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PACIFYING THE TEPEHUANES FROM 1590 TO 1642

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	vi
Introduction	1
1. The Missionization of the Tepehuanes	7
2. From Resistance to Revolt	19
3. The Consequences of Revolt	38
Epilogue	45
Bibliography	48

## **Abstract**

In the sixteenth century, Spanish missionaries entered the northern frontier of Mexico in hopes of converting the “barbarous” native peoples of the Sierra Madre Occidental. Upon their arrival, they found a population of warlike people, the Tepehuanes, who controlled large amounts of territory near valuable mines. The Spanish soon realized the need to missionize the Tepehuanes in order to gain access to a large labor force and pathways to the mines. Following the outbreak of epidemics among the natives, the Tepehuanes descended from the mountains in the 1590s. In the decades following missionization, the Tepehuanes appeared stable and peaceful to their colonial rulers. But the Tepehuanes continued to make sacrifices to traditional deities. Traditional practices persisted within the mission. Then, in 1616, the Tepehuán Revolt ignited throughout Nueva Vizcaya. The Spanish eventually defeated the Tepehuanes and worked toward total submission and pacification beginning in 1619. However, pacification proved more difficult than the Spanish imagined.

## Introduction

In the northern frontier of colonial Mexico, the land of the Tepehuanes, in the Sierra Madre Occidental, was approximately 500 miles northwest to southeast and up to 100 miles wide in some places.<sup>1</sup> The Tepehuanes became known for their natural inclination to engage in war amongst themselves and with other indigenous peoples, as well as their tendency to mount attacks on the Spanish. Much of the existing scholarship focuses solely on the Tepehuán Revolt of 1616. The lack of scholarship is largely due to the limited sources found in the historical record. Charlotte Gradie provides the most complete and recent scholarship of the Tepehuán in her monograph, *The Tepehuán Revolt of 1616*. Other historians, such as Susan Deeds, Roberto Mario Salmón, and John Francis Bannon, briefly focus on their existence and the revolt before moving on to other well-documented indigenous groups of the northern frontier. Christophe Guidicelli interprets the Tepehuanes and their history as a whole. The aim of this thesis is to gain an understanding of the origins, course, and aftermath of the revolt. Gradie's analysis fails to account for the fact the Tepehuanes expressed their discontent in a variety of ways before the revolt. The revolt did not occur spontaneously without warning signs. In addition, the defeat of the uprising did not signify widespread submission to the Spanish. It was the beginning of a struggle to pacify the Tepehuanes lasting at least, but not definitively, until 1642.

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<sup>1</sup> Mason, J. Alden. "The Tepehuán of Northern Mexico" in *The North Mexican Frontier*, eds. Basil C. Hedrick, et.al. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), 218.

Historians, such as John Tutino, Friedrich Katz, and William B. Taylor, tend to agree that Latin America remained fairly stable with few revolts during the colonial period while under Spanish rule. William B. Taylor argues that the absence of large-scale revolt does not equate to peace between the Spanish and indigenous subjects.<sup>2</sup> Many of the Tepehuanes chose to live, work, and worship in the missions. However, their choice to descend the Sierra Madre Occidental should not be construed as acceptance of Spanish domination, but rather a compromise of necessity. The Tepehuanes sought Spanish goods and subsistence during times of hardship. In times of religious doubt, the Spanish offered an alternative to indigenous religion. Peace between natives and the Spanish often proved circumstantial, but not definite or without recourse. The Tepehuán Revolt of 1616 demonstrates the tenuous relationships between indigenous people and a dominant ruler, in this case the Spanish.

Gradie's work begins with a discussion of the prehistoric Tepehuán, the arrival of the Spanish, a description of the missionization process, and a thorough discussion of the events during the revolt. This work, on the other hand, intends to focus not on the revolt and its events, but rather to establish a thorough understanding of the missionization process prior to the revolt, the motivations behind the revolt, a broad overview of the revolt itself, followed by an analysis of the post-war socio-political situation. Gradie views the revolt as a movement of cultural revitalization, a return to pre-Hispanic ways, with a specific focus on warrior culture.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, I follow Guidicelli in arguing that the leaders of the revolt desired to restore traditional

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<sup>2</sup> Taylor, William B. *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 114.

<sup>3</sup> Gradie, Charlotte M. *The Tepehuán Revolt of 1616: Militarism, Evangelism, and Colonialism in Seventeenth-Century Nueva Vizcaya* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2000), 4.



Tepehuán social hierarchies, political, and cultural norms. Contact with the Spanish, severely disrupted Tepehuán culture due to the infiltration of disease, new standards of marriage, Christian religion, tools, cattle, and diet changes.<sup>4</sup> According to Gradie, the rebel leaders utilized nostalgia for traditional ways to gain the support of missionized natives who, the leaders hoped, would have restored the insurrectionary leaders to power.<sup>5</sup> Even though she notes each of these motives for the revolt, Gradie asserts that

They had made peace with the Spanish for over a quarter of a century, had accepted congregation, and had converted to Christianity, and then they had suddenly and seemingly without reason, revolted.<sup>6</sup>

Her vision of a revolt without cause runs against the grain of her argument for cultural revitalization as a primary motive for the revolt. Tepehuán mission history is complex, with many ebbs and flows making it difficult for historians to agree upon a single, cohesive narrative beyond the timeline of events provided by Jesuit sources.

Gradie cites the revolt as “an end to what might be called the defining stage of Jesuit missionary policy in Spanish America,” which brought to a close the widespread and evident Tepehuán opposition to Spanish occupation.<sup>7</sup> However, a few pages later, she asserts that pre-revolt missionary methods continued, and the doctrina remained the ‘center of Jesuit missionary activity.’ Gradie contradicts her assertion of the end of Tepehuán opposition by continuing her discussion of Jesuit activities to encourage conversion after the conclusion of the revolt, such as the Jesuits walking into the mountains seeking out unconverted Tepehuánes for years after the revolt, where they

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 174.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 175.

retreated in fear of Spanish retaliation.<sup>8</sup> Gradie demonstrates that after the Tepehúan Revolt, the Jesuits failed to pacify and control the Tepehuanes. Her ambiguous and contradictory arguments about the revolt and its aftermath nevertheless support the argument that the Spanish failed to pacify the Tepehuanes, a topic this thesis explores in detail through an examination of documents written before, during, and after the revolt.

Guidicelli tends to agree with Gradie on the cause of the revolt, but stresses the importance of understanding historic narratives and global comparisons. Most rebellions, especially in Spanish colonies, were interpreted after the fact as rebellions against a universally accepted truth or narrative: for example, the barbarous indigenous were saved by the good Christians spreading the Gospel. Official documents of the Church, religious organizations, great nations, etc. support these syntheses. According to Guidicelli, rebellion is the “rupture of legal order.” Thus, the history of rebellion forces the actors to disappear and their actions to replace the people in history. The actors lose their faces and identities, but remain a part of the historical record as an event, date, cause and effect analysis, etc.<sup>9</sup> He asserts that historical writing often ignores the history of unwritten cultures and “primitive” peoples. As a result, historians create a universal teleology citing rebellion as a result of resistance not a result of assimilation.<sup>10</sup> The master narrative results in the indigenous peoples, in this case the Tepehuanes, being labeled antagonists, “indio rebelde.”<sup>11</sup> Unlike Gradie, Guidicelli

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 179.

<sup>9</sup> Guidicelli, Christophe. “El Mestizaje en movimiento: Guerra y Creacion identitaria en la guerra de los Tepehuanes (1616-1619)” in *Colonización, resistencia y mestizaje en las Américas (siglos XVI-XX)* ed. Guillaume Boccara (Lima: IFEA, 2002), 105-106.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 106.

examines the Tepehuanes as a people with their own history and culture, not solely in relation to the Spanish.

Guidicelli advocates an open-minded analysis of the Tepehuanes free of the stereotypes assigned by historians that the Tepehuanes as a warlike, barbarous people. Guidicelli scoured the actions of the Tepehuanes through the historical record both before and after the rebellion in an attempt to explore the implications of the rupture caused by 1616. Contrary to popular belief, many of the historically defined characteristics of the Tepehuanes only presented themselves after the arrival of the Spanish, not before. Guidicelli argues that mission life birthed the Tepehuán anti-Spanish war machine. The attacks from November to December of 1616 found the mission dwellers unprepared, and their socio-political structure destabilized, a fact that highlights the pre-existing societal divisions within the missions themselves. Prior to the beginning of the war, Nueva Vizcaya was in a illusory state of peace, which reflected the illusion covering all of Nueva España's "perfect conquests."<sup>12</sup> The illusion of perfect peace and coexistence hid the true causes of the rebellion, according to Guidicelli.

Like Gradie, Guidicelli argues that the early days of the war were not ideologically based on the preaching of millenarian ideals of the missions. The Tepehuanes sought a back to the golden era of Tepehuán culture.<sup>13</sup> Guidicelli expands on this assertion by offering a "the two faces of the same conception." The two faces are assimilation and resistance. Assimilation results in a dilution of traditional cultural

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 106-109.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 112-113.

practices. As a result, people express resistance through the retention of some of their culture even under a new order. He argues that the revolt must be interpreted within the context of ideological and cultural acculturation. Colonial contact brought about the death of primitive societies from Guidicelli's perspective. As a result, the Tepehuanes responded logically with destabilization of the new order to preserve their traditions. He argues that the pure culture desired by the Tepehuanes would never reemerge after the influence of the Spanish, regardless of the success prior to the revolt. The culture morphed into an amalgamation of both indigenous and Spanish culture.<sup>14</sup> In conclusion, the uprising was a reaction to acculturation and the Spanish redefinition of political structure and socio-cultural reorganization.<sup>15</sup>

The revolt forced the Spanish to entertain a policy of pacification in order to regain power and control in Nueva Vizcaya. Guidicelli acknowledges the retreat of the Tepehuanes into the Sierra Madre Occidental, whose terrain proved difficult for the Spanish to access and navigate. He also argues that the breadth of Tepehúan expansion and occupation is less important than the necessity to reduce them to a controlled, Spanish environment after the war. Total submission and spacial control of the Tepehuanes remained the Spanish military goal. The Spanish believed that they could maintain appearances through negotiations, but with caution to uncontrolled areas where the rebels out-populated the Spanish.<sup>16</sup> Overall, Guidicelli affords historians the most thorough account and analysis of the Tepehúan people. However, he fails to acknowledge pacification and resistance efforts beyond the immediate aftermath of the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 118-119.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 131.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 8-9.

revolt. Attempts to pacify the Tepehuanes lasted for decades after the revolt without any substantial gains in subjugation. This work builds upon Guidicelli by exploring the long-term effects of the revolt in terms of Tepehúan-Spanish relations.

