

COLONIAL HISTORY OF SALAMÁ BAJA VERAPAZ

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Introduction

The research held in the township of Salamá, Baja Verapaz, is specifically about the colonial period, considering as background some pre-Hispanic settlements known. To carry out the entire investigative process, it was necessary to make a thorough inspection of all the documents existing in the General Archive of Central America, as the main source of this writing, for which approximately one hundred and twenty-five files were consulted, of which fifty-three are cited in the content. Papers by colonial chroniclers and authors who have written in relation to the time mentioned were examined. Research techniques of Microhistory and Ethnohistory were used to elaborate this work.

The study began considering the first pre-Hispanic settlements that existed in the place and surrounding geographical points: Salamá, Rabinal, and Cubulco basin, territories where archaeological vestiges have been found, of which it was determined that there were population sites since the preclassic period. Salamá were one of the first people to form part of the region called by Spaniards “Verapaz”, a region with a special development y different from other regions conquered through force of arms, whereof it was essential to investigate from the origins, as it was carried out in the Peaceful Conquer of Verapaz, since all the area has the same historic development, it was not possible to decouple the studied township from the complete area. After explaining both latter aspects, the collection of information was made from different

documents and sources to determine the township foundation, establishing that it was founded after the implementation of new laws in 1542.

Subsequently, the Microhistory was reconstructed from 16th century to 1821. The majority of documents of the General Archive of Centro America projected us data related with land conflicts, of which it can be said that, since earlier and later colonial periods, had serious problems due to lack of ejido lands, which got so much worse in the 18th century when the population increased, this caused alimentary difficulties and shortage of money for the payment of attributes.

The name

The name of Salamá comes from the word *Tz'alam'ha*, which means *River of boards* or *Boards over the water* (Municipalidad de Salamá, 2012). According to Chavarría (1936), the name is originally Mexican and derives from *Salam* which means *tapesco* to put the *metate*, and *ja* which means water. The author Juan de Pineda (cited by Universidad del Valle, 2007) claims that, referring to Salamá, such name means *Board of Water*, the author relates it with the river that flows across the town. As regards to the name, Gall (1979) notes that Salamá means *board of water*, because the town is near the river.

Pre-Hispanic period

According to research made by Velásquez, Matheny and Bailey (2009), about complex ceramics from highlands, which is part of Salamá, they provide information to determine that during preclassic period (900-500 BC) in the departments of Baja Verapaz, Sacatepéquez, Guatemala, and Chalchuapa in El Salvador, there were links of commercial and sociopolitical exchange between different groups who lived in the area.

Researchers (Velásquez and others, 2009) maintain the hypothesis that due to the properties of the ceramics found in Salamá and other places, which are quite similar to Olmec, it may exist pre-Hispanic settlements that hasn't reached a complex level of social organization, but still had commercial relations and subsequently it established at those Olmec elite commercial places, who seek the control of the resources. Among the locations are: El Portón and Guaytán.

According to Lina Barrios (1996) the space that includes Salamá, Cubulco, Rabinal, and San Jerónimo, there was pre-Hispanic settlement. Specially in Salamá, the author considers that, since preclassic period there were population settlements, so the constructions on plains were one of the features of the sites. The ethnic groups who inhabited in this segment

were: Poqomchí, Rab'inaleb', Aq'aab', and K'iché, who did not have a settled place of residence, instead they moved towards different places due to war.

In the case of Salamá, Barrios (1996) claims that, there were six locations of Preclassic period. For the Classic period, the poqomchí occupied the area of Baja Verapaz and the tendency of constructions in plains continued in Cubulco, Rabinal, and Salamá, in that period. In the basin of Salamá four locations of populations were located (Bertrand, 1986; Arnaud, 1993; cited by Barrios, 1996).

In the postclassic period, there were many movements between populations, in such a way that the Rab'inaleb', who belonged to the K'iché Kingdom, settled in the mountain range of Cubulco and displaced to the Poqomchí people, then they advanced towards the basins of Cubulco, Rabinal, and Salamá. It is considered that in those last five centuries of the Postclassic period, the Rab'inaleb' dominated the territory mentioned above (Breton, 1943; cited by Barrios, 1996) From the displaced groups of Poqomchí it is believed that some of them emigrated to the West and others to the East.

During the Postclassic period, the inhabitants of the area were located on top of the hills, on the basins of

Cubulco, Rabinal, and Salamá, probably the reasons were a defensive response in case of war, since the Rab'inaleb' and the Aq'aab' had a great warrior tradition. Also, it is probably that the abandonment of the valleys was because of the soil infertility, plus the demographic growth. In the same period, it is believed that twenty-one population sites have existed in the Salamá basin (Arnaud, 1993; cited by Barrios, 1996).

In one of the lands extents permitted by Tomás Ignacio De Arana, a land judge in 1738, it mentions that in the location known as *Chiquik*, located to the west of Salamá, there were some *old buildings*. During the Colonial period, when it comes to buildings and old houses, they are referring to pre-Hispanic populations, and its probably that the site has been one of the indigenous settlements that was inhabited when the Spaniards, then the people can be moved to a reduction in Salamá after 1542 or instead, it may have been uninhabited when the Hispanics invaded the territory.

As mentioned before, in the surroundings of Salamá existed pre-Hispanic populations, as stated in a document of the General Archive of Central America (A3.30 E.37862 L. 2578 F. 5.v.) which it mentions one of the sites that existed in 1789, the land

measurer *Pablo Riveiro* casually found one of the sites where they had *old buildings*. The document corresponds to measure of a land located in San Jerónimo, a country estate property of religious of Santo Domingo. The measurer clearly let us observe in the manuscript that there was not only this site, instead there were others of which he was aware. [...] *back up again with a lot of effort to the five cuerda we arrive to one of many old buildings that were in these hills [...]*

Ricardo Terga (1988: 15), was convinced that in those chosen locations for reductions that took place on the colonial period, pre-Hispanic populations had previously existed, so it is not surprise that this happened in Salamá (Terga, 1988: 15).

In some cases, the Indians town reductions, initiated by the Spaniards, who received assent from the older indigenous people, which were ceremonial centers or fortress cities that the Spaniards had a vested interest in ending and destroying. It can ensure that next to each current town of Guatemala is the ancient ceremonial center or fortress city of the pre-Hispanic period.

Colonial Period

The peaceful conquer of Verapaz.

