MEXICAN HISTORY

A Primary Source Reader

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The Nahuatl historian Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimúlahuacán, Quauhtlehuanitzin, was born in Amealco, Chalco, in 1579 to indigenous parents who, though nobly named, were of secondary status. At age fourteen, Chimúlahuacán traveled to Mexico City and began working as a steward, or lay brother, at the Church of San Antonio Abad in Xolocó. While there, he began writing Mexico's indigenous history and became the premier practitioner of the genre of Nahua annals, which were composed in the indigenous language of the Valley of Mexico. His annals were compiled from 70 to 1712.

Chimúlahuacán's "Añales," written in Nahuatl, chronicle Xolocó's history in the period from 1589 to 1615. The work also relates the activities of Nahua leaders in Mexico City, and it discusses public events of note in the capital and in New Spain more broadly. Throughout, the annals are in large part a record of events that he experienced himself, though he also drew on his family's memory and the oral traditions of his day. As well as composing the annals, from which the following excerpts are taken, Chimúlahuacán also produced a lengthy history of the Indian kingdoms of the Valley of Mexico.
The Annals of His Time

Today, Saturday the 21st of the month of January of the year 1612, was when they went to San José at San Francisco to make a notification to fray Gerónimo de Zárate, one of the first Jesuits in the province, to notify him of the death of Fray José de las Casas. He was from the order of the Jesuits and was a friend of the royal canciller. He was in charge of the royal canciller's office and was responsible for preparing all the legal documents for the Audiencia. He was a very intelligent and capable man, known for his ability to handle complex legal issues with ease.

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them gently, for they tied the hands of both of them. It was only at the intercession of the Spaniards who live there, the vecinos,* that they united them, and it was with 1749 to keep them in custody. And the said María, seller of bitter atole, went along shouting, for they could not be said or told. She showed great disrespect for them, for she is a with her. The said [Juan Morales and Bernabé de San Gerónimo] were going to be detained in the municipal building, but they were brought back outside the building, and they were not able to lock them up because of the intercession of father fray Agustín del Espíritu Santo, who is in charge of the church of San Antonio Abad here. He saw them outside the municipal building as the said Juan Morales [and Bernabé de San Gerónimo] were being taken off to be in custody, and then he said to the corregidor and the notary Juan Pérez de Ribera and the interpreter, "May you know that I am a witness that this woman María deceived you when she came saying that land on which they want to erect the holy Cross is her property. It is in the road, in the intersection that these people here whom they went to arrest are setting up and putting together the platform on which they are to raise the holy Cross. It is not on anyone's property; let it be inspected." And the said people who were going to be detained were sent back; they told them, "Don't do anything yet, let the suit take its course first." And when they had been dismissed, father fray Agustín del Espíritu Santo took the said Juan Morales and the others to the viceroy, so that they asked the viceroy Don Diego Fernández de Córdoba, Marqués of Guadalcázar, for his permission, and he gave them permission to erect a holy Cross in the said road, which the said woman had opposed. After the orders had been issued and the viceroy had signed they finished putting together the platform, they got it ready, and they held a feast day for the blessing of the new holy Cross here at the church of San Antonio on the Sunday of the feast of the Holy Spirit, on the 26th of the month of May. The very reverend father whose name was already mentioned, fray Agustín del Espíritu Santo, blessed it. It was with great ceremony and processions that they went to raise it on the said new platform that was built. At this time the said woman seller of bitter atole was sick and very near to death. And when this said holy Cross was erected, the vicar general doctor Don Juan de Salamanca also gave them his permission, which they had requested, for the holy Cross to be raised. And it was not long after that the said María, seller of bitter atole, passed away; her son-in-law, whose name was ______, also passed away, because he helped his said mother-in-law in the complaint she had made.

Before this that has been told, that we have just finished recounting and writing about the dispute that happened, how the said María, seller of bitter atole, had made a complaint relating to the holy Cross, here is another thing that happened on the first, likewise here in the taxilacalli of Xoloco and in a section called Acatlán, on the

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*Although meaning only "citizen," the Spanish word vecino was ordinarily used for non-indigenous residents only.
Diego de Senete tried to make a complaint, it fell to one side; his complaint was not heard. Like this, then, occurred two separate miracles here in the said tlaxiilacalli Acatlan in Xoloco, close to the church of my precious father San Antonio Abad in Mexico, at the beginning of the said month of May. And I, Don Domingo de San Antonio Muñón Quauhtlehuanitzin, set it down here and wrote it because both things happened right before my eyes, I really saw them.

Central Themes
Indigenous people, state formation, urban life, popular culture, religion, gender

Suggested Reading


Related Sources
4. The Origin of the Nahua and the Birth of the Fifth Sun (1596)
24. The Persistence of Indigenous Idolatry (1656)