## **Chapter 1: The Missionization of the Tepehuanes**

Beginning the narrative with the arrival of the Spaniards permits a three dimensional understanding of missionization: the intentions of the Spanish, the traditional culture of the Tepehuán, and the interactions between the two parties from contact until the revolt. In the 1530s and 1540s, Spaniards arrived in the Durango area. Following their arrival, the Guadiana region became the site of the city of Durango in 1563. The proximity to the large labor force and proximity to the mines of the Tepehuán likely influenced the selection of this region. Originally, the Tepehuán occupied the upper San Pablo Valley.<sup>17</sup> News quickly travelled citing rich mines near San Felipe and San Santiago.<sup>18</sup> Based on information gathered from the sources that mention the 1616 revolt, the Tepehuán resided around Durango, in the Canatlán-Sauceda area, San Juan del Rio, Papasquiario, Atotonilco, Santa Catalina, El Zape, Guanaceví, and Indé.<sup>19</sup> According to Pérez de Ribas, a priest who wrote multiple histories of the missionization efforts in Nueva España, the Tepehuán resided in the

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<sup>17</sup> Pennington, Campbell W. *The Tepehuán of Chihuahua: Their Material Culture* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1969), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Document, Historia de la provincia de Cinaloa por el padre, 1620, folder no. 001-001, box 261 Bolton Collection, Bancroft Library, UCLA, 14. (230-00009)

<sup>19</sup>Riley, Carroll L. and Winters, Howard D. "The Prehistoric Tepehuán of Northern America." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Summer, 1963), 181.

mountains and cliffs.<sup>20</sup> In his 1620 “La Historia,” he wrote that these indios bred war and its acts into their population. “La Historia” notes the animalistic nature of the peoples (presumably the Tepehuanes) existing from Guadiana to Caponeta.<sup>21</sup> He also described the Tepehuán as hardened and rugged ‘like the tall oaks among which they are raised.’<sup>22</sup> Due to their environment consisting of deep canyons and rugged terrain, the Tepehuán generally lived isolation from other groups.<sup>23</sup> However, living in rugged terrain and isolation did not affect their ability to produce their necessary needs.

The Tepehuán cultivated cotton to make their clothing, i.e. mantas and women’s skirts.<sup>24</sup> They also wore tunics and breech-cloths, according to the anthropologist Carl Lumholtz.<sup>25</sup> In the document, Puebla 1 de Marzo de 1600, the author described the area of the Tepehuán as a fertile valley with an abundance of fish. The Tepehuán taught the priests how to cultivate the land.<sup>26</sup> Alonso de Mota y Escobar, a Mexican priest, portrayed the land as good for agriculture with accessibility to water.<sup>27</sup> As such, corn remained the only crop harvested annually.<sup>28</sup> However, according to

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<sup>20</sup> Pérez de Ribas, Andrés. *History of the Triumphs of Our Holy Faith among the Most Barbarous and Fierce Peoples of the New World*. Trans. Daniel T. Reff, Maureen Ahern, and Richard K. Danforth (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), 573.

<sup>21</sup> Document, Historia de la provincia de Cinaloa por el padre, 1620, folder no. 001-001, box 261 Bolton Collection, Bancroft Library, UCLA, 21. (230-00009)

<sup>22</sup> Pérez de Ribas, Andrés. *History of the Triumphs of Our Holy Faith among the Most Barbarous and Fierce Peoples of the New World*. Trans. Daniel T. Reff, Maureen Ahern, and Richard K. Danforth (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), 573.

<sup>23</sup> “Introduction.” Edited By Hadley, Diane, Naylor, Thomas H., Schuetz-Miller, Mardith K. *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain*, Vol.2, pt. 2 (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1997), 10.

<sup>24</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 574.

<sup>25</sup> Lumholtz, Carl. *Unknown Mexico*, Vol. 1 (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1902), 433, [gutenberg.org](http://gutenberg.org).

<sup>26</sup> “Carta Anua de la Provincia de Mexico desde Abril de 1600, hasta el de 1602,” *Monumenta Mexicana*, Felix Zubillaga, S.J., and Ernest Burruss, S. J., eds., 7 vols. (Rome: Institutum Historicum, 1956-1981), vol 7, 117.

<sup>27</sup> De Mota y Escobar, Alonso. *Descripción geográfica de los Reinos de Nueva Galicia, Nueva Vizcaya, y Nueva León por D. Alonso de la Mota y Escobar* (reprint, Mexico: P Robredo, 1940), 202.

<sup>28</sup> Mason, 219.

Ribas, they cultivated small plots of corn and native grains. They also gathered wild fruits and hunted fowl. They made wine from wild fruits and the mescal plant.<sup>29</sup> These generalized accounts gained more credibility when twentieth-century archaeologists later found physical evidence of Tepehúan dietary practices.

Around 1960, Richard Brooks, Lawrence Kaplan, Hugh C. Cutler, and Thomas W. Whitaker, archaeologists, travelled to the “La Cuevade Los Muertos Chiquitos site on the Río Zape near El Zape and Zape Chico in the state of Durango, an area occupied by the Tepehúan during the colonial period. During their travels, the archaeologists located a form of maize, called Chapalote or reventador, dated to 600 A.D. Colonial Tepehuanes likely cultivated this specific form of maize.<sup>30</sup> Brooks also found cucurbits or gourds, specifically *Apondanthera*, throughout multiple levels of the cave. These seeds appeared to be roasted and dehulled with some missing the kernel, which suggests that the natives consumed them for sustenance. He inferred based upon his findings that past people of El Zape depended on a ‘bean-corn-cucurbit complex’ for their standard diet. He also found evidence of agave, yucca, black walnuts, *Opuntia* fruits, piñon nuts, acorns, and possibly cotton used for food.<sup>31</sup> Pérez de Ribas’s “Historia de la provincia de Cinaloa por el padre” substantiates this claim denoting that seven men and their wives resided in poverty while sustaining on a miserly diet of maiz, frijoles, calabacas (pumpkins or gourds), and some game.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the diet and cultivation

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<sup>29</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 574.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Brooks, Lawrence Kaplan, Hugh C. Cutler, and Thomas W. Whitaker “Plant Material from a Cave on the Rio Zape, Durango, Mexico” in *American Antiquity*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Jan, 1962) [jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) (accessed April 30, 2017), 365-6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 367.

<sup>32</sup> Document, Historia de la provincia de Cinaloa por el padre, 1620, folder no. 001-001, box 261 Bolton Collection, Bancroft Library, UCLA, 12. (230-00009).

practices of the Tepehuanes remained consistent at least from before Spanish contact through the seventeenth century.

Campbell W. Pennington, a geographer, travelled to Chihuahua in 1960 and 1965 to pursue fieldwork among the present-day Chihuahua Tepehuanes. During this trip, he sought to uncover their material culture and history. Campbell discovered that in the Sierra Madre Occidental of southern Chihuahua, thousands of feet of volcanic matter cover the land. The topography created by the volcanic matter made the terrain rough and difficult to traverse.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the Tepehuán lived in isolation from other groups due to their environment consisting of deep canyons and rugged terrain created by volcanic matter.<sup>34</sup> According a document describing the Tepehuanes, the Tepehuán territory covered vast areas. Some people recollected fifteen days of travel throughout the territory without reaching the end of Tepehuán lands. When the Jesuits inquired as to the exact bounds of their holdings, the Tepehuanes stated that the question simply could not be answered.<sup>35</sup> Although some specifics are missing from the historical record, historians, such as Mason and Campbell, utilized sources to create a broad overview of Tepehuán society.

The Tepehuán lived great distances from one another with towns serving as administrative centers.<sup>36</sup> Politics within the Tepehuán stagnated at the village stage, consisting of extended family groups led by a council of elders or shamans and under

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<sup>33</sup> Pennington, preface, 27.

<sup>34</sup> "Introduction." Edited By Hadley, Diane, Naylor, Thomas H., Schuetz-Miller, Mardith K. *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain*, Vol.2, pt. 2 (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1997), 10.

<sup>35</sup> Report, Of the mission and journey to the Indians called Tepehuanes, 1607, box 23, no. 259, Bolton Collection, Bancroft Library, UCLA, 23. (230-00006).

<sup>36</sup> Mason, 219.



the leadership of caciques (military leaders).<sup>37</sup> The settlements consisted of small houses made of wood and stone located near a water source.<sup>38</sup> Pre-Hispanic contact, the Tepehuán lacked formal settlements, but probably had a considerable population. However, epidemics post contact likely decimated their population.<sup>39</sup> Mota y Escobar asserted that a few hundred married individuals resided in the settlement.<sup>40</sup> Tepehuán males traditionally married within their own community. As a result, the Tepehuán lacked intertribal connections in regards to expanding trade, familial, and alliance relations.<sup>41</sup> After contact, Spanish men often lived among the natives and had relationships with native women while their wives remained in Spain, which the king denounced.<sup>42</sup> Oftentimes actual relationships between the indigenous and the Spanish differed from the sanctioned behavior expected by the crown.