To understand how the history of Salamá developed from its beginnings it is necessary to understand the dynamic that was generated, since before the pacification of the territory known as *Tezulutlán* by the natives and named *land of war* by the Spaniards, area that was later named *Verapaz* by the Dominican friars.

First, it should be considered that the Spanish conquerors tried to subdue the natives of *Tezulutlán* on three occasions, but they did not succeed, so they gave it the name of *land of war* (Bossú, 1990). According to Piel (1989), the unsuccessful Spanish invasions to this region began in 1530, specifically towards Cobán, Chamá, and Rabinal.

Miguel De Mendizábal (1943), alludes to the fact that Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas wanted Christianization by conviction, not by violence, as had been done until before 1537, which was when he proposed the pacification of the territory known as *Tezulutlán*. The Spanish conquerors did not conceive the idea and mocked the friar, predicting all kinds of failures, because the success of the company prevented the plunder, rape, and slavery of the natives.

Michel Bertrand (1989), disagrees with the approach of De Mendizábal (1943) and asserts that what happened was that in the first phase of colonization, the indigenous people were at the mercy of the Spaniards, who exploited them excessively, which resulted in the flight of the natives and the decrease of the population, therefore the idea of de Las Casas was to seek a separate development, that is, to isolate the native population (outside the Spanish domain), so as not to destroy the workforce. In addition, the conquerors rejected any idea of work and therefore exploited the indigenous to the extreme.

The company of conquest without war proposed by de las Casas pretended that the religious entered the territory to preach the gospel and be received voluntarily by the natives, besides convincing them to accept the king of Spain as its monarch, without depriving them of their property or freedom, but if they did not accept it, then one of the solutions proposed by Francisco de Paula (1943), was to build fortresses in the places conquered until 1540, to prevent communication between populations.

The agreement that authorized the Dominicans the entry and Christianization of the geographical area, was signed by Alonso De

Maldonado and de Las Casas on May 2nd of 1537, in which the entry of Spaniards to the region was prohibited for five years after the entry of the religious (De Mendizábal, 1943). The agreement gave the Dominicans the exclusivity of penetration of the gospel in the aforementioned territory (Piel, 1989).

It should be noted that in 1937 Bishop Francisco Marroquín proposed the idea of building reductions to organize indigenous peoples, but to allow the King of Spain the shared administration of the peoples to the natives was indispensable as a basic condition the Pope's opinion regarding the reasoning of the indigenous (Michel Bertrand, 1989:145).

The realization of such conception, the organization of indigenous peoples, can be understood only in a particular intellectual climate: that of the papal decision of 1537, recognizing that the indigenous were beings endowed with reason. This was the precondition for allowing them administrative autonomy.

In this sense, it can be said that there was a discussion in Europe regarding the human condition of the indigenous people, which is the reason why the recognition of the Pope was needed to concentrate the populations and therefore, allow them a moderate

administration of the people. After signing the above agreement, the friars had to prepare very well for the peaceful conquest, in addition to having patience to achieve their objectives, according to Jan De Vos (1988), the planning and execution of missionary work, took approximately five years (1538 to 1543).

The region was submitted as a work of evangelizing colonization and according to Piel (1989), the raid of the priests was carried out starting from eastern Quiché, as a bridgehead, for the spiritual conquest of the entire surrounding territory. It should be noted that the Spanish had already destroyed Gumarcaj (*Utatlán*) and desired military expansion to the north and east. It is also important to mention that the area of *Tezulutlán* before the arrival of the Spanish was controlled by the K'iché, approximately since 1470 (Piel, 1989).

The K'iché had a fortress that was located among the places known as: Canillá, Joyabaj, and Cubulco, according to Piel (1989), the Spanish used the same route that the K'iché used for territorial expansion, that is, they left *Utatlán*, later to Canillá, Joyabaj, Cubulco, and Rabinal.

Before concretizing the conquest of the land of war, it was necessary to consolidate the domain in K'iché, to

which corresponds the foundation of *La Nueva Santa Cruz Utatlán* and its church, replacing *Gumarcaj*. It was also necessary to have the backing of the bishopric of Chiapas and Guatemala (Piel, 1989).

One of the strategies used by the friars to carry out the spiritual conquest was the composition of some *troves or verses* in the K'iché language, in which some passages of the life of Jesus were told, these stanzas were taught to four indigenous merchants, whose added musical accompaniment. The merchants, who traveled constantly to Sacapulas, recited the verses to the inhabitants of that place, who became interested in the messages (Piel, 1989).

The main objective of the Dominicans was to convince in the first place the caciques or indigenous leaders, who subsequently facilitated the entry of the priests who were charged with evangelizing the different populations, that is why it can be said that without this help they would not have achieved it (Piel, 1989).

The singing merchants were part of the first phase of the peaceful conquest, it was a tactic for the caciques to become interested in learning more about the meanings of the verses, by achieving this goal, the religious had the free door to go into explain more

widely the content of the lyrics of the melodies, moment that took advantage of the conviction of the leaders so that the latter were in charge of convincing the subordinate groups. Among the first caciques to be evangelized are those of Quiché and Sacapulas (Bossú, 1990). According to Piel (1989), the friars were also assisted by the caciques of Atitlán, Tecpán, Chichicastenango, and Rabinal.

To conquer the *land of war* in addition to the task of the singers, the friars sent gifts to the chieftains of the target places of penetration, which was part of the conviction of leaders and culminated in 1544 when the indigenous abandoned their weapons, allowing the entry of the Dominicans to Cobán (Bossú, 1990).

In addition to the political and military control of Quiché and Sacapulas, and the consolidation of the Church, the alliance of the caciques, who were the diplomatic intermediaries between the Church and the population conglomerates, was a fundamental condition. As a reward for the collaboration, the Church guaranteed them the power over the natives of their populations and the exclusion of the regime of *encomienda* for the inhabitants of Verapaz, which was ratified according to a royal decree of 1543 (Piel, 1989:36).

[...] offers in a certain way a precedent to the strategy of the Dominicans in Verapaz: a privileged alliance between the Church and the local caciques, exclusion of the encomenderos, first efforts of reductions and evangelization with the help of indigenous auxiliaries.

It is necessary to understand that de Las Casas and the Dominican priests took care to convince the caciques of the benefits that would take them to group in villages, for this they offered them incentives, within which they were: lands and leave them a quota of power, among others (Bertrand, 1989).

