

## Introduction

THIS IS A BOOK ABOUT indigenous society and culture in a large region of central Mexico over an extensive period of time, roughly from the mid-seventeenth century through the 1790s. Two terms in the title help define its scope and aims. *Local* indicates that although I am interested in the indigenous inhabitants of the Toluca Valley as a whole, and seek to make meaningful generalizations at that level, I recognize that they were not an entirely homogeneous and self-aware unit. In the first instance the spotlight is on society at the basic level of what happens in the various individual settlements and above all in the households constituting the settlements. The word *within* emphasizes this point further and more deeply: I am approaching the life of the society from the point of view of its members, from the inside looking out, when possible using sources generated by themselves, containing their own concepts and vocabulary and concerning the heart of their experience in a home environment. Analysis of this material makes it possible to discover models of temporal evolution and subregional variation that are otherwise hidden and also to deal in a more realistic way with the patterns of Spanish influence for a period that has often been viewed too much from the exterior, when examined at all. As imperfect as it may still be, this book is an attempt to adopt the indigenous outlook as far as possible, to see the world from that vantage point.

Within this framework, many new perspectives, by no means limited to the Toluca Valley, emerge on important topics familiar in indigenous history, such as gender, language, or the process of community fragmentation, not to speak of the nature of the household complex, land tenure, and the definition

of kinship. In a more encompassing way, such matters are related to a cultural evolution that I would call intuitive or natural, suggesting a historiographical move toward the hitherto unexplored dynamics of household life and away from the paradigm of conscious resistance and adaptation, which always implies a deliberate posture. And this is a move that is also, as anticipated in the preceding paragraph, a temporal one because, in Mesoamerican ethnohistory, attention to the early period has so far been predominant. All this calls for a thorough explanation, which will be attempted in part here, relying on full illustration in the body of the book.

The present project got its start with a fortunate accidental discovery quite a few years ago. While reviewing some dossiers in the Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de México, I stumbled on a Nahuatl testament from the Toluca Valley. More such testaments appeared in the following months, capturing my interest and unexpectedly changing the path of my research. My dissertation contained a substantial section on household life on the basis of Nahuatl testaments, and on its completion I embarked on the preparation of a volume, *Testaments of Toluca*, including many of the texts I had managed to collect and an even larger number that Stephanie Wood had gathered and generously made available to me. The documents included have transcriptions, translations, and extensive introductions, and the substantial introductory study is in a sense my first systematic approach to the topic of the present book. Items in *Testaments of Toluca* will be referred to frequently here as evidence, and going to them can provide additional significant detail.<sup>1</sup>

The project has, however, greatly expanded since that publication. The documents there come from two selected subregions; I have subsequently prepared transcriptions, translations, and commentary for an even larger body of testaments, still unpublished, coming from other parts of the Valley. The themes and perspectives have been greatly widened, and many things earlier imagined to be universal proved not to be so but rather part of a larger web of subregional variation. Moreover, this much larger corpus of testaments has been put in relation with testaments from other areas of central Mexico, as well as other types of sources, to give the analysis and the conclusions much broader impact and relevance. The present book is the outcome of this rather complex but rewarding process, and to its characteristics, aims, and larger context we now turn.

### Nature and Framework of the Book

Following the path opened up by James Lockhart, a group of scholars has expanded the scope of postconquest Mesoamerican ethnohistory in the last

twenty years and more, exploiting indigenous-language sources and making considerable progress in the understanding of the indigenous world after the arrival of the Spaniards.<sup>2</sup> The present work springs out of this tradition and at the same time pushes it in new directions outlined in the following pages.

### *Chronological Aspects*

This book represents a shift in the temporal dimension. Scholars in Nahuatl-language ethnohistory have tended to focus on the early part of the colonial period, the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and quite understandably so, if one considers the foundational effects of the first mixing of different peoples, languages, and cultures and the fascinating sources available for that epoch. The concentration is all the more noticeable in matters of general social and economic research. It is true that Lockhart's *The Nahuas* encompasses all three centuries after the conquest, being based on material in Nahuatl from any time and place, but the majority of the sources antedate the mid-seventeenth century (that is, are from ca. 1550–1650, or Stage 2).<sup>\*</sup> Haskett's *Indigenous Rulers* is perhaps the work that most brings the analysis of Nahuatl sources up through the entire eighteenth century, but primarily for the specific topic of the book, municipal government and indigenous officials.<sup>3</sup>

The fact that social and economic developments inside the Nahua world remain scarcely explored after the mid-seventeenth century has attracted my attention and curiosity. Did the dynamics of the earlier time simply continue as before? Or did change slow down until the upheavals of the later eighteenth century and the independence period? And were things the same all over central Mexico, or could the tempo vary from region to region? Eventually, questions such as these address a much broader issue than a chronological hole in the literature. It is the one of understanding the complicated rhythm of change