Mota y Escobar described the Tepehuán as robust, valiant, and highly skilled in the bow and arrow.<sup>43</sup> In Puebla, the first of March 1600, an account asserted that they were a fighting people whose land, about 300 leagues, had to be traversed in order to visit other nations, which was not safe.<sup>44</sup> According to Mason, the Tepehuán typically appear to be “physically large and strong, intelligent, friendly, proud, independent.”<sup>45</sup> The Tepehuán used bows, arrows, macanas, and brazilwood clubs for weapons. After

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<sup>37</sup> Gradie, Charlotte M. “Discovering the Chichimecas” *The Americas*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (July 1994), 80.

<sup>38</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 574.

<sup>39</sup> Mason, 219.

<sup>40</sup> De Mota y Escobar, 202.

<sup>41</sup> Salmon, 8.

<sup>42</sup> “Al fiscal de la Audiencia de la Nueva Galicia sobre que hagase oficio en lo que toca a los casados quienes viven sus mugeres y acerca de que españoles no bive en pueblos de indios. [El Pardo, 20 de Noviembre de 1603],” in Charles Wilson Hackett, ed., *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, Collected by Adolph F.A. Bandelier and Fanny R. Bandelier. 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1923-1937), vol.2.

<sup>43</sup> De Mota y Escobar, 202.

<sup>44</sup> “Carta Anua de la Provincia de Mexico desde Abril de 1600, hasta el de 1602,” 116.

<sup>45</sup> Mason, 219.

warring with the Tepehuán, the Spanish taught them to use harquebuses and firearms. Surprising to the Spanish, they mastered horseback riding, and some even began to herd cattle.<sup>46</sup> Due to the area's silver riches, Pérez de Ribas emphasized the importance of peaceful interactions between the Spanish and the Tepehuán who occupied the region.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the location of the mines motivated mission activity and peaceful interactions with the Tepehuanes.

Initially, the Franciscans established settlements in hopes of initiating conversion efforts, but had difficulty encouraging the settlement of the Tepehuán, Conchos, and Tobosos due to competition with mining and agriculture encomenderos in the area. Later, the Jesuits arrived in central Mexico in 1572 creating colegios to educate criollos' children. These colegios established control over large agricultural enterprises, which profited the order. The Crown also subsidized missions to fund mission stipends of 300-350 pesos per year for plant and livestock acquisition. Conversion efforts in the early 1590s began to emerge from Jesuit colegios in Durango and Sinaloa.<sup>48</sup> The Carta Anua de 1596 described how the natives worshipped their idols during times of war and to request a good harvest.<sup>49</sup> According to a 1607 annual report, the Tepehuán offered sacrifices to their deities due to custom not piety or veneration, and requests did not accompany the sacrifices. Thus, the author of the report fails to understand the exact reasons for the sacrifices.<sup>50</sup> The pre-contact religious practices of the Tepehuán focused on stone idols and human sacrifices.

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<sup>46</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 574.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 580.

<sup>48</sup> Deeds, Susan. *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 15-16.

<sup>49</sup> "Jesuit Annual Letter of 1597," *Diccionario bio-bibliográfico de la Compañía de Jesús en México*, Francisco Zambrano, S.J., ed., 15 vols. (México: Editorial Jus, 1962), vol. 1, 638.

<sup>50</sup> Report, Of the mission and journey to the Indians called Tepehuanes, 1607, box 23, no. 259, Bolton Collection, Bancroft Library, UCLA, 18. (230-00006).

According to Jesuit missionaries, their primary idol, Ubamari, received offerings, to include flowers, clay pots, animal bones, fruits, and arrows. Ubamari stood five palms tall on a hill above the town of Ubamari resembling a human head atop a stone pillar. Uniquely, most earth-based deities are characteristic of Mesoamerican people, which may indicate cultural interactions between the Tepehuán and their southern neighbors.<sup>51</sup> Understanding the basic structure of Tepehuán religion, communities, and political structures is essential to comprehending Spanish missionization efforts, which imposed on all aspects of Tepehuán culture.

As a means of evoking social and cultural change in the areas of Durango, Coahuila, and Chihuahua, missionaries encouraged the evangelization of natives in the 1590s.<sup>52</sup> Replying to the request that the Company lead conversion efforts on February 2, 1602, the king wrote to the captain-general of New Spain, the count of Monterrey, to discuss granting the Company of Jesus the authority to lead conversion efforts of the indigenous, especially those residing in the mountains. The dean of the church in Nueva Galicia suggested the Jesuits, but he also suggested forcing the already converted natives to pay four reales to the Company due to the Company's poverty. The dean encouraged the reduction of the natives to settlements for ease of administering the sacraments.<sup>53</sup> Instituting a peace-by-purchase plan in 1595, the Spanish, at the

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<sup>51</sup> Gradie, Charlotte M. "Discovering the Chichimecas," 79.

<sup>52</sup> Jackson, Robert H. *Missions and the Frontiers of Spanish America: A comparative study of the impact of the environmental, economic, political, and socio-cultural variations on the missions in the Rio de la Plata Region and on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Scottsdale: Pentacle Press, 2005), 46.

<sup>53</sup> "Al Virrey de la nueva españa con una Carta del dean de la nueva Galicia en que dize lo que conuernia que los religiosos de la compañia de Jesus se encargasen de la conversion de ciertos yndios para que pongo ev ello el remedio y recuado necessario. [Villalpando, 7 de Febrero de 1602]," In Charles Wilson Hackett, ed., *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, collected by Adolph F.A. Bandelier and Fanny R. Bandelier, 3 vols., (Washington, D.C.L The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 19223-1937), vol. 2.

insistence of the bishop of Guadalajara, allowed missionaries to live among the natives with little military security in order to initiate a peaceable relationship.<sup>54</sup> At the Residencia de Guadiana, P. Prov. Páez, per the Carta Anua de 1595, noted a lack of security against the natives for the four priests and two hermanos residing in the area near Durango.<sup>55</sup> By the 1596 Carta Anua, written by Arch. Prov. Tolet Fondo Astráin, 377 subjects resided within Spanish holdings. Padres comprised 115 of those subjects.<sup>56</sup> Astráin reported the indigenous peoples, both the Tepehuán and Las Lagunas, occupying the area and cultivating corn.<sup>57</sup> This influx of Spanish missionaries reveals the intention to missionize natives at the request of priests in an attempt to expand Spanish control.

Due to the breadth of the Tepehuán territory, six priests set out to share the gospel among an unknown people in an unknown land.<sup>58</sup> Most of the Company arrived from Rome in 1596. The Company learned the language of the Tepehuán and began to teach the people Christian doctrine.<sup>59</sup> In time, the Company intended to reduce the natives to doctrinas. The Relación discussed a failure to understand the native language, emphasizing the need for the Company to learn the language and teach the natives Spanish. Most used interpreters to convey their good intentions. Each priest served a purpose in the missions. P. Alonso Fernández de Segura spoke the language well. Padre Gabriel de Logroño heard confession for the natives. Padre Hernán Gómez

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<sup>54</sup> Gradie, Charlotte M. *The Tepehuán Revolt of 1616*, 111.

<sup>55</sup> Jesuit Annual Letter of 1595,” *Diccionario bio-bibliográfico de la Compañía de Jesús en México*, Francisco Zambrano, S.J., ed., 15 vols. (México: EditorialJus, 1962), vol. 1, 629.

<sup>56</sup> “Jesuit Annual Letter of 1596,” *Diccionario bio-bibliográfico de la Compañía de Jesús en México*, Francisco Zambrano, S.J., ed., 15 vols. (México: EditorialJus, 1962), vol. 1, 630-1.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 638.

<sup>58</sup> Report, Of the mission and journey to the Indians called Tepehuanes, 1607, Bolton Collection, 23. (Serial Number 230-00006).

<sup>59</sup> “Carta Anua de la Provincia de Mexico desde Abril de 1600, hasta el de 1602,” 116.

spoke otomí. In a few months, the text asserted that with God's gifts and help, the Company would be able to minister to the natives in the language of Mexico, as well as help the natives understand the sermons. The Company taught some natives to teach the catechism and hear confession themselves.<sup>60</sup> A document dated April 1602 serves as another example of God inspiring and assisting the Spanish through their missionization process.

The author of the 1602 document, probably Geronimo Ramírez, recollected how the priest, likely P. Fonte, received a message from God asking the author to join him in the Indies. Upon his arrival in 1600, he taught the doctrine in Santiago and Atotonilco. He expressed excitement for the community's fervor for God and how his heart resided in the mission. He explained the manner in which the Tepehuán spoke to him and wrote down their conversations. Presumably, this demonstrated the process of confession. He described a priest who spoke the word of Jesus Christ to the indios. The author gave his life to the mission, leaving his country, his family, the commodities, and los colegios. Jesus Christ has better things for the father to discover.<sup>61</sup>

Pérez de Ribas offered an insight to P. Ramírez's experience with the Tepehuán and mission life. He detailed how P. Ramírez received the gift of languages like the Apostles in order to preach to the natives in their language. He knew both Mexican and Tarascan, but began to learn Tepehuán in order to proceed with the evangelization process. He entered the Tepehuán 'nation' without military escort. He arrived at La Saucedá on the day of the Feast of the Holy Spirit, which celebrates the day the

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<sup>60</sup> Relación 21-22.

<sup>61</sup> "Mexico Abril de 1602," *Monumenta Mexicana*, Felix Zubillaga, S.J., and Ernest Burruss, S. J., eds., 7 vols. (Rome: Institutum Historicum, 1956-1981), vol 7, 661.

Apostles began preaching. He provided religious instruction to the natives as long as they agreed not to partake in the usual methods of celebration, i.e. drunkenness and orgies. Not a single native became drunk. The Tepehuán so loved him that they insisted upon his staying through the Feast of the Corpus Christi in an attempt to celebrate in an orthodox manner. The unconverted Tepehuán followed the example of the converts by dancing during the feast. However, the barbarous souls added elements of their own culture: holding antlers and covering their bodies with wool-like material.<sup>62</sup> Ramírez said the priests never tired of conveying the reasons for the incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the native language, and the natives listened fervently.<sup>63</sup> The use of the native language and the fervor of the priests created Tepehuán sympathetic to the Spanish, some converts, but also marginalized those Tepehuán whose roles of pre-contact settlement organization faced redefinition.