It is essential to mention that at that time the conditions of the villages were precarious, there were only six Christianized villages within which they were: *Tezulutlán*, *Jatic*, and *Cobán*, they only had two churches, one in Cobán and another in Rabinal, built with wood and straw. There were two centers of evangelization of great importance, one was in Sacapulas, which was where the caciques of *Tezulutlán* attended to be evangelized and the other in Chiapas (Piel, 1989).

In one of the writings of De Viana, Gallego, and Cardena (1955: 22), it can be corroborated, that it was until 1544 when the Dominicans freely entered *Tezulutlán*, and the natives abandoned their weapons.

The religious of Lord Santo Domingo of the preachers entered to this sacred land called of war in those days of year 1544, in the 19th day of May, of which the sacred doctrine and praiseworthy preach by Indians let us behind and received the Holly Gospels [...]

In the texts of De Viana and others (1995:23), dated from 1574 it mentions that since the religious entered, the reductions of indigenous began.

Then, that the religious entered people began to gather in the villages, build the churches and give alms for the ornaments and worship of the temples with which and the good diligence and works of the religious... and for thirty years, without having given his majesty alms any of them [...]

This is contradicted by Piel (1989), since it mentions that, de Las Casas had a sanction in 1547 by the Spanish Crown, since there were royal orders to reduce in villages all the populations conquered spiritually, who lived dispersed, order that can be inferred by the sanction was not fulfilled, which leads us to the conclusion that until the year indicated the stocks had not yet been reduced.

It should also be taken into account that the reductions were the result of The New Laws, which were promulgated in 1542 (Martínez, 2000), in which it was ordered that all dispersed indigenous people be reduced to villages, to control the population and ensure the payment of tribute. It should be mentioned that in the elaboration of these laws Bartolomé de Las Casas was one of the collaborators, which had the objective of ending the authoritarian and arbitrary regime of the military conquerors, the abolition of slavery, the cancellation of the encomienda and others (De Vos, 1988).

The reductions were intended to form villages similar to the Spanish, in which the Castilian municipal institutions should be superimposed, merged with the forms of indigenous organization, that is why there was a cabildo composed of mayors, aldermen, bailiffs and notary, where the mayors were indigenous caciques (Bertrand, 1989).

The most difficult thing was to convince the indigenous people to leave their homes in the mountains and to join together in a single population in the Spanish style [...] gradually he convinced the indigenous people to reduce themselves into villages. As the

houses of the indigenous people were built in two hours, an entire population rose in two days [...] (Terga, 1988: 15).

To reduce the natives to villages, not only evangelization was needed, but a series of agreements with the caciques were indispensable, to convince them to accept the changes and they would later convince the settlers. In exchange for caciques' help they obtained: keeping the power over the subordinates, servitude, lands, exemption from the payment of tribute, among others.

One of the main reasons that caused the resistance of the indigenous people to the reduction of a village was that their territorial property was also reduced. In the pre-Hispanic era, each indigenous group, no matter how small, owned some land that belonged to them and that they enjoyed in common for their agricultural work. In the reductions, as previously narrated, it happened that five, six, seven and even 20 or more small, and sometimes widely dispersed, populations gathered in a large village, which now, in turn, in the reduction of the village, possessed only a single ejido or communal land, which was fixed in a league

long. The lands that had belonged to these settlements, or abandoned hamlets, now returned to the Crown, to which the dominion and lordship of all the lands was attributed, by virtue of the right of conquest (Terga, 1988: 16-17).

The first small town of the mayor's office of Verapaz was Rabinal, which due to its geographical position was very important in the colonial period, since it was an intermediate point, where the road that led to Santiago de Guatemala and Cobán joined, in the latter place was the local power. The main support of the economic life of La Verapaz was the land, for the cultivation of different products that, in addition to subsistence, were also used for trade, which is why there was a constant struggle to own it (Bertrand, 1989).

According to Bertrand (1989), it was not until 1547 that the reductions began to be carried out in Verapaz, as a product of the Council of Mexico of the previous year, and it was from the middle of the 16th century that they were definitive and recognized by the Spanish authorities. Then, it was essential to prepare records of the populations, to calculate the number of taxpayers for subsequent collections, as part of the colonial economic exactions.

According to De Viana and others (1955), in 1574 in the jurisdiction of Verapaz there were fifteen towns and the same number of churches, which began to pay taxes in 1561. The authors allude to the fact that since this last year the population decreased, the reasons were: the sterility of the land in their new settlements (which were generally in ravines), the new diseases they contracted, for which they did not have any type of medicine.

Foundation of the Town of Salamá

According to the magazine *Mi Bella Salamá* (Municipality of Salamá, 2012), the town of Salamá was founded by the Dominican friars after the pacification of the territory, after 1550, it is believed that in 1552 the Christianization of the aborigines began and work began on the construction of the church, which was dedicated to Saint Matthew, who was constituted as patron of the town. The first friar appointed to San Mateo Salamá was Pedro de Angulo, appointed Bishop in 1560. The founding of the town of Salamá may have been after 1546, but it was from the mid-16th century that the colonial system was formally initiated (Bertrand, 1989:148-149).

Some chroniclers place the founding of Salamá at the time of

President Alonso de Cerrato, who arrived in Guatemala in 1546. Therefore, it is only from the second half of the 16th century that the colonial system truly operates in the region.

The same author confirms that the foundation of Salamá obeyed the application of the New Laws promulgated in 1542, the creation was probably due to settle the freedmen at that time (Bertrand, 1989: 161).

The case of Salama seems to have been a little different. According to Juan de Pineda, this town was founded in the years of the 'government' of López de Cerrato, who as responsible for applying the new laws of 1542, freed all slaves of the encomenderos, for some of whom would have had the town of Salamá founded [...]

Francis Gall (1979), mentions that in 1562 Fra Pedro de Angulo died in Salamá, but that in that year the town already had several years of existence. According to a text by the University of the Valley of Guatemala (2007), the foundation of the town of Salamá, in the valley it currently occupies was in 1562.

García Peláez, another writer of the colonial period (cited by Bertrand, 1989), believes that Salamá was a

town founded by ladinos who grouped together in order to obtain royal lands (owned by the Crown), without the help of the authorities. In this regard, it can be said that it is unlikely, since if it had been so the indigenous population would have been scarce, in addition the people have all the characteristics of a reduction and among others had ejido lands, which were granted only to indigenous communities.