<sup>\*</sup>The stages of development of Nahuatl language and culture are fully explained in the conclusion of Lockhart 1992; the language aspects were first expounded in Karttunen and Lockhart 1976. During Stage 1 (to about 1540 or 1545), the first postconquest generation, both language and culture changed very little. In Stage 2, from 1550 to 1650, Nahuatl took a myriad of words from Spanish, mostly nouns, and change affected predominantly corporations. Finally, during Stage 3, from 1650 on, including the time investigated here, Nahuatl took words other than nouns, created equivalences between Nahuatl and Spanish words, and added Spanish sounds to its phonology, while on the cultural side there were more intimate, structure-altering changes, at the corporate as well as at the household level.

and continuity in an ambiguous period, where dynamics are subtle and dramatic at the same time. The present book looks at the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the aim of giving central Mexican ethnohistory a longer perspective and breathing room to see and appreciate time and trends, and to do so through the study of the household.

### *Region, Subregion, and Sources*

The question of the special nature and chronology of developments in different regions is another dimension that remains to be explored. For that, our attention needs to zoom in on one particular important region and follow the chronological evolution of various aspects across a relatively long period so that we would have a mark against which to measure what happens in other regions across central Mexico at the same time. And comparison leads not only to more precise and differentiated generalizations but also, I believe, to a more profound understanding of the indigenous experience. These are the ideas that brought me to select the Toluca Valley, at the same time expanding the one-settlement focus of some studies in the field.

Moreover, research in various archives and collections has revealed a great number of Nahuatl testaments from the Valley, and the current book is built on more than 220\* of them, spanning from the early seventeenth century to the 1790s, the largest corpus of testaments in an indigenous language explored so far in a monograph.<sup>4</sup> The original intention was to assess how the

\*The corpus for the current book consists largely of testaments coming from the Archivo Histórico Arzobispado de México, from now on AHAM (forty-one testaments), and the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City, from now on AGN (159, from the branches Tierras, Civil, Criminal, Hospital de Jesús; for all abbreviations see the list of abbreviations in the front of the book). There are also thirteen testaments from the Archivo de Notarías de Toluca (hereafter ANdT), in the Archivo del Estado de México, kindly provided by Mark Mairot, who is working on a larger corpus in Spanish for his dissertation at UCLA. Also included are three testaments from the Newberry Library collection, one from the Biblioteca Nacional (Fondo Franciscano), and two published in Rojas Rabiela et al. 1994–2004 (abbreviated Rojas) and one in Anderson, Berdan, and Lockhart 1976 (hereafter abbreviated as BC, for *Beyond the Codices*). In addition, eight testaments from the McAfee collection at UCLA discovered at a late stage have been considered although not incorporated in many compilations made previously. Chronologically, five testaments are from before 1650, twenty-two from 1650–1700, and all the rest are from 1700 to the 1790s.

characteristics of indigenous society in the Toluca Valley evolved from mid-sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth, but no sixteenth-century Nahuatl testament from the Valley has reached us, and only a few from the early seventeenth. Because Nahuatl testaments of the sixteenth century from the neighboring Valley of Mexico have been published, though not very many in fact, I have consulted the available collections, measuring traits found in them against the later Toluca Valley corpus.\* Granted that the results are an approximation, they are based on comparison over time of two areas that were similar and in contact with each other, and this method makes it possible to place the Toluca phenomena in a broader temporal perspective, reaching original conclusions on the long-term evolution of indigenous society across central Mexico. The extant Toluca Valley testaments from the early seventeenth century, though few, have had great strategic value in the process, for they share many traits with the sixteenth-century Valley of Mexico texts and allow one to posit some general chronological trends across both regions.

While Nahuatl testaments are at the center of the study, a variety of sources in Spanish is brought in and connected to them, a rather uncommon feature, for a bifurcation usually takes place in Mexican ethnohistory, with indigenous-language research on one side and research in Spanish sources on the other. On the indigenous-language side of the divide, from early in the game scholars have realized that Nahuatl and other indigenous-language historical studies should not be done in a vacuum or cut loose from the great riches on indigenous matters contained in Spanish sources. The effects of the very separate sets of material, however, requiring different skills and methods, have continued to be felt, and integration has been hard to implement. Rebecca Horn has done pioneering work in this direction, discovering many relationships between the indigenous and the Spanish inhabitants of Coyoacan through parallel study of the local documentation in both languages, treating both communities in much the same way, but she remains unusual in this.<sup>5</sup>

\*The collections of testaments used throughout the book as a point of comparison are the following: Cline and León-Portilla 1984 (abbreviated TC, for *Testaments of Culhuacan*); Reyes García, Solís, and Valencia Ríos 1996 (abbreviated Reyes); Rojas Rabiela, López, and Lima 1994–2004 (abbreviated Rojas). Restall 1995 has something comparable for the Mayas. So far no early-period testaments for Toluca have been found, but there might be some in parish archives, yet to be explored; Loera y Chávez mentioned this problem as early as thirty-five years ago (see Loera y Chávez 1977, 19).