Pérez de Ribas explained the process of missionization, the responses to Spanish contact, and emphasized the well reception of P. Ramírez's first entrada, even by those who refused to listen. Ramírez continued moving from ranchería to ranchería preaching the word of God and declaring his intent to save souls. Among those who questioned him, an old man refused baptism stating that he bathed in the river frequently and did not need another bath. He followed the statement with a declaration of his immortality. These responses prompted the priest to share the story of Naman, the prophet who was told to bathe in the river to cure leprosy, but he also refused. The old man failed to heed the priest's warning, but when he returned the following morning, he arrived scathed from an animal attack. The old man told the priest that God proved his mortality by

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<sup>62</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 575-6.

<sup>63</sup> "Mexico Abril de 1602," 661.

choosing to save his life. His baptism opened the door for many more baptisms in that pueblo.<sup>64</sup> Although, Ribas, who worked for the monarchy, exclaimed a positive experience of the Tepehuán, some natives still feared the foreign concept of baptism.

Astráin conveyed the indigenous people's fear of death after the priests' arrival, which encouraged parents to allow the baptism of their children. He recanted the baptism of a sixty-year old Tepehuán, which encouraged others to be baptized. Astráin noted the revelation of God's grace during the baptism of the first converts.<sup>65</sup> The following year, the Jesuit Annual Letter, written by P. Prov. Esteban Páez on April 11, 1598, reported an absence of information returned this year. However, he expressed happiness when discussing how impressed the Easter ceremonies rendered the Tepehuán.<sup>66</sup> After his time at La Saucedá, Ramírez returned to the college in Durango expressing his success among the Tepehuán. The Father Rector ordered his return to pursue God's works with orders to begin the construction of a church when the time came.<sup>67</sup> Padre Ramírez's second entrada occurred in Santiago Papasquiaro. Thus, the first stage of missionization began gradually. The colonial mission and its marginalization of some Tepehuán provided the stage and the catalyst for the Tepehuán Revolt of 1616.

Robert H. Jackson argues that the mission was among the most important colonial institution in the Spanish empire. On the fringes of the Spanish empire, non-sedentary indigenous people typically resisted colonial state-systems of hierarchy. In

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<sup>64</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 576-7.

<sup>65</sup> "Jesuit Annual Letter of 1596," *Diccionario bio-bibliográfico de la Compañía de Jesús en México*, Francisco Zambrano, S.J., ed., 15 vols. (México: Editorial Jus, 1962), vol. 1, 638.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 629.

<sup>66</sup> "Jesuit Annual Letter of 1597," *Diccionario bio-bibliográfico de la Compañía de Jesús en México*, Francisco Zambrano, S.J., ed., 15 vols. (México: Editorial Jus, 1962), vol. 1, 646.

<sup>67</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 577-8.

these cases, the Spanish implemented systems, such as ‘doctrinas, reducciones, or misiones.’ Jackson examines the roles of missions, which includes the ability to teach the indigenous new skills, to become economically self sufficient, and to evangelize the indigenous. In addition, the crown expected missions to create a new pool of taxpaying peoples benefiting the Spanish empire.<sup>68</sup> Oftentimes, the missions presented an authoritarian approach to ensure that the moral, cultural, and social mechanisms of Spain pervaded the mission.<sup>69</sup> As a means of social control, missionaries expected indigenous peoples to live in nuclear families similar to European standards.<sup>70</sup> Planned communities emerged based on a grid system with a central plaza.<sup>71</sup> Forced labor became typical of mission life. With the construction of missions, expanding communication contributed to the spread of diseases, i.e. small pox and measles.<sup>72</sup> The missionization of the Tepehuán threatened the very existence of their loose political structure and communal organization, which encouraged some to retreat to the mountains in an effort to retain autonomy from the Spanish, as well as escape forced labor and taxes.

## **Chapter 2: From Resistance to Revolt**

James C. Scott argues that, in situations of unequal power, subordinated people tend to behave publicly in ways favorable to the dominant group. In the public domain, the dominant party, in this case the Spanish, appear to have full control of the situation, but in reality, the appearance of hegemony is rooted in a performance not real acceptance or submission. The amicable public relationship between the weak and the

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<sup>68</sup> Jackson, 21-23.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 264.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 46

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 264.



powerful fails to encompass the tensions, fears, and suspicions that each group may hold against one another.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the official and public record of dominant groups may not reflect actual events or concerns, especially when being relayed to royal officials from local representatives of the Crown.<sup>74</sup> In the case of the Tepehuanes, local Spanish priests detailed events back to clerical and government officials. Conversion success reflected conquest success in the early seventeenth century. Thus, priests often conveyed many more successes than concerns in their official writings. Scott argues that, “Relations of domination are, at the same time, relations of resistance.” Domination requires the maintenance of processes and rituals, such as slave labor, which inevitably causes conflict.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, domination eventually forces the subordinated peoples to react negatively against the dominant party.

Determining the exact cause of a revolt or rebellion is difficult. Taylor attributes a root cause of some sort and theories of structural strain as potential causes for violence in Latin American post-primitive societies. However, evidence fails to solidify these potential causes. For example, most post-primitive societies exhibited broad structural tension, but that alone fails to explain why violence erupted at specific times and locations lacking an obvious catalyst.<sup>76</sup> A common cause of peasant rebellions is discontent over taxes, for example the collection or increases in taxes.<sup>77</sup> In regards to the Tepehuanes, tax records notating specific amounts, collection processes, and changes have yet to be discovered in the historical record. Rebellion, as defined by

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<sup>73</sup> Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 2-4.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 45.

<sup>76</sup> Taylor, 128-9.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 135-136.

Taylor, is a community effort unlike the spontaneous eruption of civil disorder caused by an uprising. He suggests that rebellions tend to start in the community sparked by anger, but resolve in a timely manner through festivities without spreading chaos to outside communities.<sup>78</sup> Taylor asserts that regional insurrections require multiple villages united under a single leader to create a simultaneous movement.<sup>79</sup> However, the Tepehuán Revolt quickly spread to neighboring missions and groups while operating on a system of messengers under the influence of unmissionized natives, but without a unified leadership. The Tepehuán Revolt challenges both Taylor and Tutino's notions that rebellion requires a specific event or catalyst in order to ignite, but Scott differs in his understanding of resistance.

By understanding the types of resistance, as explained by Scott, it is clear that the Tepehuanes began resisting the Spanish long before the beginning of the revolt. Scott differentiates between open, declared resistance and undisclosed resistance. Declared resistance includes open revolt, publically desecrating religious icons, assaulting officials, rioting, refusals to partake in activities, publically resisting ideology, etc. Undisclosed resistance are ways of nonviolently or discreetly disobeying approved actions, such as resisting ideology through syncretic religious practices.<sup>80</sup> The Tepehuanes maintained a public appearance of compliance, but practiced undisclosed resistance prior to the revolt.<sup>81</sup> In the case of the Tepehuanes, total ideological domination failed due to the continued existence and practice of traditional religion, which served as a negation and counter-ideology to the dominant ideology. The

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 116-118.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>80</sup> Scott, 198.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 118.

Tepehuanes followed the rituals, both religious and cultural, of the Spanish, which presented a supposed acceptance of Spanish practice at face value. However, upon further examination, evidence actually reveals the practice of undisclosed resistance, such as traditional rituals and family relations, in their own living spaces.

Keeping their distance, natives resistant to missionization, to include some who worked the mines and interacted with the missions, and shamans, covertly performed their native ceremonies at night.<sup>82</sup> Susan Deeds examined ethnic persistence strategies of survival and mediated opportunism. She argued in support of ethnic survival hinging on adaptation during times of economic and cultural changes, i.e. diseases and wartime. Ultimately, Deeds constructed a paradigm of mediated opportunism, the nexus of cultural and environmental opportunism and moral and biological barriers.<sup>83</sup> She ascertained a resistance from the Tepehuán to work in the mines without force. The 1570s encomiendas of the Tepehuán, Conchos, and Tarahumaras experienced conditions similar to slavery. Spanish law authorized three weeks per year of labor service, but according to Deeds, most indigenous inevitably worked beyond the maximum becoming permanent residents.<sup>84</sup> As a result, by the time of Tepehuán missionization efforts, the natives feared forced labor, but also desired the commodities of the missions, to include tools, cloth, cattle, and seeds.<sup>85</sup> According to Pérez de Ribas, the Tepehuán never complained about the Spanish in the area because the Spanish taught them to raise livestock for sustenance and brought “an abundance of food,

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<sup>82</sup> Deeds, 27.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 12-3.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 17-8.

clothing, riches...”<sup>86</sup> As before mentioned, Gradie argues that the Tepehuanes made peace with the Spanish for twenty-five years before revolting without an apparent cause.<sup>87</sup> However, per Deeds’s concept of mediated opportunism, the Tepehuanes clung to the Spanish due to widespread disease, as well as the increasing necessity of Spanish goods, not as a result of reduction or pacification as suggested by Gradie. Therefore, the idea of voluntary relocation to Spanish missions rests upon the idea of necessity rather than personal desire or want for a new social, political, religious, and economic community.

By the time of the second entrada, drought and hunger provided by God enticed some of the Tepehuán to move down the mountain to the pueblo of Santiago Papasquiario to find more suitable residences. When the priest heard of the indigenous people’s move, he approached the settlement, where the Tepehuán, atypically unarmed, greeted him. He urged the natives to come together and form a pueblo with the help of kind and peaceful Spaniards to aid in the fulfillment of their material needs. The priest emphasized the importance of a contract guaranteeing religious instruction with the goal of conversion, which revealed the intention of the Spanish to govern native lives. According to this account, these Tepehuán eagerly accepted the priest’s offer. The prime location of the pueblo offered Spanish access to a much needed mountain pass.<sup>88</sup> Ramírez’s work at Santiago Papasquiario concluded shortly after.