According to oral tradition, with the arrival of the conquering Spaniards came also some Indigenous Tlaxcaltecas (of Mexican origin), who settled in the place known in 2015 as Santa Elena neighborhood and were part of the population of Salamá in the colonial period (Interview: Hervin Cruz, March 19, 2015). This information coincides with what Cortés and Larraz (1958) wrote, when he stated that the natives spoke the corrupted Mexican language, but that everyone understood Spanish.

As you can notice in the writings of different authors, we do not know the exact date of foundation of the town, we only have data of dates close to the establishment. Most likely it was created after the implementation of the New Laws of 1542, since being part of the ordinances that came from Spain, had to be fulfilled.

De Viana, Gallego and Cadena (1955: 27), mention in one of their writings, that in 1571 there was a road that connected Santa María Tactic with Salamá, which indicates that already for that year the town existed. It must be emphasized that Salamá was not included within the fifteen towns of the Verapaz, namely: Santo Domingo Cobán, San Juan Chamelco, San Pedro y Santiago, San Agustín, Santa María Cahabón, San Lucas Zulben, Santa Cruz, San Cristóbal Cacoh, Santa María Tac Tic, San Esteban Tamahú, San Miguel Tucurub, Santa Cruz Cahaboncillo, San Pablo, San Andrés Polochic y San Mateo Xocoloc.

The Verapaz area suffered a series of epidemics, which eliminated a large part of the indigenous population from 1574 to 1580, which also caused the emigration of many of the survivors to urban centers, leaving their crops, their lands or selling them in some cases, in which situation those who took advantage of the circumstances were the Spaniards, who through anomalous processes took possession of land (Terga, 1989: 18). In the limits of Salamá in 1661 there was a place known as *Pachalum*, which had an extension of one caballería, this land was sold by Isabel de Morales to Gaspar Reimundo, main indigenous of Salamá, at a value of *ninety-five*

tostones (one *tostón* was equivalent to half a peso).

In 1700 the measurements of a piece of land in the place known at that time as *Jojá* in the jurisdiction of Salamá were carried out. That land, which was "three leguas" from the center of the town, was denounced as *realengo* by Juan Ugaldes, in order to buy it by means of composition. The land was located in the middle of Salamá and Tac Tic (AGCA A1. E. 52177 L. 5956).

Within the important data of the same document (AGCA A1. E. 52177 L. 5956) it is mentioned that by that date already existed the Hacienda San Nicolás, which belonged to the religious Dominicans of Cobán. Another relevant aspect is that until that year the indigenous people of Salamá did not have the *legua* of land that they should have as *ejido*, thus the authorities did not comply with the colonial laws.

In the aforementioned case, it is reported that the community lands of San Mateo Salamá were less than half a league (AGCA A1. E. 52177 L. 5956 F. 5). [...] *without any contradiction although the Indians of the town of Salamha have not been located because they are three leagues from said town and they do not have the said land or even a league [...]*

There is no doubt that the religious of Santo Domingo for having rendered the service of pacification of the area of Verapaz obtained perks, such is the case of the land granted by King Felipe of Spain in 1706, who ratified on that date the titles conferred in 1696. The mentioned grant included: *seven cattle ranch sites*, five land *caballería* in the Salamá Valley, three sites and three *caballerías*, located to one side of the San Jerónimo mill, three sites and two *caballerías* located in the place known as *Estancia de Chuacux* (AGCA A1.24 E. 10219 L. 1575).

As can be seen, the Dominicans had land in abundance, which gave them the possibility of having a sugar cane production and processing plant and ample places for raising cattle. This as part of the alliance between government and church, which existed throughout the colonial period.

The importance of land as a means of agricultural production in the colonial period is incalculable, for the indigenous it meant the means of food subsistence, means of paying taxes and other economic levies, while for the Spaniards and Creoles it meant a means to enrich and obtain semi free indigenous labor. For these reasons, as part of the indigenous needs reflected through the three hundred years of the colonial period, the main mayors of Salamá asked the authorities to grant

them an extension of land, since they did not have enough for planting (AGCA A1.24 L. 1582 F. 207).

The lands on which they planted corn, beans and chili, according to indigenous accounts, had been owned since the foundation of the town, but because they were contiguous to one of the country estate owned by the Dominican religious, the managers of the same stripped them of the lands, for which, as the only alternative for their agricultural labors, they had to take in lease their own lands (AGCA A1.24 L. 1582 F. 207).

What they demanded in the above-mentioned petition was that they be awarded the lands where they sowed, as ejido, for their subsistence and payment of tribute, since they did not have any document that protected them in their possessions (AGCA A1.24 L. 1582 F. 207). This was another problem during the colonial period, since most indigenous peoples did not have legal documents from their ejido lands (Solórzano, 2009).

Trying to solve the problem of *lack of community land in Salamá*, the prosecutor of the Royal Court in 1718 ordered a survey of the boundaries of the ejido lands of the town. As a result of this measurement and corroborating that there was indeed a lack, in relation to the corresponding league, he

communicated that the communal possessions should be expanded, so that on the east side, he ordered to increase by 61 cuerdas 16 varas, On the west side 45 cuerdas 5 varas, on the south 45 cuerdas 16 varas, on the north 36 cuerdas, which completed the extension of ejido (AGCA A1.24 E. 10227 L. 1583).

The surrounding land belonged to the Dominicans, who were affected by this decision, the authorities agreed to compensate the religious for the loss of property. Although it can be seen at first the prosecutor's decision as in good faith towards the indigenous, it should be remembered that one of the policies of the Crown was to provide the indigenous communities with land, since it was the indigenous who generated the wealth, for the Crown, the church, and the colonizing Spaniards (Martínez, 2002).

In another of the writings of the General Archive of Central America (A1.21.6 E. 52359 L. 5966 F. 4) relating to the ejidos of Salamá it is mentioned, that according to the law twenty title sixth book third of the compilation of laws of the Indies, no estancia, hacienda or cattle raising could be founded, at a distance of one and a half legua from the settlements or indigenous peoples, so that the latter enjoyed their ejido lands that had to be one legua.

[...] that no cattle ranch may be raised or established alongside the old settlements and villages unless it is at a distance of one and a half leguas and if it is less than half a legua and if the reduction is new it is twice as far as the inference that the real will is that the Indians will enjoy the whole circuit of their people of such distance that there had been [...]

The estates affected by the Crown's determinations were the following: San Jerónimo, San Nicolás and Payaqué, but according to the information, for the loss of a part of their estates had to be compensated in some way, either in money or with land in other nearby places.

