is depicted wearing headdresses with their faces covered in war paints. The Cazonci, depicted looking over slaves while holding a bow and arrow, has a long shirt or cape that also covers most of his body. In the context of warfare, dress was apparently a marker of distinction since the only groups of people depicted without clothes are captives who were taken in warfare that are completely naked (fig 4.1). In sum, the less decorated warrior appeared to be the least distinguished warrior and these dress codes signaled whether one was a noble, commoner, or slave.

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<sup>467</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 143; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 24.

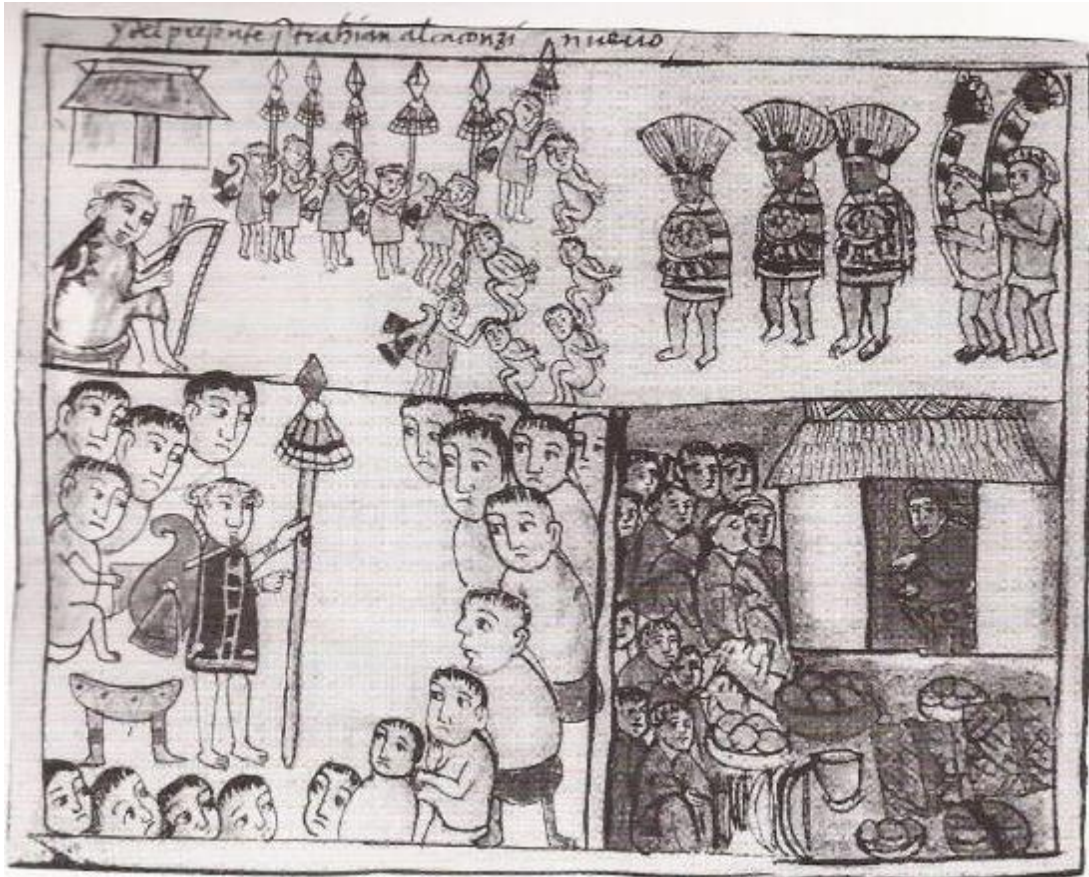


Figure 4.1. “The Speeches of the chief priests and the presentation made to the Cazonci.” Source: Eugene R. Craine, and Reginald C. Reindorp, eds., trans. *The Chronicles of Michoacán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), Plate 15.

The *Relación* provides a glimpse into benefits of serving in the Tarascan warrior classes included the ability to acquire social prestige as those who fought gained the access to distinguished clothing, hairstyles, vestments, and insignias that signaled that were said to be reserved for valiant men. Decorations and implements used by Tarascan warriors are portrayed as being exclusive to those willing to fight to the death by proving themselves in the battlefield. In the *Relación*, the cacique from the city of Coyoacán (Ihuatzio) asserts that the wearing of such insignias meant nothing if a warrior simply chose to run away from battle. These adornments belonged to those who fought vigorously and were willing to die in combat. “Where should we be,” he asks, “with our lip-rings made of turquoise and raw wide wreaths and necklaces made of



precious fish bones, if not here?” (*Donde habéis de haber vosotros, los bezotes de piedras de turquesas y guirnaldas de cuero y los collares de huesos de pescados preciosos, sino aquí?*)<sup>468</sup>

The assertion that these insignias were exclusive to the valiant fighter also is found in the chapter of the *Relación* concerning the women in the Cazonci’s home who attacked a group of Spaniards for robbing his treasures. They scold the Tarascan lords who allowed the theft to occur by questioning why they wore lip plugs reserved for valiant men.<sup>469</sup> In both of these examples, it is related that the use of necklaces, hairstyles, lip plugs, and other decorations used by the warriors were exclusive to warriors who proved that they could fight to the death.

Tarascan combatants’ insignias could also articulate their religious devotion to the male deity of fire and warfare, Curicáueri. During the festival of Hiquándiro at Tzintzuntzan, the captain general urged the men to be brave and not run away from battle because the deities favored them, stating, “Here the Gods of the Heavens will favor us, this is so” (*Aquí nos favorecerán los dioses del cielo: esto es así*).<sup>470</sup> According to the *Relación de Michoacán*, they wore vestments and other insignias to invoke him while in battle. The plumage they donned was representative of the deity and included green feathers, white heron feathers, eagle feathers, and red parrot feathers. This suggests that the colors white, green, red, and yellow were representative of the solar deity because these bright colors represented light of the sun god. These feathers were placed on protective clothing, shields, and headdresses of the warriors. In

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<sup>468</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 145; Craine and Reindorp, eds. and trans. *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 26.

<sup>469</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 190; Craine and Reindorp, eds. and trans. *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 79.

<sup>470</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 144 ; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 25.

addition to their weapons, the *Relación* mentions that the *valientes hombres* carried white battle flags “de su Dios Curicáueri” into battle.<sup>471</sup> It is stated that iconography was considered important to a Tarascan warrior’s success as Curicáueri was called to assist them in the battlefield through their insignias.

The men from the frontier, who included Chichimecas, Matlatzincas, Uetamaechas, and Chontales, also partook in these ceremonies and decorated themselves in war paints, feathers, animal skins, and battle flags before engaging in combat.<sup>472</sup> The Matlatzinca also utilized a distinct dress and hairstyle that signified their status. Sources from other groups that inhabited the Toluca Valley suggest that they generally wore a cotton or maguey fiber cloth that they wore over the shoulder.<sup>473</sup> The ways in which Otomí-speaking men styled their hair also distinguished them based on their occupation as well as their age. In general, both men and women wore their hair long, except men allowed theirs to grow only up to the back of their neck. In Matlatzinca culture, elders, known as *picheque*, tied together the hairs that lay at top of their scalp, while allowing the rest of their hairs to fall loosely. Otomí warriors, on the other hand, donned curly hairstyles that were reserved for warriors, which the Nahuas describe as *tzotzocolli* (a pitcher or

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<sup>471</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 142-143.

<sup>472</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 142; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 23. According to the following passage in the *Relación de Michoacán*, the warriors from the various distinct ethnic polities prepared themselves by, “blackening their bodies and putting wreaths made of deer skin or bird feathers on their heads...Those who are going to this conquest are the people from Mechuacán with Chichimecas and Otomis, whom the Cazonci had subjected, the Maltazincas, the Uetamaecha, and the Chontales, who were joined by those from Tuspa, Tamazula, and Zapotlan...” (*Y ataviábanse todos los valientes hombres, entinzábanse todos y ponías en las cabezas unas guirnaldas de cuero de venado o de pluma de pajaros...iban a esta conquista, los de Mechuacán y los chichimecas y otomíes que el cazonci tenía sujetos, y matlalcingas y uetamaecha y chontales, y los de Tuspa y Tamazula y Zapotlán...*)

<sup>473</sup> Carrasco Pizana, *Los Otomíes*, 74.

jug) and *temillotl* (“stone pillar”) in the *Florentine Codex* (fig 4.2).<sup>474</sup> Notably, other cultures in Mesoamerica also appropriated the *temillotl* hair style reserved it for men who took four captives in warfare.<sup>475</sup> To the Otomí, this distinct hairstyle is described in three distinct terms: *yongānāxhtaāde*, *yongāntzāxhtādē*, and *yoxēnāxhtādē*, referring to the practice in which their hair was curled and frizzled above the forehead (“*cabellos crespados de la frente*”).<sup>476</sup> These hair styles were not only meant to distinguish them as valiant men but it also bore cosmological significance. In Nahua culture, Olko describes, hair signified the source of one’s spiritual energy, or *tonalli*, “a hot celestial life force forming the spiritual component of different beings, closely associated with their destiny.” When another warrior’s hair was grabbed or cut off, it represented the deprivation of them from their life force.<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> “*Gran Diccionario Náhuatl* [en línea],” Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Ciudad Universitaria, México D.F.), 2012 (Accessed April 25, 2018), <http://www.gdn.unam.mx>; Olko, *Insignia of Rank in the Nahua World*, 35.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>476</sup> Carrasco Pizana, *Los Otomíes*, 74-79.

<sup>477</sup> Olko, *Insignia of Rank in the Nahua World*, 34.

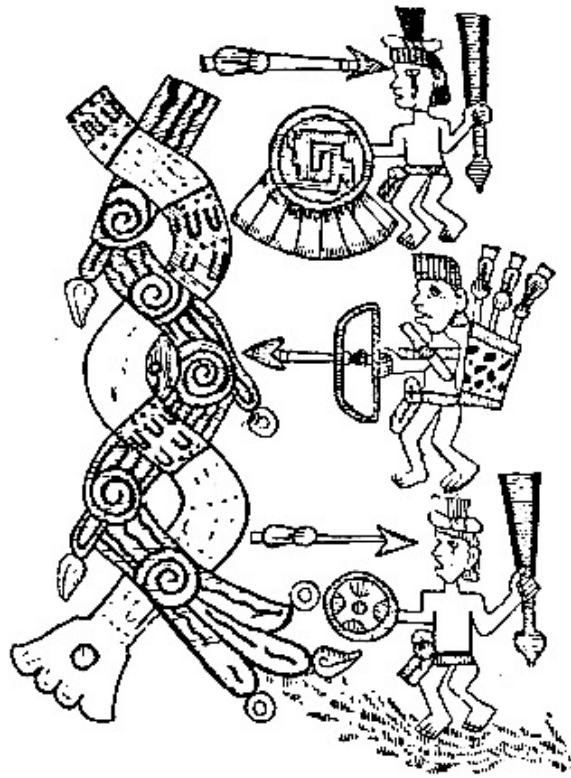


Fig. 14.—*Guerreros otomies. Códice de Uamantla. Según Selser.*

Figure 4.2. “Otomí Warriors. Uamantla Codice.” Source: Pedro Carrasco Pizana, *Los Otomies: Cultura e historia prehispánica de los pueblos mesoamericanos de habla otomiana*, edición facsimilar de la de 1950 (Mexico: Biblioteca Enciclopédica del Estado de México, 1979), 129.

In contrast to Tarascan and Otomí warriors, Chichimeca groups recently subjugated by the Uacúsecha and inhabited the eastern borderlands in the Toluca Valley were said to be distinct for lacking vestments.<sup>478</sup> Even when they did lack clothing in warfare, this did not imply that they neglected to invoke the war deities as the *Relación* states that Chichimecas were said to

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<sup>478</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 122. During the first confrontation between the Chichimeca-Uacúsechas and the village of Curincuaro, the warriors are described as lacking adornments and clothing for warfare.

have carried eagle feathers on their backs and as well as white battle flags made out of feathers; These light colors were invocative of the solar deity of fire and warfare, Curicáueri.<sup>479</sup> The Chichimeca warriors' lack of clothing is, then, not interpreted as a neglect of a warrior's spiritual obligations nor as a sign of weakness for they were brave enough to engage the enemy despite their lack of protective clothing. Similarly, Mexican informants who inform Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* claim that the Chichimecas' lack of clothing strengthened them due to their exposure to the natural elements in the wild. In turn, the text alleges, this allowed them to develop strong bodies that rarely made them sick and allowed them to grow very old. It was said that when they "climbed mountains, it was as if they were carried by the wind, for they were lean—they had no folds of fat—so that nothing impeded them."<sup>480</sup> Those who fought in the Tarascan frontier at Tinguidin were said to have fought the Mexicans taking only their bows, arrows, and a shield while "naked in the flesh."<sup>481</sup> In these texts, both the Tarascans and Mexica describe the Chichimecas' lack of vestments and use of the bow and arrow as a weapon of choice as a sign of masculine strength.

### **Bow and Arrow Iconography**

In the *Relación*, the bow and arrow emerge as one of the most important symbols of warrior masculinity in the Pre-Hispanic Tarascan state. The text records that during one of the first meetings between the Spaniards, the Cazonci Tzintzicha Tangáxoan sought to intimidate the

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<sup>479</sup> Ibid., 122; 23. According to the *Relación*, the use of the color white in war flags was used to invoke the god of war Curicáueri.

<sup>480</sup> Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain, Book 10 – The People*, trans. by Charles E. Dibble and Arthur J. O. Anderson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1981), 174.

<sup>481</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 1, 79.

conquistadors when he had his men demonstrate their bow and arrow marksmanship by shooting deer and then presenting them to the Spaniards.<sup>482</sup> The bow and arrow is the weapon that appears most throughout the text and is inscribed a wide variety of meanings. Martínez and Valdez identify that it is mentioned in the book forty-seven times and had a multitude of meanings that signified political power, the status of a valiant man, tribute, offerings to the gods, hunting, wildlife, and war. Bow and arrows were literally the representatives of warriors killed in battle in faraway places and stood in for them at funerals because their bodies were unrecoverable. Moreover, Martinez and Valdez also point out that the Tarascan words associated with combat in Fray Maturino Gilberti's dictionary are derived from words that referred to the act of stabbing or pricking, which are suggestive of the use of arrows, knives, or lances. For instance, the words *thzehcuhperani* and *thzndtahperani* are derived from the root words *tzeca-* and *teczi-* which Fray Gilberti defines as "to prick, to give pricks" (*piquetear, dar piquetes*).<sup>483</sup> The bow and arrow, then, was a masculine symbol of combat and an icon that represented the Tarascan warrior. The Tarascans also associated bow and arrow marksmanship with their kinship ties to hardened Chichimeca ancestors who used it as their weapon of choice. Stone comments that, for the Tarascans, "An arrow would thus represent an arrow, but it might simultaneously serve as a shorthand for those attributes associated with Chichimec virtues of bravery, self-sacrifice, and expert marksmanship, as well as with the warriors and solar deities who incarnate these

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<sup>482</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 68.

<sup>483</sup> Martinez and Valdez, "Guerra, conquista y técnicas de combate," 22.

ideals.”<sup>484</sup> In the context of warfare, the bow and arrow were, then, a symbol of Tarascan masculinity in that represented combat, marksmanship, and ancestral ties to the Chichimecas.

The *Relación* described an idealized Tarascan warrior society centered on “valiant men” who could prove that had other virtues besides an inclination to bellicosity. The ideal Tarascan warrior was one who invoked the gods, honored various codes of conduct that valued taking enemy captives, demonstrating sexual restraint, disassociation from women during times of war, obedience, as well as acquiring and retaining dress of distinction for men who proved their worth in battle. The bow and arrow emerge in the *Relación* as a symbol of the Tarascan warrior cult since it was not only a weapon of choice but also represented fighting, valor, and ties to Chichimeca ancestors who founded the Tarascan state. The Tarascan warrior cult’s religious piety, code of conduct, and bow and associations with archery ran contrary to Spanish claims that Tarascans lacked any moral virtues. These depictions can also be observed in the *relaciones geográficas* and other colonial sources that highlight the various qualities they ascribed to the Matlatzinca and Chichimeca fighters located on the frontiers facing the Mexica domains. These ethnographic surveys also related how these warriors on the Tarascan boundaries were exemplary fighters who also invoked the gods and protected the Tarascan state with their lives by serving as an indestructible force in its frontiers.

#### **OTOMÍ (PIRINDA) WARRIOR MASCULINITIES**

During the early colonial period, the Spaniards also characterized the Otomís and Chichimeca in the Toluca Valley and other parts of Mesoamerica as warlike, unsophisticated groups. Otomís were regarded by both Spaniards and their Aztec allies as poor people of low

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<sup>484</sup> Stone, *In Place of Gods and Kings*, 80.

status and beast-like just like the Chichimecas.<sup>485</sup> In this section, I describe how the narratives of the Tarascan borderlands facing Mexico in the Toluca Valley were gendered sites where the valor of Otomí-speaking fighters known as “*pirindas*” were uniquely imagined, constructed, and performed. The Otomí were described as loyal and esteemed as fighters who expanded and defended the eastern border territories against the Mexica since the first assault on Uacúsecha polities during the reign of the Cazonci Tzitzispandáquare in the fifteenth century. Indeed, they would come to embody the favored qualities of the Tarascan warrior cult that placed a value on obedience and valiance in warfare.

### **Pre-Hispanic Background**

*Relaciones geográficas* compiled in the eastern Tarascan border territories did not fail to mention “*otomíes*” who were responsible for their defense in Pre-Hispanic times. However, the “Otomí” were not a monolithic group. The Spaniards often generalized all the Indigenous groups in these territories as simply Tarascans, Chichimecas, and Otomis but these categories were misleading. Firstly, such categorizations overlook the presence of other groups that inhabited the frontier such as the Tecos and Cuitlatecas. Second, the “Otomís” and “Chichimecas” in the Tarascan domains were not monolithic but comprised of various ethnic groups. While some of these groups may have shared ethno-linguistic similarities, they did not consider themselves as one people. In the case of Otomí speakers, those who inhabited Mesoamerica included the Mazahuas, Ocuitecas, ethnic Otomí, and Matlatzincas. Otomís who in northern Mexico they were comprised of so-called Chichimeca groups known as the Pames and Chichimeca-Jonas. Moreover, while the *relaciones geográficas* make numerous references to Otomís (*otomíes*) in the Tarascan borderlands of the Toluca Valley, they also included the Otomí-speakers known as the

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<sup>485</sup> Altman, *The War for Mexico's West*, 16-17.



Matlatzincas.<sup>486</sup> Adding to this confusion, the Tarascans also called the Otomí living in the borderlands as *pirinda*, meaning “in between,” which referred to their geographical position in the Toluca valley in between the Tarascan and Aztec states.<sup>487</sup> Lastly, the notion that only “Otomís” or “Matlatzincas” populated the territory may imply that only Otomí and Purépecha were the primary languages that were spoken in the Tarascan borderlands when, in fact, many other languages were spoken such as Mazahua, Tuztec, Chontal, Mazatec, and Iscuca.<sup>488</sup> Despite such problematic generalizations and categorizations, there was a prevailing notion that fierce “Otomí” men stood as the vanguard of the Tarascan borderlands who also contributed to expanding the Uacúsecha domains.

Before they were Mexican and Tarascan allies, the Pirindas came from a longstanding Mesoamerican militaristic tradition that predated their loyalty and service to these powerful Indigenous states. Martha Delfín Guillaumin points out that the *relaciones geográficas* indicate that the Pirindas who lived in the Tarascan borderlands included both the ethnic Otomí as well as the Matlatzincas.<sup>489</sup> Their presence in this region spans back to millennia where they demonstrated their obedience and fighting capabilities as defense forces for the Toltec state. The Matlatzincas that lived in the Taximaroa border territory came from a more antiquated legacy in comparison to their counterparts who only settled the Toluca Valley during the ascendance of the Tarascan state in the fourteenth century. The Otomí speakers from Taximaroa, located in

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<sup>486</sup> Ochoa and Sanchez, *Relaciones y memorias*, 222, fn. 1; Ibid., 227, fn. 5; Ibid., 234, fn. 3; Ochoa and Sanchez point out that while the *relaciones geográficas* for Cuitzeo, Tameyo, and Necotlan describe the presence of *otomíes* they are also in reference to the ethnic Matlatzinca populations and *pirindas* who spoke the Otomí language.

<sup>487</sup> Paredes Martínez, *Al tañer de las campanas*, 115; Martha Delfín Guillaumin, “Los pirindas de Michoacán: ¿inicio de un proceso de etnogénesis?” *Cuicuilco* 50 (2011), 151-152.

<sup>488</sup> Corona Nuñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, 2da Parte, 70; Gorenstein, *Acambaro*, 9.

