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AZTECS ABROAD?

UNCOVERING THE EARLY INDIGENOUS ATLANTIC

Caroline Dodds Pennock (University of Sheffield)

The *Florentine Codex*, the mammoth corpus of ethnographic information about the Aztecs compiled by the sixteenth-century Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún, mentions the ocean only once, but its power and ambiguity in Indigenous thought are clear in that evocative passage:

> It is called *teuatl* [sea], not that it is a god; it only means wonderful, a great marvel. And its name is *ilhuicaatl* [ocean, lit. water reaching the sky]. The people of old, the people here of New Spain, thought and took as truth that the heavens were just like a house; it stood resting in every direction, and it extended reaching to the water. It was as if the water walls were joined to it. And hence they called it "water which reaches the heavens," because it stretched extending to the heavens. But now, because of the true Faith, it is only called *uei atl* [great water].
>
> It is great. It terrifies, it frightens one. It is that which is irresistible; a great marvel; foaming, glistening, with waves; bitter—very bitter, most bitter; very salty. It has man-eating animals, animal life. It is that which surges. It stirs; it stretches ill-smelling, restless.
>
> I live on the sea. I become a part of the sea. I cross over the sea. I die in the sea. I live on the sea.[1]

This article has benefited from discussions and comments in a huge number of forums, and I am grateful to everyone who has informed my thinking over the decade I have been working on it. In particular, I am indebted to Andrew Heath, Alex Lichtenstein, James Pennock, Robert Schneider, and Charles West for their comments on the multiple incarnations of this work, as well as to the patient, incisive, and thought-provoking guidance of the *AHR*'s anonymous readers and editorial team.

[1] Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, trans. and ed. Charles E. Dibble and Arthur J. O. Anderson, 13 vols. in 12 (Santa Fe, N.Mex., 1950–1982), 11: 12: 247. To enable cross-referencing between different versions, references are given in the form of book: chapter: page number. (Page references are to the revised edition.) For Anglophone readers' convenience, I have referenced English translations of sources where they exist unless there is a specific reason to cite the original.

For Indigenous Americans before the arrival of the Spanish, the Atlantic was an impenetrable barrier, a frightening boundary of their experience and influence, but at the same time it was a place of opportunity, mystery, and spirituality, something intrinsic to their lives.[2] Much the same might be said of Europeans before Columbus's "discovery" of America in 1492: for them, the Atlantic was a fluid border of their existence, an apparently endless expanse of water, offering opportunity and resources, but also promising danger and tinged with fear of the unknown. Yet despite this shared experience of the ocean, there is a remarkable disparity in the way the Atlantic features in the history of the European and Indigenous worlds.

It has largely been taken for granted in recent years that the "Atlantic" is a concept of significance to European history and experience. Since the 1980s, "Atlantic history" has been a fixture in European and North American historiography, and we have seen an incredible proliferation of Atlantic perspectives. British, Iberian, French, Portuguese, and Dutch Atlantics have been joined by Black, Jewish, Marxist, and even Green (Irish) Atlantics, as the fertile potential of the ocean for transnational, "entangled," and global approaches has been explored.[3] Remarkably, however, the borders of an "Indigenous Atlantic" have remained rather ill-defined, and it is striking how rarely this rich field seems to touch on Native American narratives and perspectives. This is not to say that Indigenous peoples have been entirely absent from research into what is often

[2] There is no universally accepted term for the first inhabitants of what we now know as the Americas, with descendant communities having differing preferences. I use the different names here largely interchangeably, including "American" where relevant for clarity, rather than as a suggestion that modern political borders are immutable or eternal.

[3] See, for example, Pieter C. Emmer, Wim Klooster, Silvia Marzagalli, Carla Rahn Phillips, David Hancock, Deborah Gray White, David Eltis, and Alison Games, "Round Table Conference: The Nature of Atlantic History," *Itinerario* 23, no. 2 (1999): 48–174; and Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford, 2009).

called the "Atlantic World," – the depth and breadth of previous scholarship is testament to that – but studies of Indigenous experience rarely frame themselves self-consciously from an "Atlantic" point of view. Even when it is acknowledged, the Atlantic tends to be the place where events occur, rather than the methodological or historiographical framework within which they are analyzed.[4]

A certain hostility to "Atlantic history" among scholars of the Indigenous world is perhaps unsurprising, as it proceeds from a European intellectual tradition that sees the field as originating either in the post–World War II NATO alliance or with the "global" networks that followed the "discovery" of America.[5] This Eurocentric point of view effectively appropriates the ocean for Europe, even in the period before 1492. As David Armitage remarked, "The Atlantic was a European invention . . . not because Europeans were its only denizens, but because Europeans were the first to connect its four sides into a single entity, both as a system and as the representation of a discrete natural feature."[6] The focus on white people's capacity to "imagine" the Atlantic inevitably gives preeminence to approaches that see Indigenous peoples as peripheral and ignores the ways in which Native Americans themselves might have "invented" the ocean. Unsurprisingly, such Eurocentrism has tended to alienate scholars of Mesoamerica, who have long fought to reconstruct the complexity and significance of Indigenous communities and to remove them from an imperial framework that casts them as passive

[4] This was my main issue with Jace Weaver's important work *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000–1927* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2014). The volume is discussed by Linford D. Fisher, Caroline Dodds Pennock, Rebecca Earle, and Natalie Zacek, with a generous response by Weaver, in "Roundtable," *Journal of American Studies* 50, no. 4 (2016): 109–126.
[5] Both approaches are exemplified by Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005).
[6] David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (New York, 2002), 11–27, here 12.

victims of historical events.[7] Mesoamerican scholarship has thus developed largely in parallel to Atlantic history: ships (or rather approaches) passing in the night.[8] Occupied with their own rewarding methodologies—many of them closely focused on using deep linguistic analysis to construct an emic perspective—historians of Indigenous cultures have preferred to study these peoples on their own terms, and have rarely seen a reason to frame their research as part of an "Atlantic" paradigm.[9] In North America, scholars of the Indigenous world often explicitly reject "Atlantic" approaches as lacking relevance to Native history, or even as a regression that once again reduces Indigenous people to objects of imperial enterprise, dragging them back into a "European" context. For many, "The domain of the Atlantic world ended where that of the autonomous peoples began."[10] The use of the term "autonomous" here is telling: the rejection of the Atlantic is an assertion of independent, distinctive, and empowered Indigenous cultures.

In the past decade or so, however, a handful of scholars, emerging from a range of fields and nations, have begun to ponder where the first inhabitants of America fit into Atlantic history's broad compass. Where are the Indigenous denizens of the Atlantic world? Why do we hear so much about Europeans making their way west, but so little

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[7] Nathan Wachtel, *The Vision of the Vanquished: The Spanish Conquest of Peru through Indian Eyes, 1530–1570*, trans. Ben and Siân Reynolds (Hassocks, Sussex, 1977); Stephanie Wood, *Transcending Conquest: Nahua Views of Spanish Colonial Mexico* (Norman, Okla., 2003).
[8] Paul Cohen notes the similar divergence of Atlantic and New Indian histories in "Was There an Amerindian Atlantic? Reflections on the Limits of a Historiographical Concept," *History of European Ideas* 34, no. 4 (2008): 388–410, here 394–397.
[9] Matthew Restall, "A History of the New Philology and the New Philology in History," *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 1 (2003): 113–134. Other possible reasons for the divergence of these fields include the relative absence of Spanish America from early "Atlantic" discussions and the comparatively late development of "New Indian history."
[10] Amy Turner Bushnell, "Indigenous America and the Limits of the Atlantic World, 1493–1825," in Greene and Morgan, *Atlantic History*, 191–221, here 207. Other rejections of Atlantic history as a paradigm for studying Indigenous history include Cohen, "Was There an Amerindian Atlantic?"; and John G. Reid, "How Wide Is the Atlantic Ocean? Not Wide Enough!," *Acadiensis* 34, no. 2 (2005): 81–87.

about Americans traveling the other way? Matthew Bahar has argued that "scholarly ambivalence toward bridging Indian and Atlantic history is based largely in popular and academic conceptions of Native culture. Put simply, we commonly envisage American Indians as a quintessentially terrestrial people."[11] Such preconceptions mean that Indigenous communities are often seen as static recipients of transatlantic encounter, influencing the Atlantic only in their parochial interactions with Europeans, but the reality is that Native Americans not only were active participants in Atlantic networks, but also crossed the ocean by the thousands. Between 1492 and 1501 alone, at least 3,000 Americans were shipped to the slave markets of Europe, and a steady stream of Indigenous visitors followed them across the Atlantic in the following centuries, most unwillingly, but some by choice.[12] Yet, despite this substantial challenge to the familiar east-to-west trajectory of Atlantic migration, only relatively recently has the question of whether an "Indigenous Atlantic" existed been explicitly addressed, and the debate has been limited almost exclusively to North America, in particular Native travelers to Britain from the eighteenth century onward.[13] The period of Iberian dominance between

[11] Matthew R. Bahar, "People of the Dawn, People of the Door: Indian Pirates and the Violent Theft of an Atlantic World," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 2 (2014): 401–426, here 406. Bahar also astutely notes the way in which these "fixations with the *terra firma* Indian" are visible in the historiographical terminology "middle grounds, native grounds, divided grounds, crossroads, borderlands, and backcountries" (407).

[12] Jack Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples*, 2nd ed. (Urbana, Ill., 1993), 25. Precise figures are patchy and very difficult to obtain, but Forbes makes the most sustained attempt at a Europe-wide survey.

[13] In 2010, the Institute of Native American Studies at the University of Georgia hosted a conference on "Exploring the Red Atlantic." With the exception of Claudio Saunt, working on eighteenth-century Cuban-Creek alliances, Latin America was entirely unrepresented (Coll Thrush, personal communication, July 11, 2013). Daniel K. Richter's groundbreaking study *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001) explicitly identifies "colonial experience in the transatlantic world" with the experience of "eighteenth-century Native people everywhere" (174). See also Bushnell, "Indigenous America and the Limits of the Atlantic World"; and Claudio Saunt, "'Our Indians': European Empires and the History of the Native American South," in Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik R. Seeman, eds., *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500–2000* (Upper Saddle River, N.J., 2007), 61–76. On travelers to Britain, see especially Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500–*

1492 and the founding of Jamestown has largely been ignored.[14] Even Jace Weaver's landmark volume *The Red Atlantic* contains only a smattering of substantive references to Central and South American issues across nearly a thousand years, the vast bulk of them covering well-known figures such as Christopher Columbus, Bartolomé de Las Casas, and Garcilaso de la Vega.[15] But it is in the period of first encounter, before European tentacles gained a firm grip on transatlantic networks, that we can find traces of a truly "Indigenous Atlantic."[16]

THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ATLANTIC was a very different place from the densely traveled ocean of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Despite the decimation of Native peoples, those of European and African descent were still a tiny minority in the Americas, even in colonial centers, and much of the region remained tangibly "Indigenous" territory well into the eighteenth century.[17] Millions of Native Americans

1776 (Cambridge, 2006); and Coll Thrush, *Indigenous London: Native Travelers at the Heart of Empire* (New Haven, Conn., 2016).