The present project does not go as far as studying the Spaniards among the indigenous people on whom I concentrate, but the Nahuatl data are complemented with relevant materials in Spanish, and the combination of the two types of sources generates interesting observations and reciprocal validation. I have consulted ecclesiastical administrative records, the *libros de visitas* and *libros de gobierno* of four archbishops who toured the Toluca Valley in the period considered.<sup>6</sup> But far more useful for my purposes have been lawsuits from the same indigenous communities where testaments were produced, covering topics as diverse as property disputes, marital and extramarital relations, and unorthodox religious practices, plus various testaments in Spanish, for a total of roughly 300 documents. In the litigation it is not the final judgments or the legal maneuverings that are productive for my purpose but testimony about concrete matters of everyday life, whether by protagonists or neighbors as witnesses.

Study of the Toluca Valley as a region does not capture all the focuses of the book, though. The Valley settlements were not all the same, as became evident already in *Testaments of Toluca*, in which the immediacies of Toluca proper (the town of Toluca, its constituent barrios, and the settlements around it)\* were compared with the large double *altepetl*<sup>†</sup> Calimaya/Tepemaxalco, and substantial differences emerged. In my subsequent work on the rest of the Valley, in the areas of Metepec and Tenango del Valle, even more distinctions came to light, affecting both individual settlements and groups of them. The four areas represent the geographical axis of the current book, and subregional differentiation within the Valley has become a key theme, something that I believe will not be found studied in other works on early Mexican ethnohistory to date.<sup>7</sup>

The region chosen here has the attribute of being extensive and diverse yet manageable. In the end, the Valley constitutes a unit with some characteristics distinct from the Valley of Mexico, but it very much belongs to that central Mexican complex of thickly inhabited regions looking to Mexico City. It can stand for now as a major test case for local indigenous society from 1650 on, in the expectation of further regional studies to fill in the picture. Like the whole

\*The designation “Toluca proper” is still used in this book to indicate not only the town itself but the area surrounding it. With the terms *subregion* or *area* I refer to Toluca proper and the other portions of the Valley selected for this study.

<sup>†</sup>In central Mexico, an *altepetl* is a local ethnic state and corresponds to what the Spanish called a pueblo after the conquest; a *tlaxilacalli* (or *calpolli*) is one of its constituent parts.

macroregion with the exception of the capital, Mexico City, and its immediate surroundings, it can be in some sense considered rural, with agrarian activities the main pursuit and large concentrations of Spaniards few and far between.

This is the same countryside containing the haciendas to which so much scholarship has been devoted and that beyond all doubt were a major feature of the landscape, bringing on large-scale tensions including land competition. Also, judicial records show that unrest and uprisings were common in central Mexico in the later period, including some connected with the growing ambition of constituent communities for freedom from the altepetl structure, and the Toluca Valley was no different.<sup>8</sup> Evidence of growing independence of the altepetl parts called tlaxilacalli is indeed seen in the mundane Nahuatl records, yet uprisings and conflicts over land with haciendas or other altepetl have left hardly a trace in the documentary corpus for the present project. This is likely because the sources reflect above all normal, everyday procedures and experiences, rather than emergencies, or events within the indigenous community and, even more, household. It is, once again, a view from the inside of the indigenous world. This world and the Hispanic sector certainly shared the same space, depended on each other, and competed with each other, but, from the perspective of the indigenous household, extensive Spanish cultural influence is the main evidence of the other side of the coin, not conflict with haciendas.

### *The Household as the Vehicle for Studying Local Society*

Chronology, region, and sources have prepared the ground, in the sense that they made possible the focus that provides much of the originality of this book: the household. It is the first study to approach local indigenous society in a large but well-defined region over a long period of time, putting the household at the center and using it as the entry point. The outcome is a whole different level of analysis, that of the household seen from within.

From architecture to anthropology and archaeology, and even philosophy, various disciplines have used the term *household* in somewhat different ways, but what lies underneath is always the idea of a basic, primordial space of the human experience. Dealing with the household, therefore, opens up a myriad of temporal and spatial connections, to the point that the concept itself seems evident and indefinite at the same time, slipping through one's fingers. It can mean first of all the structure, the house, acting as a third skin between an individual and the world, after the body and the clothing, or as a portion of the world that human beings carve out of the continuity and infinity of natural

space to create their own particular unities.<sup>9</sup> It has been seen as an act of constructing, assimilated to the other essential human activity, cultivating, or as the creation of a space between memory and imagination in which to look for stability, for a center, or for oneself.<sup>10</sup> But the household can also be a social structure, a “moral person” holding material and immaterial wealth and passing it down through time, in a line of continuity.<sup>11</sup> In a more encompassing way, the “household” means each and every one of these aspects together: It is a relation between buildings and people; it is made up of common spaces, kinship, subsistence, production, consumption, and property. It becomes, in a word, the symbol of a social group in interaction with its physical space.<sup>12</sup>