<sup>489</sup> Delfín Guillaumin, “Los pirindas de Michoacán,” 149.

present-day Ciudad Hidalgo in the Mexican state of Guanajuato, were long established in the Michoacán region as auxiliary forces who defended the boundaries of the Toltec state from Chichimeca invaders. Then, it was known as Tlaximaloyan to the Nahuas, or “the land of the carpenters.” This Otomís in this village provided refuge to Toltec exiles when Chichimec invaders led by Xolotl reduced the capital of Tula to ruins. During the ninth and tenth centuries, Otomís and members of the Toltec royal families inhabited to the city as the Chichimec warlords initiated their conquest of central Mexico.<sup>490</sup> According to Ramón Alonso Pérez Escutia, these events place Taximaroa under the dominion of the Toltec state up to the thirteenth century. The settlement reemerges during the fifteenth century as Taximaroa, an apparent mispronunciation of Tlaximaloyan in the Tarascan language.<sup>491</sup> Unfortunately, the lack of documentary records pertaining to Taximaroa leaves a gap in its pre-Hispanic historical record; Tlaximaloyan disappears after the fall of Tula, when it was part of the Toltec frontier but reappears as “Taximaroa” in the *Relación de Michoacán*, as part of the Tarascan borderlands under the reign of the Tarascan Triple Alliance of Ihuatzio (Cuyuacán), Tzintzuntzan, and Pátzcuaro. As the accounts of the Tarascans’ military engagements with the Mexicans related, the subjugation of Taximaroa paid off well when the Otomis and Chichimecas who were settled in Taximaroa successfully repelled the Mexicans during the first and second Tarascan-Aztec Wars.

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<sup>490</sup> Pérez Escutia, *Taximaroa*, 45-47. According to Escutia, fray Juan de Torquemada’s *Monarquía Indiana* relates that the daughter of the Toltec nobles Pochotl and Huitzitzillin, Azcatlxochitl, hid in Tlaximaloyan for years. Her family lived poor and destitute in the city as they hid from Xolotl’s forces, who they feared would execute them once discovered. Eventually, an expedition into the Toltec territories led by Chichimec captains and Xolotl’s son, Nopaltzin, discovered her family. To their fortune, their lives were spared and Azcatlxochitl was married to Nopaltzin.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-38.

Apart from the inhabitants of Taximaroa, some of the inhabitants who lived on the frontier were not native to the Michoacán region but came from the Xilotepec region that were controlled by the Mexican Triple Alliance. Even though some Otomís were outsiders from the Aztec territories, these inhabitants claimed that they were embraced as frontier forces by the Cazonci Tzitzispandáquare who ruled from 1454-1479. These dates coincide with Axayacatl's War, in which the Cazonci waged a counter-assault with the support of his frontier forces against the Mexican general Tlacaelel. Since these *relaciones geográficas* also mentioned that the Matlatzinca inhabitants fought against the Mexicans, they imply that these Otomí-speaking inhabitants also participated in Axayacatl's War in defense of the Tarascan state. By claiming obedience to Tzitzispandáquare, the Matlatzincas also laid claim to his notoriety as the ruler who first successfully warded off the Mexicans. In turn, they were remembered as the Tarascans' first frontier defenders to ward off the powerful Mexican state.

Because the Mexicans were such a nuisance, the Cazonci apparently overlooked the fact that the Matlatzincas displayed disobedience towards their former Mexican allies, perhaps because these narratives make the Mexica appear as tyrants in comparison to their Purépecha counterparts. Those Otomís who settled the eastern Tarascan borderlands came from a series of ethnic Otomí and Matlatzinca migrants who left Xilotepec and other parts of the Toluca Valley because of a multitude of grievances they held against the Mexica. While the *relaciones geográficas* do not mention what these specific protests were, Carrasco Pizana notes that various Otomí communities became disgruntled with the consolidation of the Mexican Triple Alliance of Texcoco, Tlacopan, and Mexihco-Tenochtitlan because, under their authority, the Otomí were reduced from being allies of the Mexican state to its tributaries. These issues prompted a mass

exodus of Otomís who migrated to Michoacán and Tlaxcala in protest of their marginal status.<sup>492</sup> The *relaciones geográficas* for Cuseo, Taimeo, Necotlan, and Celaya provide some disparate yet comparable examples of Otomí refugees who were absorbed by the Tarascans were placed on the frontiers.

The Pirindas were utilized as auxiliaries in the Mexican Toluca Valley, the Tarascan and Mexica polities expanded and competed for territory, military superiority, and, most importantly, material resources such as access to salt, lakes, fish, game, as well as precious ores such as gold, silver, and copper. Sources also suggest that this expansionism was also driven by attempts by men in positions of authority to assert their political power and glory such that the Uacúsecha expanded their territory in honor of the deity Curicáueri whose wars were waged by his representative on earth, the Cazonci.<sup>493</sup> Similarly, the legendary Mexica general Tlacaelel instigated Axayacatl's War led by general Tlacaelel (1476-1477) against the Tarascans because he wanted to capture Tarascan soldiers so that they could be ritually executed in honor of a new sculpture made for the sun.<sup>494</sup> After this first assault by the Mexicans, the Tarascan and Aztec boundaries were set in the Toluca Valley, creating, as stated by Helen Perlstein Pollard and Michael E. Smith, "The only true territorial military border in Prehispanic Mesoamerica" because their frontier communities were lined with a chain of defensive military forts that began in the Lerma River to the north and ended at the Balsas River to the south.<sup>495</sup> The Otomí,

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<sup>492</sup> Carrasco Pizana, *Los otomíes*, 15; *Ibid.*, 272-277.

<sup>493</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 131; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 11.

<sup>494</sup> Schroeder, *Tlacaelel Remembered*, 108-109.

<sup>495</sup> Pollard and Smith, "The Aztec/Tarascan Border," 87.

Chichimeca, Matlatzinca, Teco, and Cuitlateca forces living in the border territories of these two powerful indigenous states were essential to defending the Tarascans from the Mexica and other enemies. When two Mexica onslaughts were launched against the eastern Uacúsecha territories in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Tarascans' multiethnic troupes proved that they were a formidable force by successfully repelling the Mexican invaders on both occasions. They successfully deterred the first major Mexican onslaught led by general Tlacaelel during Axayacatl's War and once again in 1515 when Moctezuma II sent the captured Tlaxcalan warrior Tlahuicole to direct a six-month assault on the Tarascan border, which ultimately failed.<sup>496</sup>

The Chichimeca and Pirinda frontier warriors emerge as bellicose figures in the *relaciones geográficas* for their mastery in warcraft. Both groups were known for their skill in long distance fighting as the Chichimeca archers were noted for their mastery of the bow and arrow while the Matlatzincas used sophisticated slings that were used to hurl large stones at great distances.<sup>497</sup> As an Otomí-speaking group, the Matlatzinca and their ethnic Otomí counterparts also gained notoriety for their skill in hand-to-hand combat; Their mastery and use of the *macana*, a club that contained pieces of sharpened pieces of obsidian at the edges, came in handy in knocking out and killing enemies who could be offered as enemy captives who were then used in ritual executions in honor of Curicáueri.<sup>498</sup> The *relación geográfica* for Acámbaro states that the men from these border territories used bows and arrows as well as macanas, which are

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<sup>496</sup> Pollard, *Taríacuri's Legacy*, 169-170.

<sup>497</sup> Carrasco Pizana, *Los otomíes*, 15.

<sup>498</sup> Gorenstein, *Acámbaro*, 112.

described as “sticks in the form of swords with many knives along the edges.”<sup>499</sup> Renown as accomplished fighters who repelled their enemies and provided necessary enemy captives, the Pirinda and Chichimeca allies embodied the attributes of the ideal Tarascan warrior.

Even though they lacked ethnic ties to the Uacúsecha ruling dynasties, they received special privileges including a semi-autonomous political status and exemption from tribute payments as non-ethnic Tarascans living in these strategic border provinces that were used to guard against Mexican enemies. Shirley Gorenstein’s study of the border territory of Acámbaro reveals how these subjects maintained a tripartite social infrastructure, meaning that the three Purépecha, Chichimeca, and Matlatzinca communities held political jurisdiction over their own ethnic polities. In this system, the Purépecha held ultimate political authority, although the Chichimeca and Matlatzinca communities could govern themselves and retain their local elites.<sup>500</sup> These men were incorporated into the Purépecha state as warriors, ambassadors, administrators, farmers, and tribute collectors. While subjugated groups who lived in the Tarascan interior were expected to raise crops for tribute and extract natural resources such as salt and obsidian, those in the border territories were not. Karine Lefebvre notes that the Chichimeca and Otomí who inhabited their frontiers paid tribute in the form of military service.<sup>501</sup> Similarly, the Mexica also extended these sorts of privileges to the groups that lived along their frontiers. Smith observes how tribute lists pertaining to the Aztec side of the borderlands indicate that their border communities were exempted from paying tribute at regular

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<sup>499</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, 1ra parte, 61.

<sup>500</sup> Gorenstein, *Acambaro*, 22.

<sup>501</sup> Lefebvre, “Acámbaro, en los confines,” 74-89. In addition to military service, they also provided the Cazonci with the war captives and blankets raided during their expeditions against the Mexica and their allies.

intervals.<sup>502</sup> In addition to political autonomy and tribute exemptions, I add that these men also reaped the benefits of glory and masculine accomplishment as warriors of the frontier.

### **Nahua Views on the Otomí**

While Tarascans took pride in the Otomí men as distinguished as warriors, their Mexican counterparts who subjugated them did not always share such endearing remarks. Nahua commentators who helped inform *Book 10* of the *Florentine Codex* describe the Otomí as a branch of Chichimecas whose men were strong, hardened laborers but were then said to have been a lazy, shifty, and wasteful people.<sup>503</sup> According to the Codex, to be called an Otomí in Mexica society was considered a derogatory insult that implied one's stupidity and ignorance. Someone who was scolded for insubordination or ignorance was allegedly told:

Now thou art an Otomí. Now thou art a miserable Otomí. O Otomí, how is it that thou understandest not? Art thou perchance an Otomí? Art thou perchance a real Otomí? Not only art thou like an Otomí, thou art a real Otomí, a miserable Otomí, a green-head, a thick-head, a big tuft of hair over the back of the head, an Otomí blockhead, an Otomí...<sup>504</sup>

These Mexican prejudices pertaining to the Otomí characterized them as a society whose people were quick to waste their foodstuffs. Even when they are recognized for harvesting crops, it is stated that they only harvested corn and maguey to make liquor and become inebriated. Such habits, according to these Mexican informants, made the Otomí and everything that was associated with them as worthless, including the adornments they wore and the food they ate.<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>502</sup> Smith, "The Strategic Provinces," 147.

<sup>503</sup> Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: Book 10*, 176-178.

<sup>504</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>505</sup> *Ibid.*

For the Mexicans who informed *Book 10* of the *Florentine Codex*, Otomí warrior masculinity was embodied in the dimwitted brute who misguided his labors and strengths for the purpose of engaging in vice and gaudiness. Despite these negative associations, the Mexican source conveys that an Otomí warrior's masculinity was articulated through their strength as opposed to their assumed cultural deficiencies.

Nevertheless, disparaging views of the Otomí and their warrior classes were not common in all sixteenth-century Mexican sources. While the Nahuatl informants of *Book 10* disapproved of the Otomí for dressing in a manner that they considered as too elaborate and showy (which included capes and other clothing that the Mexicans otherwise reserved for people of distinction), Mexica in the Aztec borderlands embraced their style of clothing.<sup>506</sup> The *relación geográfica* of Queretaro states that the Nahuatl who lived in this Otomí territory adopted Otomí dress and even their language.<sup>507</sup> For that matter, it is recorded that the Mexicans even purchased Otomí products used as implements in warfare such as jaguar skins, deer skins, as well as bows and arrows.<sup>508</sup> Mexican sources also laud the Otomí as skilled fighters and hunters like their Tarascan counterparts. Prestigious Mexica warriors could receive the title of *otomitl* as a reward for their valor in the battlefield (fig 4.3).<sup>509</sup> With regard to hunting, Carrasco Pizana observes that the term *otomí* comes from the Nahuatl word *tomitl*, which means “one who hunts birds with the bow and arrow.” Additionally, the Nahuatl translation for the Otomí-speaking *Matlatzincas* who

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<sup>506</sup> Ibid.

<sup>507</sup> Hernando de Vargas, *Descripción de Querétaro por su alcalde mayor Hernando de Vargas Enero 20, 1582*, JGI XXIV-17, Relaciones Geográficas of Mexico and Guatemala, 1577-1585, NLBLAC, 9b.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid., 1b.

<sup>509</sup> Carrasco Pizana, *Los otomíes*, 299.



also inhabited the Mexican borderlands is “the people of the nets,” in reference to their use of nets to catch fish and game.<sup>510</sup> Both of these terms pay reverence to the Otomí and Matlatzincas’ skills in archery and hunting, which were skills that were transferrable to the battlefield to inflict violence upon the enemy.



Fig. 15.—“Este valiente con la divisa de armas que tiene y por renombre otomí de su valentía y de haber cautivado en las guerras cinco o seis enemigos; el cual valiente es el de suso contenido que tuvo principio de cautivar a un enemigo en la guerra y así sucesivamente de grado en grado ha venido a subir de grado”.  
Códice Mendocino. Según Selser.

Figure 4.3. An Aztec warrior with the rank of Otomí portrayed in the Mendocino Codex. Source: Pedro Carrasco Pizana, *Los Otomíes: Cultura e historia prehispánica de los pueblos mesoamericanos de habla otomiana*, edición facsimilar de la de 1950 (México: Biblioteca Enciclopédica del Estado de México, 1979), 130.

### The Pirindas as Willing Allies of Tzitzispandáquare

The prewar speeches from the previous section pertaining to the *Relación de Michoacán* relates how Tarascan warrior society valued men who demonstrated obedience to one’s superiors as well as an unwillingness to retreat from battle. In the *relaciones geográficas* the Pirindas are

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<sup>510</sup> Ibid., 13; Beaumont, *Crónica de Michoacán*, Tomo II, 61.

remembered for demonstrating their obedience to the Cazonci when he ordered them to settle and defend the eastern border. In these accounts, they are not remembered as rebellious peoples who resisted Tarascan subjugation but, instead, as willing allies of the Tarascan state who sought refuge from the tyrannical rule of the Aztec Triple Alliance. These Pirinda warriors inhabited the Uacúsechas' eastern territories and demonstrated their strength, especially in the border territories. They appear in the *Relación de Michoacán* as brave men who defended Moctezuma's western frontier. In a passage describing Tarascan mobilizations on the Tarascan-Aztec frontier, it describes: "Some [of the Tarascan warriors] go to the frontier of Mexico and make war on the Otomis, who are valiant men, which was the reason Montezuma assigned them to the frontiers..." (*Unos iban a la frontera de México, que peleaban con los otomíes, que eran valientes hombres, y por eso los ponía Montezuma en sus fronteras*)<sup>511</sup> Notably, the passage describes the Pirindas ("Otomí") as *valientes hombres* (brave men) because of their remarkable fighting abilities on the frontier.

The *relaciones geográficas* pertaining to Cuseo, Taimeo, and Necotlan, each produced in 1579, described "Otomí" and Matlatzinca migrants who willingly approached the Cazonci Tzitzispandáquare out of their own will to defend the eastern frontier. They displayed their obedience as warriors by settling where he designated them to and by warding off the Mexicans. In each account, they approached the Cazonci and offered to serve as his vassals. Whereupon, he had them settle in one of the villages of the southeastern territories of the Tarascan borderlands. Hernando de Coria, the *alcalde mayor* and *Corregidor* of Cuseo, mentioned:

Cuseo has another pueblo...of some Indians called matalsingos, who are natives from the pueblo of Toluca, nine leagues from Mexico...in the time of their infidelity a principal

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<sup>511</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 22; Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 141.

from Tuluca, due to grievances and vexations that they received from the men from that pueblo, came to Mechoacan before the king of the province who was called Chichispandaquare, the casonsi who was king of this province, and they asked him for land to serve him like the rest of his vassals; and in this manner he administered and commanded this place, along with this pueblo of Cuseo...<sup>512</sup>

Similarly, the corregidor Juan Martínez de Verduso's account for Taimeo also stated that the Mexicans mistreated the Otomís. His report mentions how an Otomí leader by the name of Timax led his people from the Mexican province to Michoacán, where he approached Tzitzispandáquare and asked him take in his people. As agents of the Tarascan state, Timax and his community were dispersed and made to settle various locations on the southeastern Tarascan frontier, known as *tierra caliente*. In addition, they also adopted their language:

The natives from this pueblo of Taymeo and their subjects all speak one language that is called otomíes: they were once natives from the land of Mexico...they were mistreated by the Mexican kings, there was one principal named Timax who united his people and spoke with the Señor who was from this province named Chichispandaquare, father of the Caçonçi, who wanted to populate this province and provide him with tribute like the rest of the pueblos...and Chichispandaquare, as the king of the entire province, directed him and gave him this site of Taymeo where he settled; and they have lived there at least one hundred years according to the Indians; and they know their maternal language as well as Tarascan which is the language that is generally spoken in this province, and they used one and the other...when the people came to populate [Taymeo] they were many otomíes who came together, and the king of the province divided it into other pueblos in *tierra caliente* where they still live in the present.<sup>513</sup>

The account produced for Necotlan also replicated many of the patterns mentioned in the *relación geográfica* for Taimeo as well as the report for Cuseo. The only difference is that Necotlan was settled thanks to the efforts of a different Otomí principal, *Vçelo Apance*. This

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<sup>512</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones Geográficas*, 1ra parte, 48.

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*, 2da parte, 38-39.

Otomí settlement, corregidor Pedro Moreno Gallego notes in [year], produced honey for the Tarascan state:

The head of this pueblo is called Necotlantongo, and its barrios, are one people called otomies; they used to be from the province of Mexico, from the land of Tuluca; the elders say that about one hundred years ago an otomi principal named Vçelo apace came fleeing from Mexico and approached Chichispandaquare, father of the cazonci, king of this province, and he gave him these lands and sent him to populate this land and other pueblos that are called Taymeo and Metalçinpo and other pueblos in tierra caliente where they now live; this pueblo brought honey to the king of the province, and that is where the name Necotlan derives, which is the ‘land of honey.’<sup>514</sup>

The Otomí and Matlatzincas in the geographical survey for Necotlan populated the lands on the southeastern frontiers of the Purépecha state around the same time as Axayacatl’s war and when Tzitzispandáquare began to absorb a significant portion of the Toluca Valley through military conquest. In comparison to other groups in the Tarascan borderlands, these Otomí warriors were not taken by the Purépecha state through conquest but, instead, through voluntary incorporation.

The Pirinda settlers in the *relación geográfica* for Acámbaro also follow a similar narrative, although, they do not claim to have been settled by Tzitzispandáquare. These settlers are described as allies of the Tarascan state since the rule of the founding ruler, Taríacuri, who ruled during the fourteenth century, instead of Tzitzispandáquare who ruled much later. The narrative of the founding of Acámbaro follows the story of four “Otomí” leaders who abandoned the Mexican Xilotepec province of Hueychiapa. According to the compiler, the corregidor Cristobal de Vargas Valdes, they took their wives and sixty followers from central Mexico to Tzintzuntzan. Once there, the four *principales* approached Taríacuri and asked him to take them in. In exchange, they offered to be of service to him and requested that he assign them to a

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<sup>514</sup> Ibid., 42.

territory that they could populate. Taríacuri assigned them, as well as a group of Chichimeca settlers, to populate the region near the city of Guayangareo to the northeast. Vargas Valdez notes, "...And thereafter, it was ordered that the otomies would populate the said village, they populated it alongside the Indians who they called chichimecas, who always have been of service to the governors of Mechoacan, placed on the frontier to defend its lands against the Mexican Indians and the other enemies who were their own."<sup>515</sup> It would become known as Acámbaro, named after Acanba, a woman who came with the Tarascan governor of this village who one day drowned as she took a bath in one of the nearby rivers. The reverence given to the feminine figurehead of this province would soon become overshadowed by the militaristic legacy of the region as Acámbaro would later bear strategic significance as part of the Tarascan-Mexica border territories where warriors' war clubs clashed and the bones of compatriots and enemies alike sprinkled along the open fields.

These sources reveal that the Pirinda warriors largely settled the eastern Tarascan borderlands and drew their loyalty and legacy as warriors from the esteemed irechas Taríacuri and Tzitzispandáquare. Consequently, these warriors could also lay claim to the glory of these Tarascan leaders were also remembered for their distinct military accomplishments in defending and expanding the Tarascan state. While the Tarascan borderlands were comprised of a multiethnic and multilingual force, the "Otomí" (Matlatzincas) attained notoriety for their loyalty and defense of the Tarascan borderlands.

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<sup>515</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones Geográficas*, Part 1, 57-58.