Apparently, the land problem persisted for some time and did not achieve a definitive solution, as shown by the documents of the General Archive of Central America (A1. E. 52359 L.5966). In one of the texts written by José Luna y Estrada, procurator of the indigenous people of Salamá, he recounts that in 1669 they had been granted a protection of possession of the land they used to sow, but because they had no legal document of ownership, were forced to rent land located on the edge of the Payaqué River, paying the

Dominicans in terms of species and money.

It can be inferred that by 1718 there was already a high population growth, because it is hinted that there were more than three hundred tributaries and their families, which made a total of one thousand four hundred three people, those who depended directly on agricultural production and because they did not have land, they most certainly suffered from hunger.

According to the narration of the prosecutor of the Royal Audience, Salamá was located in a center where, to the east, west and south were the estates of the Dominicans and to the north were the lands of Rabinal, therefore at that time they had no place to expand the land (AGCA A1. E. 52359 L.5966).

Within the ejido lands, the Crown considered one part for sowing and another part for hunting, extracting firewood, timber for construction and others (Martínez, 2002), but in the case of Salamá they did not have this type of land and within their needs was the construction of the church and convent, for which they needed wood, in addition to the indispensable for the manufacture of their houses, which were of perishable materials (AGCA A1. E. 52359 L.5966).

The indigenous people of Salamá, by specifying lands and not having them, threatened to emigrate to the mountains, which was not in the interest of the Crown, so it was essential to find a solution urgently, the solution in the opinion of the prosecutor of the Royal Audiencia, was to have the land known as Payaque taken from the Dominican priests.

The indigenous people, for their part, asked to be awarded the ejido land (one league) starting from the church towards the east, up to the road to *San Agustín Casaguastlán* and towards the river "Cachí", the land of the other three cardinal points did not interest them (AGCA A1. E. 52359 L.5966).

It is important to emphasize that the Dominicans, in addition to those properties already mentioned, owned the land Llano Grande, and despite the indigenous had land at "one legua" away from the town of Salamá, argued that it was not suitable for sowing, so the problem of scarcity of the means of production persisted (AGCA A1. E. 52359 L.5966).

There was a place called by the indigenous Chocoxa, a land in load, where the community of Salamá used it for cattle raising of the brotherhoods called: "De La Virgen, De San Mateo

and Las Animas", also there was a place called "Los Limones", that was the limit between Salamá and Rabinal (AGCA A1. E. 52359 L.5966).

The central point to make the measures corresponding to the ejido of Salamá, was the cross that was located in the town square. According to the information collected, it can be inferred, that the place had special conditions in terms of its measures, because towards the side of Rabinal (west) could no longer measure land, because that prejudiced the ejidos of the latter town, then the measures to complete the league were made to the south (AGCA A1. E. 52359 L. 5966).

Within the places mentioned in the documents (AGCA A1. E. 52359 L.5966) it can be indicated that the rivers that served as boundaries were: "Salamá, Palo Jiote and Tempisque". In addition, a piece of land located to the north of the town called *Orotapa*, which belonged to the indigenous of Salamá: Fabián Pérez and Mateo Gabriel, used to serve as a boundary. It is necessary to mention that, although there was an urgent need for land, until 1719 the problem had not been solved, as there is no evidence to prove otherwise.

One of the extra attributions of the indigenous people of Salamá was the care and maintenance of the church, so

in 1728 they requested permission to withdraw money from the community funds to gild the altarpiece of the church and buy all the necessary ornaments, according to their words, they had cash as well as cattle which they could use (AGCA A1.73 E. 51203 L 5919).

Among the good mentioned in the written document, they had four hundred and twelve cow beef and 55 horses, also, in cash they had 864 tostones. The authorities did not authorize the petition and argued that with that money they were maintaining the expenses of the town (AGCA A1.73 E. 51203 L 5919).

According to the writings of the General Archive of Central America (A1E. 52525 L.5978) in 1738 one of the activities that the natives of Salama had (beside agriculture), was to extract honey from the honeycombs that were in the land known as “San José Comalmapa”, which was contiguous to San Nicolás farm and others. It is probable that because this place was on the border between the towns of Salamá and Rabinal, the indigenous people of these towns used it by common agreement, not only to extract honey, but also for hunting, to extract wood or any other material they needed. In this sense, it must be recalled that the conglomerate of

indigenous of Salamá did not have land to extract the indicated materials.

As already mentioned, the land problem was always serious in the colonial period, and because of this, in 1739, the indigenous people again requested the measurement and adjudication of the ejido lands that corresponded to them. The disadvantage they had was that the lands they used for planting were not theirs, but they had to pay a lease to the Dominican priests and at any moment they could be dispossessed of those properties (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 52550 L. 5980).

Among the places that served as boundaries of the ejido lands that were measured on that occasion, the following are mentioned: *Chocojá, Piedras Blancas, Río Sibabac, Jopaya, la orilla de Chuacux, Rincón del Potrero, Pallaqué, Loma Piedra de Cal, Portezuelo de Salamá y dos lomas*, the latter are located on the royal road (AGCAA1.21.6 E. 52550 L. 5980 F. 9.v.). This measurement resulted in 44 caballerías of land.

In addition to the measurement of the indicated land, there were another in a place called *La Sierra de Ixcayá*, which began on the *Chuacus* hill, passed through the *Llano Grande* hacienda, the *Estancia San Miguelito* and *Rincón de las Tejas* (AGCA

A1.21.6 E. 52550 L.5980 F. 11). In this occasion, the area of the land was 40 caballerías and twenty cuerdas.

The area of the two measured lands was 84 caballerías, which after carrying out the corresponding administrative procedures, both in terms of verifying the price of each caballería by means of witnesses, the announcement, and others (Solórzano, 2009), the authorities in charge of lands, determined that they should be sold to the indigenous as follows: 83 caballerías for a value of 5 *tostones* and 1 caballería for 10 *tostones* (one *tostón* was equivalent to four reals).

As it is known, within the policies of the Crown were: to endow lands to the towns or reductions and to sell them lands by means of composition (Solórzano, 2009), and this is precisely what happened with the ejidos of Salamá, in relation to the above-mentioned lands (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 52550 L. 5980) that make reference to the negotiation of 84 caballerías of extension, that although it cannot be affirmed that they paid them, it can be inferred that they did cancel their value (A3.15 E. 40364 L.2790) and they had titles, however, it can be inferred that the documents they had did not include the entire area they were having usufruct.