Ramírez moved on to the next ranchería about seven leagues from Santiago Papasquiario to what would become Santa Catalina. The natives offered to escort the priests to ensure his safe travels into the territory of untrustworthy and violent

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<sup>86</sup> Pérez de Riba, 574.

<sup>87</sup> Gradie, 174.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 578.

Tepehuán.<sup>89</sup> The description of another sect of Tepehuán being untrustworthy speaks to the lack of cohesion and monolithic political structure of Tepehuán. Practicality in the face of hunger and disease more often drew Tepehuán down the mountains and into the mission not evangelization or a desire to accept Spanish governance.<sup>90</sup> For example, the first Tepehuán missions received a donation of 2,000 sheep from the viceroy.<sup>91</sup> The Tepehuanes who accepted missionization benefited from the Crown's access to money, supplies, and sustenance. According to John Tutino, it is unclear why peasants in colonial Latin America did not revolt often, but reciprocity in terms of subsistence and labor may explain the relative homeostasis of colonial relations without overt rebellious tendencies.<sup>92</sup> The indigenous desired Spanish goods, which encouraged them to participate in mission life as expected by the Spanish. During times of indigenous hardship, missionization appeared to be an obvious solution to securing their immediate needs.

Following the Jesuit construction of Santa Catalina in 1596 and 1597, epidemics, such as small pox and measles, took the lives of many Tepehuán. As a result, Jesuits, including Ramírez, encouraged the Tepehuán to come into the mission village where they would receive milpas, an assigned area to build and plant for personal use. Suggesting the preservation of pre-contact socio-political organization based on kinship relations, the Tepehuán divided themselves into separate barrios and parcialidades each with separate governors.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the missionized natives resisted

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 579.

<sup>90</sup> Gradie, Charlotte M. *The Tepehuán Revolt of 1616*, 137.

<sup>91</sup> Deeds, 20.

<sup>92</sup> Tutino, John. "Agrarian Social Change in Chalco." Edited By Friedrich Katz. *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 102.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 17.

complete absorption into Spanish culture by retaining elements essential to their own culture through assimilation, which functioned as undisclosed resistance. In 1602 in Santa Catalina, Padre Ramírez baptized many people and heard confession.<sup>94</sup> During mass and other religious activities, men and women divided into groups by sex. Repetitious activities and group divisions by sex encouraged, at least the priests hoped, monogamy. According to the Spanish, even during a time of war, the people of the mission married legitimately in the church. Monogamy countered traditional Tepehuán practices.<sup>95</sup> By encouraging monogamy, the Spanish intended to form nuclear families. The practice of monogamy and the resulting nuclear families served as a form of reassurance of Tepehuán acceptance of Spanish religion and culture prior to the revolt.

Typically, children and young adults received the message of Christianity more willingly than older Tepehuán. With this fervor, young natives began building the church according to La Carta Anua de 1607. The children's ease of acceptance allowed for easy fractures within families between parents and children. This division continued to be exacerbated by shamans trying to discount the teachings and the power of the priests.<sup>96</sup> Although some division existed, in 1602 and 1607, small pox ravaged the Tepehuán leading them to search for religious power. Many Tepehuán adhered to both Christian and traditional religious practice while the confusion of what God or gods held the most power persisted. Traditionally, the Tepehuán practiced child sacrifice during times of epidemic. In theory, the Tepehuán believed that the sacrifice of innocent blood of one or a few healthy children would consume the existing disease of

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<sup>94</sup> "Mexico Abril de 1602," 662, 664.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 25.

one or more people.<sup>97</sup> Religious practices of the indigenous in the mission were often dynamic and influenced by circumstance, i.e. drought, famine, or epidemic, not by a definite dedication to one religion or the other.

As early as 1607, the historical record chronicles sporadic Tepehúan resistance to missionization and pacification. During this time, the Tepehuanes, involved in a war with the Tarahumara, reached out to other unnamed indigenous peoples and religious in near by cities for assistance in the war. After much deliberation, the religious failed to make a decision. Both the religious and the caciques sent a messenger to a priest thirty miles away to request guidance on whether to engage in the war or remain neutral and at peace. The Tepehuanes kept the Baiomani in servitude, instead of death, because they failed to pay tribute to them. At the behest of the priests, they freed the Baiomani from their service. As a result, the report conveyed the need for enhanced security for the priests in Carantapia. This action of consulting the Spanish religious prior to promulgating war further substantiated the priests' assumption of the Tepehúan positive reception of the 'law of the gospels.'<sup>98</sup> However, in regard to Gradie's assumption of apparent submission to the Spanish, the act of warring with and enslaving other native groups during the time leading up to the revolt proves that Tepehúan traditional practices persisted throughout that time.

In 1607, Halley's Comet appeared to be a sign of impending doom, according to the hechiceros. Within a month of the comet's appearance, a small pox epidemic broke

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<sup>97</sup> Report, Of the mission and journey to the Indians called Tepehuanes, 1607, Bolton Collection, 22-23. (Serial Number 230-00006).

<sup>98</sup> Report, Of the mission and journey to the Indians called Tepehuanes, 1607, Bolton Collection, 22-23. (Serial Number 230-00006).

out among the Tepehuán furthering the creditability of the hechiceros.<sup>99</sup> The journey of Ramírez, a priest arriving in El Zape, provides another example of native distrust of the Spanish. He received criticism from a sorcerer and healer upon his arrival. The sorcerer spread rumors suggesting that the priest brought the disease to the area via the food. As a result, the natives refused both the food and baptisms offered by the priest. The priest did not cease to try to persuade the ill to allow baptism, and eventually, a sick man accepted baptism. When he woke the next morning, he felt restored. Amazed by the man's healing, the sorcerer approached the priest with the request to become a catechumen, as well as learn the doctrine and be granted the sacrament of Holy Baptism.<sup>100</sup> In an attempt to discredit the priests, the hechiceros preached a connection between the Spanish, baptism, sickness, and death. Thus, the persistence of indigenous religious practices inside the mission reinforces the argument that the commitment of the Tepehuanes to the Spanish depended upon circumstance not total reduction of the Tepehuanes or submission to the Spanish.

In 1611, Rodrigo de Cabredo noted that within the Tepehuán mission at San Pablo, families resided in a specific area. The priests successfully baptized 140 adults in 1611, as well as many others who descended from the mountains into Spanish settlements as a means of abandoning the old ways of los indios. The people who accepted the priests' message and succumbed to the Society planted in the San Pablo Valley. The harvest appeared to be successful due to the abundant amount of people moving down the Sierra and digging acequias to irrigate the crops. The priests encouraged a descent from the mountains into Spanish settlements as a means of

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<sup>99</sup> Deeds, 25.

<sup>100</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 582-3.



abandoning the old ways of los indios. According to Cabredo's account, once settled in San Pablo, the devil brought down from the mountains a hechicero and ten indios resulting in the murder of eight plus the cacique of San Pablo.<sup>101</sup>

In hopes of avenging the deaths, the mission natives considered seeking out the murderers, but feared a counteroffensive trap that could result in the murders of their newly indoctrinated leaders. The indios convinced the priests to retreat to a new location three days walk away due to the overwhelming number of enemies and potential alliances near San Pablo. Desiring revenge, the converted Tepehuán sought the help of a neighboring cacique, who happened to be away fighting the Acaxees. Nonetheless, the hechicero feared retribution by the cacique, and he requested the sacrament of baptism and forgiveness for his acts. He proposed that the governor act as a Christian and forgive the sins of another Christian, meaning the hechicero, which resulted in the hechicero's pardon.<sup>102</sup> He provided an example of how marginalized religious leaders lost power, lived on the fringes of society by choice, and descended into the area of the empire without submitting to the empire's governance until he had no further choice. Consistently, those natives residing in the periphery resisted efforts of centralization coming from central Mexico, according to Katz.<sup>103</sup> Waiting for the opportune time to attack, the hechicero hoped to reassert his religious authority and a return to traditional indigenous society based on power inherent within traditional religious leadership and loose political structures largely influenced by individual

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<sup>101</sup> Cabredo, Rodrigo de. "Urduñola Subdues the Xiximes." in Thomas H. Naylor and S.J. Charles E. Polzer's, ed. *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain: 1570-1700* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1986), 228.

<sup>103</sup> "Introduction." Edited By Friedrich Katz. *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 15-16.

participation in communal defense. Thus, as early as 1611, the Spanish faced resistance on the cusp of revolt and a struggle for power from both missionized and non-missionized Tepehuanes revealing a lack of native submission to colonial power.

Due to this increase of violence from unmissionized Tepehuán, Padre Diego Larios petitioned the Crown for the establishment of a presidio to protect the Jesuits from the Tepehuanes in August 1614. In the previous year, Governor Ordíñola required two escorts to protect him from the risk of being attacked by the Tepehuanes. Padre Larios asserted that the area required a presidio as many natives caused great detriment and death to the doctrinas as a result of their summer conflicts.<sup>104</sup> According to “The Relación of Diego de Medrano,” a priest of Durango, the presidio of Santa Catalina served as a mechanism of control over the Tepehuán.<sup>105</sup> The need for a presidio clarified the state of affairs with the Tepehuanes. The Spanish failed to pacify the natives by 1614 leading to an increasing need for security from the very natives who Gradie asserts succumbed to Spanish missionization.

In 1616, the principle aggressors, the Tepehuán of the Santa Catalina mission, acted like good Christians with a majority of them accepting baptism. However, the priests sensed subliminal dissent building. Even so, the governor of Nueva Vizcaya failed to respond to their concerns in an urgent manner. In regards to the revolt, Pérez de Ribas offered a first hand account of his perception of Santa Catalina two months prior to the beginning of the revolt. He ascertained a lack of affection for Christianity and its practices. When questioned by Pérez de Ribas, Father Bernardo de Cisneros

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<sup>104</sup> Petition, Padre Diego Larios to Padre Hernando de Villafane, August 1614, Jesuit History Institute, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona. (Serial #060-00054).