## “CHICHIMECA” MASCULINITY

In the aftermath of the Chichimeca Wars, the Spaniards made broad assumptions about the Indigenous groups they called the “Chichimecas.” Similar to “Otomí,” the term “Chichimeca” was also a problematic category because, ethnologically speaking, there were no Chichimeca people since this was simply a term that Nahuas used to refer to any group that was not urbanized or that made their living through hunting.<sup>516</sup> Even the Spaniards recognized their complex ethnic sophistication. The “Chichimeca” were not a nation or polity, per se, but a series of ethno-linguistic groups such as the Caxcanes, Guachichiles, and Pames who lived north of the Tarascan and Aztec territories that were left unconquered by these Indigenous states. The conquistadors dismissed the Caxcanes as a savage, uncivilized, and warlike people (“*gente belicosa*”) likely due to their previous engagements with them during the Mixtón War.<sup>517</sup> These groups initiated hostilities with the Spaniards when they entered and settled their territories in order to exploit mines that contained rich deposits of silver. The Spaniards notably described the Guachichiles as the most warlike and bellicose Chichimec enemies. The Pames were considered the least bellicose, although they became more aggressive towards the Spaniards overtime.<sup>518</sup> América Navarro-López and Pedro S. Urquijo Torres note that the Spaniards considered the Pames the “friendliest” of the Chichimeca groups but this was because

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<sup>516</sup> Gardie, “Discovering the Chichimecas,” 68.

<sup>517</sup> Medrano Enríquez, “Rough People in a Rough Situation,” 60. Despite Spanish claims that the Caxcanes were unsophisticated Chichimecas, archeological remains show evidence of complex architecture, material culture, and use of a Mesoamerican calendar system tied to rituals, cosmology, and burial practices.

<sup>518</sup> Puig Carrasco, “La frontera chichimeca,” 663-664. The first major engagements between the Spaniards and enemy Chichimecas began in San Miguel and San Felipe, located along royal road (*camino real*) that led to Mexico City.

they were able to communicate with the Tarascans and Otomís who accompanied the conquistadors and missionaries.<sup>519</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 1, it is possible that the Tarascans may initially not have used the term “Chichimeca” themselves in Pre-Conquest times.<sup>520</sup>

It is not surprising that many sixteenth-century Spanish accounts provide many disparaging accounts pertaining to Chichimecas considering that they were written during times of excessive violence and warfare between them during the Nueva Galicia campaigns, the Mixtón War, and Spanish war with the Chichimecas. Altman relates that the town council of Compostela, which was then the capital of Nueva Galicia, complained in 1533 about the numerous assaults they faced by Chichimecas who attacked villages, assaulted them on the roads, and captured their women and children. Similar complaints by other Spanish town, however, show that the violence was retaliatory in nature as the Spaniards committed abuses against them not only in warfare but also through the abuses they suffered from the encomienda system.<sup>521</sup> In 1582 the alcalde mayor of Queretaro Hernado de Vargas described the Chichimeca as cruel *barbaros* (barbarians) for the excesses they committed years before in which they killed many Spaniards, Indigenous peoples, Blacks, and Franciscans.<sup>522</sup> The *Relación de Michoacán* and *relaciones geográficas*, on the other hand, at times highlight the more positive qualities of

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<sup>519</sup> América Navarro-López and Pedro S. Urquijo Torres, "La frontera en el septentrión del Obispado de Michoacán, Nueva España, 1536-1650." *Journal of Latin American Geography* 18, no.1 (2019), 104.

<sup>520</sup> See Chapter 1, fn. 107.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-105.

<sup>522</sup> *Relaciones Geográficas of Mexico and Guatemala, 1577-1585, JGI XXIV-17 Querétaro 1582, NLBLAC*, The University of Texas at Austin.

the Chichimeca as groups who, like their Tarascan, Otomí, and Matlatzinca counterparts, displayed loyalty and bravery on the Tarascan borderlands facing the Aztecs.

To the Tarascans, the Chichimeca groups who lived within the Tarascan domains were remembered and masculinized as masters of the bow and arrow who held vague kinship ties to the Purépecha warrior elite. In contrast to the Otomí, the Chichimeca are not entirely considered as outsiders but are revered as blood relatives like the Tarascan's Mexican counterparts who also drew upon Chichimeca lineage as a masculine attribute. As Gardie explains, the Aztecs viewed Chichimecas as “both the self and the other” because even though they described these groups as uncivilized outsiders, they also represented the “positive attributes of manliness, virility and an ancient past.”<sup>523</sup> These hunter-gatherer groups were viewed as unsophisticated, yet they were admired as hardened warriors and distant relatives. The “Chichimecas” were not only remembered for their military service but also for their ambiguous ethnic ties to the Purépecha ruling dynasties. The Uacúsecha dynasties distinctly claimed to have descend from Chichimeca migrants and remembered them as bellicose masters of the bow and arrow.<sup>524</sup> Here, I will relate how the Tarascans—like their Mexican counterparts—also described the ideal warrior also as Chichimecas. However, Tarascans distinctively admired the Chichimecas because they

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<sup>523</sup> Gardie, “Discovering the Chichimecas,” 75.

<sup>524</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 5. The Uanacaze are members of the larger Uacúsecha bloodline. The other faction includes non-Uanacaze families referred to as “Islanders” (*isleños*) in the *Relación de Michoacán* because they descended from the island-dwelling populations that lived in the islands of the Lake Pátzcuaro until the Uanacaze conquered them. Pollard, “Ruling ‘Purépecha Chichimeca,’ ” 230-234. Pollard’s findings suggest that the Uacúsecha lacked ethnic Chichimec roots and that, instead, they were likely ethnic Purépecha seeking to distinguish themselves from other elite counterparts.



represented boisterousness, a mastery of the bow and arrow, kinship ties to the Tarascan state, as well as religious devotion to Curicáueri.

### **Chichimeca as Masters of the Bow and Arrow**

In Mesoamerican cultural traditions, Chichimecas were distinctly regarded as masters of the bow and arrow. Archery was an indication of maturity and masculine accomplishment in various Mesoamerican societies. For instance, newborn males were gifted these instruments of warfare when they were born.<sup>525</sup> Mexican sources claimed that Chichimecas trained their children to use such tools for warfare and hunting at an early age. In *Book 10* of the *Florentine Codex*, the Mexicans state that the Teochichimecas (“the real Chichimeca, or extreme Chichimeca”) as well as the Çacachichimecas taught their young boys how to use the bow and arrow since they were children: “The Chichimeca taught him no play, only the shooting of arrows.”<sup>526</sup> Fray Pablo Beaumont also records that the Chichimeca were generally understood to be masters of the bow and arrow while also adding that they were bellicose. In his *Crónica*, it is recorded that they were so dexterous and precise that they would not miss a single target even if they were one hundred steps away. He writes that they spent so much of their time at war with the Mexicans as part of the Tarascan armies and asserts that they were an indestructible force who did not allow the Mexica to “win even a spec of dirt” from the Tarascan state. For that matter, he concludes, “not even the entire Mexican empire could dominate them...”<sup>527</sup> Of course, Beaumont’s recollection was an exaggeration as Tzitzispandáquare’s failed incursions into the

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<sup>525</sup> Schroeder, “Introduction,” 15.

<sup>526</sup> Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: Book 10*, 171-175. They also used the term *tamime*, which meant the “shooters of arrows,” to refer to a particular group who they called the Tamime-Chichimecas.

<sup>527</sup> Beaumont, *Crónica de Michoacán*, Tomo II, 50.

Toluca Valley proved otherwise. Nevertheless, his account, informed by Tarascan informants, provides a testament to how their skill in archery allowed them to become remembered as unconquerable frontier warriors. Gorenstein relates that the Chichimeca in Acámbaro, where they were the majority, developed their skills as archers and warriors because they placed a high value on militarism. They fashioned their own bows and arrows and served as the Purépecha state's archers.<sup>528</sup> That the Chichimecas were distinguished by their boisterousness and mastery of the bow and arrow, it is no wonder that the ruling Uacúsecha dynasty would claim to descend from them just like their Mexican counterparts who drew their own Chichimeca lineage from their ancestors who came from Chicomoztoc.<sup>529</sup>

### **Chichimeca Ties to the Masculine Solar Deity**

Uacúsecha elites also used their claim to Chichimeca lineages to propagate the notion that they were divinely ordained to rule over the Michoacán region. In Part 2, Chapter 2 of the *Relación*, the petámuti describes how the first Chichimeca ruler, Ticátame, and his people traveled near the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin and settled in Tzacapu where they made a shrine dedicated to Curicáueri. In the narrative, Ticátame gathered his followers and declared that

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<sup>528</sup> Gorenstein, *Acambaro*, 112.

<sup>529</sup> Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, 196-197. Similar to the Tarascans, the Mexica also boasted that their ancestors were Chichimecas who came from the northern desert territories where they mastered the art of warfare and hunting. Despite negative connotations that they placed on these groups as unsophisticated hunter-gatherers, the Mexica interpreted their Chichimeca lineage as a badge of honor because these northern indigenous groups were considered hardened warriors. As Sahagún's account in the *Florentine Codex* narrates, "These different people all called themselves Chichimeca. All boasted the Chichimeca estate, because all had gone into Chichimeca land where they went to live; all returned from Chichimeca land." The text adds, however, that the Mexicans considered themselves as a more sophisticated class of Chichimecas who not only survived by hunting on land with bows and arrows but also for mastering life in lake environments. To emphasize their skillfulness in fishing, they called themselves *Atlaca Chichimeca*, the Chichimeca who live on the water.

Curicáueri has ordered their people to conquer the surrounding lands on his behalf.<sup>530</sup> In this case, religious rhetoric is directly used to justify the conquests of the Chichimeca warriors as people who were chosen by Curicáueri to conquer and rule over the Michoacán region. By presenting a narrative in which the Uacúsecha-Chichimeca dynasty prevailed thanks to the deity of warfare and fire, this reflects Martínez Baracs observation that the petámuti informant was relating a statist version of the history of Michoacán that favored the Uacúsecha elite by asserting that their warriors prevailed because divine forces allowed them to succeed in battle.<sup>531</sup>

### **Distant Relatives of the Uacúsecha**

Chichimeca lineage is also used to portray the Uacúsecha as the masculine figures who hunted, mastered the bow and arrow, and worshipped solar deities. Martínez González observes that this distinction was made in comparison to other groups who they later conquered, such as the Islanders and Curínguaros, who were imbued with opposing feminine qualities as fishers that were not accustomed to hunting and that who worshipped terrestrial deities.<sup>532</sup> This phenomenon can be seen in the passage concerning four wandering Chichimeca lords who reunited with the Islanders years after their families initially separated due to an ill omen concerning a lord his sisters who turned into snakes. The Chichimeca elites encountered a man named Curiparanchan from Pacanda Island who was catching fish in the lake. In this narrative, the four men asked to speak with the fisherman who refused and remarked that he feared that they would attempt to shoot him with an arrow because they were Chichimecas. Eventually, Curiparanchan was

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<sup>530</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 21; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 103-104.

<sup>531</sup> Martínez Baracs, *Convivencia y utopía*, 88.

<sup>532</sup> Martínez González, “La dimensión mítica,” 39-44.

convinced that the men were no danger and then they feasted together. As they consumed the fisherman's catch, the Chichimecas attested to their mastery as hunters by contributing a net filled with rabbits and fowl that they caught in the wild to their meal.<sup>533</sup> This passage concerning the first meeting of the Chichimecas and Islanders indeed attests to Martínez González's observation that exaggerated masculine qualities were placed on the Chichimecas in opposition to their Islander counterparts such that the Chichimecas are said to have been so devoted to hunting that they never learned to eat fish, commonly eaten by the Islanders; inversely, the Islanders in the text claim to have never eaten wild game until the Uacúsechas introduced this foodstuff to them.<sup>534</sup>

The Uacúsecha-Chichimeca that settle in the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin are continually depicted in the text as bellicose, especially after their numerous engagements with the nearby village of Curíngaro whose leaders opposed the marriage of the daughter of Curiparanchan with the Uacúsecha lord Uápeani. After the lords of Curíngaro convince the Islanders to force the Chichimecas out of Pacanda, their people continually fear retribution from them. They dreaded that the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas would destroy their homes, believing "it is their business to go about destroying villages, and they are happy when they anticipate a fight."<sup>535</sup> In the text, the

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<sup>533</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 114-118. The story continues that as the Chichimecas conversed with Curiparanchan, they learned that they worshipped the same deities and had the same relatives. The fisherman is convinced to offer one of his daughters in marriage but is instructed to tell his people that Chichimecas kidnapped her as they relentlessly assaulted him with arrows. His daughter was, then, married to the Uacúsecha lord Uápeani but the notion that aggressive, arrow-shooting Chichimecas kidnapped her provided for a more acceptable cover story because it appeared that the Uacúsecha expected that the Pacanda Islanders would disapprove of their union

<sup>534</sup> Martínez González, "La dimensión mítica," 43.

<sup>535</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 122.

people of Curíngaro anxiously remark, “Remember how close we came to killing the Chichimecas and they, being Chichimecas, will never forget the injury. They do not know how to forget.”<sup>536</sup> The perception that their people are vengeful reemerges in the account pertaining to the first military engagement between the Uacúsecha and the Islanders. Even after defeating the Uacúsecha during their first formal military encounter, the lords of Curíngaro continued to fear retaliation because they gravely injured Uápeani and his brother Pauácume during the battle. Uápeani’s aunt, who was a villager from Curíngaro, checked on them because “they had been treated very badly when they were shot, [and] since they were Chichimecas, they would not forget.”<sup>537</sup> Even as the Islanders attempted to negotiate peace with the Uacúsecha, they were uneasy and weary of an attack. In the account, they refuse to sleep in the same village with the Chichimecas where negotiations were taking place, stating, “...These Chichimecas are two-faced and talk two ways at once. Some of them have come from Curíngaro so that early in the morning they will shoot us and destroy our village.”<sup>538</sup> Clearly, in the *Relación de Michoacán*, Chichimeca adversaries were men who should be feared.

The ways in which the Uacúsecha-Chichimeca fought also demonstrates some of the ideals of Chichimeca warrior masculinity on the battlefield and gave food to the gods with their own blood. In one tale relating one of their first engagements with the village of Curíngaro, the Chichimecas fought with simple tools such as rocks, clods, and arrows. It is also stated that they did not wear elaborate vestments, in contrast to their enemies. While in battle, the Chichimecas

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<sup>536</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid. 123.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid., 124.

made sure to avoid being hit in the head because such an assault was considered a loss of honor. If they were hit in the face and bled, they could not allow their blood to touch the ground. Instead, they had to wipe off the blood with their hands and use their fingers to sprinkle it towards the sky so that they could feed the gods who assisted them in the battlefield.<sup>539</sup> In this narrative, the Chichimecas demonstrate that they could put up a fight despite the fact that they lacked sophisticated clothing and weaponry in comparison to their enemies. They also pay due reverence to the gods in the battlefield by offering their blood.

In Tarascan society, the Chichimecas were both remembered as hardened warriors who defended the eastern frontier as well as relatives of the Uacúsecha dynasty who were destined by the god of warfare and fire Curicáueri to rule over the Michoacán region. Chichimecas were understood in Mesoamerica to be the exemplary and archetypal hunters and masters of the bow and arrow whose fearlessness in the battlefield made them warriors who should be feared. They were not only exemplary fighters but godly-ordained fighters who were destined to rule over the Mexican center-west. The Uacúsecha rulers, depicted in the *Relación de Michoacán* by the *carariecha*, are constantly shown with the bow and arrow to not only emphasize their Chichimeca roots but also their abilities in warfare and hunting. These associations demonstrate that while it may be tempting to use the terms *Chichimeca* and “savage” interchangeably, this would be erroneous in a Mesoamerican context. Unlike the Spaniards who viewed savages as people who were not related to them and who held inferior habits, the Tarascans and Mexica believed otherwise. As the sources demonstrate, the Tarascans exalted the Chichimeca for their masculine traits which included their mastery of the bow and arrow and their status as rulers and

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<sup>539</sup> Ibid., 122.

warriors who were chosen to prevail by Curicáueri. Chichimec masculinity, therefore, implied that the Tarascan warriors not only possessed physical strength but also spiritual superiority.

## CONCLUSION

Accounts relating the military service of the Otomí and Chichimeca men who served in the Tarascan borderlands demonstrate how they shaped unique perspectives and ideals about what it meant to be a warrior for the Tarascan state. Unlike other conquered and tributary groups, these ethnic groups were lauded as distinguished defenders of the eastern border facing Mexico-Tenochtitlan. Many of the Otomí-speaking Matlatzinca warriors who lived in this frontier were former allies of the Mexica who realigned themselves with the Purépecha due to political grievances they held against the Mexican Triple Alliance. During the fifteenth century, the Cazonci ordered them to settle the eastern territories facing Mexico during the reign of the irecha Tzitzispandáquare. He was known for consolidating the power and administrative apparatus of the Tarascan state in the city of Tzintzuntzan. He placed these willing allies at the eastern frontier facing the Mexica.

The Indigenous informants who helped to produce the *Relación de Michoacán*, the *relaciones geográficas*, as well as other sixteenth-century colonial sources describing Tarascan, Matlatzinca, and Chichimeca fighters provide an Indigenous perspective relating the positive attributes of their warrior societies which stood in contrast with Spanish perceptions of these Indigenous fighters as untrustworthy men that lacked any positive virtues. However, in many cases these warrior masculinities were exaggerated and hypermasculinized in ways that also portrayed Tarascan, Matlatzinca, and Chichimeca warriors as men directly tied to solar deities of warfare with strict codes of conduct emphasizing the taking of enemy captives strictly for human sacrifices (instead of enslavement). The sources relate Tarascan soldiers lost face when they did

not live up to expectations. Disobedient soldiers were threatened with physical punishment, public humiliation, the removal of their insignias of distinction, and even death. The *Relación* also relates that warrior masculinities in the Tarascan borderlands were not something that were simply proven through battle. These soldiers were also expected to provide religious devotion to Curicáueri, practice sexual restraint during wartime, exercise obedience to their superiors, and to be unwilling to retreat from battle. It is claimed that those who failed to collect firewood for the gods or failed to practice sexual abstinence in times of warfare faced scrutiny and criticism from their superiors. However, such scrutiny was also likely reflective of the moralist concerns of the Christian authors of these sixteenth-century texts who were concerned with matters of sexual excess and religious devotion. Tarascan warrior masculinity emphasized proving one's worth in the battlefield and warriors were rewarded with social prestige and insignias that distinguished them as valiant men such as earplugs and lip rings.

Narratives relating to the Otomí and Chichimeca warriors who contributed to the expansion and defense of the Pre-Hispanic Tarascan borderlands in the Toluca Valley show how they embodied the traits of the ideal Tarascan warrior. Moreover, their depictions illustrate the multifaceted nature in which these borderlands were described as sites where Indigenous warrior masculinities were also constructed in sixteenth-century colonial texts. Non-ethnic Tarascans warriors such as the Otomí and Matlatzincas that inhabited the eastern frontier in places such as Acámbaro and Taximaroa embodied the traits of the boisterous and loyal Tarascan fighter when they displayed their loyalty to the Cazonci. The Matlatzincas populated the eastern Tarascan borderlands in defiance of their former Mexican allies and, instead, came to the defense of the Purépecha who appear to have given them better treatment. These Otomís were renowned for successfully repelling two Mexican onslaughts led by Axayacatl and later Moctezuma II,



allowing them to be remembered and imagined as an indestructible force. While the Chichimecas were sometimes viewed as aggressive and unruly, they were also understood to be skilled archers and fighters as well as revered ancestors of the Uacúsecha dynasty whose background as a warrior society allowed them to consolidate most of the Michoacán region as the Tarascan state. Chichimeca association with Curicáueri allowed those who claimed this identity to embody the traits of spiritual devotion that was essential to producing a well-rounded soldier.

Many of the political privileges Chichimeca and Matlatzinca communities enjoyed in the Tarascan borderlands, such as exemption from tribute payment, was lost after the Spanish subjugated the Tarascan state and Nuño de Guzman executed the Cazonci. While Indigenous groups in this former frontier were no longer exempted from tribute payments in return for military service, Alejo Cárdenas and Gutiérrez show that those who in that resided in the former Tarascan borderland community of Acámbaro attained a semblance of autonomy under Spanish rule such that they could retain traditional leadership and have their own administrative representatives which included a cacique, governor, *jueces ordinaries*, *regidores*, *alguaciles*, and *escribanos*. The Chichimeca and Matlatzinca warriors on the frontiers were no longer invested in expansionist campaigns that extended the authority of the Uacúsecha elite. Instead, they were incorporated as auxiliary forces of the Spanish conquistadors and aided the Spaniards as they conquered and suppressed various Indigenous groups in the greater western and northern Mexican region. With the introduction of Spanish technologies that included the use of metal swords, horses, cannons, and firearms, the Iberians altered the magnitude and landscape of warfare and death to the likes that the Tarascans were not previously familiar with. The northern territories such as Acámbaro, however, continued to serve some of the same functions of a military frontier as it, along with other territories in northern Michoacán, became an outpost

where Spanish soldiers and their Native auxiliaries were stationed during as they engaged in the Spanish war with the Chichimecas, which did not cease until the turn of the century.<sup>540</sup> The northern Tarascan borderlands, then, became the Spanish Chichimeca borderlands. Even under Spanish rule, the Tarascan-Aztec borderlands did not shift from becoming borderlands to bordered lands, as Adelman and Aron presume.<sup>541</sup> This new Chichimeca frontier created by the Spanish did offer new privileges for warriors and governing elites in the Michoacán region, which is discussed in the following chapter. Evidently, the Indigenous military forces not only sought to demonstrate their valor and loyalty in the battlefield with historical narratives pertaining to Pre-Hispanic times but also through their participation in the Spanish conquest of other native peoples. In this vein, when Indigenous men in Michoacán displayed masculinity through military service as Spanish auxiliaries, they also contributed to the Spanish colonization.