For these reasons, the Spanish Crown, based on the royal decrees of 1692, 1717 and 1720, demanded payment for the aforementioned lands, but the indigenous people argued that they had documents that protected their possessions. In this respect, the principal indigenous, and mayors of said town argued that (A3.15 E. 40364 L.2790 F. 14):

[...] although we have titles that state that we have and enjoy a portion of caballerías of land, we can assure that they are of no use whatsoever and that we also notice that the scope of the cost of said titles for such a large number of caballerías is small. As they declare in them, in the same way we find ourselves without any instrument of the place where our people are [...]

What the indigenous indicated in this text is that although they had a large area of land, it was not suitable for planting, so they needed another measure of land to be taken (AGCA A3.15 E. 40364 L.2790).

Other relevant information is that the priests of Santo Domingo, who owned the lands that the indigenous people were interested in, made a donation to the Salamá community, corresponding to 28 caballerías of land. For this gesture towards the

indigenous people, the authorities granted them land in other places to the religious (AGCA A3.15 E. 40364 L.2790).

There was another property called *La Sierra Iscayá* that had been awarded to the indigenous people of Salamá in 1744, but according to the information obtained, it was not enough for the number of inhabitants of the place, so they had to lease it to the Dominicans (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 52642 L. 5986).

According to the measurements indicated above, by 1752, the limits of the ejido lands were the following: Portezuelo and border crossings with Rabinal, Pie de la Loma de Orotapa, Portezuelo of the royal road to Guatemala, the Rincón and Payaqué rivers crossing, the Payaqué and Sibabax rivers crossing; summit of the hill Piedras Blancas, the ravine Chocoxa, summit of the hill Pacalá, the hills Redonda Colorada and Arrecifes Peinados (AGCA A3.15 E. 40364 L.2790 F. 34).

One of the problems related to land, is the one dating back to 1758 (AGCA A1. E. 53270 L. 6037) in which the mayors and principals of Salamá in that year, claimed as their own the lands of the place named *Pachalum* which, according to them, belonged to the common people. On the other hand,

it is also mentioned that the land was occupied by *Los Ramones*, that is, the Ramón Family who, according to the mayor and principals, had taken over the land.

What the members of the Ramón family argued was that they were the owners but that in good faith, they let the indigenous people of Salamá sow and harvest on the land, also to extract wood or any other natural products. Agreeing with the same document, fifty-nine families lived on these lands. According to the writings, the problem continued until 1802, with different requests from heirs of the previous owners (AGCA A1. E. 53270 L. 6037).

Undoubtedly, the town of Salamá was having changes in its social structure, since it can be seen that in 1762 there were already some Spanish inhabitants, who bought land in the surrounding places, just as the case of Domingo Antonio Díaz, who requested the authorities to buy a piece of land in the place called *Cacapec* Mountain, or *Santa Rita Cacatec*, which adjoined the Salamá's lands of ejido (AGCA A1 E. 52933 L. 6009).

As the names of the land buyers denote, it can be inferred that some Spaniards and Ladinos were getting land around Salamá, which was configuring a new population group in Salamá, who were buying land to

expand their properties either agricultural, livestock or the sugar cane process, such is the case of Claudio Marín, who bought a piece of land from José Cabrera in 1763, in the location called *Pachalum*, which worked at some time as a *Trapiche*, this land was later sold to Antonio Méndez in 1772 (AGCA A1.80 E. 53038 L. 6017).

As an important fact of the manuscript, it is mentioned that the brotherhoods lent money to *Censo*, that is, at interest for a certain time, which was precisely what happened with the land alluded to, in which the buyer also required a debt with the brotherhood of the village of Rabinal (AGCA A1.80 E. 53038 L. 6017).

Fray Joseph Prado (quoted by Gall, 1979), wrote that in 1765 San Mateo Salamá was a town delimited by haciendas and sugar mills, although they had small plots with corn, beans and sugar cane plantations, they did not get much production. In addition, one of the activities of the women was spinning, for the realization of this work the mayors were in charge of distributing the raw material. An aspect that is striking is that the author mentions that there were people of *all qualities* in the village, it is likely that he refers to indigenous and Ladino people taking into account the Ladino people in a broad way, that is, that this

group brought together all the people product of miscegenation.

Pedro Cortés y Larraz (1958) in his visit to Salamá (between 1768-1770) mentions that it was one of the three presidencies that depended on the curacy of Rabinal, as were the towns of Cubulco and El Chol, but all three functioned and were administered independently.

Among the places that the same author mentions as belonging to Salamá are: hacienda El Guapinol, the valley Los Ramones, the San Jerónimo sugar mill, belonging to the Dominican religious; this last land was used for cattle raising and bean sowing. According to Cortés y Larraz, the river that ran through the town was used to fertilize the land (Cortés y Larraz, 1958).

The same author mentions that more than a thousand people lived in San Jerónimo, of which approximately seven hundred were slaves. At that time, the San Jerónimo sugar mill used advanced technology for the production of sugar, as Cortés y Larraz (1958) did not fail to be amazed at the speed with which they carried out the work, the production according to the author considered, was six hundred arrobas per month, whose value was three pesos each.

It is worth mentioning that a large number of the workers were slaves specialized in masonry, carpentry, and metal smelting (Cortés y Larraz, 1958).

In the observations made by the priest, they confirm that the agricultural production was corn and beans, but in some places there was sugar cane and cattle raising. The priest in charge of the church was Benito Jiménez, who mentioned that the income produced by the church was 798 pesos. In the opinion of the priest of Salamá at that time, the indigenous people spoke the *corrupted* Mexican language, but they all understood Spanish (Cortés y Larraz, 1958).

It is mentioned in the same document (Cortés and Larraz, 1958), that some indigenous people who lived in the town sowed in the valley of *Los Ramones* and that there were also approximately twenty families in the valley, most of whom did not attend the parish, because for their marriages and baptisms they went to other places. In the *Pagmi Valley* there were approximately eighteen families of ladinos, who only came to the town during Holy Week.

It is likely that in 1772 the number of taxpayers has increased again, it is considered in this way because, despite having enough land as ejidos at

that time (according to the award documents indicated above), in that year they were granted eighteen and a half caballerías again, for which the procurator of the Royal Audiencia presented the confirmation of the corresponding title (AGCA A3.30 E. 37831 L. 2577).

Likewise, in 1773, they were awarded twenty-one caballerías of ejido land, for which the respective property title was requested from the authorities. The Royal Audiencia according to the manuscripts issued the title (AGCA A3.30 E. 37832 L. 2577).