<sup>105</sup> “The Relación de Diego de Medrano.” in Thomas H. Naylor and S.J. Charles E. Polzer's, ed. *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain: 1570-1700* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1986), 473.

replied with dismay that some kind of evil made these Tepehuán restless lately with no desire to change.<sup>106</sup> According to Scott, systematic subordination, for example organized life on missions, creates tension and pressure from subordinated members of society.<sup>107</sup> Mission life imposed cultural, social, and political expectations onto the Tepehuanes. Therefore, pressure built from within the mission, which allowed resistant Tepehuanes living beyond the reach of the Spanish to infiltrate the mission with thoughts of rebellion. Eventually, the pressure elicited an unavoidable, undeniable reaction. The Spanish ignored other acts of resistance in 1607, 1610, and 1611 before open revolt ensued.

The priests' concern for discontent proved warranted. A short time later, all of the Tepehuán pueblos agreed to carry out their attack on November 21, 1616, but the Tepehuán of Santa Catalina prematurely began their rebellion five days early. A merchant mule driver arrived in Santa Catalina. The Tepehuán began to rob the mule driver, but then another mule driver arrived carrying Father Hernando de Tovar, a Jesuit. The Tepehuán verbally accused him of being unconcerned in regards to the Tepehuán as people not just as potential converts. The physical violence proceeded when Father Tovar received a lance to his chest resulting in his death. In Atotonilco, the priests retreated to a safe house where they suffered smoke inhalation, arrows, stones, etc. resulting in the death of many people. With little gunpowder, the Spanish defended themselves as long as possible, but tragedy followed with brutal murders of 198 people.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the discontent of the Tepehuán finally provoked a public display

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<sup>106</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 593.

<sup>107</sup> Scott, 186.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 597-8.

of resistance in the form of a multi-faceted revolt shaking the foundation of the Spanish-controlled missions housing converted Tepehuán.

Within the first few days the initial attacks effectively devastated the province, including the agricultural areas in the Sierra Madre Occidental, the entrance to the Valley of Papasquiario, and Santa Catalina. Lacking sufficient supplies, the Spanish and their slaves, servants, etc. entered the churches in Guanaceví and Indé, as well as the Franciscan convent of San Juan del Río.<sup>109</sup> In the mean time, joined by the Acaxees, Conchos, Chinipas, Salineros, Tarahumaras, Tobosos, and Xiximes, the Tepehuán resisted the Spaniards as a mass alliance under the leadership of Quautlatas and Cogoxito. Quautlatas, a religious leader, led an assault in November 1616 killing over 400 Spanish sympathizers. Coming to the aid of Quautlatas, Cogoxito encouraged the evolution of the offensive into a religious crusade hell bent on obliterating all evidence of Spanish influence. In order to promote support for the Tepehuán cause, Quautlatas advocated an evangelical approach calling for the return to the old ways of worship. In true prophetic fashion, he declared that the revival of the human body would be guaranteed to anyone who lost their life during the battles to recover their homeland.<sup>110</sup> After learning of a potential native rebellion in Santa Catalina, Fathers Bernardo de Cisneros and Diego de Orozco at Santiago attempted to make peace through an intermediary cacique known as Don Francisco. Upon the fathers' arrival, Don Francisco died as a result of flogging. Two friendly natives in disguise uncovered the plot for rebellion by infiltrating the group of conspirators. The teniente and priests ordered all Spanish sympathizers to retreat to the church for safety. The Spanish sent

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<sup>109</sup> Guidicelli, "El Mestizaje en movimiento: Guerra y Creacion identitaria en la guerra de los Tepehuanes (1616-1619)," 110.

<sup>110</sup> Salmon, 21-2.

word to the governor of Nueva Vizcaya, Gaspar de Alvear y Salazar, but help did not arrive in time.<sup>111</sup>

The letter reached the governor on November 17, 1616 at eleven in the morning. Led by Captain Martín de Olivas, a miner familiar with the terrain, twenty-six Spaniards and their service took up arms to help the Spanish in Catalina, only to arrive too late. The Spanish and the Christian natives, barricaded within the church, watched the Tepehuán desecrate the town's cross.<sup>112</sup> Desacralization of Christian items and God reinforced the Tepehuanes' views of the superiority of indigenous deities. The indios vandalized churches, crosses, homes, etc. during the war to display their abandonment of the Spanish establishment and religion in an attempt to return to a purely indigenous identity.<sup>113</sup> After reinforcements arrived from Santa Catalina, 500 natives attacked and set fire to the church with all of the mission residents within it. In an attempt to lure the Spanish out, Miguel, a treasonous native, told the Spanish that he and a few others were Christian natives hoping to restore their relationship with the Spanish after their rebellious actions. The Spanish negotiated with Miguel requesting the safe passage of one Spanish sympathizer to Durango if they evacuated the church. Those within the church followed Father Orozco to their death. The attackers mounted Father Orozco's body in the shape of the cross and axed his body through the middle. He died a martyr. Hidden in the confessional, three adults and three children survived, but approximately 100 men and women perished.<sup>114</sup> Tepehuán leaders successfully persuaded converted natives to rebel and fight against other mission Tepehuanes. The instantaneous

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<sup>111</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 599-603.

<sup>112</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 599-603.

<sup>113</sup> Guidicelli, "El Mestizaje en movimiento: Guerra y Creacion identitaria en la guerra de los Tepehuanes (1616-1619)," 128.

<sup>114</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 599-603.

conversion of mission natives to rebels demonstrates a pre-existing rupture of mission life. In conclusion, Spanish pacification and submission of the Tepehuanes by 1616 existed only in appearance, not in reality.

The survivors of the Santiago attack came upon Captain Olivas and his troops from Durango. Upon hearing of the deaths of the Christians, Olivas retreated to La Saucedá and sent word to the governor asking for permission and assistance to quell the rebellion. From La Saucedá, Olivas led reconnaissance squads to suppress the Tepehuán and their revolt. The same rebels from Santiago Papasquiaro destroyed the pueblo of El Zape as well. Four priests, Juan de Valle, Luis de Alavés, Juan Fonte, and Gerónimo de Monfanta, as well as nineteen Spaniards and more than sixty black and native slaves, perished during the attack. The sole escapee, a young native boy, left for Guanaceví, a mining camp to spread the news. At the request of Don Juan de Alvear, the alcade mayor, twelve soldiers prepared and quickly left to confirm the account. Along the way, these men found mutilated corpses of acquaintances followed by the discovery of more bodies in the cemetery of the church. Due to a lack of troops, the group retreated back to Guanaceví for protection, but periodically met and fought the rebels en route. Barricading the church, the Spaniards defended themselves, but the rebels destroyed property and set fire to the mining equipment.<sup>115</sup> Fear gripped the Spanish, which resulted in fervor to try to defend what they could.

One hundred sixty leagues from Mexico City, Durango witnessed commercial activity and Spanish people coming and going due to the proximity of the mining camps. Fearing Tepehuán violence, the governor of Nueva Vizcaya sought the help of

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 603-5.

nearby natives, the Tunal, who unbeknownst to the Spanish allied with the Tepehuanes. The government employed Tunal laborers to assist in the fortification of the city. While working a Tunal native commented, “Go ahead, make us hurry along today, tomorrow you’ll see.” Overheard by a member of the religious Order of Saint John, an alarm sounded to warn the Spanish. The Tunal workers died at their hands. The natives within Durango utilized trumpets in what appeared to be ceremonial celebrations, but in reality, the trumpets sounded to alert the Tepehuán to meet for battle. Receiving word from Durango, the governor of Nueva Vizcaya dispatched troops from nearby Zacatecas, allocated the royal treasuries of two unnamed towns, and met with the council of learned men, the religious, and the Real Audiencia to determine the degree of action. Pérez de Ribas described the Tepehuán “like herds of deer skipping through the mountains and valleys.” He noted the lack of military formation marching, distances between the groups, and the lack of a central home front to suppress, which made it difficult for the Spanish to oust them.<sup>116</sup> The advantages of the natives resided within their traditional lifestyles before Spanish control. They took advantage of their knowledge of the terrain, their ability to sway their peers back to traditional practices and power dynamics, and their ability to avoid the Spanish government’s subjection of the rebels to their law.

On January 2, 1617, Diego Martinez de Hurdaide wrote a letter to el virrey explaining the critical situation in Nueva Vizcaya. The Spanish lost all of Nueva Vizcaya and part of Nueva Galicia due to a lack of military troops and strength in the area, but the Spanish managed to pacify some Christian souls even with a lack of

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 613.

strength. The Tepehuanes continued to damage churches throughout the area. As a result, the Spanish risked irreparable damage and loss to the entire province of Sinaloa. In 1617, the Spanish attempted to begin pacifying and punishing the rebellious Tepehuanes. During pacification, the Spanish soldiers required new attire, costing 300 pesos, as well as a soldier's salary of 700 pesos. The soldiers insisted upon receiving their salaries from their service to His Majesty to sustain them and pay their mounting expenses resulting from the revolt. In the previous two years, few supplies, only 100 pesos in clothes and another 100 pesos in silver and arms, arrived to sustain the soldiers. The Crown sent provisions for the purchase of horses and other items necessary for the pacification of delinquent natives. When requesting additional troops, the Spanish soldiers specifically refused the help of mulattos, mestizos, and troublemakers. Hurdaide also asked the virrey for a fleet of mules to send back bronze and other items to the royal treasury. Hurdaide's letter provided a lens of understanding into the beginning of the revolt, the beginning of attempted pacification, and the status of a few indigenous peoples. The province consisted of a diverse population in the Rio Mayo missions. Those natives helped the Spanish communicate with the principal caciques in an attempt to negotiate peace. Some of the barbarous natives worked as carpenters or blacksmiths, but others lacked the ability to complete intense labor. During times of danger, the natives sometimes failed to provide adequate arms to the religiosos.<sup>117</sup> Thus, the era of attempted pacification began during the revolt, documented as early as January 1617.

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<sup>117</sup> Letter, Diego Martinez de Hurdaide to Virrey, January 2, 1617, box 23, no. 258, Bolton Collection, Bancroft Library, UCLA, 133-137. (040-00074).