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<sup>540</sup> Mariana Alejo Cárdenas and Falcón Gutiérrez, "El desarrollo institucional de una república de indios en la chichimeca. El pueblo de San Francisco de Acámbaro, 1540-1690," *Jóvenes en la Ciencia: Revista de divulgación científica* 3, no. 2 (2017): 1792-1797.

<sup>541</sup> Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 3, (Jun 1999): 839. The authors wrote that borderlands were "born of imperial rivalry and cross-cultural mixing became borders when the costs of ethnic alliances surpassed their benefits and when European empires decay." While this may appear true, such a Eurocentric definition of borderlands does not consider how in the Tarascan-Aztec borderlands they did not solidify into rigid borders. At most, they became state lines and not borderlands during the Mexican national period as the former Tarascan borderlands now vaguely comprise the limits of the Mexican state of Michoacán.

## **Chapter 5: “*Nosotros, todos los principales y maceguales*”: Governing Masculinities in the Chichimeca Frontier of Acámbaro and Taximaroa**

Under Spanish rule, Indigenous elites in Michoacán continued to invoke their kinship ties to powerful, Pre-Hispanic ancestral figures in order to retain a semblance of their own authority when they sent petitions to the viceroy and other Spanish authorities in which they sought to maintain their positions of authority or to acquire material privileges. Delfina Esmeralda López Sarrelangue has studied how Indigenous elites in the central cities of Pátzcuaro and Tzintzuntzan used their ties to the Cazonci so that they could access such benefits for themselves, their families, as well as for their communities. Don Pedro Cuiniarángari, the first governor of Michoacán, amassed land and the political post of the governorship after Guzmán executed his adopted brother, the Cazonci Tzintzicha Tangáxoan. After Don Pedro’s death in 1543 and the Cazonci’s surviving children came of age, they also ascended to the governorship and acquired substantial wealth. As governor, Tzintzicha’s son Don Francisco Taríacuri (also known as don Francisco Caltzontzin), who only lived for two years during his tenure, received tribute and owned various lands, homes, a library, farm animals, palaces Pátzcuaro and Tiripetíó, a mill in Opopeo, and a sugar mill in Tomendán that was administered by a Spaniard. These privileges would also extend to Don Antonio Huitziméngari who succeeded his brother in 1545. Don Antonio was so resourceful that he was able to fund expeditions to quell Chichimeca uprisings in northern Mexico with his own resources and funded the construction of a road from Zitácuaro to Acámbaro in 1550.<sup>542</sup> His grand palace, which still bears his last name, remains today in the city of Pátzcuaro as an artisan market (See figs 5.1 and 5.2).

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<sup>542</sup> López Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro*, 169-177.



Figure 5.1. Palacio de Huitziméngari. Don Antonio Huitziméngari's palace now stands as an artisan market in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán. Photo by author.



Figure 5.2. The courtyard inside Palacio de Huitziméngari. Pátzcuaro, Michoacán. Photo by author.

Don Constantino Huitziméngari, also cited his lineage to his grandfather the Cazonci and his father don Antonio in documents where he demanded the recognition of his noble status and right to collect tribute. It was necessary for him to argue that he was rightfully endowed to these privileges since his legitimacy as a noble was opposed by other Tarascan elites for being the illegitimate son of one the Cazonci's children, don Antonio Huitziméngari. In a 1590 decree from the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza II granted don Constantino servants who worked in his home, provided him with firewood, as well as grass to feed his horses. The order not only cited his relation to the Cazonci and his father don Antonio but it also voiced the nobleman's concerns that he did not want to lose respect from fellow Tarascan natives.<sup>543</sup> Presumably, this *mandamiento* (commandment) insinuates, the personal services he received from fellow Tarascan commoners served as a status marker that legitimized his authority as a Tarascan nobleman descended from the traditional ruling dynasties. In a 1598 real cedula (royal document), the viceroy again responded to don Constantino's request to receive the same amount of gold, maize, servants, and other services as his blood relatives. The document began by recognized his relation to the Cazonci and addressed his grandfather through the Christian name in which he was baptized, don Francisco Tangáxoan.<sup>544</sup>

What has been least discussed—at least in the English language literature pertaining to the Tarascans under Spanish rule—is how lesser-known elites who lived on the fringes of what was once the Tarascan borderlands continued to retain their authority under Spanish rule even

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<sup>543</sup> Paredes Martínez, “*Y Por mi visto*,” 293-294.

<sup>544</sup> Consejo de Indias, “Real cedula al virrey de Nueva España y la Audiencia de México, para que informen sobre la gratificación que gozaron Antonio Huitzimengari y su hijo Pablo y la que actualmente tiene su hijo Constantino Huitzimengari que pide que se le iguale a la de su padre o hermano,” 1598, 7 August (PARES: Portal de Archivos Españoles, Archivo General de Indias).

though they were not related to the Cazonci. These elite men and, in some cases, elite women, also state their relationship to local Indigenous elites from local communities to acquire material privileges for themselves as well as in some cases for their entire villages. In Taximaroa, one of the former Tarascan border territories that was previously used by the Tarascan state as an entry point to conduct trade and diplomacy, Indigenous elites also managed to leverage their authority in order to bolster their wealth as well to assert their paternal authority. A license signed by the viceroy Martín Enriquez in 1575 to the local principal don Juan Bautista reveals that he owned at least eight hundred farm animals as well land that was expanse enough to pasture them. The text in this decree shows that Bautista faced political opposition from other Indigenous officials in Taximaroa pertaining to his wealth since he sought out permission from the viceroy to allow his animals to roam freely because “some justices and other people impede him from doing so.”<sup>545</sup> Four years later, Bautista used his political authority to ask the viceroy to help him retrieve his daughter who was apparently separated from him by an aunt, “against her will.” The testament states:

...don Juan Bautista principal del pueblo de Tajimaroa me hizo relación que stando enfermo e teniendo en su casa en compania una hija suya donzella se la saco y llevo de su poder una tia suya contra su voluntad. Por que destar en compania de la dicha su tia se le podía perder. Me pidió se la mandase entregar e por mi visto por la presente mando que luego que este mandamiento vos sea mostrado [ilegible] en cuyo poder este la hija del dicho Juan Bautista. <sup>546</sup>

...don Juan Bautista principal of the pueblo of Tajimaroa has related to me that having been sick and in his care in the company of his daughter a maiden was removed and taken from his power by an aunt against her will. Because being in the company of the said aunt he could lose her. He asked me to order her return and by my command in the present I order that this commandment be demonstrated [ilegible] in his power the

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<sup>545</sup> Archivo General de la Nación de México, General de Parte 51, Expediente 402, fs. 90.

<sup>546</sup> Archivo General de la Nación de México, General de Parte, Volume 2, Expediete 193.

daughter of the said Juan Bautista.

While the testament does not provide details regarding the nature of this familial dispute, the escribano who reports on Bautista's case invokes paternalist lexicon in the principal's defense. The decree states that his daughter took care for Bautista while he was sick and, while he was debilitated, she was "taken from his power," thereby overstepping his fatherly authority. Moreover, it was not another paternal authority, or *poder* (power), that stripped him from his guardianship over his daughter but a female relative. The order also reiterated Bautista's fear that his daughter would be lost from him if she was not retrieved. The viceroy, then, ordered that his daughter be retrieved to him in order to reinforce her father's paternal *poder* over her. Bautista's case is representative of the ways in which Indigenous authority in the former Tarascan borderlands underwent numerous transitions in the latter half of the sixteenth-century. Aside from their appropriation of Spanish patriarchal ideas articulated in the previous chapters, the principals in outliers such as Taximaroa and Acámbaro faced significant challenges to their authority. First, they no longer enjoyed the political autonomy that the Tarascan state once provided them with in Pre-Hispanic times. In order to exact legal justice, Indigenous authorities like Bautista had to seek the support of Spanish authorities like the viceroy.

In this chapter, I discuss how principals from the former Tarascan borderlands adjusted to the expectations of the new colonial order. To articulate this point, I return to the theme of governing masculinities previously discussed in Chapter 2 to discuss how the expectations of Indigenous male rulership in the frontier underwent continuity and change. While these principals of these pueblos once enjoyed the ability of not being pressured to provide any form of tribute to those who governed over them, the Spanish Crown obligated them to provide tribute and labor to Spaniards who variously owned mines, haciendas, and sugar mills. Yet, the Spanish

colonial system provided them with various material benefits such as legal offices, wealth, exemptions from repartimiento labor, and the ability to collect tribute. However, in contrast to other literature that often tends to depict these principals as self-serving opportunists, I argue that these principals also used their status as principals to advocate for themselves as well as for the greater communities that they represented. Aware of their status as principals, elite Indigenous men in Acámbaro and Taximaroa advocated in favor of the commoners, referred to as *macehuales*, which was the Nahuatl term referring to commoners, although the *relación geográfica* for Cuitzeo suggests that the Tarascan term for commoners was *purépecha*.<sup>547</sup>

In the first part of this text, I provide a brief historical sketch of the pueblos of Acámbaro and Taximaroa from the Pre-Hispanic to the early colonial period. In the second section, I discuss Tarascan and Spanish expectations of the Indigenous elites as well as the privileges that these positions of authority afforded to the Indigenous elite. In the last section, I discuss how Native principals in the frontier carried out their new roles in the frontier.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: ACÁMBARO AND TAXIMAROA, 14<sup>TH</sup>-16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES**

Since the Pre-Hispanic period, Acámbaro and Taximaroa were both strategic provinces situated in the Tarascan-Aztec borderlands and colonial sources suggest that their significance as frontier territories endured during the first century of Spanish colonization. This region was definitively a borderlands, culturally speaking, as it was predominated by ethnic Otomís, Matlatzincas, and also various so-called Chichimeca groups who were incorporated as fighters, administrators, tribute collectors, translators, messengers, traders, spies, and diplomats. The

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<sup>547</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 2, 49.



peoples who inhabited these Tarascan borderlands were multiethnic and multilingual and this legacy continued even into the late seventeenth century.<sup>548</sup> These frontier territories generally enjoyed limited influence from the Tarascan core. Unlike other groups the Tarascans conquered, those in the Tarascan-Aztec borderlands did not have to adopt Tarascan deities nor were they required raise crops, extract precious metals, or gather salt to pay tribute to the Cazonci. Instead, they were allowed to retain their traditional practices and paid tribute in the form of military service.<sup>549</sup>

Both of these communities were part what Gorenstein refers to as a settlement frontiers and political frontiers because the people who settled there were not only were incorporated as part of the Tarascan state but also contributed to its military defense against Mexica armies.<sup>550</sup> Additionally, there were of course, other Tarascan border territories that performed similar functions such as Ajuchitlan, Araro, Cutzamala, Indeparapeo, Jungapeo, Maravatío, Taximaroa, Uasmaeo, Ucareo, Yuriria, Zinapecuaro, and Zitácuaro. Acámbaro and Taximaroa were exceptional, however, due to the fact that they were the two territories that were situated closest to the Aztec state. Acámbaro, for that matter, not only served as a buffer zone for encroaching Mexican armies but also a military frontier against enemy Chichimecas to the north.<sup>551</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 1 and 4, Acámbaro and Taximaroa played definitive roles in Tzitzispandáquare and Zuangua's counter assaults against Mexican forces who sought to take

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<sup>548</sup> Alejo Cárdenas and Gutiérrez, "una república de indios en la chichimeca," 1795.

<sup>549</sup> Lefebvre, "Acámbaro, en los confines," 85-87.

<sup>550</sup> Gorenstein, *Acambaro*, 5.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-106.

their eastern territories in the Toluca Valley during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Karine Lefebvre notes that Acámbaro also had topographical advantages such that it located on rugged terrain, which made it difficult to attack. Moreover, its elevated terrain allowed these Tarascan allies to identify encroaching Mexican and Chichimeca enemies.<sup>552</sup> Taximaroa, according to Pollard, was the official entry point where Mexican diplomats and merchants had to go if they wanted to enter any of the territories within the Tarascan state.<sup>553</sup> For that matter, the Spaniards also had to present themselves at Taximaroa before first initiating trade relationships with the Cazonci.<sup>554</sup> What also made these Tarascan border territories exceptional to the other former Tarascan borderlands was that they continued to function militarily and politically as frontier communities under Spanish rule during the Chichimeca Wars.

### **Acámbaro**

Acámbaro was subjugated by the Tarascan Triple Alliance sometime in 1440.<sup>555</sup> Like the other multiethnic Tarascan polities situated in the borderlands, the ethnic Matlatzinca and Chichimeca groups living in Acámbaro were allowed to elect their own leaders so long as they yielded authority to Tarascan leaders who settled alongside them. This created a tripartite social infrastructure in which “Chichimeca,” Matlatzinca, and Tarascan ethnic groups living in the same territory could exercise their own form of government in this borderland so long as they obeyed the Cazonci’s officials. Two of these were the *caracha capacha*, who was one of four

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<sup>552</sup> Lefebvre, “Acámbaro, en los confines,” 81.

<sup>553</sup> Pollard, *Tariacuri’s Legacy*, 171.

<sup>554</sup> Amy J. Hirshman, “‘Valor, Skill, and Resistance’: Tarascan Opposition to Aztec Ambitions.” *General Anthropology* 22, no. 2 (Fall 2015), 1-5.

<sup>555</sup> Lefebvre, “Acámbaro, en los confines,” 74.

administrators who oversaw the Tarascans' four frontiers, and the *ocanbecha* who was charged with collecting tribute, counting the population, and managing public works.<sup>556</sup> Archeological evidence attests to the autonomy enjoyed by the people of Acámbaro since Tarascan cultural and religious influence in this region was extremely limited.<sup>557</sup> The people of Acámbaro also had their own administrative officials. According to the *Tasción del Bachillar Juan de Ortega* of 1528, they not only had their own principal but also a translator who understood Nahuatl language.<sup>558</sup> This likely facilitated trade with the Mexica as archeological evidence reveals the presence of Aztec traders, or *pochtecas*, in the region who traded with Tarascan merchants who, unlike the Aztecs, were officially considered to government agents.<sup>559</sup> By no means was Acámbaro a miniscule polity as estimates of the population, which mostly lived in the Cerro del Chivo summit, once estimated to at least 6,000 in the years of 1450-1520. Gorenstein points out that at the time the *relación geográfica* that included Acámbaro was produced, it was one of four cabeceras in the Celaya region with thirteen subject barrios.<sup>560</sup> In comparison, some parts of Acámbaro were more populated than the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin, which numbered to about 3000-5000 people.<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>556</sup> Gorenstein, *Acambaro*, 103

<sup>557</sup> Lefebvre, "Acámbaro, en los confines," 84-85.

<sup>558</sup> Gorenstein, *Acambaro*, 24.

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-105. According to Gorenstein, "But unlike the *pochteca* who constituted a private guild, the Tarascan merchants were civil servants, that is, they were government merchants with government directives."

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*, 103

After the Cazonci submitted to Cortés, Acámbaro was officially incorporated as the pueblo of San Francisco Acámbaro in 1526.<sup>562</sup> In 1538, Hernán Pérez de Bocanegra became the first encomendero of this region and he also served as the alcalde of the Chichimeca frontier until 1542. Acámbaro, once a Tarascan borderland, became part of the first Chichimeca frontier territories of New Spain that also included Queretaro and Apaseo. According to Mariana Alejo Cárdenas and Falcón Gutiérrez, Acámbaro was politically incorporated within a *república de indios* (“republic of Indians”) in this region. Their work suggests that Acámbaro continued to have a measure of political autonomy such that Acámbaro had its own cacique representative, gobernador, jueces ordinarios, regidores, alguaciles, and escribanos with four independent cabeceras beneath it: Yrameo, Amacotín, and Atacorín and Eménguaro.<sup>563</sup> This suggests that the Spanish preserved the traditional pre-Hispanic leadership in Acámbaro just like in other parts of the Tarascan state.

The multiethnic communities in Acámbaro, however, experienced significant political change during Spanish colonization. According to Enrique Gerardo Garnica Calzada and Carmen Dolores Barroso García, the majority of this population once inhabited on the slopes of the Cerro del Chivo mound, which was considered a sacred hill. However, the Spaniards found that the Tarascan, Otomi, and Chichimeca communities were too dispersed for them to administer. Crown officials, with the support of Franciscan missionaries, ordered them to abandon their homes on the hilly terrain and instead populate the *congregaciones* located in the flat terrain located below Cerro del Chivo. The yácata that was once located atop the hill was demolished

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<sup>562</sup> Lefebvre, "Acámbaro, en los confines," 81-82.

<sup>563</sup> Alejo Cárdenas and Gutiérrez, "Una república de indios en la chichimeca," 1792-1794.

and replaced with a cross while the multiethnic communities, which were formerly dispersed, were now concentrated around a church.<sup>564</sup> As I discuss later in this chapter, this transition was met with much resistance from Indigenous commoners and principales.

## **Taximaroa**

Taximaroa, located south of Acámbaro, was a site where the Tarascans engaged in diplomatic relations with Mexican merchants and diplomats to negotiate trade and, in one instance, a temporary alliance so that they could face the encroaching Spaniards. According to Ramón Alonso Pérez Escutia, as the Spanish sieged Tenochtitlan, the Mexica sent embassies to Taximaroa and they were received by its governor, Capacapecho. After the leader questioned the emissaries, he communicated their intentions to the *irecha* Zuangua in Tzintzuntzan who agreed to receive them. This news was delivered to the Cazonci from Taximaroa to Tzintzuntzan. He agreed to listen to them. This process was also replicated when the Spaniards requested to meet with the Cazonci. Interestingly, Capacapecho reportedly sent news to the Zuangua about the Spaniards' coming by sending portraits depicting these strangers. The emissaries shared these with the towns they passed in between Taximaroa and Tzintzuntzan.<sup>565</sup> Interestingly, Capacapecho's name is reminiscent of the *caracha capacha* who were the four principals charged with governing and defending the four frontiers, representing each cardinal direction. It

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<sup>564</sup> Enrique Gerardo Garnica Calzada and Carmen Dolores Barroso García, "Urbanismo y territorio: el caso del pueblo de Acámbaro, Guanajuato," *Jóvenes en la Ciencia: Revista de divulgación científica* 3, no. 2 (2017), 2035-2038.

<sup>565</sup> Pérez Escutia, *Taximaroa*, 54-56

is possible that he was one of these four principals as it is known that the residence of one of the governors was in Taximaroa.<sup>566</sup>

During the first contact with the Spaniards, Taximaroa's political significance as a frontier settlement where Tarascans practiced diplomacy endured. The Spanish invaders continued to honor Taximaroa as an entry point to the Tarascan capital when Cortés first sent a caravan of messengers to this village in order to request a meeting with the Cazonci in 1521.<sup>567</sup> Taximaroa was also where Cristobal de Olid and his Mexica allies first appeared as they requested to meet with the Cazonci in 1522 during their second incursion into Tarascan territory.<sup>568</sup> Over a decade later, Taximaroa also as a jurisdictional frontier for the Church as it was recognized as part of the limits of the Bishopric of Michoacán in 1535.<sup>569</sup>

After Antonio de Carvajal conducted his visitation of the lands in Michoacán from 1523-1524 to distribute them to the Spaniards as encomiendas, Gonzálo de Salazar became Taximaroa's first *encomendero* on July 24, 1524.<sup>570</sup> Ramón Alonso Pérez Escutia observes that this territory was highly disputed due to political rivalries between allies of Hernán Cortés and Nuño de Guzmán. At first, the land was confiscated by crown officials and Cortés had it reassigned it to a Diego López Pacheco. While the land was given to Pacheco, it was recognized

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<sup>566</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>567</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 29.

<sup>568</sup> Hirshman, "Tarascan Opposition to Aztec Ambitions," 4.

<sup>569</sup> Navarro-López and Urquijo Torres, "La frontera en el septentrión," 99. The limits of the Obispado de Michoacán were established on July 30, 1535 by the Second Audiencia acting on a royal decree by Carlos V. Its limits included Taximaroa, Maravatío, Yuririapúndaro, Purandiro, Aratza, Tlazazalca, Jacona, Periban, Tancítaro, La Huacana and Tuzantla.