Regarding the purchase of privately owned land, one of the buyers of land around Salamá was Vicente Mexicano, who in 1786 wanted to buy a lot located in the place known as *Chulín*, which was *six leguas* away from the town and was later named *San Antonio de Padua*. Within the information contained in the text (AGCA A1.80 E.53241 L. 6036) it is stated that the indigenous people of that town previously bought the land of *Purulá* for their ejidos, but they did not use it because it was at a great distance from the town. The *Chulín* or *Tzulín* land lay to the east of *Purulá*.

Some narratives from 1789 describe the town of Salamá as a place where there were abundant forests,

rivers, vegetation, fauna, mountains, valleys, and some places of settlement: *the lands of Chivac, Llano Grande and hacienda San José Chivac* (A3.30 E. 37862 L. 2578).

Among the policies of the Crown regarding indigenous lands, it was contemplated not to give the titles to the indigenous communities, whether they were property if they were purchased by composition or if they were granted by royal mercy or ejidos. (Solórzano, 2009), This situation is coupled with what happened to the natives of Salamá, since they requested in 1793 that the respective documents be delivered to them, in order to have legal certainty in land tenure (AGCA A1.21.6 E.53294 L. 6040).

The information provided by the mayors and principals of the aforementioned town, leads us to believe that until 1793 they had not solved the legal problem of communal land, which caused some *Ladino people* to want to seize these lands (AGCA A1.21.6 E.53294 L. 6040 F. 1). *[...] it seems and we all say that, at the present time, we are totally without titles to the lands of our people [...]*.

It is important to mention that in 1793 the male indigenous population of Salamá, besides being tributaries of the king, were *arrow soldiers*, who

collaborated to put down some uprisings that took place in Verapaz (AGCA A1.21.6 E.53294 L. 6040 F. 1).

The main mayors and other commoners of the town of San Matheo Salamá jurisdiction of the province of Verapaz, tributaries and arrow soldiers in some uprisings offered in said Verapaz [...].

It is also probable that in Salamá there was a kind of army of natives of the place, which was kept in reserve and functioned as an ally of the Spaniards, in case of insubordination of the other neighboring populations, since they had a warrior tradition since before the arrival of the Hispanics.

In addition to giving the reference the natives of Salamá, that their ejido lands were on a par with the San Jerónimo mill, reveal to us that y 1793 there were already a high number of Ladino settlers who were their neighbors. Also, what the information assures us is that by the end of the 18th century the town was being invaded by Spaniards and mestizos, which denotes that the agreement of de las Casas and Maldonado, ceased to have validity (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 53294 L. 6040 F. 1). *[...] and because of so many Ladino people that we have as neighbors that some of them bother us*

for our lands seeing that they do not have our titles noticed [...]”

A very common practice in Salamá was for the indigenous people of the villages to have land for raising cattle and horses, as stated by Josef González, mayor of Verapaz in 1794, in a report of the community assets of the aforementioned village (AGCA A1 E. 15411 L. 2154).

In the same document it is indicated that the Indians of Salamá had 378 heads of cattle, including bulls, oxen, and steers, in addition they had three mares, a donkey and a mule. On the other hand, in cash they had eight hundred eighty-eight hundred and eighty-eight tostones tres reales. As it is also known, from the community funds the authorities extracted money to lend it to annual interest, it was also the case of Salamá, since from this fund a loan was made to Pedro de Aycinena that amounted to 3,000 tostones (AGCA A1 E. 15411 L. 2154).

The same year Salamá already appeared within the towns of Verapaz, as the number thirteen on the checkbox, it is possible that within the list that was found, the names of the towns have been placed because of their importance since they are consigned in the following way: *Cobán, Rabinal, Cubulco, San Pedro, San Juan, Santa Cruz de Santa Elena, Cahbon, San*

Cristóbal, Tac Tic, Tamahun, Tucurub, Zalamá, Santa Cruzdel Chol, and San Agustín Linquín (AGCA A1 E. 15411 L. 2154 F. 14).

Some properties that had a large extension and were part of the jurisdiction of Salamá, were in the hands of few owners, such is the case of the *Chivaque* state, which belonged to José Manuel De León; also, the *Chuacús* and *Llano Grande* estates belonged to Tomás Guzmán. The *Chirrúm* sugar mill belonged to the García family, and the sugar mill called *Chipacapox* belonged to the native Agustín Cojón (AGCA A1 E. 53308 L. 6041).

As can be seen, the names of the places are related to indigenous settlements of later era, for instance: in the case of the *Chivaque* estate it may be what is known as the village *Chivac* and the *Llano Grande* estate, which in 2015 is a village with the same name. Also, it can be seen that some indigenous people made land in individual ownership.

As it was also normal, there were land disputes between the indigenous communities during the colonial period (Solórzano, 2009), it was in this type of problems that in 1764, Salamá and Rabinal had conflicts for a land located in the mountain of *Yscayá*, the

border area between the two towns (AGCA A1 E. 53308 L. 6041).

The natives of Salamá used the indicated land, since they had corn plantations on it, in addition to the fact that on the mountain of *Yscayá* there was a water source that provided the liquid to the people and reached the square. The solution proposed by the people of Salamá, was that they would have the land in dispute and that the people of San Miguel would be granted what they called *Chancor* or *Cacapec* (AGCA A1 E. 53308 L. 6041).

As an interesting contribution related to land, it is mentioned in the document, that in the surroundings of Salamá there was also a high demographic growth of Ladino population in 1794, since according to the calculations of the indigenous people of the San Miguel estate, the number of mestizos rose to one thousand two hundred, to which it must be added, that they used the disputed land (AGCA A1 E. 53308 L. 6041).

The interesting thing about land and ladino population is that the towns were transformed over time, the ladinos referred to in the writing, as can be inferred, were economically poor, did not own land and planted in the places they saw that had no owner.

It should be remembered that the situation of the ladinos was different from that of the indigenous people since the former did not own ejido lands and did not have the resources to buy real estate.

On the other hand, it should be taken into account that although the document does not mention the place of origin of the Ladinos, it is possible that they originated from several places, but since there is a conglomerate of mestizo population, it is likely that they have gradually settled in the nearby towns, which in this case would be: Salamá, Rabinal and San Miguel Chicaj, which could increase the number of non-indigenous population of Salamá.