This idea of the household “in the round” resonates deeply with the approach followed here. I understand the household as both a living space, a physical configuration of buildings and land, and as a social organization consisting of the inhabitants of the complex; it is a social and economic as well as material unit.<sup>13</sup> The key element in this case is the space in which some people live together and the relations that link them, not any named kin group. Although, as we will see, lineage and kinship are extremely important, the operative entity at this level is the household and not the notion that comes to our minds so readily, the family. The word *calli*, “house,” proliferates in the Toluca Valley texts, and *-chan*, “one’s home,” is common, but no native word that could be translated as “family” is found anywhere.\*

The historical literature on indigenous societies based on sources in Spanish has usually operated at the level of the community because that is where documents are clearer and more abundant. The vast and great work of Charles Gibson, for one, was virtually all at the level of the corporation, rarely even mentioning individuals or households. Another example is William Taylor, who studied rebellions in eighteenth-century Mexican countryside as community phenomena. More recently, individuals have been finding their place through their actions recorded in court cases, be they attempts to affirm personal interests and mold laws (in Brian Owensby’s new book, for example) or postures vis-à-vis the independence movement (Eric Van Young). Either way, these actions take individuals outside their households, while the aim of the present book is to place them back in, to consider them inside this primordial space.<sup>14</sup>

\*The loanword *familia* appears only once, in a very late text from Capultitlan shot through with Spanish expressions (ANdT d. 14, not. 1, 202:1, Pascuala María 1792). The phrase is “ome lluntas para imantencion ihua ifamilia,” “two yokes [of oxen] for the maintenance of him and his family.”



Moving to the literature based on sources in Nahuatl, Lockhart analyzed the household's physical and social structure, deducing certain principles from a limited number of specific examples and from general observation; within that framework he could not be systematic at a local level or comparative between times and regions, and the household is central to only one chapter of the large work. The books by Haskett on indigenous municipal government in the Cuernavaca district up to independence and by Horn on the complex altepetl of Coyoacan in 1519–1650 contain analysis at much the same level as mine here, not only based on mundane Nahuatl documents but also dealing with large and diverse entities across long stretches of time. By exploiting Nahuatl wills of key individuals and, in Horn's case, also by studying Nahuatl bills of sale for land, they provide useful comparative perspectives for my work. A direct and systematic approach to the household, however, did not fit into the plan of either book.<sup>15</sup>

Sarah Cline anticipated the type of analysis I use here, focusing on home and everyday life in the altepetl of Culhuacan, in the Valley of Mexico, on the basis of a unique set of testaments written around the 1580s.<sup>16</sup> The present book expands the spatial and chronological scope (corresponding to the number and variety of testaments) and grounds the research in a deep study of all the relevant indigenous terminology, while also assessing quantitatively various household phenomena, when possible. The hope is that, by doing so, we can get at a systematic reconstruction of the indigenous household and hence a more incisive understanding, granted the limits imposed by the silences in the sources. If successful, we can get a step closer to recovering "the homes of the past; we can recreate them, and by doing so give a representation that has all the traits of a copy of the real," in Bachelard's words.<sup>17</sup>

Of course, the household level of analysis may not interest everybody, but there is much to be said for the centrality of the topic to the history of the indigenous world more broadly. Not only does the household unit influence or even to an extent determine organization at the corporate level; it may have larger implications. Once Spaniards had taken over imperial-level phenomena, the Nahua world consisted of entities of three categories: altepetl, tlaxilacalli, and household. Of these, by the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries the first was in many cases fragmenting into its constituent parts, as well as having ever more of its functions preempted by the Spanish sector. The tlaxilacalli, though now becoming dominant, is difficult to study as such because there are very few sources that would allow a close-up, in-depth view. On the other hand, the most common type of Nahuatl documentation, the testament, is an open door into the household, specifically enumerating and

telling about all its buildings, lands, and people. And it is these very testaments that, by identifying the sociopolitical units and their officials and by providing a composite picture of given communities, become the best source in existence for studying the tlaxilacalli and many aspects of the altepetl. In this book, the two overarching corporate entities are seen from the household out, and, though this is not the only way to study them, it is a productive and indispensable one, illuminating things about them at their roots.