<sup>570</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 134-135; Pérez Escutia, *Taximaroa*, 59.

by the surveyor bachiller Juan de Ortega as one of Cortés's properties in 1528, which reflected personal allegiances rather than encomienda tutelage. Guzmán intervened on September 18, 1529 and had the land once again under the jurisdiction of Salazar. This land remained within Salazar's family until 1612.<sup>571</sup> These changes in the encomienda of Taximaroa were likely due to multiple complaints Guzmán and other Spaniards leveled against Cortés regarding his slow distribution of encomiendas as well as the charge that he held too many of the best lands in Michoacán for himself.<sup>572</sup> Similar to Acámbaro, Taximaroa was also a vast territory and the tributes that were paid to encomiendas are lost in the historical record.

As in Acámbaro, the Indigenous peoples in Taximaroa also underwent numerous political reconfigurations and often came into conflict with the Salazar family who sought out extralegal measures to take over their lands. In one instance, Gonzalo tried to take lands specifically reserved for the natives, which prompted the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza in 1543 to send the corregidor of Michoacán, Luis de Leon Romano, to investigate. According to Salazar, these indigenous *vecinos* (the term used to refer to residents living in these territories) were simply selling him barren lands that were of no use to them. In 1544, the commissioner approved the sale, much to the viceroy's suspicion. He requested Romano to verify the conditions in which the lands were taken, which resulted in him nullifying the sale due to an unknown technicality. The Salazars also received concessions for acquiring Indigenous labor and livestock, especially

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<sup>571</sup> Pérez Escutia, *Taximaroa*, 59-61. The land was then passed on to his son Juan Velázquez de Salazar after Gonzalo de Salazar's death in 1553. Doña María Urdiñola, the wife of Juan Velázquez de Salazar then sold the land to a don Joseph Magallón in 1612, thereby ending the Salazar family's title in Taximaroa.

<sup>572</sup> Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, 160.

during 1524-1569.<sup>573</sup> Perhaps the most significant changes came in the mid-sixteenth century when colonial authorities increasingly pressured the natives to resettle into *congregaciones* from 1550-1564 and again from 1593-1605 in order to easily administer them, to provide them with religious instruction, as well as to collect tribute.<sup>574</sup>

Under Spanish rule, both Acámbaro and Taximaroa continued to function as political frontier territories although they lost many of the privileges they once held as borderlands of the Tarascan state. As Chichimeca frontier territories, they were no longer exempt from paying formal tribute and, instead, were required to labor in Spanish-owned mines, sugar mills, haciendas, and fields under the *encomienda* and *repartimiento*. Like their Tarascan counterparts in other parts of Michoacán, they suffered from the abuses of *repartimiento* labor, population decimation, epidemics, violence in the midst of the Chichimeca Wars, and displacement from their homelands when forced to live in *congregaciones*. Nesvig observes that during this period, the entire province of Michoacán, for that matter, functioned as a political frontier because the *encomenderos* in this region who committed abuses against Indigenous people were largely devoid of any political oversight or repercussions for their actions.<sup>575</sup> The Indigenous noblemen transitioned accordingly under this new political order. These new governing masculinities blending traditional codes of conduct rooted in pre-Hispanic customs with colonial Spanish expectations of rulership.

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<sup>573</sup> Pérez Escutia, *Taximaroa*, 63-64.

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>575</sup> Nesvig, *Promiscuous Power*, 3; 40.



## TARASCAN & SPANISH EXPECTATIONS OF THE INDIGENOUS ELITE

Into the end of the century, the Spanish crown continued to award political posts to recognized members of the Indigenous nobility in Michoacán. Many of the expectations placed on these noblemen mirrored many of the same qualities that their pre-Hispanic predecessors expected of them. For instance, a decree by the viceroy Luis de Velasco issued in 1594 in which he announced the awarding of the position of juez gobernador of Taximaroa to Francisco de los Ángeles, lists the various expectations entrusted upon the principal. The decree reads:

don Francisco de los Angles Charingua, native Indian and principal of the pueblo of Taxiquaro, subject to Capula. As the said juez gobernador you are in charge and in care of the protection and good treatment of the natives, that they receive Christian doctrine and listen to mass at the times they are obligated and they go and benefit their milpas and fields at the necessary times; and not take excessive tribute; are not carried by *tamemes* (porters)...do not allow *derramas* (unofficial taxes), do not post Indians as escribanos nor work belonging to Spaniards; to avoid drunkenness and making pulque, non-conjugal sex and other sins publicly done in offense to god our lord, punishing those who commit these excesses and to have a baton of justice I give power and faculty to which rights are required. Don Luis Velasco.<sup>576</sup>

Notably, many of these expectations are similar to the expectations desired of Indigenous principals that are mentioned in the *Relación*. As I discuss in the following section, Tarascan principals were expected to not be abusive to the natives and were also urged to ensure that their subjects attended to religious duties. The *Relación* also warned that principales should abstain from excessive drunkenness and sexual indulgence. Yet, the above mentioned decree also represents a sharp break from traditions of Indigenous governance. Previously, in Taximaroa as well as in other parts of the Tarascan state, locals were governed by principals who originated from their own villages but Don Francisco de los Ángeles was an outsider from the pueblo of

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<sup>576</sup> Paredes Martínez, “Y Por mi visto,” 426.

Taxiquaro. This represented some of the few ways in governance in the former Tarascan state and its borderlands became altered in early colonial Michoacán.

### **Expectations of Indigenous Elites in Pre-Hispanic Times**

The *Relación de Michoacán* describes the various qualities that were expected from Indigenous principals who occupied posts below the Cazonci. According to the chapters describing the selection of new caciques (chiefs), the *Relación* states that that when these principals died their successor was always chosen amongst his male relatives who included his brothers, sons, or nephews. The successor was someone who was expected to be the most discrete, the one who expressed the most sorrows (*el que tiene más tristezas consigo*), who was the most experienced, and also the most obedient. After the new cacique was selected, he was given “insignias of honor” (*insignias de honra*) that included golden lip plugs, golden earrings, and bracelets. In addition to sending people to war, the Cazonci expected these men to attend to religious duties by gathering firewood to honor the gods in the temples and also to pray in the houses of the priests. The caciques were also urged to display generosity to their people, the commoners, by inviting them to eat with them and by not committing abuses or excesses against them.<sup>577</sup> In exchange, the people were urged to display their obedience to these principals who promised not to be lazy or “asleep tossed against a corner.” They were said to declare that they were their both subjects’ mothers and fathers, stating, “*mira que yo sería vuestro padre y vuestra madre.*”<sup>578</sup> While the *Relación* claimed that the caciqueship was a strictly male occupation, another chapter in the text relates that at one point the ruler of Tzacapu—which was where the

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<sup>577</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 150-151; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 32.

<sup>578</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 152; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 34.

Uacúsecha-Chichimecas originated—was once ruled by a female cacique called Quenomen who wielded a war club and shield. This apparently sparked outrage as the *Relación* claims that the founder of the Tarascan state, Tariácuri, absconded this woman by stating that she should be taking care of children if not that she ought to be executed and thrown into a river.<sup>579</sup>

Nevertheless, the notion that caciques should be men surely aligned with the expectations of the new colonial government which expected Indigenous rulers to be obedient males with exemplary qualities.

Caciques, who were charged with overseeing a village, were just one of many political posts that Indigenous noblemen could acquire. The first chapter in the first part of the *Relación* lists over forty political posts that men occupied beneath the Cazonci and these included the gobernador, captain general, and the ocámbecha (tribute collector and census taker) (See Appendix 1). The second chapter lists the eleven different positions occupied by the male priests. Interestingly, the same chapter does not discuss the role of female religious authorities although the surviving fragment of the first part of the *Relación* describes a priestesses who stood in for the earth goddess Cuerauáperi and also women who selected slaves to be sacrificed in ceremonies dedicated to her honor. The third chapter outlined domestic positions occupied by female authorities who lived in the house of the Cazonci. There was one who oversaw all of them, known as the *yveri*, and the chapter described the various roles these women performed which included preparing the Cazonci's meals, watching over his slaves, and guarding his

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<sup>579</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 91; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 187.

jewelry (See Appendix 2).<sup>580</sup> Interestingly, six of the positions occupied by principals mentioned in the first chapter of the *Relación* were listed as still being practiced at the time that the text was published (See Table 6.1). Eleven of these positions were listed as still active at least two decades since the Spaniards first came into contact with the Tarascans, although the passages suggest that some of these roles changed significantly. For instance, the *uaxanoti* who used to oversee all of the Cazonci's messengers, simply served as letter carriers after the Spanish conquest. Other posts, which traditionally provided tribute to the Cazonci and his principals now provided these goods to Spanish encomenderos. The first position listed as still active were the tribute collectors and census takers called the *ocámbecha*. There were also the *uaruri*, who oversaw the collection of fish as well as the chief leather worker who made boots and pelts, the *cutzuri*. There was also an official known as the *pucuriquari* was in charge of overseeing the people who collected wood from the mountains, which were used to make boards, beams, and other materials.<sup>581</sup> The fact that many of these posts survived suggests that some principals were able to conserve a measure of their authority under the Spanish conquest.

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<sup>580</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 131-139; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 11-19.

<sup>581</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 131-135; Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 11-15.

Table 5.1. Administrative Positions listed as still active in the *Relación de Michoacán*, Part 3, Chapter 1.

Ocámbecha	<i>There are others called ocámbecha, who are charged with counting the people, and bringing them together for public works, and collecting taxes; they each have an entrusted neighborhood...now many times, in [exchange] for the tribute, they ask too much of the people in charge, and they take it away, and they come many times to take tributes from the people, especially gold and silver.</i>
“Mayordomo mayor”	<i>There was another mayordomo mayor, deputy over all the officials in charge of making houses, that were more than one thousand: another thousand to novate the temples...of these there still are many.</i>
Cacari	<i>There was another called cacari, deputy of all the stonecutters...of these there are still many each with their own role.</i>
Uaruri	<i>There was another called uaruri, deputy on all the fishermen of the net who were in charge of bringing fish to the cazonci and all the lords...This said uaruri still has this habit of collecting the fish from the fishermen, although not in as much quantity as in their time.</i>
Cutzuri	<i>There was another called cutzuri, senior leather pelt maker [of baldrés<sup>582</sup>], who made leather boots for the cazonci; He still has his occupation.</i>
Uzquarerecuri	<i>There was another called uzquarecuri, deputy over all the feather workers that dressed the vestments of the gods in plumes and made the feather works for dances. Today there still are these feather workers.</i>
Pucuriquari	<i>There was another called pucuriquari, deputy on all those who guarded the mountains, who were in charge of cutting beams and making boards and other wooden material of the mountains...There is still here in Michoacán this pucuriquari.</i>
Parícuti	<i>...and there was another called parícuti, the senior boatman who had his people assigned to paddle and today these still exist.</i>
Uaxanoti	<i>There was another called uaxanoti, a deputy over all the messengers and mails, who were there in the courtyard of the cazonci for when they were needed to be sent to some other part, and now they serve by carrying letters.</i>
Urani atari	<i>There was another deputy who oversaw those who paint gourds named urani atari, to which there still are.</i>

Source: Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 131-135.

The *Relación* also describes the Tarascans as Spanish subjects. This relationship was likely described by Don Pedro Cuiniarángari since the text continually cites his testimony and

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<sup>582</sup> It is likely that here the *Relación's* author equated the material used for making the skin as *baldrés* also spelled as *baldés*, which referred to a flimsy, soft, tanned sheep skin, often used to make gloves. Source: Real Academia Española, <https://dle.rae.es/?id=4sYNWuu>

describes him as the acting governor of Michoacán. In the passage describing Don Pedro's marriage ceremony, the Tarascans are described as both brothers and vassals to the Spaniards who were prepared to attend to their every need to the point where they literally found themselves "foaming at the mouth." (CR 37; Alcalá 154) These newly established ties are described in kinship terms and is also related by the women given to the Spanish envoys sent by Hernán Cortés who first visited the Cazonci. After these women slept with the Spanish men, they reportedly began calling them *tarascue*, or in-laws, which was the term the Spaniards used to call them *tarascos*. The text relates that the natives were initially uncomfortable being called *tarascos*, although, a closer reading of the corresponding text suggests that this was not because they did not want to be called in-laws:

...y los españoles antes que se fuesen llevaron dos indias consigo que le pidieron al Cazonci de sus parientas, y por el camino juntábanse con ellas y llamaban los indios que iban con ellos a los españoles tarascue, que quiere decir en su lengua yernos y de allí ellos después emperzaron a poner este nombre a los indios y en lugar de llamarles tarascue, llamaronlos tarasco, el cual nombre tienen ahora y las mujeres tarascas. Y córrense mucho destes nombres. Dicen que de allí les vino, de aquellas mujeres primeras que llevaron los españoles a México, cuando nuevamente vinieron a esta provincia.<sup>583</sup>

...and the Spaniards, before leaving took two Indian women with them that they asked from the Cazonci and her parents, and along the road they laid with these women and the Indians who went with them called the Spaniards tarascue, which means in-laws in their language and henceforth they began calling the Indians by this name and instead of calling them tarascue, they called them Tarasco, which is what they call them now and the women are called tarascas. And they shy away from these names. They say it came from then, from the first women who the Spaniards took to Mexico, when they first came to this province.

The above mentioned text suggests that the Tarascans were not embarrassed that they were called in-laws, or *tarascos*, rather they were uncomfortable with the notion that the term was

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<sup>583</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 182.

given to them from the women that were given to the Spaniards as concubines. This passage suggests an uncomfortable power dynamic in which the Tarascans did not want to be defined by a relationship in which their Uacúsecha-Chichimeca forefathers were sexually dominated by another group. As discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, the entire second part of the *Relación* depicted narratives of Uacúsecha lords who received wives from the groups that they dominated. However, the chapter describing the women given to Cortés's men is the only part in the manuscript where the descendants of these "Chichimecas" were shown providing another group with women. In phallogentric terms, the *Relación* conveys that when the Tarascans gave women to the Spaniards this symbolized their defeat. Through recognizing their kinship status as maternal in-laws, they also recognized the skewed power dynamics that characterized them as conquered subjects.

### **Expectations of the Indigenous Elite Under the Spanish Crown**

As subjects of the new colonial order, the Indigenous principals of Michoacán were allowed to retain their traditional elites, although this policy initially attracted immense debate. According to Esmeralda Lopez Sarrelangue, some Spaniards argued in Aristotelian terms that the Natives should be governed by the wisest and most competent men, which were attributes that the Iberians only saw in themselves. In contrast, the Natives were seen as the least capable of self-government. After all, some felt that the Spaniards offered superior values such as the Christian faith, the great laws of Spain, political virtues, and refined morals. On the other hand, Franciscans like Bartolomé de las Casas argued that Indigenous peoples were better off governing themselves since the conquistadors committed so many abuses against them. Religious writers also argued using Aristotelian logic that the Natives should be ruled by their own best and brightest, which implied that the Crown should retain their pre-Hispanic authorities

who governed before the conquest. Some saw the notion of self-rule amongst the Indigenous peoples as an attack on the *encomienda* since *encomenderos* were responsible for protecting the Natives and with providing them with religious instruction (which they rarely did, if at all). *Encomenderos* felt that if Indigenous peoples were given the right to govern themselves, this undercut their authority over them.<sup>584</sup> Surely, this was the case in the *Proceso* of 1530 in which *encomenderos* complained that they could not get Indigenous peoples to work for them because the *principales* were absent and because the *Cazonci* explicitly ordered the villagers not to obey the Spaniards. Nevertheless, incorporating Indigenous principals as agents of the colonial government was a practical strategy that made them easier to administer. Francisco Quijano Velasco suggests that this policy allowed for a more efficient conformation of New Spain's dominions because it resulted in the incorporation of pre-existing political entities and also facilitated the collection of tribute, "above all in the regions that had rulerships with sophisticated fiscal structures and government."<sup>585</sup> The Tarascan state indeed had the desired characteristics that made Spanish colonization in the region desirable since it had a bureaucratic infrastructure characterized by men in stratified positions of government.

To facilitate a smoother transition to the Spanish colonial system, on May 26, 1543, the crown issued a *cedula* that laid out a series of regulations regarding the *repartimiento*, taxation, and treatment of Natives in New Spain. According to the document, Indigenous people were supposed to be paid when they worked under the *repartimiento*. Another section stipulated that the Crown as well aware of many complaints they received regarding excessive tribute demands

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<sup>584</sup> López Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro*, 83-86.

<sup>585</sup> Quijano Velasco, "La conformación de Nueva España y sus fronteras," 96-97.



from Natives and the King urged that they should be taxed less than they were in Pre-Hispanic times. The Crown also ordered for the implementation of a system where tribute collections would be made transparent and commanded that a record book of tributes should be kept and made available for all the principales and caciques to see.<sup>586</sup> These record books would be referred to as the *tasación* in the cases described in this chapter. While many of the orders stipulated in the cedula reflected the King's intention to address numerous hardships faced by Indigenous peoples, many of the laws were broken, if not ignored.

In 1557, the Crown issued another order that sought to empower Indigenous authorities and their descendants in New Spain. The royal decree stipulated that the Crown would recognize the political authority of traditional Indigenous elites so long as they submitted to the authority of the crown. However, Spanish authorities were careful to explicitly differentiate their titles as *caciques* and *principales* because were reluctant to afford them with the distinctive titles of *reyes* (kings) or *señores* (lords) that were reserved for Spanish authorities. These titles were distinctly given to Indigenous elites in New Spain as the term *cacique* was appropriated from Natives in the island of Hispaniola. López Sarrelangue notes that while *cacique* generally referred to a chief, it was equivalent to the Spanish title of duque, marqués, or conde. Any Indigenous noble or authority who held a political post below the cacique were generally referred to as *principales* (principals).<sup>587</sup> Not all caciques were able to retain their noble status throughout the sixteenth century. The majority ended up poor and did not have the resources to pay for petitions in which

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<sup>586</sup> "Cedula containing ordinances regulating repartimientos, tax collection, and the treatment of Indians in New Spain", May 26, 1543, MS 1226, Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>587</sup> López Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro*, 85-87.

they could attempt to pass on their claims as principales on to their relatives. There are also, however, many documented cases of principals who were able to retain their status and acquired substantial wealth under colonial rule.<sup>588</sup>

Caciques and principales in Michoacán did not always represent the best interests of their people. Numerous complaints were brought against them for the abuses they committed against commoners such as enslavement, collecting excessive tribute (which was illegal), and receiving daughters as a form of tribute. Some principals also circumvented Spanish laws when they hid people in order to avoid paying taxes and also when they imposed illegal unofficial taxes known as *derramas*.<sup>589</sup> Complaints and petitions against corrupt principals came from the commoners themselves as well as friars, encomenderos, and visitadores.<sup>590</sup> In Acámbaro, a complaint was ordered in 1552 against its gobernador on behalf of various “Chichimecas” who said he demanded excessive amounts of tribute. They state that although they were only required to provide eight pesos worth of gold in tribute that the principal demanded thirty pesos, which prompted the viceroy to intervene and issue a decree ordering him to stop.<sup>591</sup> Similarly, in a 1590 case in Taximaroa, macehuales complained that their principals were levying excessive *derramas* under the false pretext that they were being used to build a church. The viceroy ordered these

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<sup>588</sup> Ibid., 85-88.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>591</sup> Paredes Martínez, “*Y Por mi visto*,” 96.

principals to pay back this money to the commoners and ordered them to be punished if the corregidor found evidence of wrongdoing.<sup>592</sup>

Complaints leveled against corrupt Indigenous principals not only came from Michoacán but also other parts of New Spain such as Tlaxcala, which prompted the crown to pass a series of laws that were meant to “emancipate” the macehuales.<sup>593</sup> In 1550 and 1557, two orders were issued that sought to protect the commoners from the principales by allowing them the right to work voluntarily, with pay, and with days off.<sup>594</sup> These laws that sought to “emancipate the commoners” (*emancipación de los macehuales*) had the effect of also crippling the power and influence of the Indigenous nobility both in Michoacán and Tlaxcala because this reduced these nobles’ abilities to gather laborers who could increase the value of their properties and wealth.<sup>595</sup> From a psycho-historical perspective, one might be led to speculate if these excesses could also be read as a desperate attempt by elite Indigenous men to retain their power as they faced the slow and gradual decline of their political power. Yet, the hardships experienced by the commoners—the macehuales (or in Tarascan language, the *purépecha*)—should not lead one to sympathize with the abusive principals.

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<sup>592</sup> Ibid., 334-335.

<sup>593</sup> Andrea Martínez Baracs, *Un gobierno de indios: Tlaxcala, 1519-1750* (México, D.F.: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social; Fideicomiso Colegio de Historia de Tlaxcala; Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2014), 182-183.

<sup>594</sup> López Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro*, 94. The 1550 order obligated that wages should be paid to the commoners and not to the principales, insinuating that principals were taking money from hard-working commoners.

<sup>595</sup> Martínez Baracs, *Un gobierno de indios*, 182-183.

