



# Native Mesoamerican Settlers of Colonial New Mexico: Identity, Memory, Forgetting

Danna Levin Rojo

**Thursday, September 29 • 2:00 PM MT**  
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Scholars have long debated the participation of Tlaxcalan Natives in the Spanish conquest and colonization of New Mexico, based on evidence concerning the Barrio de Analco de San Miguel, in Santa Fe, supposedly established by Tlaxcalan allies in 1609-1610. This presentation will discuss the possible presence of Otomís and other Mesoamerican Natives as frontier settlers in 17th to 18th century New Mexico, and the traces they may have left in the cultural heritage of several Indo-Hispano communities located north of Santa Fe. A piece of possibly important evidence for this hypothesis is the set of drawings that decorate the underside of the choir-loft of the chapel of San José de Gracia de las Trampas, which contain designs that resemble closely certain symbols typical of the Otomí syncretic Christian iconography used in 17th and 18th century chapels in the Mexican states of Hidalgo and Querétaro. Because colonial documents rarely recorded the provenance and ethnicities of non-Spanish members of colonizing parties, Otomí presence is very difficult to demonstrate. However, my research has explored other sorts of indirect evidence that I will present, together with a general reflection on what indigenous groups, local or Mexican, are generally considered part of the New Mexico Hispano cultural heritage, why some of them -like the tlaxcallans- are acknowledged and others are not.

*Tenured professor-researcher at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco in Mexico City, Dr. Danna Levin is now developing research as a visiting faculty at the Latin American and Iberian Institute (UNM). She holds a BA degree in History from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of London, U.K.*



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