[14] There are a handful of honorable exceptions to this, most notably José Carlos de la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans: Seeking Justice and Reward at the Spanish Royal Court* (Austin, Tex., 2018); Éric Taladoire, *De América a Europa: Cuando los indígenas descubrieron el Viejo Mundo (1493–1892)* (Paris, 2014); and Nancy E. van Deusen, *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Durham, N.C., 2015).

[15] Weaver, *The Red Atlantic*. As this trio of figures illustrates, although outstanding as a project of recovery, writing forgotten voices back into Atlantic history, Weaver's Red Atlantic is also incongruously Eurocentric at times, framed by European encounters with Native Americans, and implicitly sidelining Indigenous understandings of the Atlantic. See Fisher, Pennock, Earle, Zacek, and Weaver, "Roundtable."

[16] Tempting though it is to talk in terms of Black, White, and Red Atlantics, I do not use "Red Atlantic" (a term popularized in this usage by Jace Weaver and previously associated with a radical or Marxist ocean) because it is not a term that Indigenous peoples themselves would claim. Weaver, "The Red Atlantic: Transoceanic Cultural Exchanges," *American Indian Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2011): 418–463.

[17] Before the founding of Jamestown in 1607, the majority of European migrants to the Americas were Spanish, and by 1570, whites still made up only around 5 percent of the population of Mexico City, a proportion similar to the black and mulatto population, and which barely doubled in the next hundred years. Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2008), 87; Emerson W. Baker and John G. Reid, "Amerindian Power in the Early Modern Northeast: A Reappraisal," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 61, no. 1 (2004): 77–106.

were entangled in the circum-Atlantic web, but what is often forgotten is that thousands more traveled (or were transported) to Europe.[18] Only when we recognize the mobility of Native people, especially in the often-overlooked early Hispanic world, does the "Indigenous Atlantic" begin to emerge as a meaningful concept in either a tangible or a theoretical sense. In this distinctive early Atlantic, before the tide turned almost inexorably toward Europe, we can more easily see Native Americans as purposeful actors who created and transformed transatlantic networks, forging not one but many "Indigenous Atlantics."

It is hard to pinpoint precise numbers of Indigenous people who crossed the Atlantic. The records are incomplete, unclear, and sometimes deliberately misleading. Partly due to attempts to sidestep legal prohibitions of Indigenous slavery and travel, Native American travelers are poorly recorded, and their identities are often blurred in the records, hidden behind identifiers that relate to color rather than origin: terms like *loro* (intermediate/brown), *blanco* (light), *loro casi negro* (brown, almost black), or the even less precise *esclavo* (slave) are often used in place of *indio* (Indian).[19] What is clear, however, is that tens—perhaps hundreds—of thousands of Indigenous Americans crossed the Atlantic to Europe in the sixteenth century: as enslaved people, as family members or *criados* (dependents) of Europeans, and as intentional travelers with their own ambitions and agendas.

[18] Joseph Roach argues that "The concept of a circum-Atlantic world (as opposed to a transatlantic one) insists on the centrality of the diasporic and genocidal histories of Africa and the Americas." Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York, 1996), 4.
[19] Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans*, 26–35.

The experiences of purposeful voyagers of "Aztec" (Central Mexican) origin are a reminder of the distinctive experiences of Indigenous peoples in a world that often saw them as homogeneous members of the "republic of Indians."[20] Whereas the sources in other parts of the Americas are almost exclusively by Europeans, so that scholars have only implicitly been able to unearth an Indigenous viewpoint on the Atlantic, the Aztecs and their neighbors wrote extensively in the colonial period, both in their own language of Nahuatl and in Spanish. These sources make it possible to trace their unique—and comparatively well-evidenced—beliefs about the ocean and to closely examine one Indigenous way of thinking about, and interacting with, the Atlantic world. Focusing on the Aztecs also demonstrates that the Atlantic can be a powerful analytical framework, even for those peoples whose lands did not directly border the ocean. While coastal cultures such as the Maya and Wabanaki may have spent more time on the sea, the inhabitants of sixteenth-century Mexico City were embroiled in transatlantic networks by their day-to-day contact with colonial officials and structures in the imperial capital; although the ocean was hundreds of kilometers away, they still had to deal with the transatlantic world on their doorstep. In contrast to peripheral regions, where some tribes lived on the fringes of empire well into the nineteenth century, for the Aztecs any respite from direct contact with the Spanish could at best be brief.[21] Caught at the heart of the colonial enterprise, most Mesoamerican cultures did not have the option to retreat into relative isolation; they had little choice but to engage with the Atlantic, and many did,

[20] Although I recognize the difficulties and possible anachronisms of the term "Aztec," I use it as the most comprehensible term for a non-specialist audience, referring to the culture that dominated Central Mexico in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, more properly called the "Mexica."

[21] There were a handful of free nations in South America at the turn of the nineteenth century, but they lay far beyond the Valley of Mexico, the center of the Spanish Empire. See Bushnell, "Indigenous America and the Limits of the Atlantic World," 210–212.

deliberately and successfully. But is there any value in trying to integrate Indigenous groups into the structures of Atlantic history, or is it merely another colonization, this time of the Indigenous past?[22]

To make an Atlantic approach valuable, we must move beyond simply locating Indigenous people within the traditional frameworks of transatlantic exchange and mobility. A distinctive "Indigenous Atlantic" must recognize that Native people understood the ocean in completely different ways—from historians, from Europeans, and from each other. We can never fully appreciate the rich and varied spectrum of Indigenous belief, but we can attempt to foreground Native understandings of the Atlantic and, as Sami Lakomäki powerfully argued, "rethink the Atlantic paradigm more fundamentally from an Indigenous perspective that situates the sea within Native cosmologies, geographies, and historicities."[23] So, we must not only understand that Native people *did* engage with the Atlantic, but also ask *how* they engaged with it. This is about more than "looking east from Indian country," or tracing the transatlantic journeys of Indigenous people, important though both those things are.[24] To find a truly "Indigenous Atlantic," we must reimagine the history of the ocean itself.

[22] Previous transatlantic studies of Indigenous Mexico have tended to focus on the circulation of information about the Aztec people, rather than the people themselves. See, for example, Benjamin Keen, *The Aztec Image in Western Thought* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1971); and María Fernanda Valencia Suárez, *Los aztecas y la conquista de México en las ambiciones inglesas, 1519–1713* (Mexico City, 2018).
[23] Sami Lakomäki, "'We Then Went to England': Shawnee Storytelling and the Atlantic World," *Ethnohistory* 63, no. 4 (2016): 595–619, here 597. This kind of analysis is much harder for the sixteenth century than for the turn of the nineteenth, when Lakomäki's analysis of Shawnee narratives of a diplomatic voyage to England suggests that they understood the "*kčikami*" (great water) as a dangerous borderland.
[24] "Looking east from Indian country" references Richter's *Facing East from Indian Country*.

NATIVE AMERICANS DID NOT SUDDENLY discover the Atlantic in 1492; they had deep ties to the sea before white people ever hove over the horizon. In Mesoamerica, our understanding of Indigenous engagement with the ocean is being transformed by archaeology. Investigations such as the Proyecto Costa Escondida (Hidden Coast Project) have shed light on Maya seafaring traditions, making clear that the extent and duration of coastal trade and transportation in the Mesoamerican world have previously been underestimated.[25] Andrew Lipman's pioneering research on "the saltwater frontier" shows how Algonquian-speaking peoples' seafaring expertise made them powerful players in the coastal world of the seventeenth-century Euro-American Northeast.[26] Focusing on the same region, Matthew Bahar has shown the Wabanaki to be a tenacious, organized, and influential maritime force in the eighteenth-century Atlantic, while Nancy Shoemaker has explored the engagement with the ocean that came from the long history of Native whaling.[27] We must reorient our understanding of "Indigenousness" to incorporate this oceanic dimension and recognize the truly reciprocal nature of the Atlantic encounter.

For the Aztecs, whose empire reached from the Pacific in the west to the Caribbean in the east, the *uei atl* (great water) of the "Atlantic" was of deep spiritual

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[25] Jeffrey B. Glover, Dominique Rissolo, Jennifer P. Mathews, and Carrie A. Furman, "El Proyecto Costa Escondida: Arqueología y compromiso comunitario a lo largo de la coa norte de Quintana Roo, México," *Chungara: Revista de antropología chilena* 44, no. 3 (2012): 511–522. For more on Maya coastal activity, see, for example, Heather McKillop, *In Search of Maya Sea Traders* (College Station, Tex., 2005); and Thomas H. Guderjan and James F. Garber, eds., *Maya Maritime Trade, Settlement and Population on Ambergris Caye, Belize* (Culver City, Calif., 1995).

[26] Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (New Haven, Conn., 2015).

[27] Bahar, "People of the Dawn, People of the Door"; Nancy Shoemaker, *Native American Whalemen and the World: Indigenous Encounters and the Contingency of Race* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2015); Shoemaker, ed., *Living with Whales: Documents and Oral Histories of Native New England Whaling History* (Amherst, Mass., 2014).

significance, for the Aztecs lived their lives on the water. Their capital city of Tenochtitlan lay in the midst of the great lake of Texcoco, and this island heart of the Aztec world, suffused with canals for arteries, was linked to the mainland only by narrow causeways. Unsurprisingly for waterborne people, the Aztecs had long experience of aquatic trade, warfare, and communication, and their cosmology reveals a deep spiritual connection to the ocean, which was confronted and transformed by the arrival of Europeans from across the "great water." By dipping our toes tentatively into the "Aztec Atlantic" (or perhaps, rather, the Mexica *uei atl*), we can begin to reconstruct an Indigenous perspective on the ocean at the moment of encounter: an early "Indigenous Atlantic."

Sahagún, who has been dubbed the "first anthropologist" for his work on Aztec culture, claims that "the water of the sea, the ocean" (*yn teuatl, yn ilhuicaatl*) was itself worshipped as a god by the Aztecs, and the spiritual power of the ocean is entangled in the language itself.[28] *Teuatl* (sea) can also mean "divine liquid" or blood, that most primal of life-giving fluids, which fueled the Aztec realm.[29] The earth itself was *cemanahuac* (the place surrounded by water), and the land rested on a great disk or

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[28] Miguel León-Portilla, *Bernardino de Sahagún: First Anthropologist*, trans. Mauricio J. Mixco (Norman, Okla., 2002). Due to the destruction of records, we are heavily dependent on official records and colonial accounts of Aztec thought, to complement archaeology and the few surviving pictographic codices. "Missionary ethnographers" such as Sahagún were responsible for producing an extraordinarily rich corpus of material, albeit one that must be handled with considerable care and skepticism. Nonetheless, enough of the Aztecs' historical songs, recitations, and pictographic records survived the conquest to provide a "treasured resource" for later chroniclers; Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (Austin, Tex., 2000), 20. See also, for example, Georges Baudot, *Utopia and History in Mexico: The First Chronicles of Mexican Civilization, 1520–1569* (Niwot, Colo., 1995); J. Jorge Klor de Alva, H. B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quiñones Keber, eds., *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Albany, N.Y., 1988); and Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago, 1996).