Under the colonial system, principales could attain various positions of administrative authority and each title came with its own set of expectations and responsibility. These titles included the cacique, the gobernador, alcalde, regidor, and principal. Perhaps the greatest title was that of the cacique who was charged with various duties which included protecting the macehuales, overseeing other appointed leaders, defending the assets of the caciqueship and Spanish government, and sometimes settling land disputes. The gobernador was charged with overseeing religious activities; obligating commoners to attend church and school; jailing drunkards, idolaters, and public sinners; made sure that the rules of the markets were followed; defended the commoners; and gathered voluntary workers to repair the churches. Alcaldes, who were instituted in some parts of Michoacán in 1540, were charged with carrying out the laws known as ordenanzas that pertained to Indigenous peoples. Regidores were responsible for maintaining peace and order. Lastly, there were the principales. While principales were generally used to refer to all Indigenous nobles and administrators, those with the title of principal were obligated to defend claims to Indigenous lands by maintaining knowledge of which lands belonged to whom. Principales, moreover, could gather and were considered members of the governing bodies of their communities. According to López Sarrelangue, in some parts of Michoacán some of them fed commoners daily since pre-Hispanic customs obligated them to practice hospitality.<sup>596</sup> Indeed, this resonates with the expectation in the *Relación* urging principals not to be stingy and share their food with the common people.

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<sup>596</sup> López Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro*, 146-148.

## **Principals' Articulations of Governing Masculinity Under the New Colonial Order**

Governing on behalf of the Spanish crown came with incentives as it provided Indigenous principals in Michoacán with both new and old ways of displaying their power as male authorities. López Sarrelangue provides two categories of benefits that male authorities could acquire under the new system, which she distinguishes between privileges of honor and privileges of benefit. Privileges of honor refers to how Indigenous principals distinguished themselves by rank, social status, and dress. For instance, Tarascan elites could attain various rights including: the title of “don,” the permission to wear Spanish dress, the ability to bear arms, and ownership of horses and mules. Privileges of benefit refer to the material benefits that were exclusive to Indigenous nobles, which included a salary in exchange for their service, the right to collect tribute, the ability to acquire an office, and land ownership.<sup>597</sup> As I describe in the following section, these displays of governing masculinity can also be read as a continuation of the ways in which Indigenous principals in Michoacán continued to distinguish themselves and demonstrate their authority since before the Spanish conquest.

Into the late sixteenth century, there are documented cases of Tarascan men who were able to acquire substantial wealth and privileges as they occupied offices rooted in their own Pre-Hispanic traditions. For instance, in Tarascan society artists known as *carariecha* were associated with the Indigenous nobility and there is evidence that suggests that they continued to be recognized as principales into the turn of the century. Afanador-Pujol cites the 1590 case of a freelance Indigenous artist named Francisco de Arévalo whose adulterous activities with a Spaniard's wife prompted the courtroom to conduct an inventory of his home. The case revealed

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<sup>597</sup> Ibid., 111-112

that the artist commissioned many works, was educated, could write, owned a book written in Purépecha, and owned Spanish clothing.<sup>598</sup> These possessions were indicators of his noble status since access to education was exclusive to Indigenous principals instead of commoners. The office of the feather worker (*plumajero*), which was cited as still existent at the time that the *Relación* was written, appears in a different case in the same year.<sup>599</sup> Jusepe Cuirixan, a feather worker, successfully petitioned the viceroy for an exemption from the repartimiento labor draft on the basis that he was “occupied with certain works pertaining to his office.”<sup>600</sup> This indicates that such positions not only could help secure these men with wealth but also exemptions from forced labor practices.

Indigenous women and their children who were married to established men could also acquire substantial wealth from their marriage partners. When Catalina Nispo’s husband Anton Cuiris passed away, he wrote a testament in Purépecha that his wife later asked to be translated into Spanish for legal purposes (See Figure 5.3). The testament reveals that her late husband’s home was passed on to her and her children. He also ordered for his children to be educated by a tutor named Fernando Gutiérrez, who was most likely a monk since these men were usually charged with educating the sons of Indigenous principals. Curis’s will indicated that a donation from his assets should be used to pay one peso to the Augustinian monastery. His children’s education was to be paid from the extensive list of debtors recorded on his will.<sup>601</sup> Similarly, in

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<sup>598</sup> Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán*, 30-34.

<sup>599</sup> Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán*, 133.

<sup>600</sup> Caja 4, Exp. 391, 20 diciembre 1590, AHCP.

<sup>601</sup> Caja 5, Exp. 7, 6 a 10 julio 1591, AHCP.

Taximaroa, there is an account of one female principal who also had the privilege of accumulating wealth from the assets of their husband. A mandamiento recorded on September 7, 1593, records that a Doña Inez Xarinze from Taximaroa sold two tracts of land to a don Thomas, who was also a Native principal as well as to a Juan Velazquez de Salazar. The order recognizing the sale does not state how extensive these lands were or for how much they were purchased for. The order does note that both tracts of land were located in two distinct pueblos that were subject to Taximaroa, which were Tuspa and Tacenbaro and also that they were large enough to be used for raising horses and *ganado menor*, which usually referred to small farm animals such as chickens and sheep.<sup>602</sup>

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<sup>602</sup> Paredes Martínez, “*Y Por mi visto*,” 405.

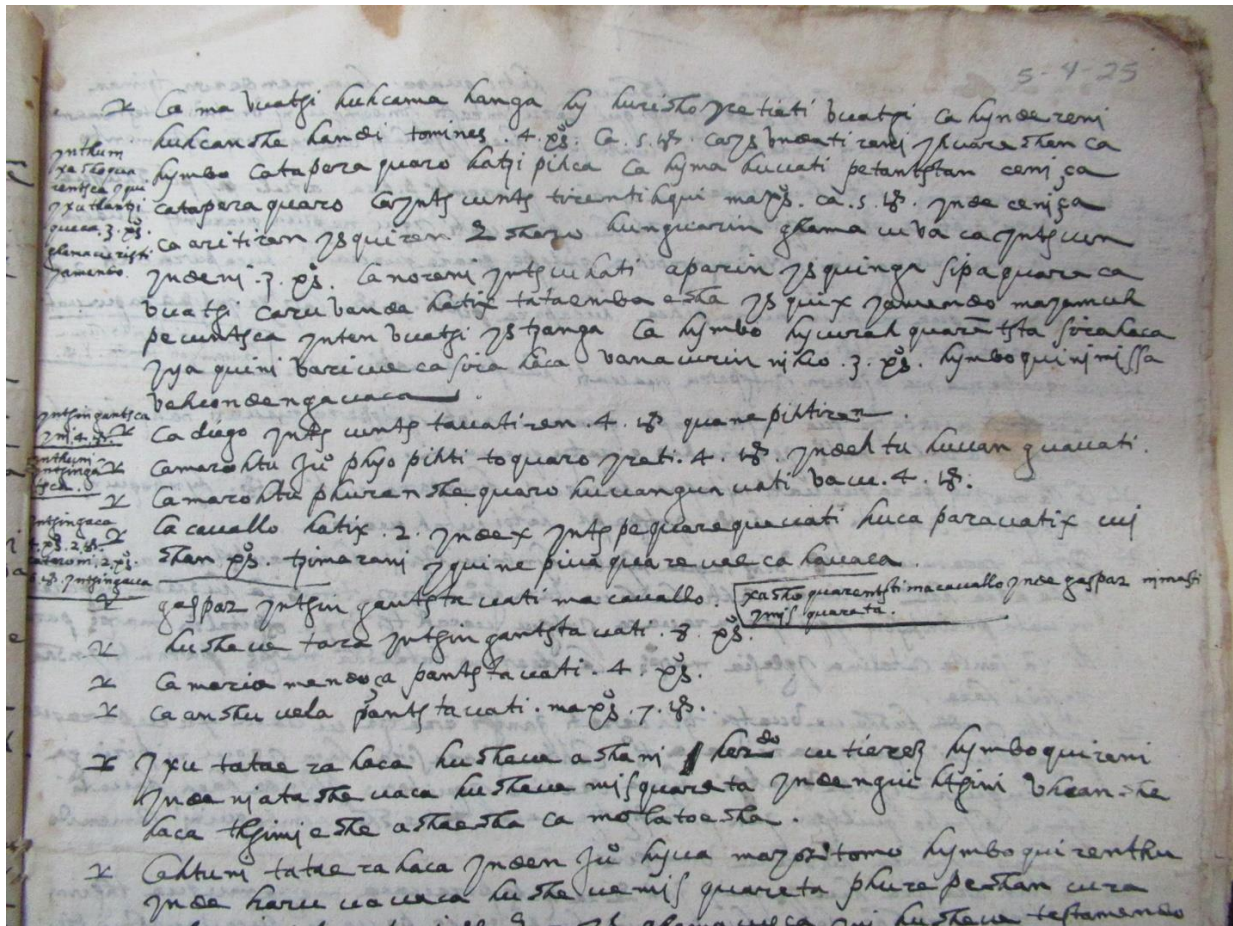


Figure 5.3. Excerpt from Antón Curis's will written in Purépecha. Source: Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad de Pátzcuaro. Caja 5, expediente 4. 6 a 10 de julio de 1591.

Indigenous principals in Michoacán also took advantage of their right to petition the viceroy for the ability to use a horse and to carry a weapon. This was necessary because in New Spain, it was illegal for Indigenous people to ride horses, carry daggers, swords, or wear Spanish clothing unless they were provided with a license allowing them to do so. An Indigenous person caught riding a horse without a license could be sentenced to receiving two-hundred lashes in public along with the confiscation of the animal.<sup>603</sup> The possession of a horse was perhaps one of

<sup>603</sup> López Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro*, 120.



most visible distinctions that separated Indigenous nobles from commoners. Many elites received the privilege of riding horses during the advent of the Chichimeca Wars that began in the 1550s. A sample of one hundred and fourteen licenses awarded to principales in Michoacán from the 1550s to the 1590s indicates that noblemen who resided near the Chichimeca frontier communities, in what was once the Tarascan borderlands, also requested and received access to horses and weapons (See Appendix 3). In eleven of these mandamientos, principales from the boundary regions of Acámbaro (6), Taximaroa (3), and Yuririapundaro (4) were given licenses to possess horses. Don Cristobal, a principal from Acámbaro, was distinctly awarded by the viceroy in 1551 with a license to also carry a sword, dagger, and to wear Spanish clothing “without penalty” in recognition of his role in helping to “pacify” New Spain.<sup>604</sup> This suggests that he was awarded for his participation in the Spaniards’ violent campaigns to conquer the Mexican center-west throughout the century.

For governing elites in Tarascan society, the horse not only invoked a symbol of status but also masculinity as well as destructive, mythological qualities. López Sarrelangue argues that the horses and other four-legged animals were emblems of maleness in Spanish culture that were also appropriated by Indigenous principals in Michoacán. On the one hand, ownership of mules represented economic capabilities since owning these animals suggested that they would be used to tend to extensive lands. Horses, on the other hand, were desired for the spirit and prestige they invoked in the rider who felt the vitality of a warrior and conqueror. As best stated by López Sarrelangue, riding the horse provided the rider with the feeling as if he was fused with the animal, as if they were a centaur. The ability to ride a horse in itself was a symbol of masculinity

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<sup>604</sup> Paredes Martínez, “*Y Por mi visto*,” 42.

in Spanish culture. She points out that the term generally used to refer to men in Spanish culture, *caballero*—which is synonymous with the English term “gentleman”—suggests one’s ability to own, tame, and ride a horse.<sup>605</sup> Indeed, the desire to ride and own a horse is evident in numerous cases throughout Michoacán describing the roles of Indigenous men who stole horses from other principals as well as from the Spaniards.<sup>606</sup> Various passages in the *Relación* describe the Tarascans’ fascination with the curious animals. The Mexican envoys who sought military support from the Tarascans brought reports to the Cazonci about their engagements with the strange men riding deer dressed in a strange metallic coat.<sup>607</sup> The Aztec messengers also conveyed that the horses resembled a creature depicted in one of their legends. According to this story, the son of a god exhumed his dead father’s corpse and when he accidentally dropped the cadaver it turned into a deer “with a mane on its neck and a long tail like those that come with the strange people.” The animal then proceeded to run east, disappearing into the direction from which the Spaniards came.<sup>608</sup> The text also states that the Tarascans who first observed the Spaniards’ interactions with the horses initially believed that the horses knew how to talk and that they understood how to speak to the Spaniards since they responded to their commands.<sup>609</sup> Horses in the *Relación* also represented the conquest of the Tarascan state as the Cazonci was executed after Nuño de Guzmán ordered him to be dragged alive by the tail of a horse as a crier

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<sup>605</sup> López Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro*, 118-120.

<sup>606</sup> Martínez Baracs and Espinosa Morales, *La vida michoacana en el siglo XVI*. For example, see cases 106, 111, 324, 386, 474, 479, 487.

<sup>607</sup> Craine and Reindorp, *The Chronicles of Michoacán*, 61.

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>609</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

yelled, “People, look! This stupid fool tried to kill us. He has been tried an this sentence was handed down against him...Look at him, see the example.”<sup>610</sup> In these scenarios, the horse were powerful symbols of the supernatural whose presence signaled the end of the Tarascan state.

### **GOVERNING MASCULINITIES ON THE FRONTIER**

Apaseo, a pueblo subject to Acámbaro, was one of many of the former Tarascan border provinces that used to enjoy a measure of relative autonomy. However, as one case demonstrates, this sovereignty was disrupted not only by the Spanish conquistadors but also their Tarascan counterparts who once governed over them. On December 16, 1560, the Otomí principales of Apaseo field a petition to protest the removal of an alguacil named Juan Yoquah. The petition appears to show that these Otomí principals requested the viceroy to provide them with Yoquah as a Nahuatl-speaking translator. While the petition does not provide any other details about this case, the principals accuse the Tarascans ordering the removal of Yoquah:

Nosotros todos los principales y maceguals otomis del rio parecemos ante vuestra merced diziendo que el señor visorrey proveyo a Juan Yoquah por alguazil del rrio a peticion nuestra para quenos favoreciese y ayudase por ser persona tal y entender la lengua mexicana del qual rrecebimos ayuda y estamos consolados y agora los tarascos quieren que vuestra merced nos lo quite por tanto pedimos no se permita se nos quite pues no ay causa para ello pues sola passion no es bastante.<sup>611</sup>

We the principales and maceguals otomis of [Apaseo of] the river present ourselves unto your majesty to say that the viceroy provided for Juan Yoquah as the alguazil of [Apaseo del Rio] by our petition so that you may favor us and help us because he is the said person who understands the Mexican language of which allows us to receive help and we are consoled and now the Tarascans want your majesty to take him away which prompted us to ask you not to permit this because there is no reason for passion is not enough.

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<sup>610</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>611</sup> Caja 131, Exp. 3, 16 de diciembre de 1560, AHCP.

The complaint, interestingly, recognizes the fact that these Otomí principals were well aware of their historic roots in the Apaseo region, as they continue to state, “we are natives and the first on this land which is ours.” These principals cite their roots to the land, which they felt made them eligible for a measure of protection from the viceroy. Yet, they convey the awareness that they lived on the margins of the province of Michoacán. Unlike the Tarascans, who lived in the interior regions of Michoacán, these Otomí principals describe themselves as relatively poorer, which they felt made them more vulnerable to political abuses. The petition concludes in stating:

Y pedimos a vuestra merced por amor de dios no seamos mal tratados de los dichos tarascos pues nosotros somos naturales y primeros en la tierra lo qual es nuestra y ellos senos an entrado y porque seamos pobres no nos ande hazer agravio ni mal tratamiento y por tanto vuestra merced mande hazer la ynformaçion y nos haga justiçia en mandar que el dicho Juan Yoquah este en el dicho pueblo y nos favorezca pues para ello fue traydo y elegido de otro pueblo y tiene madamiento del señor visorrey y paraello y pedimos justicia.

And we ask your majesty by the love of god not to allow us to be mistreated by the said Tarascans for we are natives and the first on this land which is ours and they came in and because we are poor this brings us much hardship nor mistreatment and by your great majesty send to make the order and bring justice in sending the said Juan Yoquah to stay in the said village and to favor us for that was why he was brought and selected from another town and has the authority of the sir viceroy for this effect and we request justice.

Like their counterparts in the interior of Michoacán, nobles from the Tarascan borderlands that became the Spanish Chichimeca frontier also invoked their ties to traditional male elites who administered the borderlands for material and economic privileges. Interestingly, however, their petitions also reflect the deterioration of the relative autonomy these former border provinces once enjoyed under Tarascan rulership. Nevertheless, it also reflects how principals in these frontiers adjusted to the new colonial order. In this section, I focus on cases pertaining to the two former border provinces, Acámbaro and Taximaroa.

## Access to Wealth, Positions of Government, and Repartimiento Exemptions

Indigenous principals certainly had much to benefit from the new colonial order but this also came at the expense of weakening local rule. For instance, the viceroy began to assign principales from other pueblos to serve as judges in places towns they were unfamiliar with. On December 9 1593, the title of juez gobernador for Taximaroa was awarded to don Francisco de la Cerda who was a principal from Pátzcuaro.<sup>612</sup> In the previous year, don Diego del Águila of Taximaroa was awarded the same position for the duration of one year as his successor was in the process of being chosen.<sup>613</sup> While it is unclear why the crown implemented these policies that led to changes in jurisdiction, one might suspect that this was an attempt to curtail corruption amongst the principales.

Alternatively, principales could find themselves commissioned to perform administrative duties in other pueblos that they did not originate from. On the twenty-fourth of October of 1552, the viceroy commanded a principal named Buenaventura to serve as a *juez* (judge) for the pueblo of Tuzantla, located towards the southeast of Taximaroa.<sup>614</sup> In the following month, Don Luis de Velasco officially decreed that he was to serve as the acting judge of Tuzantla which provided him with a yearly salary of fifty pesos a year. His principal duties in the pueblo was to attend to the collection of tribute. He also was charged with making sure that the locals partook in religious instruction, did not engage in drunkenness, or idolatries. However, as a judge, this order

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<sup>612</sup> Paredes Martínez, “Y Por mi visto,” 409.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid., 395.

<sup>614</sup> Ibid., 127-128. Interestingly, this case from Tuzantla was regarding a female principal, doña María, and her brother in law, don Bartolomé, who protested the seizure of assets (*bienes*) belonging to don Diego, the husband of the female litigant.

noted that he was required to physically reside in Tuzantla.<sup>615</sup> While the benefits of being named a judge with a regular salary may have been a benefit of being named a principal, one could only speculate if the viceroy's order that Buenaventura should be forced to move to another pueblo by may have provoked resentment within him. This certainly appears to be the case in a 1593 case where the newly elected governor of Acámbaro Pedro de Águila lived in Taximaroa, prompting the viceroy to order him to move to back to pueblo in which his post was intended.<sup>616</sup>

Orders issued by the viceroy hint that the new colonial order also led to rivalries in the Indigenous political culture in Taximaroa that was largely male dominated. In 1582, various principals denounced the troublesome Martín Pechamo who was referred to as an “indio revoltoso” (unruly Indian) who was the cause of much harm. He was blamed for disturbing the peace in Taximaroa because he encouraged the Natives to initiate various lawsuits (*pleitos*) against each other. For that matter, they argued that Pechamo himself was the “cause and occasion of lawsuits and differences between the natives” and that he only encouraged these people to use the legal system to serve his own interests. What is interesting about this account is that while Pechamo was not as a principal he was accused of levying various unofficial and illegal taxes (*derramas*) which otherwise could only be issued by Indigenous authority figures. The principals claimed that the exorbitant fees that he charged were like *derramas*, allowing him to accumulate many pesos in gold which he simply “consumed and wasted on his own uses and advantages.” Whether Pechamo actually did cause many locals in Taximaroa to go into poverty or if he simply annoyed the principales because of the numerous cases he most of brought upon

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<sup>615</sup> Ibid., 130-131.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid., 397.

them is open to speculation. What is clear is that these principals clearly perceived Pechamo as a threat to their own authority because he understood how to navigate the colonial Spanish legal system and accumulated considerable wealth for the services he provided to litigants.

Political tensions amongst Indigenous male principales are also found in the mandamientos. In 1592, Indigenous leaders in Taximaroa challenged their gobernador's decision to appoint local leaders without consulting the cabildo to hold elections.<sup>617</sup> While the case lacked details regarding the dispute, another complaint issued in the same year clarifies the conflict. According to a principal named Pedro Chaca, the gobernador appointed two men who were previously suspended from taking any political offices by order of the corregidor Francisco de Portillo. The viceroy subsequently ordered Portillo to remove Diego Aracha who was appointed as alcalde and Bautista Tzureque who was regidor.<sup>618</sup> Indeed, this case highlights that Taximaroa's principals were competent in their abilities to seek the viceroy's support in order to validate their own authority.