On the whole, the household focus suggests movement in a different direction from that taken by much of the literature on indigenous peoples in eighteenth-century Mexico (and elsewhere, for that matter), which has highlighted the theme of resistance. Such an emphasis is quite natural, for the late period was a time of population growth, tension over lands and taxes, and consequently rebellions. Scholars have applied the concept of resistance to more ordinary situations as well, discussing passive resistance or resistant adaptation.<sup>18</sup> In this approach, however, much remains unknown about everyday structures, not at a moment of upheaval but in their normal existence. And a close look reveals that indigenous peoples often did not choose resistance as a conscious act or did not adopt ordinary behaviors and attitudes to resist a situation or authority. So, resistance as an operating concept fails to capture a considerable part of indigenous life at the time. Shifting the focus to the household means drawing attention to the interactions within indigenous local society on issues of daily life and their intuitive, natural evolution over time. It means highlighting that adjustment in the postconquest indigenous world was a process and one often consisting of spontaneous or almost unconscious moves to incorporate or exclude specific elements, rather than outright adaptation. Last, it implies the recognition of a new whole created from indigenous and Spanish components, a different world even though it embodies important elements of continuity from both antecedents.\*

### The Toluca Valley in the Time of the Study

The Toluca Valley is an extensive highland area of central Mexico, just to the west of Mexico City, separated from it by an elevated mountain range. Much

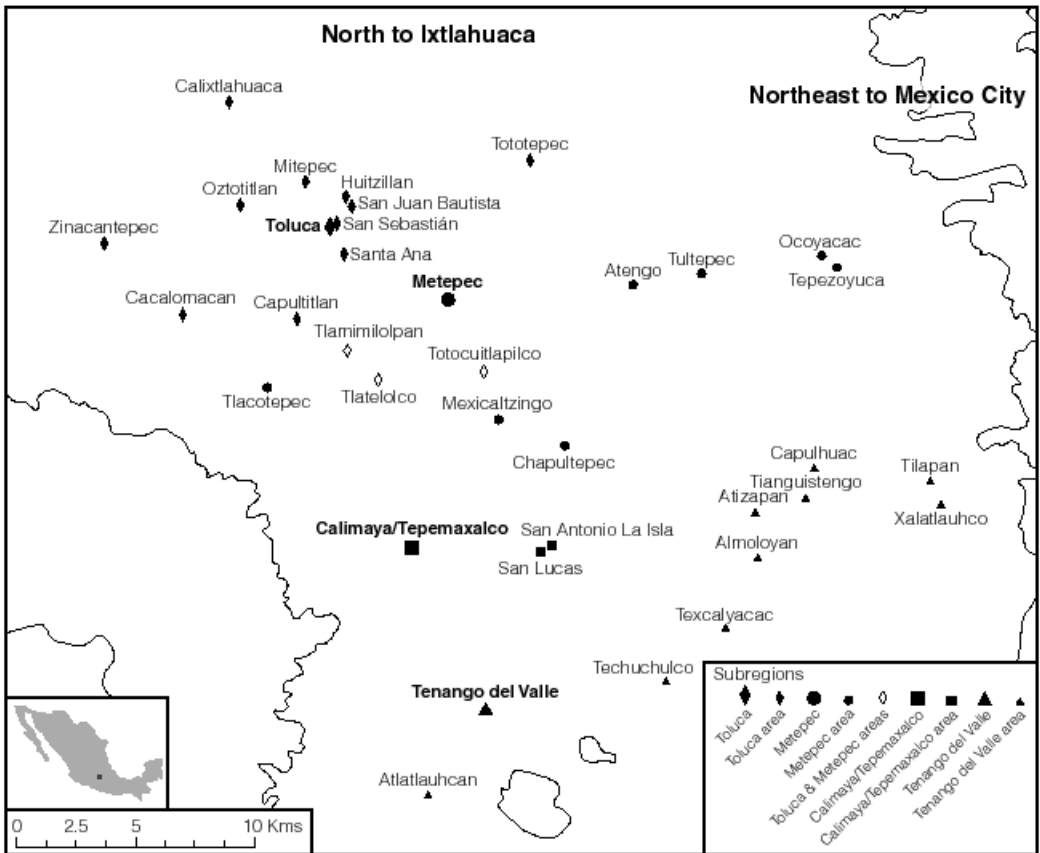
\*The term *continuity* has created a bit of confusion in Mexican ethnohistory. It has been used a lot by the New Philology movement to stress the survival of indigenous structures and the points of convergence between indigenous and Spanish societies. At the same time, its use has been questioned by the critics of the movement as a way to downplay change and the disruption of conquest.

of it is level land surrounded by mountains, but the north extends indefinitely as a plain. The southern part is the best watered, so the south and south-center were the great maize areas, whereas the north, after the Spaniards arrived, was more propitious for grazing. The inhabitants spoke various Otomanguean languages, but late in the fifteenth century the Nahuas arrived in strength, taking over and making Nahuatl the dominant language,<sup>19</sup> though not necessarily the one spoken by the most people.\* After the Spanish conquest, the town of Toluca and its surroundings became part of the Marquesado del Valle, the *señorío* originally given to Hernando Cortés. Little difference can be detected between developments and structures in the area directly under the crown and in the Marquesado, which in fact was taken over by the crown openly at times. Four administrative centers existed, with their jurisdictions varying greatly over the years. In addition to Toluca, Metepec, and Tenango del Valle, the jurisdiction of Ixtlahuaca to the north at times came as far south as Zinacantepec.<sup>20</sup>