[29] Thelma D. Sullivan, "Nahuatl Proverbs, Conundrums, and Metaphors, Collected by Sahagún," *Estudios de cultura náhuatl* 4 (1963): 93–178, here 146–147.

alligator (Cipactli) that floated on primordial waters. Thus the world was metaphorically surrounded by blood and water, a vivid evocation of the Aztecs' vision of the cosmos. The *ilhuicaatl* (sky water or heaven water) of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans "reached to the heavens," providing a perfect "turquoise enclosure" encircling the known world, a world whose very origins were aquatic.[30] According to the *Histoire du Mechique*, recorded in 1543, the earth goddess Tlaltecuhtli, in her form as Cipactli, was tempted to the earth by the god Tezcatlipoca (Smoking Mirror). (See Figure 2.)

> And before she came down, there already was water upon which she walked, but nobody knows who created it . . . and they squeezed her so hard she split in the middle, and from the back half they made the earth; and they took the other half to the sky, which caused the other gods to be very ashamed . . . And to compensate [for it], they made trees, flowers and grass from her hair; from her skin small herbs and tiny flowers; from her eyes, wells and springs and small caves; from her mouth, rivers and small caverns; from her nose, valleys and mountains.[31]

This beautiful text conjures a vivid picture of the elaborate ways in which water saturated the Aztec world from the moment of creation. Even when on land, in a very real way the Aztecs believed themselves to "live on the sea."[32]<FIG. 2 NEAR HERE>

The intricate ties binding the Aztecs to the ocean are also evident in archaeology from the Templo Mayor, the sacred "mountain" that lay at the geographic and symbolic heart of their cosmos, the axis of the (probably) thirteen heavens and nine underworlds. Despite Tenochtitlan's physical distance from the sea and the ready availability of materials from the lake, objects from the Atlantic coast were regularly discovered at the

[30] *Florentine Codex*, 11: 12: 247, 6: 4: 19. For the Aztec worldview, see Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, "Symbolism of the Templo Mayor," in Elizabeth Hill Boone, ed., *The Aztec Templo Mayor: A Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, 8th and 9th October 1983* (Washington, D.C., 1987), 185–209, here 186–189.
[31] Leonardo López Luján, *The Offerings of the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan*, trans. Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano and Thelma Ortiz de Montellano (Niwot, Colo., 1994), 255.
[32] *Florentine Codex*, 11: 12: 247.

Great Temple among buried ritual offerings linked to the damp and humid underworld. The remains of Atlantic flora and fauna, including mollusks, sea urchins, shells, and fish bones, often appear in one of the deeper levels of offerings below a layer composed of large pieces of skin from reptiles, fish, and (to a lesser extent) mammals. Leonardo López Luján, the current director of the Templo Mayor Project, argues that this placement of objects symbolizes the surface of the earth, above the oceanic waters of Tlalocan, the realm of the water gods and the wellspring of all the earth's waters. "For the sea enters within the land . . . It goes in all directions within the land in the mountains."[33] The skin quite literally embodied Cipactli, "the reptilian covering that floated on the sea," which was represented by objects from the "great water" of the Atlantic.[34] Atlantic artifacts clearly played a specific role in Aztec theology, forming a significant link to the wetter aspects of the sacred world and integrating the ocean into the symbolic center.[35]

Such views of the ocean imbued Aztec cosmology and must have had powerful meaning for the Indigenous people who found themselves crossing the "great water," as well as creating tangible connections to the Atlantic.[36] In the century before the Spanish

[33] *Florentine Codex*, 11: 12: 247.
[34] López Luján, *The Offerings of the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan*, 255.
[35] For the significance of different types of offerings, including marine objects, see ibid., 240–266.
[36] Given that the "great water" was not synonymous with the "Atlantic" before 1492, one might reasonably ask whether we should be talking about "Indigenous oceanic history" rather than "Indigenous Atlantic history." But, although it is vital to understand the hemispheric context, the Pacific experience after the European invasion had distinctive differences from the Atlantic exchange. Not only did encounter occur much later in many Pacific regions, but (partly due to its vastness) contacts were more fragmented. In many ways, the "South Sea" was a profoundly Indigenous space, but although an "Indigenous Pacific" offers the opportunity to invert traditional Eurocentric histories of the ocean, it does not (in the sixteenth century, at least) particularly change the global narrative. In the sixteenth century, trans-Pacific voyages were monopolized by Europeans, and although it is possible that a few Native Americans made the long journey to the west, they did not in this early period form the "web of diaspora identities" that connected the Atlantic world. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), quote from 218. See, on the importance of the Pacific to Native Americans, Kealani Cook, *Return to Kahiki: Native Hawaiians in Oceania* (New York, 2018); Joshua L. Reid, *The Sea Is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs* (New Haven, Conn., 2015); and Johan Reinhard, "Sacred Mountains: An

invasion, the Aztecs had extended their influence across Central Mexico, building trade and tribute networks that stretched from coast to coast. As many as 200,000 dugout canoes plied the lake and riverine system of the Valley of Mexico, shipping goods and people over long distances.[37] The Aztec histories, rewritten in the 1430s as Tenochtitlan was rising to power, deliberately promoted water as a core part of their identity. Pictographic records show their origins in Aztlan, another island city surrounded by water, and the mythical histories layered narratives that placed Tenochtitlan at the center of a cosmos surrounded by water.[38] (See Figure 3.) Their island capital, modeled on the lake city of Aztlan, lying above underground lakes linked to the sea, was a microcosm of the world itself, surrounded by the ocean.[39] At the time of the Spanish invasion, the Aztecs were purposefully fashioning themselves as a watery people with global aspirations: "we shall conquer nations, near and distant, we shall subdue towns and cities from sea to sea."[40] Although the Spanish conquest brought an end to Aztec supremacy, it did not dampen the ambitions of the Indigenous elites; it merely shifted their horizons.[41]<FIG. 3 NEAR HERE>

Ethno-Archaeological Study of High Andean Ruins," *Mountain Research and Development* 5, no. 4 (1985): 299–317.

[37] Ross Hassig, *Trade, Tribute, and Transportation: The Sixteenth-Century Political Economy of the Valley of Mexico* (Norman, Okla., 1993), 56–64.

[38] Barbara Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, the Life of Mexico City* (Austin, Tex., 2015), 26–27; Boone, *Stories in Red and Black*, especially 214.

[39] The Templo Mayor was believed to be founded over two caves filled with the water of fire (*tleatl*) and the water of conflagration (*matlalatl*), which formed a tangible link to the sea. Johanna Broda, "The Provenience of the Offerings: Tribute and *Cosmovisión*," in Boone, *The Aztec Templo Mayor*, 211–256, here 222.

[40] Fray Diego Durán, *The History of the Indies of New Spain*, trans. and ed. Doris Heyden (Norman, Okla., 1994), 42–43. I have argued elsewhere that the Aztecs had a "globalizing" worldview; see Caroline Dodds Pennock and Amanda Power, "Globalizing Cosmologies," in Catherine Holmes and Naomi Standen, eds., *The Global Middle Ages*, Supplement 13, *Past and Present*, no. 238 (November 2018): 88–115.

[41] For the conceptual centrality of water to the Aztec world, before and after the conquest, see Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan*.

WITH THIS PROFOUNDLY OCEANIC OUTLOOK, the Aztecs saw the Atlantic as a route to wider worlds, to opportunities, and to power. Although Europeans initiated the regular transatlantic routes, they often remained heavily dependent on Indigenous people, who recognized the opportunities offered by the Atlantic and were dynamic economic and political agents in the sixteenth century, deploying their already vigorous long-distance trade networks to serve new markets.[42] Native Americans thrived particularly in industries that drew on their traditional expertise and commodities: Indigenous fur traders were powerful brokers in the Northeast, while Mexicans were central to the production of cochineal dye, one of the most valuable American exports.[43] Such communities were not only actively engaging in transatlantic networks, but also transforming, and being transformed by, them. In 1553, the Nahua *cabildo* (council) of Tlaxcala bemoaned the erosion of elite authority and traditional standards by a group of cochineal farmers and merchants who prioritized gaining wealth from export crops over the production of domestic staples.[44] Native people were not merely being coerced into Atlantic exchange; they were developing their existing industries and networks to meet a new opportunity,

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[42] The same might be said of the Pacific, where the "Manila Galleon" should be seen as an extension of Indigenous transcontinental networks, as well as an expression of Spain's global reach. On pre-Columbian long-distance trade networks, see, for example, Timothy G. Baugh and Jonathon E. Ericson, eds., *Prehistoric Exchange Systems in North America* (New York, 1994); Michael E. Smith, "Long-Distance Trade under the Aztec Empire: The Archaeological Evidence," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 1, no. 2 (1990): 153–169; and W. Dirk Raat, "World History, MesoAmerica, and the Native American Southwest," *History Compass* 10, no. 7 (2012): 537–548.

[43] Daniel Francis and Toby Morantz, *Partners in Furs: A History of the Fur Trade in Eastern James Bay, 1600–1870* (Kingston, Ont., 1983); Raymond L. Lee, "Cochineal Production and Trade in New Spain to 1600," *The Americas* 4, no. 4 (1948): 449–473; Carlos Marichal, "Mexican Cochineal and European Demand for a Luxury Dye, 1550–1850," in Bethany Aram and Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla, eds., *Global Goods and the Spanish Empire, 1492–1824* (Basingstoke, 2014), 197–215.

[44] "The Evils of Cochineal, Tlaxcala, Mexico (1553)," in Kenneth Mills, William B. Taylor, and Sandra Lauderdale Graham, eds., *Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History* (Oxford, 2002), 113–116.

and when the wealth of new commodities poured eastward across the Atlantic, Native people came with them.[45]

On February 12, 1545, a delegation of Maya chiefs, in full Q'eqchi' regalia, presented Prince Philip with treasures showing the richness of their lands. Along with two thousand quetzal feathers sent by the chiefs of Tuzulutlán, the gifts included beautiful clay pots and fruit platters, as well as Mexican foods and plants: chiles, beans, maize, and "containers of whisked chocolate." This is the first recorded example of drinking chocolate in Europe, and it was carried to the court—and presumably prepared—by Native people. Indigenous delegations were quite common at court by the 1540s, but the regent was nonetheless impressed, not only by their finery, but also by their fortitude; seeing the Maya "with so few clothes, in the rigours of the cold of Madrid," he said to them: "You must be [made] of steel."[46] Such voyagers can help to loosen the crushing grip of Europeans on transatlantic exchange and pinpoint the independent and direct influence of Indigenous Americans, not only on that exchange but also on European culture itself.

Although Native people were vital conduits in the so-called "Columbian Exchange," which flooded Europe with new tastes and sensations, Indigenous influences rarely appear in popular understandings of European identity. Commodities such as tobacco, chocolate, tomatoes, potatoes, and corn have been divorced from their Native

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[45] Alfred W. Crosby Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Conn., 1972); Roger Schlesinger, *In the Wake of Columbus: The Impact of the New World on Europe, 1492–1650*, 2nd ed. (Wheeling, Ill., 2007). Marcy Norton demonstrates that not only chocolate and tobacco, but also Aztec tastes and habits surrounding them were adopted by Spanish consumers; Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006): 660–691; Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures*.
[46] Agustín Estrada Monroy, *El mundo k'ekchi' de la Vera-Paz* (Guatemala City, 1979), 194–198, quotes from 195 and 196.