One of the benefits that noble status offered principals was the ability to be excluded from the repartimiento labor draft. Toward the end of the century in Taximaroa, Indigenous principals became well aware that they could petition for this exemption when they cited their status as principales. A case brought to the viceroy in 1591 pertained to over sixty Indigenous people who each claimed that they were principals and should thus be excluded from working for the Spaniards "as if they were maceguals" (*como si fuesen maceguals*). Perhaps because this was such a large number of petitioners who sought recognition as nobles, the viceroy did not

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<sup>617</sup> Ibid., 384.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid., 476.

initially grant them the exemption and, instead, ordered a corregidor (local magistrate) to investigate whether or not the petitioners were actually principals. This case suggests, however, that kinship ties to local Indigenous nobles was not enough to be guaranteed an exemption from the repartimiento. The decree also ordered that the principals in question could only be excluded from *tequios* and “personal services”—which were both terms that referred to repartimiento labor—so long as they occupied official governing posts in Taximaroa. Once the term of their offices concluded, these principals were ordered to serve the Spaniards as *tequitlato*s just like the commoners.<sup>619</sup>

While citing one’s status as a principal was enough to have some men excluded from the repartimiento, Indigenous men working in Franciscan monasteries in Taximaroa cited their age and religious service as a factor to persuade the viceroy to rule in their favor. In 1591, Andres Felipe complained that various Indigenous authorities have continually pestered to participate in the labor draft, despite the fact that he was a principal and an old man who “was of such age, that it is impossible to attend to personal services.” He also stated that he should be excluded from the repartimiento because he already had an occupation in making habits for the Franciscan monks.<sup>620</sup> Later that year, the viceroy responded to a similar petition by Antonio Felipe who stated that he was a sickly old man over the age of fifty who worked making habits for the Franciscans in Taximaroa. He protested that he was often called to work in the mines of Guanajuato despite the fact that he was over fifty years old and very sick.<sup>621</sup> In both cases, these

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<sup>619</sup> Ibid., 130-131.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid., 362.

<sup>621</sup> Ibid., 453.



petitions were granted by the viceroy. Interestingly, these mandamientos prompts one to suspect if there was a relationship between Andes Felipe and Antonio Felipe. One possibility was that these were the same person and that one of the two petitions might have simply been a misnomer. Since both men had the same last name, they may have been brothers or relatives who both may have taken advantage of their ties to the Franciscan monks to draft a petition requesting them to be excluded from the labor draft. Interestingly, however, Andres invoked his status as a principal in order to bolster his claim to receive the exemption. In contrast, Antonio is not described as a principal, indicating that either he may have been a commoner. Nevertheless, both cases reflect distinct strategies in which Indigenous men were aware that their status as principals or elders with ties to religious institutions could garner them with certain benefits.

### **Principales as Advocates**

Indigenous principals not only used their authority to settle conflicts with other Indigenous men but they also used their power to settle conflicts with Spaniards, often advocating in favor of the commoners. In Taximaroa, the principales supported the *purépechas* by asking the viceroy to settle disputes in which the Spaniards overworked them in the sugar mills. In Acámbaro Indigenous authorities pushed back against excessive tribute demands as well as orders urging the macehuales to work in the mines of Guanajuato and other parts of the Chichimeca frontier. In these accounts, principales do not only emerge as figures only concerned with their own interests but also the well-being of their communities.

One of the earliest formal complaints leveled against encomenderos in Taximaroa is found in the case Gonzalo de Salazar, who was mentioned in the first section of this essay. In addition to Salazar's attempts to use corrupt methods of acquiring lands from the Natives, he was also notorious for exploiting their labor. A 1551 ruling from the viceroy indicates that the

principals of Taximaroa complained that when the commoners worked in Salazar's sugar mills, they produced more crops and clothing than what they were supposed according to the *tasación*. They provided two hundred people to work in his mill and the strenuous work there prompted many people to desert Taximaroa, which in turn has made it harder for them to produce tribute as well as to provide laborers for the repartimiento. As a result, the viceroy ordered Salazar to temporarily stop extracting native laborers from Taximaroa from working in his mills until he could secure a recount of the population and provide a more reasonable number of people who could attend to Salazar's mill.<sup>622</sup>

In Eménguaró, a pueblo subject to Acámbaro, Indigenous authorities also protested unreasonable tribute demands from Franciscans, from other principals in Acámbaro, as well as from Spanish encomenderos. In 1591, the viceroy issued three successive mandamientos that responded to all of these complaints. The first articulated that a Franciscan monastery requested excessive amounts of tithes from the locals, which included chickens, fish, and labor in the form of "services and other things for the needs of the religious men who reside there." The second mandamiento complained that the gobernador, alcaldes, and principales from Acámbaro, which was their head town (*cabecera*) requested a derrama of one and half pesos in gold. They protested this tax because it was not listed in the *tasación*. Moreover, the Indigenous officials from Acámbaro told the principals of Eménguaró that all the funds from the tax would be used for their church and community and that anything leftover would be given to their pueblo, which was promise they felt was unfulfilled. Lastly, the viceroy ordered Nuño de Cháves, the encomendero of Acámbaro, to accept his required tribute in corn in January instead of months

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<sup>622</sup> Ibid., 40-41.

later, when he usually requested it. This made it easier for the locals to provide him with the said tribute because it fell on the months in which they usually collected their harvest. Each of the three requests to relax these tribute and tithe demands pertaining to Eméngaro were approved.<sup>623</sup> However, there is no way of knowing if these orders were actually followed.

The principals of Acámbaro also issued a series of complaints and petitions in the last decade of the sixteenth century to limit the number of laborers they gave to work in the mines in the Chichimecas region. Their laborers were likely in high demand considering their relative proximity to the mines of Ozumatlán and Tlalpujahuá, which was where their complaints originated. From 1590-1591, the viceroy responded to two complaints in which the principales complained that they did not have the capacity to send enough people to work in these locations because their population was substantially weakened and reduced. The people of Acámbaro had to walk six leagues (20.71 miles) to reach the mines while some of their subject pueblos had to walk up to twelve leagues (41.42 miles). Upon reaching their destination, they worked strenuously for two weeks and then had to make the long trek back to their villages.<sup>624</sup> What contributed to these hardships, the complaints note, were the various illnesses that befell their people.<sup>625</sup> These sicknesses may likely have referred to the various plagues that inflicted the Acámbaro region in the latter half of the sixteenth century. In 1570, the *relación geográfica* for Acámbaro stated that its total population numbered to some 2,600 people although it “was once more populous, and due to a pestilence, that occurred generally throughout New Spain four years

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<sup>623</sup> Ibid., 340-341.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid., 464-465.

<sup>625</sup> Ibid., 297.

ago, it diminished and fell in said quantity.”<sup>626</sup> By 1591, the population was recorded at 1,557 although this figure excluded widows.<sup>627</sup> Due to the apparent need to update the amount of forced laborers who would be sent to slave in the mines, the viceroy approved a temporary halt to repartimiento labor in Acámbaro in the mines until a census of the population was conducted.<sup>628</sup>

Despite attempts to push back against the crippling demands of the repartimiento in the early 1590s, the principals of Acámbaro as well as Taximaroa negotiated and settled for reform instead of an overhaul of the strenuous labor in the mines. In Taximaroa, some were fortunate enough to avert laboring in the mines and, instead, were able to petition to work in the sugar mills, although this is not to say that such work was no less exploitative.<sup>629</sup> In the previously mentioned decrees, the viceroy issued temporary labor halts and sought to remedy the Natives’ complaints by enacting policies that would result in less laborers being sent to the mines and—at least on paper—reduce the amount of work they had to perform. These initiatives provoked considerable agitation from the mine owners but also the Indigenous peoples as well.

Minework evidently became a delicate subject in Acámbaro that sparked much protests from its peoples, which prompted the principals to help determine a solution. Two decrees issued in 1591 shows that the repartimiento itself instigated conflicts amongst the people of Acámbaro between those who worked in the mines and those who worked in less strenuous slave labor

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<sup>626</sup> Corona Núñez, *Relaciones geográficas*, Part 1, 56-57.

<sup>627</sup> Paredes Martínez, “*Y Por mi visto*,” 468-469.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*, 333-334.

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

conditions. Indigenous laborers who were exploited in the mines complained that it was unfair that some of their fellow villagers never worked in the mines and instead only attended to work in the homes, workshops, and farms of Spanish residents.<sup>630</sup> In order to resolve this conflict, the governor, alcalde, and regidor of the pueblo called on the viceroy to rotate between the different sets of laborers by pointing out that there were 153 laborers who regularly worked in the churches while 1,000 went to the mines. They also argued, for that matter, that the amount of people who worked in the churches was unnecessary, stating that there was sometimes more than one person used for a given post. The principals claimed, for instance, that in the church of the pueblo of Aguarindeo, there were thirty-six people working in the same occupation.<sup>631</sup> In these cases, the principals served as mediators in the midst of these rivalries amongst their subjects.

#### CONCLUSION

Sadly, while some of these Indigenous officials may have had their peoples' best interests in mind, the recurring complaints of exploitation suggest that the abuses of the repartimiento labor system would not cease. In cases where the viceroy handed orders to improve these forced labor practices, there was very little oversight and it is likely that they were rarely ever enforced. For that matter, the Crown and viceroy had little incentive to significantly reduce the repartimiento since it was a lucrative system that rewarded them through the system known as the royal-fifth in which those who profited from the mines provided a fifth of their profits to the crown. Indigenous principals were powerless against the market forces of new colonial system

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<sup>630</sup> Ibid., 464.

<sup>631</sup> Ibid., 468-469.

but this did not stop them from challenging their peoples' exploitation nor did this prevent them from seeking out privileges that the new government provided them.

Yet, as they validated the authority of the laws of New Spain, these principals also had to come to terms with the gradual loss of their own authority. As other authors have noted, the introduction of the system of elections in the second half of the sixteenth century ultimately crippled the abusive powers of the principales but it also led to the overall decline of the Indigenous nobility in Michoacán. Under this system, the caciqueship was still only passed down to recognized principales. However, in this scenario birthright no longer guaranteed the acquisition of a political post. This system was once again reversed in 1602 by the Viceroy Luis de Velasco who allowed the caciqueship to be passed down from father to son, thereby favoring a system where troublesome caciques were simply removed.<sup>632</sup> Nevertheless, the damage had been done as many Indigenous principals throughout Michoacán lost their titles, fell into poverty, and, like the Cazonci, felt themselves akin to commoners.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> López Sarrelangue, *La nobleza indígena de Pátzcuaro*, 108

<sup>633</sup> Scholes and Adams, *Proceso*, 20.

## Conclusions

This dissertation examined the narratives of the Tarascan borderlands through the lens of hypermasculinities to provide a gender history of early colonial Michoacán. The point of this dissertation project was not to argue that the Spaniards merely imposed hypermasculine patriarchal values onto Native peoples in Michoacán. On the contrary, I have shown how Native peoples also contributed to colonial constructions of masculinity grounded on warfare, violence, female subversion, and governance in the narratives of the Tarascan borderlands. The *Relación de Michoacán, relaciones geográficas*, and other colonial texts largely centered on the narratives of Tarascan men who expanded, defended, and governed the borderlands while almost ignoring the presence of powerful female figures. The conquest of Michoacán along with the periods of extreme violence and political conflicts contributed to Spaniards and Indigenous peoples' multifaceted portrayals of androcentric customs in Michoacán. On the one hand, these depictions portrayed Tarascan men as bellicose, violent, patriarchs and, on the other, they also were depicted with Christian-like virtues such as religious devotion, sexual restraint, and pacifism. This dissertation investigated on four broad categories of Tarascan hypermasculinities reflected in these colonial sources, which were expansionist masculinities, governing masculinities, female masculinities, and warrior masculinities. I argued that the hypermasculinities performed in the sixteenth-century colonial documents relating the history of the Tarascan borderlands were superficial and contradictory because they reflected the contemporary political moments in which these sources were produced. In the following sections, I provide a summary of my analyses, my scholarly contributions, and future directions and questions posed by my research.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the Introduction, I proposed interrogating the androcentric, patriarchal posturing found in the *Relación de Michoacán* and other colonial sources by utilizing the lens of Indigenous hypermasculinities as framework to deconstruct the *Relación's* performance of a male-dominated Tarascan state. I have drawn on theoretical insights from in scholars in the fields of gender, colonialism, and masculinities. The first key insight derived from this literature is that human societies never have one standard of masculinity. The Indigenous informants in the colonial texts articulated a multiple standards of masculinities practiced by the Uacúsecha-Chichimeca forefathers, the Cazonci, noblewomen, the warrior classes, as well as the Indigenous noblemen who were incorporated into the Spanish colonial government as principales and caciques. Second, I have discussed how these masculinities were co-produced both by Indigenous men and the Spaniards. The primary documents consulted throughout this dissertation which were the *Relación de Michoacán* and the *relaciones geográficas* were both written by Spaniards with the support of Indigenous informants who were often men in positions of power and authority. The third point made is that the depiction of Pre-Hispanic Tarascan customs in these texts should be read with suspicion and not taken at face value. As I described in the case of the *relación geográfica* for Pátzcuaro, the Franciscan authors and Indigenous informants claimed that Indigenous noblemen were not so included to alcoholism and sexual unrestraint like the young men from their day; they claimed that nobles waited until they reached the age of thirty-five until they engaged in drunkenness or sexual relations with women. Yet, the *Relación de Michoacán's* various tales of various irecha who possessed multiple wives, however, clearly refutes this idea. Lastly, I have argued that the projection of Indigenous hypermasculinities in these colonial documents was also political. For instance, when the Cazonci's descendants like the governor



Don Antonio Huitziméngari cited his participation in the Chichimeca Wars, he was given monetary compensation for his service.

In Chapter 1, I argue that the Indigenous informants who helped to produce colonial texts related to the Pre-Hispanic Tarascan state, which included nobles, artists, and elders, sought to represent an “expansionist masculinity” in the *Relación*’s narratives of the conquest of the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin. I suggest that the associations between Spanish and Tarascan conquests were not a coincidence. The *Relación* was written during the pan-Indigenous uprising in the region of Zacatecas known as the Mixtón War and a decade after Guzmán’s campaign to conquer Nueva Galicia, while the *relaciones geográficas* were composed twenty-nine years after the Chichimeca Wars commenced in 1550. Those from the Uanacaze branch of the Uacúsecha dynasty described themselves as descendants of bellicose “Chichimeca” men who introduced the worship of the masculine solar deity Curicáueri and conquered their opponents who worshiped local goddesses. In the *Memoria of Don Melchor Caltzin* and the *relaciones geográficas*, Indigenous informants describe the wars waged by the ruler Tzitzispandáquare who made Tzintzuntzan the capital of the Tarascan state and waged war with the Mexica. These accounts often served to bolster Tarascan claims that they held morally superior values in contrast to their Mexican enemies. Indeed, many of these statements were also supported by the Spaniards who described the Tarascans as more caring and compassionate than the Mexica.

In this Chapter 2, I employ the lens of governing masculinities to examine how the conquest of Michoacán led to multifaceted depictions of the Cazonci Tzintzicha Tangáxoan and his adopted brother Don Pedro Cuiniarángari as cowards, traitors, and cunning strategists. As governing elites, both men were given the impossible task of balancing Spanish and Tarascan expectations of governance under colonial rule. They represented interests that were often

contradictory and anxiety-inducing. The Cazonci was not only apprehensive of taking his father's role as the *irecha* but he also became increasingly fearful of the Spaniards to the point where he almost committed suicide. Eventually, he agreed—at least formally—to submit to Hernán Cortés in 1522 by agreeing to allow the Spaniards to appropriate his lands and collect tribute and labor from his subjects. However, seeking to preserve his own wealth, the Cazonci defied the colonial establishment by preventing encomenderos to profit from his people and even executed Spaniards who were a nuisance. While Tangáxoan failed to launch a full-scale war against the Spaniards and their Tlaxcalan and Mexican allies, his stance changed in 1530 in his planned assault at Cuinao after he and his people endured nine grueling years of atrocities committed by Spanish soldiers and encomenderos. I showed how Spanish and Tarascan notions of governing masculinity, which at first appeared to be on equal terms, were in fact at odds with each other during the Cazonci's tenure.

Through an examination of the *Proceso* describing the trial and execution of the Cazonci as well as the accounts of the Spanish conquest in the *Relación*, I argued that the opposing interests these masculinities represented became much clearer in narratives of Don Pedro and the Cazonci's actions in the Tarascan frontier regions of Taximaroa and Cuinao. Their attempts to prove to the Spaniards that they were worthy governors, even though they had conflicting loyalties to both the Tarascan state and the Spanish crown, collapsed in the Tarascan borderlands. Both men represented the interests of their Indigenous compatriots in their attempts to wipe out the Spaniards on two separate occasions and on two separate Tarascan boundary zones and after the conquistadors uncovered their ploys, these men attempted to change strategies by portraying themselves as Spanish loyalists. The *Proceso* reveals that Don Pedro, the Cazonci's trusted advisor, turned against him after admitting to their numerous crimes and

confirming the irecha's ambush in Cuinao. Cuiniarángari's actions led many historians and contemporary observers to perceive him as an opportunist since he was awarded with the governorship of Michoacán after the Cazonci's death. Cognizant of his critics, Don Pedro attempted to redeem himself as an ally of the Cazonci and the Spaniards in the *Relación* by describing his actions as an intermediary who spoke on behalf of Tangáxoan to Cristóbal de Olid's armies who were stationed in the frontier territory of Taximaroa. The conflicting notions of Tarascan and Spanish governing masculinities was resolved with the symbolic killing of the Cazonci and his succession by Don Pedro as the Indigenous governor of the province of Michoacán.

In Chapter 3, I addressed one of my main research questions, which was to challenge the extent to which it was true if that the Indigenous people of Michoacán held on to pre-existing patriarchal customs. I problematize the inclination to describe Tarascan society as a male-dominated patriarchy because both Pre-Hispanic and early colonial texts describe the presence of powerful and influential women. Even though the *Relación* claimed that Tarascan males were highly vigilant and restrictive of female sexual and marriage practices, these claims were inconsistent as some committed adultery without punishment and others left abusive marriages by simply leaving their partner's home. Women were not passive figures in the *Relación* but were also shown playing essential roles in helping to expand and defend the Tarascan borderlands and were often masculinized as warrior-like. These masculinized women included the female cacique Quenomen who ruled after her husband's death, Tariácuri's adulteress wife whose actions provoked a military conflict, and also Tariácuri's daughter who killed a lord from Curíngaro. I also provide examples of influential Indigenous women in Michoacán who served

as assassins, spies, priestesses, merchants, and elites to argue that Tarascan society was also not dependent on male dominance of females even into the sixteenth century.

In Chapter 4, I discuss how the turbulent periods of warfare that overtook Michoacán and the greater central-western Mexican region during the sixteenth century informed hypermasculine depictions of Pre-Hispanic Tarascan, Chichimeca, and Otomí warriors in the narratives of Uacúsecha dynasty's frontier expansions. The conquest of Michoacán, Guzmán's campaign war to conquer Nueva Galicia, the Mixtón Uprising, and Chichimeca Wars were all fought by the Spaniards using Tarascan, Otomí, and Chichimeca auxiliary forces from Michoacán. These wars fed into Spanish assumptions that the Tarascans and Chichimecas were unruly and boisterous. To counteract these assumptions, Native informants who helped produce the *Relación* and *relaciones geográficas* underscore how their men practiced a warrior cult centered on spiritual values, a mastery of the bow arrow, and a strict code of conduct that emphasized loyalty and a willingness to fight to the death. When examining the narratives pertaining to the Tarascans and their Otomí and Chichimeca counterparts who fought in the eastern frontier facing Mexico-Tenochtitlan, their forces were also depicted engaged in religious devotion, displays of obedience, and a mastery of archery. The Tarascan informants who informed these early colonial texts sought to reclaim the dignity of their warrior classes who were humiliated and viewed with suspicion during the periods of turbulent warfare during the sixteenth century. In this chapter, I pointed out that, given the multiethnic nature of the Indigenous men who inhabited the Tarascan domains, there were a multitude of Tarascan warrior masculinities although I examine three broad categories that emerge in the sources: Tarascan warrior masculinities, Otomí warrior masculinity, and Chichimeca warrior masculinity.

In the fifth chapter, I return to the subject of governing masculinities to discuss how principals from the former Tarascan borderlands territories of Acámbaro and Taximaroa adjusted to the expectations of the new colonial order. While these principals of these pueblos once enjoyed the ability of not being pressured to provide any form of tribute to those who governed over them, the Spanish Crown obligated them to provide tribute and labor to Spaniards who variously owned mines, haciendas, and sugar mills. Yet, the Spanish colonial system provided them with various material benefits such as legal offices, wealth, exemptions from repartimiento labor, and the ability to collect tribute. However, in contrast to other literature that often tends to depict these principals as self-serving opportunists, I also show how these principals also used their status to advocate for themselves as well as for the greater communities that they represented. I show how principales from Acámbaro and Taximaroa also used their power to advocate in favor of the commoners in matters concerning exploitation.

#### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

As is the fate of most dissertation projects, this research indeed provoked more questions than answered. On a positive note, it has led the author to suggest many more possible avenues for future research in the field of Indigenous masculinities, borderlands history, and early colonial Michoacán. A much more extensive project that was beyond the scope of this dissertation would also study how Spanish notions of masculinity interacted or intersected with how Indigenous men's ideas about masculinity. Another phenomenon that a more extensive work on this same project could undertake is a study of how the narrative of the Tarascan/Aztec borderlands defies various assumptions previously made in the field of borderlands history. For example, a trope that was once popularized and espoused in the borderlands literature suggested that borderlands in North America ultimately become borders, almost as if this were a

rule of thumb.<sup>634</sup> However, the Tarascan-Aztec borderlands—which were in fact in geographical North America—defied this convention. As a matter of fact, these borderlands reverted into frontiers and, into the Mexican Independence period to the present, became the state lines of Michoacán, Guerrero, Mexico state, and Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Colima. Lastly, in a future work, I would like to emphasize how these hypermasculine colonial sources centered on warfare and violence also reflected the recent historical traumas faced by the Tarascan people who were engulfed in a series of violent wars initiated by the Spaniards in their ongoing efforts to conquer the Mexican center-west.

### CONTRIBUTIONS

This initial intent of this dissertation was to contribute to borderlands history by discussing the presence of borderlands outside of the contemporary U.S.-Mexico border. For that matter, in the case of the Tarascan-Aztec borderlands, this study also reminds historians that there were borderlands that existed without the presence of European actors. Similar to the Spanish and Anglo-American frontiers, Indigenous borderlands were also sites of cultural plurality, political negotiations, conflict, and identity formation. This is utterly clear in accounts describing Chichimeca, Matlatzinca, and ethnic Otomí groups who inhabited the Tarascan borderlands, spoke multiple languages, and engaged in diplomacy with Aztec diplomats.

Additionally, this work sought to touch on the underexplored theme of masculinities in borderlands history. While there are in fact, many gender histories in the field of borderlands, they often are restricted to studies of women. This reflects a common error in which studies of gender are erroneously equated with studies of women although *gender* also implicates studies of men as

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<sup>634</sup> Adelman and Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders,” 814-841.

well. In this work, I was conscious not to make a mistake of writing a history of Tarascan masculinities that was solely about men and exclusive to women. I have shown how these masculinities were often constructed on the basis of female subjugation. Moreover, I provided examples of masculinized and influential women in the Michoacán region. Lastly, I prioritized my discussions on Indigenous masculinities over European colonialist masculinities. It contributes also to gender studies by showing how Indigenous principales began to appropriate Spanish notions of masculine rulership, male conquest, and patriarchy in the sixteenth century.

### **CLOSING REFLECTIONS**

This study of Indigenous hypermasculinities resonates during our current period of heightened xenophobic rhetoric that has engulfed the North and South American continents. It emerges during the era of the so-called men's rights movement, with adherents in various parts of the globe seeking to perpetuate hypermasculinist male dominance and espouse misogynistic ideologies. They aspire to revert to an imagined past where men supposedly had more freedoms and where women, “non-whites,” immigrants, and non-heterosexuals were “kept in their place.” For that matter, in the summer in which I conducted my archival studies, the town I called home, El Paso, was assaulted by a white supremacist mass shooter, Patrick Crisius, who killed twenty-two innocent people due to fears of a “Hispanic invasion” in Texas and therefore sought to target ethnic Mexicans. Crisius’ racist dogmas and inclination to use violence are a byproduct of the toxic masculinity that oozes from the militant rhetoric of racist organizations such as the Klu Klux Klan, Neo-Nazis, and Proud Boys. This xenophobic macho rhetoric has emboldened the countless numbers of mass shootings in recent years and will unlikely cease in the coming years as the perpetrators continue to be emboldened by Donald Trump’s racist rhetoric. This study responds by pointing out how such rhetoric is politicized and fabricated, even in the colonial world.

The study of Indigenous hypermasculinities is not only beneficial because this field is underdeveloped but also because it has liberationist potential for contemporary Indigenous scholarship. In *Indigenous Men and Masculinities*, Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson point how Canadian First Nations scholars in fields such as Indigenous studies, gender, English literature, art, and cultural studies seek to use this scholarship to decolonize Indigenous customs and history. Their works point out how colonial white supremacist, heterosexist European ideals and institutions such as machismo, homophobia, and patriarchy have influenced Native customs and history even in the present. Today, there are still issues amongst native leaders using the façade of tradition to oppress and ridicule women, LGBT, and two-spirit people by claiming that they had a lesser, or no role, in their culture. He observes how these xenophobic attitudes, which he describes as “Indigenous heterosexual patriarchal masculinity” are rooted in colonial practices.<sup>635</sup> Similarly, the African scholar Ratele has observed how cultural revivalist movements in post-apartheid South Africa have used the rhetoric of decolonization and “preserving traditions” to espouse homophobic and misogynistic rhetoric.<sup>636</sup> In the contemporary Chicana and Mexicana community, there is also a persisting inclination to depict the pre-colonial Mexican past as male-centered, “Mexica”/Aztec, and heteronormative. Yet, by examining the history of colonialism and its impact on gender ideologies, the Latina scholar may conclude that these normative ideologies were a product of the colonial order. As a response to these concerns, this study contributes to studies of how colonization influenced the production of hypermasculine Indigenous notions of manhood.

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<sup>635</sup> Innes and Anderson, “Introduction,” 4-11; Hokowhitu, “Taxonomies of Indigeneity,” 87-90.

<sup>636</sup> Ratele, “Currents against gender transformation,” 37.





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## Glossary

### NAMES OF IMPORTANT ACTORS

**Alonso de Estrada:** Treasurer who allowed the Cazonci to escape punishment from Bachiller Juan de Ortega in exchange for a bribe.

**Axayacatl:** Mexica Tlahtoani who oversaw the first war against the Tarascans led by Tlacaelel.

**Cristóbal de Olid:** Conquistador who almost prompted a war with the Tarascans when his armies visited Taximaroa in 1522. He was killed in 1524 during an unauthorized expedition in Honduras where he declared independence from New Spain.

**Cuaraque:** According to the Proceso, he is the first Tarascan informant to provide testimony on the Cazonci's planned assault in Cuinao.

**Don Antonio Huitziméngari:** The son of the Cazonci who served as governor of Michoacán from 1545-1562.

**Don Pedro Cuiniarángari:** A former representative of the Cazonci who also supplied incriminating testimony that led to the irecha's death. After participating in Guzmán's conquest of Nueva Galicia, he served as the governor of Michoacán from 1530-1543.

**Francisco de Villegas:** Spanish encomendero who filed criminal complaints against the Cazonci that led to the irecha's trial and execution in 1530.

**Fray Jerónimo de Alcalá:** Franciscan monk who is the suspected author of the *Relación de Michoacán*.

**Hiquíngare:** The son of Tariácuri who became a priest and ruled over the city of Patzcuaro during the reign of the Tarascan Triple Alliance.

**Hireti Ticátame:** The first "Chichimeca" ruler who brought his people to the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin from Zacapu. He died in the aftermath of a dispute regarding a deer.

**Huitziltzi/Tashauaco:** Don Pedro's brother and war general who later assisted the Spaniards in the conquest of Colima and died sometime when he served under Olid.

**Juanillo:** The young male who reportedly engaged in homosexual acts with the Cazonci and also appears to have testified against the irecha during his trial in 1530.

**Nuño de Guzmán:** The former governor of the Spanish province of Panuco who became the president of the First Audiencia. He oversaw the trial, interrogations, and execution of the Cazonci when he began his conquest of Nueva Galicia in 1530.

**Quenomen:** Female cacique in Ihuatzio who is despised by Tariacuri because she dressed in warrior garments.

**Tariacuri:** The primary protagonist in the second part of the *Relación de Michoacán* who succeeded in conquering the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin, especially with the support of his nephews and son.

**Tlacaelel:** Mexica general who led a failed assault to conquer the Tarascans during their first war in 1479-1480.

**Tzintzicha Tangáxoan:** The last irecha of the Tarascan state known as the Cazonci. At first, he peacefully received the Spaniards but then became troubled when Cristóbal de Olid arrived to Taximaroa two hundred armed men. Don Pedro, who met with the Spaniards, later convinced the Cazonci to meet with the Spanish. The Cazonci, who was baptized as "Don Francisco," was imprisoned numerous times for failing to provide adequate gold and provision to the Spaniards. In 1530, Tzintzicha was executed for ordering the deaths of Spaniards in Michoacán and for conspiring to lead an attack against Guzmán's armies at Cuinao.

**Tzitzispandáquare:** Irecha responsible for making Tzintzuntzan the central governing city of the Tarascan state, thus taking away the authority from the cities Pátzcuaro and Ihuatzio.

**Zuangua:** The penultimate irecha who learned about the coming of the Spaniards from Mexican messengers seeking his support and military aid. He died from an illness (most likely smallpox) which he appears to have contracted from the Mexican or Tarascan messengers that visited him from Tenochtitlan.

#### **KEY FIGURES, TERMS, AND CONCEPTS**

**Cacique:** A term the Spanish appropriated from the Tainos to refer to Indigenous chiefs who oversaw a village.

**Cazonci:** The distinct term given to the last hereditary ruler of the Tarascan state, Tzintzicha Tangáxoan. He was also known as the Caltzontzin, the Nahuatl variant of this term.

**Chichimecas:** A generic term given to unurbanized Indigenous groups who lived in the unconquered territories north of the Tarascan and Aztec political dominions.

**Cuerauáperi:** Tarascan earth mother goddess.

**Curicáueri:** Tarascan solar deity of fire and warfare.

**Derramas:** Illegal and unauthorized taxes.

**Encomenderos:** Spaniards who possessed an encomienda.

**Encomienda:** Colonial institution where Indigenous peoples were legally entrusted to a Spaniard and paid him with labor and/or tribute in return for Christian religious instruction. The encomienda system was later abolished in 1542 due to complaints of abuses of the native peoples suffered under this system but was replaced with the repartimiento that proved to be just as abusive as the previous institution.

**Irecha:** Hereditary ruler of the Tarascan state.

**Islanders:** Refers to the inhabitants who lived on the Islands of the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin and were later conquered by the Uacúsecha-Chichimecas.



**Macehuales:** A Nahuatl term often found in Spanish legal documents referring to Indigenous commoners.

**Matlatzincas:** Refers to an ethno-linguistic group of Otomí speakers who lived in the Michoacán and Toluca Valley regions. In Nahuatl, the term refers to “people of the net,” which referred to their fishing practices in which they cast nets to collect fish.

**Mexica:** Alternatively known as the “Aztecs,” this is the term referring to the Nahua speaking people who inhabited the polity ruled by the Triple Alliance of Mexihco-Tenochtitlan, Tlacopan, and Texcoco.

**Otomís:** Refers to the various ethnolinguistic groups that the Spaniards described as *otomies* because they held similar languages. These groups included the Matlatzincas, the ethnic Otomí, Mazauas, and Ocuitecas.

**Petámuti:** The chief priest of the Tarascan state who also served as a judge.

**Pirindas:** Referred to the Tarascans’ Otomí inhabitants who lived in the frontiers of the Tarascan-Aztec borderlands. The term *pirinda* literally meant “in between” and referred to their geographical position in the Toluca valley in between the Tarascan and Aztec states.

**Principales:** A generic term referring to Indigenous peoples in positions of authority or who held kinship ties to Indigenous nobles.

**Purépecha:** According to the *relación geográfica* for Cuitzeo, this term referred to “the working people,” or commoners, in the Tarascan language. Today, this is the preferred term is used to describe the Indigenous people who descended by Tarascans, as the term *tarasco* was often used in a derogatory manner in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

**Tarascan Triple Alliance:** This refers to the expansionist alliance between the three cities of Tzintzuntzan, Ihuatzio, and Pátzcuaro.

**Tarascans:** English term referring to the Indigenous peoples of Michoacán who the Spaniards called *tarascos*.

**Uacúsecha:** The ruling dynasty referred to as “Chichimecas” in the *Relación de Michoacán* who conquered the Islanders and Curínguaros that inhabited the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin.

**Uanacaze:** One of the many families who descended from the Uacúsecha dynasty. This particular family is credited to providing information on most of the events of the *Relación de Michoacán*. The Uanacaze were previously in power during the Spanish conquest of Michoacán and were represented by the rulership of Tzitzispandáquare, Zuangua, and Tzintzicha Tangáxoan.

**Xarátanga:** Tarascan moon goddess.

## Appendix

**Appendix 1. Offices mentioned in Chapter 1, Part 3, of the *Relación de Michoacán* listed in the order in which they appear.**

Cazonci	Cazonci
Gobernador	The Cazonci's governor
Capitán general	Captain general in warfare
Caciques	Chiefs
Achaecha	Maintained the Cazonci's palace, were always in his company (his advisors?)
Caracha-capacha	Four chiefs of the four frontiers
Ocámbecha	Each assigned to a district, collected tribute, counted people, gathered people for public works. **
Piruuauqa uándari	Collects all the blankets and cotton given as tribute
Tareta uaxátati	Supervisor of the Cazonci's seed plots and oversaw the supervisors assigned to the seed plots in all the subject villages
Mayordomo mayor	Charged with overseeing workers who construct houses and renovate temples.
Cacari	Supervisor of all stone masons and quarries
Quanícoti	Chief of all hunters that brought deer, rabbits, and birds for the Cazonci
Curu hapindi	Supervised hunting of ducks and quail sacrificed for feasts of the goddess Xarátanga
Uaruri	Oversaw the fishermen who fish with nets and who supplied fish to the Cazonci and lords **
Tarama	Oversaw the fishermen who fished using <i>anzuelos</i> (fishhooks, bait, or lures)
Cauáspati	Supervisor of all who harvested for the Cazonci
Mayordomo mayor de miel	Received and stored all the honey given to the Cazonci
Atari	Kept all the maguey and wine made for feasts
Cutzuri	Made all the leather war coats for the Cazonci **

Uzquarecuri	Oversaw all the feather workers who made adornments
Pucuriquari	In charge of all forest guards, those who cut wooden beams, make boards from the forests, make canoes **
Cuirínguri	Deputy in charge of making all the drums for the Cazonci's dances
...otro sobre todos los carpinteros	Deputy in charge of all the painters
Tesorero mayor	The chief treasurer responsible for all the silver, gold, and other precious metals used in feasts for the gods
Cherénguequa uri	Supervised manufacturing of cotton doublets for wars
Quanícoqua uri	In charge of supervising the making and storing of vast quantities of bows and arrows
Diputado sobre las rodela	In charge of making and storing round shields
Quengue	Supervised all the corn brought to the Cazonci
Icháruta uandari	Chief canoe maker
Parícuti	Chief boatman **
<i>...otro sobre todas las espías de la guerra.</i>	Chief of wartime spies
Uaxanoti	Oversaw messengers and couriers stationed in Cazonci's patio; serve as letter carriers after Spanish conquest **
Alférez mayor para la guerra	Chief ensign for wars
<i>...otro que era guarda las águilas grandes y pequeñas y otros pájaros..</i>	Guardians and feeders of all the eagles and other birds kept by the Cazonci
<i>...otros que tenían cargo de dar de comer a sus leones y adives (del Cazonci)</i>	Those in charge of feeding the lions and jackals of the Cazonci
Diputado sobre todos los médicos del cazoci	Deputy of all the Cazonci's doctors
Urani atari	Oversaw all the gourd painters

Chunicha	Oversaw all the painters
<i>...diputado sobre todos los olleros.</i>	Oversaw all the potters
Hucátziqua uri	Oversaw makers of jars, plates, and bowls
<i>...diputado sobre todos los barrederos de su casa</i>	Deputy of all the sweepers of his house
<i>...diputado, sobre todos los que hacían flores y guirnaldas para la cabeza.</i>	Deputy in charge of those who make wreath flowers for the Cazonci
<i>...diputado sobre sus mercaderes que le buscaban oro y plumajes y piedras con rescate.</i>	Supervisor of all who trade or barter gold, plumages, and precious stones with the Cazonci
Quangariecha	The Cazonci's guards

\*\*Offices that were still being practiced at the time the *Relación* was written

**Appendix 2. Offices mentioned in Part 3, Chapter 3, in the *Relación de Michoacán* listed in the order in which they appear.**

Yreri	The Cazonci's principal wife; oversees all the women in the Cazonci's home
Chuperípati	In charge of keeping all of the Cazonci's jewels
Camaera	His head "waitress," whom, with other women, gave him his clothes and served as his pages
<i>...otra que tenía cargo de guardar todos sus jubones de guerra de algodón y jubones de plumas de aves.</i>	Keeps the Cazonci's cotton war "doublets" and "doublets" made of bird feathers
Cocinera	Cazonci's head cook
Atari	The "page of the cup," ( <i>paje de copa</i> ) which suggests she was in charge of serving the Cazonci's drinks
Maestresala	Chief waitress who serves the Cazonci's food
Iyámati	Makes the Cazonci's sauces
Siquapu uri	In charge of all the Cazonci's blankets
<i>...otra que tenía cargo todos los sartales que se ponía el cazonci en las muñecas, de piedra; y turquesas y plumajes.</i>	In charge of all the Cazonci's bracelets made of stone, turquoise, and plumages
Pazápeme	In charge of all the female slaves of the house who serve him with their breasts exposed
<i>...otra que tenía en cargo las semillas.</i>	In charge of the Cazonci's seeds
<i>Otra que tenía en cargo todo su calzado.</i>	In charge of the Cazonci's footwear
<i>...otra que tenía cargo de recibir todo el pescado que traían a su casa.</i>	In charge of all the fish received in the Cazonci's home
<i>...otra que tenía cargo de hacelle mazamorras al cazonci</i>	In charge of making all the corn pulp for the Cazonci
Quapímequa	Keeper of the large blankets given as offerings to the gods

Quataperi	The guard of all the women ( <i>era guarda destas mujeres</i> )
<i>Había un viejo para guarda de todas.</i>	Old man who guarded, or oversaw, all the women in the Cazonci's home
<i>...otra que tenía cargo de guardar toda la sal que traían a su casa...</i>	Oversees all the salt brought to the Cazonci's home
Uandozinquarecha	In charge of the Cazonci's entertainment and amusement
<i>...una persona principal en la ciudad, que sabía todas las sementeras del pueblo...</i>	A principal person who knew where all the seed plots in the village were and who they belonged to and settled disputes regarding these seed plots and lands (unclear if this position was for a male or female)

**Appendix 3. Sample of *licencias* awarded Indigenous principals in the northeastern territories of Michoacán, 1551- 1594.**

License awarded:	sword	horse	dagger	Spanish habit
<b>1551</b>				
Antonio, principal de Zinapécuaro		1		
don Alonso, cacique de Quipato, sujeto a Yuririapúndaro		1		
don Cristobal, principal de Acámbaro				
Juan Tzicique, indio otomí, cacique de Acámbaro		1		
Pedro Helias, principal de Taximaroa		1		
<b>1552</b>				
don Buenaventura, principal de Taximaroa		1		
don Francisco, cacique de Yuririapúndaro		1		
don Juan y don Alonso, caciques de Yuririapúndaro(6 yeguas)		1		
Martín, principal de Taximaroa		1		
<b>1553</b>				
don Baltasar, Acámbaro		1		
don Gonzalo de Santiago y don Sebastián, principales de Cuitzeo		1		
don Juan, don Mateo, don Alonso, don Francisco, gobernadores de Cuitzeo		1		
Gonzalo, Acámbaro		1		
Martín Cortés, Acámbaro		1		
Martín, principal de Acámbaro		1		
<b>1590</b>				
don Augusto Cano, indio principal de Cuitzeo		1		
don Bartolomé Guavi, indio principal de Cuitzeo		1		
don Bartolomé Miguel, indio principal de Cuitzeo		1		
don Pedro Miguel, indio principal de Cuitzeo		1		
<b>1591</b>				
Agustín Curi, principal de Cuitzeo		1		
Cristobál León, principal de Acámbaro	1		1	1
don Bartolomé Conxando, principal de Cuitzeo		1		
Francisco Antón (en razón de los servicios que prestó), Yuririapundaro		1		
<b>1594</b>				
don Agustín Pedro Cuini, indio principal de Cuitzeo		1		
<i>Total:</i>	1	23	1	1

Source: Carlos Paredes Martínez, ed., “Y Por mi visto”: *Mandamientos, ordenanzas, licencias y otras disposiciones virreinales del siglo XVI* (Morelia, Michoacán: Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, 1994).



## **Vita**

Daniel Santana received his Bachelor's Degree as a double major in History and Chicana and Chicano Studies at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) in 2012. He later received his Master's degree in history at CSUN in 2014 and then went on to pursue his Ph.D. in Borderlands History at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), where he also received a certificate in Women's and Gender Studies. He served as both as an Instructor and Teaching Assistant (T.A.) both at CSUN and UTEP. Previous courses he taught include Supplemental Instruction, U.S. History to 1865, and Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies. Previously, Santana has also worked as a student intern for the California Faculty Association, a staff member for Museo Urbano, a research assistant for the institute of Oral History at UTEP, a volunteer for the Sin Fronteras Bracero Archive in El Paso, and, lastly, as a Ph.D. Research Assistant for the Center for Metrics-Based Planning (cMBP) at UTEP.

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