In line with its concentration on local indigenous society, this book does not follow these legal districts closely; their boundaries changed quite often, settlements being moved from one to another. Rather, I have established some groupings based on proximity and especially on affinities and unities that can be perceived in the collected sources (see Figure 1.1).<sup>†</sup> From north to south, first there is Toluca, which includes the city itself and its immediate surroundings but also a series of settlements that looked to it and shared characteristics

\*Apparently a substantial number of the people and communities appearing in Nahuatl testaments were descendants of earlier Nahua migrants from the Valley of Mexico, while others must have been descendants of Otomanguean peoples or a mixture of the two. They both seem to have used Nahuatl as written medium, and the testament corpus here contains no vocabulary from Otomanguean languages, nor can any differences be detected between groups that might be attributed to ethnic origin. Indeed, the vocabulary and phrases employed all have close parallels in the Nahuatl used at that time in other parts of central Mexico. Whether the people seen in the testament corpus and the related litigation were Nahuas or not, they all belonged to the same Toluca Valley indigenous culture, a congruent variant of central Mexican indigenous culture more generally.

<sup>†</sup>Similar characteristics emerging from the sources, such as reference points in the landscape, description of the house structure, vocabulary used for land, household matters, or funeral rites, have been taken into consideration. This means that a few settlements that belonged to the Metepec jurisdiction much of the time have been analyzed within the area of Toluca proper.



**Figure 1.1.** Map of the Toluca Valley and its subregions.

The four major centers included a cluster of tlaxilacalli that cannot be represented separately on the map. The names of those that appear in the sources for this book are listed here. *For Toluca:* San Juan Evangelista, San Luis, Santa Clara Cozcatlan, Santa Bárbara Xolalpan, San Miguel Aticpac, San Cristóbal. *For Metepec:* San Francisco Quaxochco, San Mateo Toltitlan, San Miguel Tapalcapan, Santa Cruz Tianquitzenco, Santiago. *For Calimaya:* Pasiontitlan, Tlamimilolpan, Teopantonco, Teopanquiyahuac; and *Tepemaxalco:* Pasiontitlan, San Lucas Evangelista, Santa María de la Asunción, San Juan Bautista Yancuictlalpan, Santa María Nativitas, Santiago Apostol Quaxochtengo. *For Tenango del Valle:* San Diego, San Mateo, San Nicolás Pilpan, Transfiguración. *Sources:* Map designed with software ArcGIS 10.1, with some data taken from Stephanie Wood, “Corporate Adjustment in Colonial Mexican Towns: Toluca Region, 1550–1880” (Doctoral dissertation, UCLA, 1984), and Dorothy Tanck de Estrada, *Atlas ilustrado de los pueblos de indios, Nueva España, 1800* (México DF: El Colegio de México and Colegio Mexiquense, 2005).

with it. Some of these are quite far in the direction of Metepec, the center of the second area here identified, again with settlements around it, but not some well off to the north that at times were in its jurisdiction. Calimaya/Tepemaxalco, a bit further to the south, was never an administrative center at the same level as the others, but it is such a large and distinct entity that it is here considered as an area on its own. Finally, Tenango del Valle includes most of the far south of the Valley. To the north is an area in the direction of Ixtlahuaca and looking to it, which is much more thinly documented in this study's corpus and seems to vary somewhat from the rest; here it is incorporated into the analysis only to a certain extent.

The high altitude and cold climate made the Valley particularly suitable for maize cultivation and livestock raising, as we have seen, and they have been its major resources since early postconquest times.<sup>21</sup> Both Spanish estates and indigenous settlements were dedicated to agrarian activities and, although Spanish enterprises initially concentrated on livestock and indigenous settlements on maize, with time there was much interpenetration. Pigs were especially prevalent in the maize-rich south, with larger livestock more to the north, but again there was much variety. The Valley produced goods for the markets of Mexico City, the mining centers of Zultepec and Temascaltepec to the south, and for internal consumption, though the latter was long the least profitable branch.<sup>22</sup> All of this had taken shape by the late sixteenth century and was still very similar in the eighteenth, as illustrated by a report written in 1757 by a priest of Metepec, Cayetano Jacinto de Sotomayor, on haciendas and ranchos.<sup>23</sup> He visited ten haciendas, the great majority of which were growing maize and beans and had livestock, especially cows, mares, and sheep, with the occasional presence of pigs. He also interviewed the indigenous authorities of Metepec and four other settlements in the jurisdiction concerning the community's lands, and they reported unanimously that the crop they cultivated was maize.