American context and appropriated by European narratives, losing their inherently Indigenous character and significance. Tomatoes are seen as Italian rather than Mexican; potatoes are Irish, not Andean. The failure to recognize Indigenous mobility has resulted in a European monopoly on Atlantic exchange. Native American contributions are seen as localized, confined to their own shores, supplying Europeans with unusual commodities with which to delight their compatriots, and receiving novelties from the east in return. And so we end up with an Atlantic in which exchange and encounter, in both directions, are almost always mediated by Europeans. Where Indigenous influences do manage to defy the dominant current and flow east toward the metropole, they are carried by Europeans. Thus, despite thousands of earlier Indigenous travelers to Europe—many of whom definitely smoked—Sir Walter Raleigh, with his tobacco and potatoes, stands as the discoverer and pioneer of American products in the British imagination.[47] The Indigenous Atlantic has been erased.

In reality, though, Americans did not need Europeans to represent them in Europe; they were perfectly capable of representing themselves, and did so on many occasions. From the very first, Indigenous people were part of the transatlantic world, regularly appearing on ships arriving in Europe. In addition to enslaved or forced migrants, there were also many official embassies, elite delegations, and free people traveling as individuals or in small groups. Thanks to the painstaking archival work of Esteban Mira Caballos, we know that nearly 2,500 Indigenous Americans—including

[47] Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, "La esclavitud en Castilla durante la Edad Moderna," *Estudios de historia social de España* 2 (1952): 367–428, here 392.

145 Mexicans—were recorded as arriving in Castile between 1493 and 1550.[48] By examining just a small sample from these hundreds of sixteenth-century accounts, we can sketch the outline of an early "Indigenous Atlantic" and reveal the ways in which Americans permeated the fabric of European society, forming personal, economic, and intellectual transatlantic connections. Sixteenth-century Europe is often seen as insulated from the confrontation with the "new" world of the Americas, safely hidden behind John Elliott's famous "mental shutters," and shielded by distance from the horrors of the "savages."[49] But a good year before Cortés claimed victory over the Aztecs, the Spanish court watched in horrified fascination as a young Mexican—a "slave" to Juan de Ribera, Cortés's envoy—gave a graphic demonstration of human sacrifice and captive-taking. According to Peter Martyr, after dragging an unfortunate compatriot around by his hair, the Aztec threw him to the ground and then "feigned to cut open his breast above the heart, with a knife. After tearing out the heart, he wrung from his hands the blood flowing from the wound, and then besprinkled the sword and shield."[50] At times, the challenge to European expectations presented by the Indigenous was all too immediate.[51]

LESS THAN TWO DECADES AFTER first encounter, it is clear that Europeans were already having their compass broadened by the Indigenous Atlantic. Across Spain and Portugal,

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[48] Esteban Mira Caballos, *Indios y mestizos americanos en la España del siglo XVI* (Madrid, 2000), 111, 123–133. As Mira Caballos admits, his calculation of 2,442 *indio* travelers to Castile is probably on the low side, as it does not include the (likely substantial) illegal traffic in enslaved people.
[49] J. H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650*, new ed. (Cambridge, 1992), 14.
[50] Peter Martyr d'Anghera, *De Orbe Novo: The Eight Decades of Peter Martyr d'Anghera*, trans. and ed. Francis Augustus MacNutt, 2 vols. (New York, 1912), 2: 202–204, here 202.
[51] Martyr's account of this rare (and not particularly accurate) display speaks to European fascinations with human sacrifice, which was practiced only by certain Indigenous groups. For more on the ways in which ritual violence formed an intelligible part of Mexica life, see Caroline Dodds Pennock, *Bonds of Blood: Gender, Lifecycle and Sacrifice in Aztec Culture* (Basingstoke, 2008).

France, Italy, England, and the Low Countries, Europeans were meeting Native Americans, as enslaved people, curiosities, diplomats, translators, sailors, and family members.[52] Most were involuntary migrants—kidnapped or coerced from their homes—but there were also a significant number of free people, traveling individually or in small groups. The first Mexicans to set foot on European soil fell into the shadowy space often occupied by early Indigenous travelers; we know they were Totonacs from the eastern region of Mexico, but their precise identity and the purpose of their journey are obscure. At least two high-ranking men, two women, a young male interpreter, and probably some other attendants arrived in Spain in 1519, along with the emissaries and treasure sent by Cortés as part of his campaign to win royal support for his unsanctioned conquest of Mexico.[53] Whether these people were kidnapped or simply curious, we will never know, but it is clear that the Totonacs were sufficiently sharp to realize how best to turn the situation to their advantage. Speaking through their young interpreter at court, the men responded to questions about whether the king had "ordered" their baptism with judicious politeness—"they were happy being Christians"—and even managed to convince the pope's representative that the treasure was their gift to the king, from "a *cacique* (which means lord) who wants friendship and peace with the Christians."[54] From the first, Indigenous Americans were building political capital in the Atlantic world.

[52] See, for example, on Britain: Thrush, *Indigenous London*, and Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters*; on France: Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton, Alta., 1984), chap. 10; and on Antwerp: Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans*, 47–49.

[53] The numbers are impenetrable, but at least five male *indios* are recorded by name.

[54] Transcription of Ruffo di Forli's letter in Marcel Bataillon, "Les premiers Mexicains envoyés en Espagna par Cortés," *Journal de la Société des americanistes* 48 (1959): 135–140, here 139–140. On the Totonacs, see also Archivo General de Indias, Seville [hereafter AGI], Indiferente General, 420, l. 8, fols. 173v–175r, 185r–185v; Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, 2: 38–39; AGI, Contratación, legajo 4675, transcribed in Manuel Giménez Fernández, "El alzamiento de Fernando Cortés: Según las cuentas de la casa de contratación," *Revista de historia de América*, no. 31 (1951): 1–58, here 53–58.

When Charles returned to the Low Countries to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor, he took the Mexican artifacts with him, displaying them at the town hall in Brussels, where he was holding court. There, in the late summer of 1520, the artist Albrecht Dürer reflected on the treasures with an artist's eye: "All the days of my life I have seen nothing that rejoiced my heart so much as these things, for I saw amongst them wonderful works of art, and I marvelled at the subtle *Ingenia* of men in foreign lands."[55] This famous quote is often trotted out to demonstrate the cultural encounter between Europe and the Americas, but the human dimension so in evidence in Dürer's writing is usually overlooked: the artist did not see merely the objects, but also the human hand behind them. Other Europeans, too, were prompted to reassess their preconceptions by experiences with the Indigenous Atlantic. Martyr, who sought out and interviewed Native American travelers to Spain, wrote of the Totonacs' prominent lip piercings:

> I cannot remember ever to have seen anything more hideous; but they think that nothing more elegant exists under the lunar circle. This example proves the blindness and the foolishness of the human race . . . The Ethiopian thinks that black is a more beautiful colour than white, while the white man thinks the opposite . . . We are influenced by passions rather than guided by reason, and the human race accepts these foolish notions, each country following its own fancy.[56]

Whatever the original objective of their journey, whether initiated by Indigenous authorities or exploited by Cortés, the Totonacs were regarded largely as curiosities, but they were in many ways not unusual, for Indigenous travelers were common at court by the 1520s. In 1525, two sons of the deceased Aztec emperor Moctezuma, don Rodrigo and don Martín, traveled to Spain and met with Charles V. They were given an annual

[55] Albrecht Dürer, *Literary Remains of Albrecht Dürer*, ed. William Martin Conway (Cambridge, 1889), 101–102.
[56] Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, 2: 39.

stipend of 100 *ducados* by the Crown and sent to study Christian doctrine at a monastery in Talavera before being granted land in the form of *encomiendas*. Rodrigo was likely a young man when he crossed the Atlantic, for he was recorded as "growing up" at the monastery of San Francisco in Madrid in 1533.[57] After a short period in the monastery, Martín seems to have returned to New Spain—becoming one of many Indigenous people who made multiple journeys across the Atlantic, for he is recorded as returning to court in 1528.[58]

Elite youths were particularly welcome visitors in this early period, because the education of noble children was a common acculturation tactic.[59] The Crown fostered transatlantic networks for this purpose, not only welcoming Indigenous embassies and using them to build links, but also deliberately educating Native people in Spain, with the intention of returning them home to indoctrinate their peers. In 1526, Charles V ordered that twenty *indios*, those with the best "ability and understanding," and if possible of the highest birth, should be brought to Spain for instruction in the Catholic faith "on the first ships" leaving for Seville.[60] Such nobles established Indigenous Atlantic networks, acting

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[57] *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar* [*CDIU*], 25 vols., vol. 18 (Madrid, 1925), 33, 46; Vasco de Puga, *Provisiones, cédulas, instrucciones para el gobierno de la Nueva España* (Madrid, 1945), fol. 69; Carina Lee Johnson, "Negotiating the Exotic: Aztec and Ottoman Culture in Habsburg Europe, 1500–1590" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2000), 65–66. *CDIU* also mentions a third son of a chief who came with them, Fernando (18: 33).

[58] Howard F. Cline, "Hernando Cortés and the Aztec Indians in Spain," *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 26, no. 2 (1969): 70–90. We cannot be positive that this is the same don Martín, son of Moctezuma, who received a grant in 1525, but it seems so from context; the likelihood is also bolstered by the fact that most of Moctezuma's sons died after the invasion.

[59] Peter B. Villella, *Indigenous Elites and Creole Identity in Colonial Mexico, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 2016), especially chap. 2.

[60] Vasco de Puga, *Prouisiónes cédulas Instruciones de su Magestad: ordenáças y difútos y audiéncia, pa la buena expedició de los negocios y administració d justicia: y gouernació dsta nueva España: y pa el vué tratamiéto y conseruación de los yndios, dende el año de 1525. hasta este presente de. 63* (Mexico City, 1563), fol. 21.

as ambassadors for their own people and, both unwittingly and deliberately, disseminating European values in America. For several decades after its foundation in 1536, the College of Santa Cruz at Tlatelolco educated many sons of the Indigenous nobility, teaching them to read and write in Spanish, Latin, and Nahuatl. These "trilinguals" were vital in the Franciscans' intellectual projects, and also undertook studies in their own right.[61]

The contribution of such Indigenous intellectuals to the Spanish Golden Age has largely been forgotten, but the flourishing of Native scholarship and the arts was not limited to the Americas. Garcilaso de la Vega, whose works remain part of the canon of classic literature, is certainly the most eminent Indigenous migrant of his generation. A descendant of Inca royalty, Garcilaso crossed the Atlantic in 1560, where he became a renowned literary figure in Spain, interpreting the histories of his people for audiences on both sides of the ocean.[62] Although there was a great flourishing of Nahuatl literature in the latter part of the sixteenth century, the Mexicans cannot claim so illustrious a transatlantic celebrity, but they too helped to shape the intellectual world of the Atlantic, both through their writings and in person. In 1552, an elderly Nahua doctor called Martín de la Cruz composed the *Libellus de medicinalibus indorum herbis* at the College of Santa Cruz. A medical text, similar to a European herbal, it was translated into Latin by Juan Badiano, a Nahua teacher at the college. Viceroy Mendoza sent the translated codex to King Philip II along with a shipment of plant specimens. From the king's library at the

[61] Rocío Cortés, "The Colegio Imperial de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco and Its Aftermath: Nahua Intellectuals and the Spiritual Conquest of Mexico," in Sara Castro-Klaren, ed., *A Companion to Latin American Literature and Culture* (Oxford, 2008), 86–105; Villella, *Indigenous Elites and Creole Identity in Colonial Mexico*, 81–85.