On January 10, 1617, Captain Diego Martinez de Hurdaide wrote to governor don Gaspar dictating the danger in Sinaloa due to the revolt, cautioning Gaspar in regards to native treatment, and requesting additional troops. He claimed that his Lordship sent him with forty soldiers and five hundred friendly natives to enter Ocotlan to punish the Tepehuanes when instructed. Hurdaide noted his desire to punish the Tepehuanes in service to His Majesty. He sadly wrote of the situation plaguing the frontier due to the uprising. The Tepehuanes commandeered the royal mines and towns creating a great danger and risks for the surrounding areas. He enlisted the help of fifty men and gathered weapons from the port of Acapulco. Loyal natives guarded the Spanish. Hurdaide asserted with great certainty that both punishment and pacification of rogue natives would occur. He sought to collect all of the people of the province, even outsiders, in hopes of receiving pledges of loyalty to His Majesty. He armed the loyal with muskets, harquebuses, and gunpowder. Hurdaide recruited the miners, as well, because fighting the revolt took precedence over any other activities, Crown instructed or otherwise. Once again, he insisted upon the urgency of receiving more armaments and horses. Friendly natives volunteered and left their lands to fight with the Spanish because of the good treatment they received, such as pay and food. With their victory, the natives expected rewards for their service.<sup>118</sup> Considering Hurdaide's correspondence with both virrey and don Gaspar, pacification played a significant role in the attempt to suppress the rebel Tepehuanes throughout the revolt. However, pacification and reduction proved much more difficult than the Spanish anticipated.

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<sup>118</sup> Letter, Diego Martinez de Hurdaide to gobernador don Gaspar, January 10, 1617, box 23, no. 258, Bolton Collection, Bancroft Library, UCLA, 91-93. (040-00075).

Destruction continued. “Hurdaide allowed the treasurer, Juan de Ibarra, to intercede for me in relaying my fears of the destruction of the province to General Francisco de Urdiñola. The people of the town Guacare (illegible), located eight leagues away, burned the church.” The disloyal natives lied about their obligation to the Crown. Another offshoot of the rebellion persisted in Matapan. Many towns suffered from death and illness. For twenty days, the Spanish fought the Tepehuanes. Hurdaide wrote Padre Vicente de Aguila to detail the state of the “nation.” The disloyalty of supposed friendly natives resulted in the deaths of Captains Pedro de Montoya and Gonzalo Martin, as well as many more Spaniards and some religious. He discovered the entrance point of the rebels in the Yaqui River. Hurdaide found a solution for those pernicious tlatoles. He told loyal natives the Spanish plan of attack. The natives spoke amongst themselves, which resulted in a rebel overhearing the supposed plan. According to Hurdaide, the Spanish foiled the natives by revealing the rebel spies among them.<sup>119</sup> Loyalty and disloyalty, as well as pacification and rebellion, remained central to the progression of the revolt. From the beginning of Spanish contact, the Tepehuánes straddled the line between the Crown and tradition with trust fading and reemerging as events arose.

Nonetheless, the Spanish faced the remaining rebels with great difficulty. With 120 native allies and seventy soldiers with their horses Governor Don Gaspar de Alvear left Durango in order to distribute supplies, i.e. flour, to the missions, but also to find the Tepehuanes. The governor and his men marched through Guanaceví taking the body of a religious found on the way to his original destination. The governor

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 94-99.

dispatched Captain Montaña with sixty sympathetic natives and twenty-five Spaniards to find the enemy. Montaña reconnected with the governor in El Zape, both horrified by the sight of the dead and the extent of the destruction. Continuing on to Tenerapa, the governor and his soldiers participated in an assault killing thirty individuals and enslaving about two hundred Tepehuán women and children. Next, the Spanish arrived in Santiago Papasquiario after hearing a Tepehuán suggest that it was the next stop of the revolt, but the rebels never arrived leaving the Spanish to bury the four priests. By this point, the hechicero, who proposed evangelization of the Tepehuanes to traditional religious practices, began losing his credibility as those who died during the revolt never arose from the dead. The pre-contact religion failed to sustain itself in its entirety after missionization, as Guidicelli argued. The governor and his men set out to destroy the Tepehuán. Upon the group's arrival to the south side of the mountain range where the Tepehuán resided, a group of Tepehuán rebels topped the hill in search of more cattle. The hidden allied natives launched a wall of arrows killing many, but most importantly killed Cogoxito, their leader. God punished his blasphemies with three arrows to the mouth, according to Pérez de Ribas's account.<sup>120</sup> Thus, the revolt ended in 1618 with the rebel Tepehuán failing to accomplish their return to traditional religion, societal norms, political organization, and power dynamics, which produced lasting effects.

### **Chapter 3: The Consequences of the Revolt**

As a result of the Tepehuán revolt, cattle rancherías failed to survive the fires. The mining camp at Indé permanently closed, adversely affecting the economy of

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<sup>120</sup> Pérez de Ribas, 613-625.

Durango. In addition to many slaves and natives, at least two hundred Spaniards perished. An estimated one thousand plus Tepehuanes died from war, hunger, and circumstances relating to war. Pérez de Ribas emphasized a great necessity to reduce the Tepehuán to the Holy Faith to induce loyalty to the crown. He also believed that God placed silver mines in the lands among the most barbarous in order to ensure Spanish discovery and conversion efforts. Father Andrés Lopés, the only priest to survive the Tepehuanes, tried to restore the Christian faith among the rebellious, but failed during the first attempt.

In February 1618, Father José de Lomas arrived in Santiago Papasquiario. First, he led the Tepehuán in prayer and began to teach the doctrine. His state of affairs letter to the Father Principal in Mexico City indicated a lack of complete reduction of the Tepehuán to the Holy Faith. He asserted a need for soldiers to ensure safety. The Viceroy of Nueva España sent the Company to attempt to rehabilitate the Tepehuanes with the rebuilding of the church and doctrinal instruction. Four priests divided themselves among three prior settlements encouraging their return to the missions. Many Tepehuán complied exhausted from the “evil and wretched life.”<sup>121</sup> According to a 1625 memoranda, Father Andrés López and Father Burgos of the Company ministered to six hundred and thirty-four people. On February 16, 1625, Juan Varela described the Tepehuanes as divided, weak, and subject to angry punishments from other more powerful leaders.<sup>122</sup> In the years immediately following the revolt, the

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 630-1.

<sup>122</sup> “Razon y minuta de los yndios que se administrant en las provincias de la nueba Vizcaya Por los Vicarios Veneficiados y religiosos de San Francisco y Compañia de Jesus que hoy estan bautizados. [1625].” In Charles Wilson Hackett, ed., *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, collected by Adolph F.A. Bandelier

Tepehuanes failed to sustain themselves either as missionized or a cohesive, independent unit, but the Spanish also failed to completely reduce Tepehúan opposition.

Following the revolt, the Spanish decided to reestablish colonial order with pacification through military force.<sup>123</sup> Guidicelli describes the process of pacification as bloody and difficult. To reduce the rebels meant to reduce a substantial part of the indigenous population. The ravages of war produced lasting effects on the Tepehuanes after the war. After the rebellion, the Spanish struggled to identify the precise indigenous group responsible for the war. Oftentimes, the Spanish mistook the Tarahumaras for the rebel Tepehuanes in part due to shared territory and dual bilingualism. Pacification and negotiations depended on the precise identity of native groups. Per Guidicelli, the taxonomy of the Tarahumaras and the Tepehuanes persisted throughout the attempted Spanish pacification.<sup>124</sup> The Spanish's inability to correctly identify the Tepehuanes demonstrates their lack of control over the indigenous population. This lack of control continued in the following decades.

In one of Padre Contreras's accounts in 1638, he wrote Padre Pérez with news of the Tepehuanes. He noted that the Company baptized Tepehuanes both before and after the war. For five of seven years after the revolt, the natives communicated with the Spaniards. During that time, the Spaniards dressed the natives. They became tame and domesticated. Nevertheless, in 1638, the Tepehuanes settled for two months heavily guarded and forming two towns. They frequently entered battles and killed

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and Fanny R. Bandelier, 3 vols., (Washington, D.C.L The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 19223-1937), vol. 2.

<sup>123</sup> Guidicelli, Christophe. "Un cierre de fronteras... taxonómico. Tepehuanes y tarahumara después de la Guerra de los Tepehuanes. (1616-1631)." <https://nuevomundo.revues.org/25913#quotation> (accessed March 23, 2017), 2.

<sup>124</sup> Guidicelli, "El Mestizaje en movimiento: Guerra y Creacion identitaria en la guerra de los Tepehuanes (1616-1619)", 109-110.

others haphazardly. However, they knew that entering the land of the Padres required a cessation of battles and massacres. They experienced these requirements before the war under the administration of Padre Fonte y Moranta and after the war with the administration of P. Sangueta, P. Nicolas de Estada, and P. Min Larios. According to Contreras, the Tepehuanes wished for the priests to enter their territory to form congregations and many towns. He noted their docile nature and their faithfulness. Under the leadership of the priests, the Tepehuanes dug acequias and undertook larger public works projects. The Valley, although humid, provided fertile land and rivers bounding with fish. The nearby mountains, rich in minerals, contained silver deposits. The king distributed alms to those indigenous peoples who spread Catholicism in the Valley. The Jesuits' obligation to the natives expanded with this increase of native participation. After, eleven years of service to the mission, Contreras, according to this account, successfully brought the barbaric natives to the faith, being both obedient and pacifistic toward the Crown.<sup>125</sup> Conversely, a second account, also written by Contreras, detailed Spanish problems with Tepehuanes performing witchcraft during this same period.