From the preceding paragraphs it is clear that the Spanish presence was strong in the Valley and was nothing new; yet most settlements preserved a mainly indigenous population, as shown by various censuses of Valley districts taken in 1717 and summarized in Table I.1.<sup>24</sup>

What is presented in the table is by no means supposed to be exhaustive, and systematic data for the whole region have not been located, but evidence such as this can provide some insights into population distribution and composition. While Spaniards were numerous in the head town of each subarea

**Table 1.1** Population in some settlements of the Toluca Valley, 1717

Settlement		Spaniards (and "gente de razón")	Indians	Total inhabitants
Toluca	Cabecera	3,482	7,978	
	Pueblos	2,992	1,173	15,625
Metepéc	Cabecera	474	1,624	
	Pueblos	—	1,376	3,474
Tenango del Valle	Cabecera	736	892	
	Pueblos	—	1,922	3,550
Calimaya	Cabecera	964	4955	5919 <sup>b</sup>
	Pueblos	"	"	
Zinacantepec (Toluca area)	Cabecera	504	759	
	Pueblos	—	2,156	3,419
Xalatlauhco (Tenango del Valle area)	Cabecera	352	839	
	Pueblos	—	1,354	2,545
Capulhuac (Tenango del Valle area)	Cabecera	258	932	1,190 <sup>b</sup>
	Pueblos	"	"	
Atengo (Metepéc area)	Cabecera	20?	2,033	2,050 <sup>b</sup>
	Pueblos	"	"	
Texcalyacac (Tenango del Valle area)	Cabecera	—	542	
	Pueblos	—	1,108	1,650

*Note:* This is a reproduction of the data found in the archbishop's report, with the same categories of Spaniards, *gente de razón*, and Indians and the same settlement names as given there (indication of the areas is mine, though); the report indicates where data could not be collected and thus the total number of inhabitants cannot be deduced. Moreover, the numbers of Spanish and indigenous people for the category "Toluca pueblos" seem quite awkward; thus, there might have been some inaccuracy during the actual survey of the territory. Finally, notice that mestizos and mulattos were normally included among the Spanish population as *gente de razón*, and this helps to explain the relative absence of references to mestizos in the documents, which may seem otherwise surprising (on this matter see Lockhart 1991, 229–230).

<sup>a</sup> No data on pueblos.

<sup>b</sup> Incomplete or approximate data.

(Toluca, Metepéc, Calimaya/Tepemaxalco, and Tenango del Valle), indigenous people predominated numerically even there and far more so in settlements away from the centers.<sup>25</sup> Thus the overall situation in the Toluca Valley allowed indigenous settlements to preserve their language, culture, and structure, while at the same time being exposed to significant Spanish influence.

Authorities and institutions are not at the center of this book; the chief district administrators, the *corregidor* in Toluca and the virtually equivalent *alcaldes mayores* in Metepéc and Tenango del Valle, hardly figure in its characteristic sources except in testamentary warnings that they are to be called on to punish those who challenge bequests; even their deputies in charge of various subareas are little heard of.<sup>26</sup> Due to the nature of testaments, religious authorities are somewhat more relevant. The Valley was originally put under the administration of the Franciscans, with their church in Toluca the

center for the whole district and Franciscans in charge of the great majority of all indigenous parishes. Three other orders came to be established in Toluca proper: the disalced Carmelites, the Mercedarians, and the hospital order of San Juan de Dios.<sup>27</sup> From an early time, however, new parishes were assigned to secular priests, and by the eighteenth century this process, generally called secularization, was far advanced, with Metepec going to the secular clergy, as well as the most important parishes in the jurisdiction of Tenango del Valle. The city of Toluca, though, was not secularized until 1859.<sup>28</sup>

It is also worth knowing that although the great majority of the sources of this book were generated in the various settlements of the Toluca Valley, most of them have been preserved through institutions in Mexico City, where litigation containing testaments and proceedings was channeled. In ecclesiastical circles, litigation would begin with the Juzgado Eclesiástico in the city of Toluca, then being appealed to the Provisorato de Indios y Chinos in Mexico City and today preserved in the Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de México. Provincial ecclesiastical courts have scarcely been exploited as a source for colonial history, and the documentation of the Juzgado of Toluca in particular has never been used before.<sup>29</sup> In secular matters, disputes were first heard by the local deputies and *alcaldes mayores*, then went on appeal to the Juzgado de Indios, a branch of the Royal Audiencia, also in the capital, with the records held today in the Archivo General de la Nación.<sup>30</sup> Both avenues have preserved many of the Nahuatl testaments used in this study, while the litigation about marriage, extramarital relationships, and other personal matters is mainly in the Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de México.

### Organization of the Book

The backbone of this book is an arrangement into three large parts, moving from Part I on the indigenous household structure, the very core; to Part II, on the people who inhabit the household and their activities; and then on to Part III, which deals with those aspects of ordinary life in which the household most meaningfully intersects with corporate institutions and practices. Part I, "The Household Setting," consists of two chapters, the first one being essential for the central themes of the book and its main contributions. It presents the indigenous household as a unit constituted by three parts: the buildings, the land on which they stand, and the saints, or religious images, inside. The house and its land have already been considered in various ways by the existing literature, while the integration of the saints in this organic view of the house complex represents a novel way of analyzing the indigenous household.