[62] Sara Castro-Klarén and Christian Fernández, eds., *Inca Garcilaso and Contemporary World-Making* (Pittsburgh, Pa., 2016).

Escorial, the codex made its way to the Barberini Library, and eventually to the Vatican. An early copy has even been found in the library of the British royal family at Windsor Castle.[63] The manuscript is now known as the *Codex de la Cruz Badiano* in recognition of the Nahuas' work. Although their names are sometimes forgotten, the work of Indigenous scholars also circulated widely in Europe as part of missionary texts. The thoughts and words of Mexicans such as Antonio Valeriano, Alonso Vegerano, Martín Jacobita, and Pedro de San Buenaventura—who collaborated with Sahagún on the *Florentine Codex*—were widely disseminated in scholarly circles.[64] In 1568, a student at the college from Azcapotzalco, Pedro Juan Antonio, traveled to Salamanca to study law. Six years later, he published a Latin grammar in Barcelona.[65] The ideas of Indigenous intellectuals formed part of the flows of information that crisscrossed the Atlantic and, like their Spanish contemporaries, many of them also sought to cross the ocean to listen, learn, and teach in person.[66]

By 1570, the college at Tlatelolco had begun to decline, suffering from epidemics and natural disasters, and hedged in by official suspicion. But the foundations had been laid for an intellectual tradition that profoundly shaped the Nahua engagement with the Atlantic world. From these educated Indigenous elites emerged the *ladinos* (Hispanized Mexicans), who became a vital part of the colonial world on both sides of the ocean. These so-called "good Indians," usually bilingual sons of the nobility, played critical roles as intermediaries. Moving easily between Indigenous and Spanish society, the

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[63] Millie Gimmel, "Reading Medicine in the Codex de la Cruz Badiano," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, no. 2 (2008): 169–192.
[64] León-Portilla, *Bernardino de Sahagún*, 144.
[65] Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans*, 103.
[66] Gabriela Ramos and Yanna Yannakakis, eds., *Indigenous Intellectuals: Knowledge, Power, and Colonial Culture in Mexico and the Andes* (Durham, N.C., 2014).

ladinos could be used to the advantage of the colonizers—as interpreters, negotiators, evangelists, and administrators—but their cultural flexibility also allowed them to promote their personal and family interests at the highest levels.[67] Indigenous people were active partners with the Spanish in the establishment of colonial structures: as the surviving nobility sought to shore up their position in the new political environment, they purposefully asserted a transatlantic identity that blended their ancestral entitlements as *señores naturales* (natural lords) of the region with claims to Hispanic noble privilege as ongoing military allies of the conquistadors, swift converts to Christianity, and Crown representatives in their own communities. The Spanish reliance on devolved and confederated imperial structures gave *caciques* (chiefs) material influence as intermediaries in the Atlantic world, and Indigenous *cabildos* (councils) took a lively interest in transatlantic affairs, conducting epistolary campaigns and sending embassies to the royal court to assert their rights and claim privileges.[68]

From the very first, Cortés's closest allies, the Tlaxcalans, sent regular representatives to court, and in 1535 their embassy secured for their city the title of "La Leal Ciudad de Tlaxcala" and a guarantee that it would remain perpetually self-governing under direct Crown control.[69] The descendants of Moctezuma also conducted a long-running campaign to secure the privileges they felt were their due as a result of his

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[67] Manuel Aguilar Moreno, "The *Indio Ladino* as a Cultural Mediator in the Colonial Society," *Estudios de cultura náhuatl* 33 (2002): 149–184; José Carlos de la Puente Luna, "The Many Tongues of the King: Indigenous Language Interpreters and the Making of the Spanish Empire," *Colonial Latin American Review* 23, no. 2 (2014): 143–170; Villella, *Indigenous Elites and Creole Identity in Colonial Mexico*, 38.

[68] Villella, *Indigenous Elites and Creole Identity in Colonial Mexico*, especially 72, 30, 40; Laura Matthew and Michael R. Oudjik, *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica* (Norman, Okla., 2007).

[69] AGI, Indiferente General, 422, l. 16, fol. 201r; AGI, Patronato, 275, ramo [hereafter r.] 41; Eustaquio Celestino Solís, Armando Valencia R., and Constantino Medina Lima, eds., *Actas de cabildo de Tlaxcala, 1547–1567* (Tlaxcala, 1984), 125, 128, 194, 196; Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* (Stanford, Calif., 1952), 164–169, 229–234; Taladoire, *De América a Europa*, 54–56.

"collaboration" with Cortés. In 1528, when Cortés returned from the Americas for the first time—bringing with him a considerable entourage intended to impress the emperor with the wealth and glamour of his newly acquired realms—three sons of Moctezuma traveled with him: don Martín Cortés Nezahualtecolotl, don Pedro Gutierrez Aculan Mocteuhzoma, and don Juan Covamitle.[70] Cortés's company is often mentioned as a curiosity in accounts of this period; it was a large, eye-catching group that included birds, animals, objects, entertainers, jugglers who tossed logs into the air with their feet, tumblers, conjurers, dwarfs, and hunchbacks, along with about a dozen Tlaxcalans who played a traditional ball game for the amusement of the court. An Augsburg engraver named Christoph Weiditz vividly (if not entirely accurately) captured the transatlantic visitors when he drew them for his unpublished "costume book" (see Figures 1, 4 and 5), and Charles V was apparently so delighted with the entertainers that he sent them on to Rome to entertain Pope Clement VII.[71] But what is often forgotten is that Cortés was not the only one playing diplomatic games during this trip. Of the thirty-six named individuals in this company, at least fifteen were Nahua nobles: Indigenous diplomats and ambassadors engaging directly with colonial transatlantic structures of power.[72]<FIGS. 4 AND 5 NEAR HERE>

[70] Cline, "Hernando Cortés and the Aztec Indians in Spain." See also Carina L. Johnson, *Cultural Hierarchy in Sixteenth-Century Europe: The Ottomans and Mexicans* (Cambridge, 2011), 84–88.

[71] Christoph Weiditz, *Authentic Everyday Dress of the Renaissance: All 154 Plates from the "Trachtenbuch"* (Mineola, N.Y., 1994). For more on this source, see Elizabeth Hill Boone, "Seeking Indianness: Christoph Weiditz, the Aztecs, and Feathered Amerindians," *Colonial Latin American Review* 26, no. 1 (2017): 39–61. On the trip to Rome, see Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The True History of the Conquest of New Spain*, trans. Alfred Percival Maudslay, ed. Genaro García, 5 vols. in 4 (1916; repr., Nendeln, 1967), 5: 152–153.

[72] Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin, *Chimalpahin's Conquest: A Nahua Historian's Rewriting of Francisco López de Gómara's "La conquista de México,"* ed. and trans. Susan Schroeder, Anne J. Cruz, Cristián Roa-de-la-Carrera, and David E. Tavárez (Stanford Calif., 2010), 420–421.

Moctezuma's sons, and the other high-status Nahuas, held powerful claims as descendants of hereditary rulers and *señores naturales*, and were recognized as official envoys by a Spanish Crown keen to legitimize and stabilize its fledgling American empire. Royal *cédulas* (decrees) and accounts from the House of Trade show that several of the men died in Spain; at least one, Benito Matatlaqueny, took a trip to Rome; and the Crown paid for all of the men to be provided with rich European-style clothing, food, medical care, and lodging, before agreeing to pay passage back to New Spain for those who survived. Only a few seem to have accepted this offer, as several of the senior men, including Moctezuma's sons and his brother, don Francisco, chose to stay on in Spain, and were lodged at the Monastery of San Francisco in Madrid, receiving royal posts and grants. Don Martín, perhaps because of his previous transatlantic connections, received a substantially larger stipend than the others and was given the most senior position, being made a member of the king's household in 1533.[73] When Juan died in 1535, his brothers apparently decided that it was time to return home and left for Mexico, carrying with them the knowledge and networks they had built in Europe.[74] Don Hernando de Tapia, a former counselor to Moctezuma, remained in Spain for another year with his Nahua wife and son, staying until the Crown helped him reclaim some valuable goldwork sent by his father.[75] Such voyagers were not isolated examples, or disconnected from their communities. The records of Indigenous communities make clear that Nahuas saw their

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[73] See especially AGI, Contratación, 4675B, fols. 124v–127v, 172v–175v. Don Martín's higher stipend could also have resulted from his arguably superior birth.
[74] AGI, Indiferente General, l. 4, fols. 20–20v, 36v–37; Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, *Crónica Mexicayotl*, trans. Adrián León (1949; repr., Mexico City, 1975), 151. Donald E. Chipman suggests that don Pedro had returned to Mexico at some point between 1528 and 1535, but I have not found any evidence suggesting this voyage. Chipman, *Moctezuma's Children: Aztec Royalty under Spanish Rule, 1520–1700* (Austin, Tex., 2005), 85.
[75] Johnson, *Cultural Hierarchy in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, 88.

international travelers as a valuable resource and something to be proud of, documenting them in their annals and making them part of the history of their people.[76] In 1536, it seems that the Moctezuma family's efforts at building their relationship with the Crown bore fruit, for Martín and Francisco were granted coats of arms for their father's help in the conquest of New Spain.[77]

THE 1528 GROUP IS OFTEN SEEN as remarkable, but what is perhaps most interesting about this period is how ordinary it was to see Native agents and petitioners at court. Elite men—those with the means and the motivation to travel—frequently voyaged to solicit the Crown on behalf of their families or communities, becoming part of the transatlantic networks that crisscrossed the empire.[78] Such men saw themselves as operating in an Atlantic context: they understood that structures of law and power stretched across the ocean. Their ambitions were transatlantic, even when they did not travel, but tangible connections held particularly powerful meaning; legal records show the Crown was

[76] See, for example, Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *Codex Chimalpahin: Society and Politics in Mexico Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco, Texcoco, Culhuacan, and Other Nahua Altepetl in Central Mexico*, trans. and ed. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Susan Schroeder, 2 vols. (Norman, Okla., 1997), 1: 161–165, 177; Juan Buenaventura Zapata y Mendoza, *Historia cronológica de la noble ciudad de Tlaxcala*, ed. Luis Reyes García and Andrea Martínez Baracs (Tlaxcala, 1995), 137, 151–155, 161–165, 173–179, 187–189.

[77] María Castañeda de la Paz and Miguel Luque-Talaván, "'Privileges of the 'Others': The Coats of Arms Granted to Indigenous Conquistadors," in Simon McKeown, ed., *The International Emblem: From Incunabula to the Internet—Selected Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of the Society for Emblem Studies, 25th July–1st August, 2008, Winchester College* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2010), 283–316. Don Pedro also received arms in 1539. Castañeda de la Paz and Luque-Talaván claim that Pedro's arms were not granted until the day of his death in 1570, but in fact they were approved on October 15, 1539, but sent from Spain only on September 11, 1570. Chipman, *Moctezuma's Children*, 85, 162 n. 39.