Contreras cited the importance of baptizing and indoctrinating the Tepehuanes, but the task proved difficult. In 1638, the cacique of Zape, Felipe rose from the interior of the sierra with several aggressive and militant followers. With great caution, the Superior arrived at the mission. Although suspicious of the Tepehuanes, the priests' lives, specifically Martín Suarez, the missionary of El Zape, depended on very little security. Contreras arrived with Captain Barrasa from the presidio. The native soldiers

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<sup>125</sup> Letter, Padre Gaspar de Contreras to Padre Andres Pérez, August 5, 1638, Jesuit History Institute, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, 944-6. (Serial #040-00110).

and Don Felipe submitted to Captain Barrasa and accepted pardon. The friendly and well-intentioned natives swore loyalty to the king. According to the Spanish, the Devil directly influenced the actions of the natives. Contreras began to preach to the gentile Tepehuanes and the hechicero in their language. After the great war, the remaining Tepehuanes retreated to their towns. He preached how the natives and the Spanish each lived their lives inciting sacrilege. He credited the caudillo for all of the bad and demonic actions of the Tepehúan people. The caudillo threatened a miserable death to any Tepehúan who failed to obey him during the war with the Spanish.<sup>126</sup> Prisoner testimonies, utilized by Guidicelli, consistently stated that many of the prisoners participated in the rebellion due to the fear of Tepehúan retribution, but also the hope of marvelous rewards promised to the faithful by the rebelling Tepehuanes.<sup>127</sup> Consequences for individual actions during the revolt abounded within both the Spanish and Tepehúan communities following the revolt.

As a result of the spells and magic performed by Don Pedro, the hechicero, a native woman became sick. She died due to all of the secrets and treason. As a result of the girl's death, the Spanish took Don Pedro to the gallows where they executed him. Don Felipe, Pedro's brother, became wrought with fear of punishment for his attack on the mission. Felipe's maliciousness and strength allowed him to escape in April during the night. The priests wrote a letter to the Governor defending the innocence and requesting the forgiveness of Padre Suarez for the escape of Felipe.<sup>128</sup> This interaction

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<sup>126</sup> Letter, Padre Gaspar de Contreras to Padre Andres Pérez, 1638/1639, Vol. 25, Misiones, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona. (Serial #040-00107).

<sup>127</sup> Guidicelli, "El Mestizaje en movimiento: Guerra y Creacion identitaria en la guerra de los Tepehuanes (1616-1619)", 116.

<sup>128</sup> Letter, Padre Gaspar de Contreras to Padre Andres Pérez, 1638/1639, Vol. 25, Misiones, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona. (Serial #040-00107).

in 1638 between the Spanish and the troubling Tepehuanes, both hechiceros and militant leaders, substantiates the claim that the Spanish failed to overcome the “overt, widespread opposition by the Tepehuanes” contrary to Gradie’s assertion of total pacification following the revolt. The Tepehuanes obeyed the laws of the Spanish, such as not inciting warfare, only when directly subject to Spanish control within the missions, but retained their practices elsewhere.

Responsible for overseeing the reduction of the Tarahumares and the Tepehuanes in Sinaloa, Luis Valdes Cavallero gave a report dated March 30, 1642 from Parral. The Tepehuanes and the Tarahumares began to receive the teachings of the Company. The Company commanded the principal caciques to send all of their captains who participated during the war to the doctrina to receive judgment from the Jesuits for their actions.<sup>129</sup> This report demonstrates the potential for the reduction of the Tepehuanes twenty-three years after the conclusion of the Tepehúan Revolt. Thus, demonstrating that, contrary to Gradie’s assertion, the Tepehuanes failed to become pacified and fully under the control of the Spanish doctrina in not only the years following the revolt, but in the long term.

Lumholtz provides most of the known anthropological evidence for the Tepehuanes as a result of his trip to Mexico from 1890-1892. His trip details Tepehúan religious practices of the late-nineteenth century, specifically those presumed to have pre-colonial or syncretic, colonial origins. Per custom, the Tepehuanes tied the owner or his son to a horse while carrying a cross made of three ears of corn upon the completion of the harvest. Monthly or every other month, they gathered in a remote

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<sup>129</sup> Report, Luis Valdes Cavallero, 1642, Jesuit History Institute, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona. (Serial #040-00124).



medicine lodge. While singing, they called upon Tuní, their god, and Gunósi, brother-in-law, for the shamans to receive instruction for the gods to give them rain and for the natives to avoid evil. With three shamans, the Tepehuanes began the ritual at dusk. The natives raised a cross adorned with strings of beads, flowers, and eagle feathers. On each 'arm of the cross,' they attached yaguete, also known as 'eye of the god.' They placed meat and three jars of tesvino at the cross. Ousting the fire, they continued to sing and dance until midnight. Eventually, they hear three rounds of apparent footsteps atop the lodge. After the third set, the roof moves and Tuní walks among the people. Tuní, seen only by the shamans, wears a tunic of gold. He joins in the festivities where he asks if anyone wants a drink. A gourd of tesvino appears in each man's hand, and he remained drunk all night from the gift. Then Tuní vanishes. After Tuní's departure, Maria Djáda, both mother and the moon, arrives. She greets the women, who then ask her to sing. Maria advises the women to continue making tesvino for both herself and Tuní.<sup>130</sup> The Tepehuánes utilized the symbols of Spanish religion, such as the cross, alongside their native gods in syncretic religious practice. By using the evangelicalism of the Company, the Tepehuanes exchanged the Christian God for the Devil, according to the writings of Guidicelli.<sup>131</sup>

In addition to rituals, the Tepehuanes believed in many superstitions. For example, they used their hands to scoop water from the land in fear of being swept away inside the mountain during the night by the 'master of the spring.' Terrified of going blind, they never trimmed their finger or toenails. If a person is sleeping, their

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<sup>130</sup> Lumholtz, Carl. *Unknown Mexico*, Vol. 1 (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1902), 431-4, [gutenberg.org](http://gutenberg.org).

<sup>131</sup> Guidicelli, "El Mestizaje en movimiento: Guerra y Creación identitaria en la guerra de los Tepehuanes (1616-1619)", 125.

soul, located between the stomach and the chest, could be off wandering. Thus, the Tepehuanes never woke a sleep person because the person's soul may not return. They also believed that the soul passes through the eyes, mouth, and the nose of a deceased person. In terms of gender, they thought that women have four ribs, while men only have three. Thus, upon their death, the Tepehuanes made four feasts for women and only three for men. Also, a hen crowing signified a coming accident unless the hen died.<sup>132</sup> All of these beliefs existed at the time of Lumholtz's travels, and per those Tepehuanes, derived directly from those of their colonial ancestors. Lastly, he observed that the Tepehúan language was "full of consonants, and hard like the people themselves." Although most Tepehuanes knew Spanish in 1895, they spoke their traditional language between themselves.<sup>133</sup> Thus, the traditional language continued to be used a hundred years after the beginning of Jesuit missions in the Durango area. The significance of these practices rests in the fact that syncretic religious and cultural practices, documented in great detail, persisted even under the supposed Spanish reduction and pacification of the Tepehuanes.

## **Epilogue**

Charlotte Gradie's work consists primarily of a timeline of events and explanations detailing the roles and purposes of colonial institutions and colonization. Christophe Guidicelli offers a thorough analysis and understanding of Tepehúan history in its own right and within the context of conquest. He seeks to understand the consequences of missionization leading up to the revolt, as well as how the revolt altered Spanish control in Nueva España throughout the mid-seventeenth century. This

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 434-435.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 425.

work analyzed the works of both Gradie and Guidicelli in comparison to the historical record to understand the road to attempted pacification, which included a timeline splattered with submission, discontent, revolt, and ultimately, Spanish failure to pacify the Tepehuanes before 1642.

Following the trajectory of Spanish-Tepehúan contact from 1590 through 1642 allowed for the understanding of not just the Tepehúan Revolt of 1616, but also the aftermath and lasting effects. From 1607, the historical record indicates that the Tepehuanes performed traditional practices of warfare and religion. From hechieros tormenting the Spanish villages to warring with other natives, pre-contact traditions continued. Thus, proving Gradie's assertion that they revolted without cause incorrect. The majority of Tepehuanes retained their traditional culture and practices throughout the period leading up to the revolt. Referencing Deeds's concept of mediated opportunism, this work uses disease, warfare, famine, and the desire for Spanish commodities to justify the Tepehuanes' descent into the missions, which falsely appears as native reduction.

Colonial rule alone, according to Tutino, fails to explain rebellions in colonial Mexico because levels of control, cruelty, and coercion varied under Spanish rule.<sup>134</sup> However, this statement counters Scott's idea of aggressively defying the dominant party without actually crossing the line from resistance to rebellion. Those Tepehúan groups on the periphery maintained control of large masses of land because the Spanish failed to maintain a means to control the lands, such as a standing military or police force, beyond the core administrative area. Therefore, marginalized Tepehúan leaders

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<sup>134</sup> Tutino, 95-6.

retained their following beyond the control of the missions while patiently waiting for the ideal time to rally against the missions. In the case of the Tepehuán Revolt of 1616, those leaders preyed upon mission natives who resisted full submission to the Spanish, which ignited a full-fledged revolt.

Utilizing Scott's concept of resistance, the Tepehuanes practiced many forms of undisclosed resistance, such as syncretic religious practices, from the start of missionization until the outbreak of the revolt in 1616. The revolt shattered the charade of Tepehuán compliance, which according to Scott is merely a public performance not indicative of actual conditions. Until 1642, the Spanish faced Tepehuán resistance to missionization and actively attempted to reduce the Tepehuanes to doctrinas. This continued struggle of the Spanish to missionize the Tepehuanes into the mid-seventeenth century confirms that complete pacification failed in the decades immediately following the revolt. Historians must utilize an understanding of the Spanish colonial system to understand how official reports revealed dual experiences when interpreting source material. With greater attention to the Jesuit narratives, historians will find that the priests often reported their difficulties with the natives while concurrently praising their successes. This work begins the process of revealing the failure of the Spanish to pacify the Tepehuanes in the decades after the rebellion, but until the narratives and historical record are taken as a whole as Guidicelli advocates, the true story of the Tepehuanes remains covered by multifaceted and contradicting information.

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