Moreover, a chronological approach applied to the combination of sources allows one to discover and trace substantial changes in the house structure by the later period. Chapter 2 is closely linked to all the preceding, dealing with a more external or distant element of the household structure, the land not attached to the house, scattered in the countryside. The main new elements here are an assessment of the average landholdings per household in the Valley and a reconstruction of inheritance patterns, again with attention to chronological evolution as well as regional differentiation. Ultimately, both chapters discuss the strategies of inheritance that testators adopted when passing on their property, revealing fascinating things about gender, age, and changes over time.

The next three chapters (Part II, “The People”) cover various features of the people residing in the household. Chapter 3 deals with identities, that is, the ways in which the household dwellers identify themselves and their position in the total network of relationships. Kinship terminology is an obvious starting point, encompassing blood kin and relatives acquired through marriage, followed by an analysis of naming patterns and then the broader affiliation, that to an individual’s *tlaxilacalli* or *altepetl*, always mentioned by a testator when introducing him- or herself. Some interesting changes emerge, such as a “genderization” of kinship terms that did not mark gender in the earlier period (words for spouses and children). The penetration of Spanish influence into kinship vocabulary as well as naming patterns has been long acknowledged by the literature and is confirmed here, with some new aspects. The attention to chronology, subregions, and specific terms reveals interesting variations, but persistence is still part of the picture, particularly with the sense of belonging to one specific settlement, which remains the most immediate way to express one’s identity, aside from the name.

Interactions are at the center of Chapter 4, which gives ample space to the most basic relations within the household, those between the couple and between parents and children. But household interactions also mean disputes over property because relatives are precisely the ones most likely to contest access to inherited houses and parcels of land. And here and there in the documents another type of interaction surfaces, that with the Spanish who settled in the Valley or had commercial links with the indigenous population. The aim of this chapter is to give some idea of how people related to one another within the household, highlighting common practices and fluidity as well as crises within it.

Contacts and exchanges often go together with activities, in the sense of occupations that individuals practice to support themselves; they are the sub-



ject of Chapter 5. Surely many such activities left no trace in the documents consulted, but maguery cultivation and pulque production, sale or rental of animals and land, and hocking and moneylending can all be commented on. The purpose here is to give a fresh look at what indigenous people did for a living from the point of view of testaments and court cases, thus from inside or within the household structure. Interesting gender specializations emerge (some already known), such as men's predominance in matters related to land and animals and women's strong roles in pulque trade and moneylending. In all of this, the household space is constantly in touch with the exterior, with a blurring effect on any public/private division.

The opening up of the house complex that has begun in the previous section acquires larger proportions in the following two chapters, constituting Part III, "Corporate Aspects." Chapter 6 deals with worship of patron saints and other nonhousehold saints, confraternities, ritual kinship, and funerals, all aspects of religion that, although often starting in the house, imply the participation of the community or corporate element. Toluca Valley testators express their devotion to a patron saint in various ways, but one aspect is common to the great majority of them: This devotion falls within the realm of the corporation, literally or figuratively, while the household remains the prerogative of the family saints, and the two realms are in some ways remarkably separate. As for *cofradías*, here they are considered from the particular point of view of individuals mentioning them in testaments, which leads to highlighting features different from those typical of the literature on sodalities. Ritual kinship is also seen through the lens of individual choices, and testaments allow us to get at some intriguing aspects of what being a *compadre* or *comadre* meant for the indigenous people of the Valley. And, last, funerary practices reveal an interesting mixture of Spanish and indigenous traits, as well as some of the best examples of local habits and subregional variation. The chapter ends with some inquiry into the religious beliefs of the indigenous people of the Valley or, better put, examines the extent to which such a quest is possible with the available sources.

Chapter 7 deals with officials of the communities, primarily seen as testators and witnesses to testaments, though sometimes performing their official functions. The aim is once again to get a perspective on local officials as individuals and members of society rather than to reconstruct municipal institutions and their operations. It is common knowledge by now that municipal and church offices were intertwined; by following references in the sources used here, even more details emerge about rotations, hierarchies, and training

practices. In addition, it becomes evident that by the later colonial period local officials are by far the preferred witnesses and executors of testaments, contrary to what happened earlier. It is also possible to get at the lives of some of them, which reveals how many are individuals of rather humble status, holding offices that were once the exclusive realm of the elite. Finally, following individual references to local officials allows a glimpse into the various ways in which the municipality entered household life, from tribute collection to land distribution.

The sequence of chapters sketched above will, I hope, elucidate many of the characteristics of the indigenous household and its context. But we need to start from the beginning, turning now to the structure of the household complex: its buildings, land, and saints.