[78] Many Indigenous nobles traveled to the peninsula to petition the Crown in the sixteenth century. See, for example, Esteban Mira Caballos, "Indios nobles y caciques en la Corte real española, siglo XVI," *Americanistas* 16 (2003): 1–15.

constantly reminded in letters from petitioners that these were men "who had kissed the hands of Your Majesty."[79]

There were numerous sixteenth-century ordinances prohibiting "*indios*" from traveling across the Atlantic to seek royal favor in person—the Crown preferred that they seek redress from local institutions—but once American subjects had arrived in Spain and appealed for royal support, they were entitled to be heard, and many exploited this opportunity. By the 1560s, it was routine for Indigenous visitors to be granted financial aid from the treasury. Claiming that as *indios* they were by definition "*miserable*" (poor and wretched), a legal category granted to minors and those who were unable to seek justice for themselves, Indigenous travelers exploited their "childlike" status in European eyes. As *miserable* vassals, children of the king, they were entitled to protection, support, and legal assistance.[80] In the 1550s, don Francisco Tenamazcle, a Mexican *cacique* brought to Castile in the 1550s to account for his part in the Mixton revolt, exploited the opportunity to appeal directly to the Crown about the abuses his people had suffered. Having been betrayed and sent to Seville in irons, Tenamazcle was lucky enough to secure the services of the famous Defender of the Indians, Bartolomé de Las Casas. The Dominican helped him write a blistering condemnation of Spanish crimes against the *indios*, which concluded with a petition for "funds to buy the chief some clothing and other necessities." Despite the fact that Tenamazcle was imprisoned at Valladolid, the Crown agreed to pay a substantial sum to cover his maintenance, and to receive his

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[79] *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de América y Oceanía, sacados de los archivos del reino y muy especialmente del de Indias*, 42 vols. (Madrid, 1864–1884), 41: 91.

[80] Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans*, especially 124–133, 141–145.

petition on the "incomparable grievances and injustices" against his people.[81] As both ruler and vassal, he was entitled to live in an appropriate style and to appeal to Spanish law. The Crown stood at the apex of the legislative order, and Nahua people quickly adapted their own long traditions of litigation and recordkeeping, using Spanish formulas to promote their own agendas.[82] Indigenous people clearly recognized the importance of transatlantic networks—physical as well as intellectual, legal, and political—as vital to their success in the colonial world.[83]

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL BONDS, TOO, crossed the ocean. The limited sources make it tricky to trace the journeys of lower-status *indios* and *mestizos*, who often traveled as unnamed *criados* (dependents), but the fragments we do have hint at a rich transatlantic universe of family and household relationships. In contrast to seventeenth-century British North America, where marriage (and even sexual contact) between whites and Native women was rare, intermarriage was common in sixteenth-century Spanish America, and Indigenous women were important conduits in the early Atlantic world.[84] Spanish men rarely risked returning to Europe with Indigenous wives, but they often had informal

[81] AGI, Contaduría, 1050, fol. 420; "Documento 19. Tenamaztle: La voz de los chichimecas sobre la ética de la guerra (1555)," in Alberto Carrillo Cázares, *El debate sobre la Guerra Chichimeca, 1531–1585*, 2 vols. (Zamora, 2000), 2: 513–535; Lawrence A. Clayton, *Bartolomé de Las Casas: A Biography* (Cambridge, 2012), 438–440; Miguel León-Portilla, *Francisco Tenamaztle: Primer guerrillero de América, defensor de los derechos humanos* (Mexico City, 2005), 175–176.
[82] Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519–1810* (Stanford, Calif., 1964); Lisa Sousa and Kevin Terraciano, "The 'Original Conquest' of Oaxaca: Nahua and Mixtec Accounts of the Spanish Conquest," *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 2 (2003): 349–400.
[83] For an explanation of the significance of the Spanish Crown's complex role as legislator, enforcer, and moderator of law, see John Lynch, "The Institutional Framework of Colonial Spanish America," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24, Supplement S1 (1992): 69–81.
[84] Richard Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America* (Baltimore, 2002), 158–166; Pedro Carrasco, "Indian-Spanish Marriages in the First Century of the Colony," in Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett, eds., *Indian Women of Early Mexico* (Norman, Okla., 1999), 87–103, here 88.

relationships with Native women, and such partners were common among the enslaved people and servants in households returning to Spain.[85] In one typical case, a young girl named Beatríz was enslaved in Venezuela before later joining the household of an undistinguished Spaniard named Alonso Ponce, with whom she had a child. When Ponce returned to his village in Spain in 1539, he risked his community's condemnation by taking Beatríz and their *mestizo* daughter, Juana, with him. Beatríz died after only two years, but Juana remained in her father's care until she was close to adulthood, when her father placed her in domestic service—just as he might have a legitimate child—and returned to the Americas by himself. Juana became a maid in a Seville household in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the port city. Too young to have known her Indigenous mother, it seems likely that Juana just blended into Spanish society.[86] Mixed households were common and presumably at least sometimes loving, but numerous legal cases reveal the instability of Indigenous women's lives, and their vulnerability to household changes, especially after the death of a partner. For an unmarried Peruvian woman such as Isabel, who went to Castile with her Spanish partner, Pedro de Oropesa, and their *mestizo* son, Lorenço, the lack of legal standing, combined with the father's right to his children under *patria potestas*, made her position precarious.[87] When, after living for nine years with his Indigenous family in Spain, Pedro married a Spanish woman and then quickly died,

[85] Van Deusen, *Global Indios*, 64–85.
[86] Nancy van Deusen, "The Intimacies of Bondage: Female Indigenous Servants and Slaves and Their Spanish Masters, 1492–1555," *Journal of Women's History* 24, no. 1 (2012): 13–43, here 17–18.
[87] Robert I. Burns, ed., *Family, Commerce, and the Sea: The Worlds of Women and Merchants*, trans. Samuel Parsons Scott (Philadelphia, 2001), 960–964.

Isabel and her children found themselves abruptly declared enslaved by his new wife and had to fight, successfully, for freedom and compensation in the courts.[88]

Isabel claimed that her relationship with Pedro had been willing, but such cases are complicated by the inevitable, and often obscured, power dynamics of master/enslaver and servant/enslaved person relationships. Exploitation, sexual assault, and other forms of abuse were endemic, but affective ties stretched across the Atlantic, and Spaniards often went to considerable lengths to retain the Indigenous members of their household when they sailed home.[89] In 1540, Luis de la Serna pleaded on behalf of his distraught five-year-old granddaughter, Maria de la Cerda, to be reunited with Elena, an "*india*" servant who had raised her, and who had been taken away after traveling to Spain without a license.[90] *Mestizo* children—often legitimized by their fathers—appear frequently in the records of Atlantic travel, often tragically ripped away from Indigenous mothers when Spanish fathers exerted their rights under *patria potestas* and wished to send their children "home."[91] The Crown actively encouraged the migration (and associated indoctrination) of *mestizo* offspring, who were permitted to travel to the peninsula with their Spanish parent without a license after 1524.[92]

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[88] Archivo de la Real Chancellería, de Valladolid, Registro de Ejecutorias, caja 1192, 44; van Deusen, *Global Indios*, 95–96.

[89] On abuses, see, for example, AGI, Indiferente General, 1963, l. 4, fol. 27; AGI, Justicia, 1162, no. 6, r. 2.

[90] AGI, Indiferente General, 1963, l. 7, fols. 217v–218r. Such relationships were not uncommon. For example, in 1536, another *india*, Juana, brought a young Spanish girl to her family in Spain; AGI, Indiferente General, 1962, l. 5, fols. 44r–44v.

[91] Van Deusen, "The Intimacies of Bondage," 24–26.

[92] *Recopilación de las Leyes de las Indias* (Madrid, 1680), book 6, título 1, ley 8. At least fifteen licenses were granted to bring mestizo children to the peninsula in the period 1515–1524. Esteban Mira Caballos, *Las Antillas Mayores, 1492–1550: Ensayos y documentos* (Madrid, 2000), 292. See also Juan Gil, "Los primeros mestizos indios en España: Una voz ausente," in Berta Ares Queija and Serge Gruzinski, eds., *Entre dos mundos: Fronteras culturales y agentes mediadores* (Seville, 1997), 15–36.

There is no way to be sure how many Indigenous people—free or enslaved—eventually settled in Iberia, but it is clear that they were numerous. Witnesses in a 1558 lawsuit were asked if they had seen any *mestizos*, and they affirmed unanimously that they knew men who were both "of the Indies and of Spain."[93] People of Indigenous descent must have been an everyday sight in the peninsula; Martín Cortés, son of the conquistador Hernando and his Nahua translator Malintzin, accompanied his father to Spain in 1528, where he became firmly established in Spanish society: legitimized by the pope, a knight of the Order of Santiago, and a page in the royal household. While Martín's family renown certainly smoothed his path through the Indigenous Atlantic, his experience as a young man of Indigenous descent crossing (and later recrossing) the ocean in search of his fortune was not unusual.[94]

Interpersonal bonds not only built an Indigenous Atlantic world in emotional and social terms, but also created material and cultural networks. Intermarriage, coupled with the Indigenous domination of domestic service and childcare, meant that Hispanic children in the Americas were often raised in an environment dominated by Native women, learning their preferences, behaviors, and beliefs.[95] Surrounded by Indigenous people and relying on their domestic labor, Europeans learned Indigenous tastes and practices, creating a "material dependence on Indians." The swift adoption of smoking and chocolate, for example, shows the circulation of Indigenous preferences around the

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[93] Mira Caballos, *Indios y mestizos americanos en la España del siglo XVI*, 93.

[94] Anna Lanyon, *The New World of Martín Cortés* (Crow's Nest, N.S.W., 2003). Mestizo children were undoubtedly part of the "Indigenous" Atlantic, but fell into rather different legal and social categories, depending on their social status. For more, see, for example, Monique Alaperrine-Bouyer, "Cruzar el océano: Lo que revelan los viajes a España de los mestizos peruanos en la segunda parte del siglo XVI," *Historica* 37, no. 2 (2013): 7–58.

[95] See, for example, Nancy M. Farriss, *Maya Society under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton, N.J., 1984), 112.

Atlantic basin, driven largely by Native production and trade in this period, for Europeans did not recognize the economic potential of tobacco until after the 1590s.[96] The Atlantic world was co-produced from its very inception: a shared space, but also a distinctively Indigenous universe.

IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE were part of the Atlantic; as a migrant group, they were a vital part of the networks that forged both European and American culture in this period, shaping political policies, molding families and their fortunes, and influencing the diffusion of objects, commodities, culture, and ideas.[97] But we must take care not to be too effusive in painting this vivid cosmopolitan melting pot, for the vast majority of Indigenous people were not voluntary participants in this lively exchange. From the moment of first encounter, Native Americans were seen by Europeans as a commodity to be exploited. On his first voyage alone, Columbus kidnapped around two dozen Taínos, setting a precedent for numerous opportunists and slave raiders who followed.[98] Yet, although the enslavement of Americans (particularly within their own borders) has increasingly become part of the scholarly understanding of the abuse of Indigenous peoples, it rarely features in global narratives or discussions of the

[96] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures*, 102–106, quote from 87.
[97] One wonders how a study of Native musicians at the papal court might change our understanding of the introduction of American music to Europe. For example, the famous bass rhythmic tune the *ciaconna* is first mentioned in Spanish literature as an Amerindian dance, the *chacona*, at the turn of the seventeenth century, and it first appears in the Italian music of Girolamo Montesardo in 1606. This Indigenous musical form is of "obscurely transatlantic" origin, and its transmission is usually credited to missionary networks. Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), 102. See also Thomas Walker, "Ciaccona and Passacaglia: Remarks on Their Origin and Early History," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 21, no. 3 (1968): 300–320.
[98] Christopher Columbus, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus (During His First Voyage, 1492–93), and Documents Relating the Voyages of John Cabot and Gaspar Corte Real*, ed. Clements R. Markham (1893; repr., Cambridge, 2010), 74–75.

transatlantic slave trade.[99] Nor does the enslavement of close to a million Mexicans and other Central Americans before 1600 seem to have permeated the wider historical or popular consciousness of slavery.[100] Yet Nancy van Deusen conservatively estimates that "at least 650,000 indigenous people were enslaved and *forced to relocate to foreign lands* throughout the inter-American and transatlantic Iberian world" during the sixteenth century.[101] This rivals the estimated 300,000 Africans who suffered the horrors of the Middle Passage in the same period, around 2 percent of the total victims of the infamous Triangle Trade.[102] These figures do not capture the harrowing reality of enslavement, but they do allow us to imagine the sixteenth century a little differently.

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[99] Joyce E. Chaplin pithily summarizes the state of the field: "Indian slavery has long been without a coherent narrative, yet the narrative of American history is incomplete without the story of Indian slavery." Chaplin, "Enslavement of Indians in Early America: Captivity without the Narrative," in Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas, eds., *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* (Baltimore 2005), 45–70, here 70. Important works on Indigenous slavery include Carlos Esteban Deive, *La Española y la esclavitud del indio* (Santo Domingo, 1995); Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2015); Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670–1717* (New Haven, Conn., 2002); Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (New York, 2016); Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2012); William L. Sherman, *Forced Native Labor in Sixteenth-Century Central America* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1979); Silvio Zavala, *Los esclavos indios en Nueva España* (Mexico City, 1968); and *Native American Slavery in the Seventeenth Century*, Special Issue, *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (2017). Van Deusen's outstanding study of Indigenous struggles for freedom from enslavement is again an exception, which frames Castilian communities explicitly as "globalized" sites, parts of an "indioscape" that was "transimperially present." *Global Indios*, quotes 36, 12.

[100] Andrés Reséndez estimates that there were some 2.4–4.9 million Native Americans enslaved in total between 1492 and 1900, including up to 900,000 from Mexico and Central America in 1492–1600. *The Other Slavery*, 324. David Eltis and David Richardson, eds., *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven, Conn., 2010), magnificently illuminates one of the greatest tragedies in human history, but its total omission of Indigenous Americans is a powerful symbol of the wider silence on this issue.

[101] Van Deusen, *Global Indios*, 2, emphasis added. Jace Weaver estimates that a similar figure of approximately 600,000 Indigenous enslaved people experienced "blue water transshipment" to the east (including to the Caribbean), but I have seen nothing in my research to suggest so high a figure for oceanic transportation specifically, and Weaver provides no footnotes for his claim, making it impossible to verify. Weaver, *The Red Atlantic*, 17–18, 18 n. 31. What is clear is that hundreds of thousands of Indigenous Americans were kidnapped and transported during the sixteenth century.

[102] Though this is doubtless a significant underestimate, the Slave Voyages database shows 277,505 embarked enslaved people in 1501–1600. http://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates.

Despite royal decrees against Indigenous slavery, Americans were regularly shipped to Europe to serve in bondage as enslaved people, servants, and that most problematic and pernicious of categories, *naboría*: neither enslaved nor free, a state of permanent bondage against which the subject had very little legal recourse.[103] As the earliest slaving ships traveled west, bearing captive Africans to a life of appalling bondage in the Americas, so their cargo on the return journey would often have been kidnapped and subjected Indigenous people, who would join the thousands of enslaved people of African descent already living in Seville. Catastrophic population loss, combined with increasingly stringent prohibitions on American slavery, means that the Indigenous Atlantic has not left us the same powerful human legacy as the "Black Atlantic," which resulted from the forcible transportation of millions of Africans and people of African descent.[104] But when we recognize records of Indigenous shipment and sale and scrutinize the legal and baptismal records, it becomes clear that "*indios*" formed a significant minority in Spain during the sixteenth century, particularly in regions

[103] Van Deusen, *Global Indios*, especially 114–118; Esteban Mira Caballos, "Indios americanos en el Reino de Castilla, 1492–1550," *Temas americanistas*, no. 14 (1998): 1–24, here 2–3. Despite a genuine desire to free illegally enslaved "*indios*," Spanish prohibitions of slavery were patchy, often contradictory, and difficult to enforce. On Indigenous slavery in the peninsula, see, for example, Juana Gil-Bermejo García, "Indigenas americanos en Andalucía," in José Jesús Hernández Palomo, and Bibiano Torres Ramírez, eds., *Andalucía y América en el siglo XVI* (Madrid, 1983), 535–555; Esteban Mira Caballos, "De esclavos a siervos: Amerindios en España tras las Leyes Nuevas de 1542," *Revista de historia de América*, no. 140 (2009): 95–109; Alfonso Franco Silva, "El indígena americano en el mercado de esclavos de Sevilla (1500–1525)," *Gades*, no. 1 (1978): 25–36. The Portuguese, much less reticent than the Spanish, frequently granted contracts for Indigenous enslavement. One route alone saw more than 3,000 people forcibly transported to Europe over fifteen years from the mid-1530s. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans*, chap. 2.

[104] Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*; Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Philadelphia, 1992); James Walvin, *Making the Black Atlantic: Britain and the African Diaspora* (London, 2000).

closely linked to the Atlantic networks, especially Seville, but also Extremadura and the west of Andalucia.[105]

In contrast to the African trade with the Americas, the majority of enslaved people in Europe were women and children, brought specifically for domestic service and chosen for their greater adaptability, vulnerability, and sexual availability.[106] After the New Laws of 1542 confirmed that the enslavement of Spanish vassals was illegal, hundreds of Indigenous people from across Spain appear in the archives appealing for their freedom.[107] In a rare case of families being transported together, a court record from June 12, 1543, shows the emancipation of the Mexicans Andrés and Magdalena—a couple who had somehow miraculously managed to keep their three-year-old daughter, Juanica, with them—and Alvarico, whose wife, Teresa, had died on the voyage.[108] Such deaths were frequent in the early years, when enslaved people suffered not only from the usual issues of overcrowding and poor nutrition, but also from their lack of immunity to European diseases. Suicide was common, as Native people, separated from families and homelands, threw themselves overboard in despair.[109] The horrors of the Middle Passage suffered by enslaved Africans shipped to the west to serve on distant plantations—the crammed ships, inhumane conditions, carelessly discarded corpses, indignity, and despair—were shared by Native Americans transported east to work among Europeans, and in their homes.

[105] John Hemming, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (London, 1978), 151–152.
[106] Reséndez, *The Other Slavery*, 50–51.
[107] See, for example, AGI, Justicia, 741, no. 3; 908, no. 1; 1178, no. 4; and 1162, no. 6, r. 2.
[108] AGI, Justicia, 741, no. 3.
[109] Accounts include a 1544 report of mothers throwing themselves into the sea in despair at their separation from small children. Mira Caballos, *Indios y mestizos americanos en la España del siglo XVI*, 62–66.

Legal records, many of which have been sensitively disentangled by Nancy van Deusen, show the complex, varied, and often horrifying experiences of Indigenous people in the Atlantic world.[110] Most fully integrated into Spanish society, learning the language and fulfilling their Christian obligations to confess and take communion. Enslaved people seized as children frequently forgot their native tongue, while older travelers appeared in court understanding questions in Nahuatl but responding in Spanish. Unsurprisingly, many enslaved people and servants formed connections with other Indigenous people in the peninsula, marrying and befriending those who had shared their experiences.[111] Some freed people fought to retain their identity and return to the Americas, taking up the Crown's offer to pay their passage home after they were liberated. Others, having been kidnapped and often branded as children, had little memory of their families and homelands. Formerly enslaved people often chose to continue paid work for their masters after being freed, creating a Native diaspora, which eventually seems to have largely merged into the peninsula's blended Moorish and Spanish population.[112] In the faint tracks of these travelers, we can find traces of diasporic networks and identities emerging, as Indigenous people in Europe struggled to cope with their dislocation and to retain emotional bonds with their homelands while trying to find a place within European and imperial culture.

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[110] Van Deusen, *Global Indios*.

[111] Van Deusen has even suggested that an Indigenous Atlantic patois may have developed, but the evidence is ambiguous. Ibid., 177–180.

[112] Esteban Mira Caballos, "Indios y mestizos en la España moderna: Estado de la cuestión," *Boletín americanista*, no. 57 (2007): 179–198.

HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH WE CAN trace the journeys of Native Americans across the Atlantic, and even sometimes follow in their footsteps, it is extraordinarily difficult to view this world through their eyes, as there are very few documents that permit us to access their emotions or impressions directly. This is a perennial problem with transatlantic Indigenous histories—the principal sources are usually the records of Europeans who either observed, accompanied, kidnapped, or enslaved the Native Americans in question. But among the *Cantares Mexicanos*, the rich collection of Nahuatl songs preserved in the National Library in Mexico City, we are offered the opportunity to open a small window onto the Indigenous view of the transatlantic world. In a series of *cantos* layered with aquatic imagery, an *atequilizcuicatl*, or "Water-Pouring Song," mingles memories of Atlantic voyagers with Christian and Nahua ideas of power, afterlife, and paradise. Collected in the mid-sixteenth century, the *cantares* are the product of an ancient lyrical tradition, and use Indigenous modes of expression to grapple with the disjunctures and traumas of the new colonial environment.[113] These compositions blended established formats with current affairs, communicating and coping with the challenges of the new, and creating an Indigenous worldview that was framed in transatlantic terms. In the first part of the "Water-Pouring Song," we hear of the meeting between Cortés and Moctezuma, and of the shattering defeat of Tenochtitlan. The poem then discusses a dangerous ocean crossing, and finally, beyond the "jade waters," the Mexicans find themselves at the Spanish court (presumably of Charles V). Vivid images of flowers and pouring water dominate much of the *canto*—these are

[113] For an excellent (if now slightly dated) starting point to the vast wealth of research on the *cantares*, see John Bierhorst, trans. and ed., *Cantares mexicanos: Songs of the Aztecs* (Stanford, Calif., 1985), 537–552.

metaphors for the warrior captives of the Aztec world, and for the nourishing of the earth with blood. A short excerpt can give a sense of the song's expressive blending of Christian, Nahua, and imperial ideas into a redolent image of transatlantic travel.

> The wind now rises, howling and moaning. Thus does the ocean seethe
> and the ship creaks its way along.
> Verily the wonders of God wash over us. We behold massive waves.
> Flowers rain gently down, and the ship creaks its way along.[114]
> O, friends! Marvel here in the midst of the water! You're slicing through it, Don
> Martín! The ocean crashes in waves against us . . .
> We are already wanted here. Long is the house of the Emperor; let its waters flow
> [lit. appear]!
> He is respected. Thus does God already see him.
> Let us call out to the Only God. Perhaps in that way—for a single day
> by his side, in his presence—we [will be] his vassals.
> We go there to the sea to admire things, just we Mexicah. There the Emperor
> says goodbye, telling us, "Go see the Holy Father."
> ohuaya ohuaya [ecstatic vocables, which appear at the end of sections]
> He has already said, "Perhaps what I need is gold. May all bow down. Verily
> cry out [pl.] to the celestial one, God.
> For the same reason, he sends us off to Rome. He told us that:
> "Go see the Holy Father."
> In the Pope's long house, where stands the multi-hued crypt,
> scripture writ with gold brings us dawning light.[115]
> Conches make things stir. God's word is guarded there where it stands. The
> trogon.
> Arrayed. Closed.[116] It brings us dawning light.
> Harken unto it, you princes. It rests here beside us in this very place, this place
> like the House of God in Rome where the Pope keeps watch over all.[117]

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[114] "Flowers rain gently down" is perhaps a metaphor for drizzle or spray. An alternative reading would be something like "rain falls gently like petals."
[115] Literally "makes us visible," with the same verb used for "dawning."
[116] Or "final."
[117] I am indebted to David Bowles, who is working on a new translation of the *Cantares mexicanos*, for sharing with me his excellent rendering of these excerpts from Canto LXVIII, stanzas F and I. Alternative translations are available in Bierhorst, *Cantares mexicanos*, "LXVIII: Water-pouring song," 326–341; and Miguel León-Portilla, *Cantares mexicanos*, vol. 2, book 2 (Mexico City, 2011), "LXIX: Atequilizcuicatl/Canto de riego," 828–885, http://www.historicas.unam.mx/publicaciones/publicadigital/libros/cantares/cm03/13_LXIX%20Canto%20de%20riego.pdf. Classical Nahuatl is an extraordinarily complex polysynthetic and agglutinative language, which makes it hard to provide a definitive rendering, but Bowles's work is extremely precise and avoids the problematic "ghost song" tradition that pervades Bierhorst's translation. James Lockhart, "Care, Ingenuity, and Irresponsibility: The Bierhorst Edition of the *Cantares Mexicanos*," in Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards: Postconquest Central Mexican Philology and History* (Stanford, Calif., 1991), 141–157.

It is rarely wise to read poetry too literally, but actual experiences of the Atlantic seem to be overlaid here with spiritual allusions and Nahua conceptions of heaven.[118] The narrators, finding themselves in the "house of the Emperor," "call out to the Only God" (an Indigenous conception of the monotheistic Christian God). There is an ambiguity in the phrasing here that blurs the distinction between the emperor and God himself—it is in calling to God that the "vassals" are able to spend "a single day by his side, in his presence." Whose presence exactly is not made clear, and there is a sense of the inextricability of religious and imperial power. The singers are then sent to Rome, to "see the Holy Father," with the striking (and possibly sarcastic) suggestion that "gold" is linked to the glory of God. Once they reach the pope's "multi-hued crypt," an expressive and syncretic image of the great basilica ("crypt" or "cavern," *oztotl*, has sacred overtones in Nahua culture, with links to origins, the womb, and the afterlife), the "scripture writ with gold brings us dawning light." This fabulously evocative phrase conjures up at once both the glories of Christianity and the splendor of the illuminated books that enclosed it. Here, in the House of God, the pope keeps watch, heralded by conch trumpets, and watched over by the "trogon"—the colorful quetzal, a bird whose precious feathers carried sacred significance for the Nahua. There is a fascinating *mestizaje* of religious and imperial ideologies in this song. The emperor is explicitly linked not only with power and religion, but also with gold. The emperor's authority is unambiguously related to Rome, and the house of the pope is mingled with heaven itself.[119] In the earlier stanzas, we also hear that the "tree of sustenance" is beyond the

[118] Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (New York, 2002), 163.
[119] Bierhorst, *Cantares mexicanos*, 341.

"seething ocean." Not only the pope and the emperor, but also the suckling tree, from which all Aztec babies were born, were to be found on the far side of the Atlantic. Here we see memories of transatlantic experience merging with Mesoamerican ideologies and missionary teachings, as the Indigenous people blended Nahua ideas of birth and the afterlife with Christian conceptions of heaven, and fused imperial, papal, and heavenly authority into a shared source of power.

By the mid-sixteenth century, when this *canto* was likely composed, several groups of Nahua nobles had visited Spain, but the allusion to the travelers being sent to Rome by the emperor makes it probable that it concerns the 1528 delegation. Serge Gruzinski rejects the connection of this song to transatlantic travel as "too simple," but his contention is based at least partly on "the absence of Spaniards on the ship," which seems an overly literal reading of the mere fact that no Europeans happen to be mentioned. In fact, Gruzinski's reading of the text as a metaphorical pilgrimage or journey to paradise alluding to specific Christian and European literary forms is perfectly compatible with the idea that it also reflects specific recollections of transatlantic experience.[120] By the time the song was recorded, many Indigenous voyagers had made the round trip to Europe. At least three specific voyagers named Martín might have been in the mind of the anonymous composer: Moctezuma's son, who reaped the rewards of petitioning the Crown; Malintzin and Cortés's son, who returned to Mexico in 1562, where he became a prominent player in local political intrigues; and Martín Ecatzin, a nobleman who, according to the Annals of Tlatelolco, spent five years in Spain in the

[120] Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind*, 152–153, quotes from 153.

1520s.[121] Given that the song is of Mexica origin, the reference is most likely to don Martín Cortés Nezahualtecolotl, who crossed the Atlantic repeatedly, and—as one of the last surviving sons of Moctezuma—was entangled in Nahua histories and politics.[122] But whether the *canto* references a specific transatlantic journey, a more complex bundle of associations, or both, it is clear that the Atlantic was a vivid and topical realm in the Indigenous imagination.

This "Water-Pouring Song" offers unique insight into the ways in which individual experiences of the Atlantic infiltrated the Indigenous view of the world. For the Aztecs, the ocean remained a place of mystery and danger, but it was no longer a largely supernatural space. Thanks to their transatlantic experiences, it was transformed into a theater of activity, a physical barrier that could be crossed rather than a metaphysical boundary to their experience. (Although one does wonder what they made of the fact that the "water which reaches the heavens" was now, quite literally, a way to reach "heaven" in Rome.) But despite this tangible impression of the Atlantic, for most Native Americans, Europe presumably remained as abstract and exotic a concept as the turquoise walls that had previously encircled the disc of the earth. Yet every Indigenous person would have lost family members and friends to transatlantic influences—to slavery, disease, or violence—and the experiences of transatlantic voyagers were so well

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[121] James Lockhart, *We People Here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico* (Eugene, Ore., 2004), 154–155. In fact, although this transatlantic voyage is widely reported, it seems that he may rather have accidentally accompanied Cortés on his 1524 expedition to Honduras. Nonetheless, Martín certainly seems to have undertaken an extended sea passage, which was remembered in Indigenous accounts.

[122] For an introduction to the various Martíns, see Camilla Townsend's excellent new history of the Mexica, *Fifth Sun: A New History of the Aztecs* (Oxford, 2019), which shows them as a force before and after the Spanish invasion (155–163).

known that people sang about them in the streets. The Indigenous Atlantic world was an everyday reality.

WHEN WE RECOGNIZE THE PRESENCE of thousands of Indigenous Americans in Europe from as early as the 1490s, it becomes impossible to dismiss them as insignificant oddities. As diplomats, travelers, entertainers, traders, and, sadly, most often as enslaved people, Native Americans became integrated into and influenced European culture, and also carried it home to the Americas. Returned voyagers added their voices to those of colonists in creating Indigenous understandings of their new rulers; sometimes corroborating but at other times contradicting, they were independent agents of cultural exchange. It is not enough to see these travelers as cultural artifacts; they were also go-betweens, official and unofficial mediators between cultures and channels of knowledge between worlds. The Indigenous Atlantic is a project of recovery: filling a gap in our knowledge and reintegrating Native American history into a world that has often been Euro- and sometimes Afrocentric in its perspective. But it is more than that: the Indigenous Atlantic has the potential to transform our understanding of that world—reshaping our view of the way that global networks developed, destabilizing our assumptions about slavery, decentering our focus, and redrawing our mental picture of early modern European society.

This is not to idealize the Atlantic as an Indigenous space. Agency is meaningless if it is divorced from understandings of oppression.[123] Indigenous people were exploited

[123] On the importance of engaging meaningfully with the concept of "agency," see Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 113–124.

and enslaved in the Atlantic; their homelands became European "borderlands," and transatlantic exchange presaged devastating depopulation, catastrophic wars, and centuries of political, economic, and cultural oppression, which continue today.[124] For Native Americans, one wonders whether "entangled history" suggests less a colorful tapestry than a chain caught around the ankle.[125] But even though the sixteenth-century Atlantic was not an equal place, it was a shared one, where Indigenous people held tangible and mobile influence in the turbulent waters of early empire. For Native people, the ocean could be an opportunity, a pathway, a marketplace, a mystery, an adventure, and a tragedy. As the experiences of the Aztecs remind us, there were many "Indigenous Atlantics," and together they transform our understanding of the early Atlantic world.

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[124] I am indebted to Claudio Saunt for provoking this thought when he wrote that for Indigenous Americans, "middle grounds and borderlands were simply homelands." "'Our Indians,'" 61.
[125] For a discussion of "entangled histories," see "Entangled Empires in the Atlantic World," *AHR* Forum, *American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (June 2007): 710–799.

FIGURE 1: Supposedly the only Aztec woman to accompany Cortés to court in 1528, from Christoph Weiditz's *Trachtenbuch*. This image is typical of the slippery sources for such transatlantic travelers as her appearance and dress (unlike that of the ballplayers and jugglers) are not typical of Indigenous Mexico, leaving us wondering whether she – or only her appearance – has been imagined. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Trachtenbuch_des_Christoph_Weiditz#/media/File:Weiditz_Trachtenbuch_001.jpg [CC-PD-Mark].

FIGURE 2: Tezcatlipoca tempts the goddess Cipactli to earth by letting her eat his foot. From the Pre-Columbian *Codex Fejérváry-Meyer*. https://www.flickr.com/photos/bibliodyssey/3692272818/sizes/o/ [CC BY 2.0].

FIGURE 3: The Aztecs depart from Aztlan (on the left). *Codex Boturini* (ca. 1530–1541), Museo Nacional de Antropología de México. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tira-1.jpg [CC-PD-MARK].

FIGURE 4: Indigenous Mexicans from Cortés's company juggling logs at court. From the *Trachtenbuch* of Christoph Weiditz. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Weiditz_Trachtenbuch_008-009.jpg [CC-PD-Mark].

FIGURE 4: Tlaxcalans from Cortés's company playing the Mesoamerican ball game at Court, from the *Trachtenbuch* of Christoph Weiditz. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Weiditz_Trachtenbuch_010-011.jpg [CC-PD-Mark].