The *Yscayá* property, which had an area of more than forty caballerías, was sold to Joseph Nicastro in 1799 at a price of 6 tostones each carrier. The authorities despite the need for land raised by the indigenous people of Salama. Decided to sell the land to an individual and ignore the requests of the inhabitants of their formation village. As a ready mentioned above, the natives of Salamá in 1786 had a plot of land for raising cattle. The cattle were slaughtered for the sale of meat. This being one of the businesses of the brotherhood and from where they obtained funds to defray expenses of it. In Salamá. In the aforementioned

year, there was no butcher shop established as a business for the trade of the product. It was the indigenous people who were in charge of the sale of the food (AGCA A3.3 E. 813 L. 41 F. 3).

[...] and even our community when we have the opportunity or when some of the old useless things of the treasury of our community or brotherhoods are killed. Because your worship knows well that in this town there is no other trade for the state and many poor indigenous and Ladinos, so even if the windward is little that we taxpayers pay [...]

The same year, Mr. Cándido Francisco Dighero presented an application to market beef in Salamá, which the natives opposed, as they externalized it was the only business of the brotherhood. It should be evidenced that the Spaniards and Creoles during the colonial period were always interested in the marketing of products within the towns, since they had the means to do so and as a ruling class, they did not have prohibitions by the authorities to do so. Of such account, that the supply of meat was authorized to Dighero.

In the colonial period there were a series of orders issued by the Royal Court, one of them is the one issued in

1805, corresponding to the formation of a common fund of ladinos. The mayor of Verapaz, Lorenzo Montúfar, in his response to the letter said that of the one hundred seventy-four ladino families residing in Salamá, one hundred refused the contributions and seventy-four agreed. The contributions to which the paper refers were the following: the payment of four reales or one bushel of corn annually (AGCA A1.73 E. 7955 L. 382).

The common fund of Ladinos had the function of serving in times of catastrophe, for the purchase of land, establishment of schools, payment of doctors in case of epidemics, repairs of church, canonry, and others. To which the Ladinos of Salamá, when questioned about the interest in this type of contribution, most replied that they were not interested (AGCA A1.73 E. 7955 L. 382 F. 3– 3.v).

Not having taken effect the summons that was made in this town of Salamá, it was considered more convenient to make the summons and persuasion going from house to house and lists of the heads of families of which it is composed are added, separating those who remained current and persuaded from those who absolutely refused notwithstanding

the brief explanation that was made to them.

As for the royal tribute to be paid by the indigenous inhabitants of the towns, it was two pesos a year for each man, but until before 1801 they paid another economic levy, the *quebrado acrecido*, a tax for which in some places they paid one real (one eighth of a peso) per person (AGCA A3.10 E. 4937 L. 247).

In 1805, Salamá relied on 1118 tributaries, who in addition to the Real tribute and the *quebrado acrecido*, paid a real and a half each individual, for the imposition known as *milpa de comunidad* (maize of the community), which was detrimental to its economy (AGCA A1.73 E. 15412 L.2154).

In some other towns the *quebrado acrecido* was taken from the Real tribute, which was a disadvantage to the fund, therefore, the authorities in 1807 determined to eliminate the aforementioned levy and established that only two pesos should be paid, but without any discount (AGCA A1.24 E. 51206 L. 5919).

Another important point is the real estate works built in 1806, they provide us with information about the needs of the town in that year, since it is mentioned that a galley was built to be used as a school and town hall, also a space for the women's prison is

mentioned (AGCA A1.73 E. 15412 L. 2154).

The building mentioned was located in front of the central plaza of the town, it was divided into three spaces, one of the spaces was used as a weapons room, another was a passenger room, and another served as a town council of indigenous people.

In the period under analysis there were also anomalies in the management of funds, as reported in the manuscripts of the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 E.15412 L.2154), regarding the disappearance of money from the community funds, which was not surprise and it is asserted that in the case of the province of Verapaz, during the administration of the mayor, Lorenzo Montúfar (before 1808), twenty-three thousand pesos disappeared from the community funds, which is why the authorities asked Montúfar's son to clarify the accounts.

The Royal Audience feared that when the communities' coffers ran out of money, they would not be able to cover the expenses for which they used the money from the coffers, besides, it can be inferred that the indigenous had enough levies and they could not stand any more demands that they made with violence, reasons for which it could be

expected that the natives would abandon the towns. The abandonment of the towns did not suit either the Crown or the church since they would lose the source of wealth for both institutions (AGCA A1.73 E.15412 L.2154 F. 4.v.).

[...] and may they suddenly raise their cry, shake off the yoke, and leave the villages abandoned. The Indians are already giving many indications of these intentions [...] there are many signs that the Indians are suffocating in their hearts certain forebodings and willingness to rise to the slightest novelty of oppression [...]

Although the document generally speaks of the Verapaz area, it gives us a slight idea of the conditions of all the towns that made up that jurisdiction and when talking about uprisings it speaks equally of all the populations and Salamá was part of the reductions.

In 1808, Salamá had a school that served sixteen schoolchildren, the teacher that year was Ambrosio Barrios, within the stories it is expressed that one of the pupils had high performance (AGCA A1 E. 7956 L. 382 F. 3).

In the Verapaz area, in 1809, there was extreme poverty, due to natural phenomena that hit the territory during

the two previous years, which resulted in the lack of corn, which was one of the main foods of the indigenous people, from which it can be inferred that there was hunger, malnutrition, and death of part of the population. Added to this was the levying of taxes (AGCA A1.73 E. 48174 L. 5757).

Due to the conditions of poverty, the exaggerated tax burdens and so many other factors, the authorities were latent in the fear of a rebellion of the native, as already mentioned above, the solution proposed by the mayor was to reduce the taxes so as not to oppress the inhabitants more of the reductions. In the end, a discount was decreed and from 1806 the payment for each individual was fixed at three reals per year for the entire province of Verapaz (AGCA A1.73 E. 48174 L. 5757).

In the colonial period it was also common for the cattle of the owners of private estates (of Ladinos, Creoles or Spaniards), to be introduced to the ejido lands of the towns, which happened in Salamá in 1811 in the land known as *San Joaquín Patal*, where some Ladinos entered two hundred cows to graze, for which the indigenous were annoyed, so they requested the authorities to admonish the invaders or to make an agreement and pay the community for the pasture. The prosecutor granted the petition a

writ of protection (AGCAA1.45.8 E. 3777 L. 184).

As observed in the information of the General Archive of Central America (A1.80 E. 53481 L. 6051), it can be inferred that in 1811 there were several farms that were dedicated to cattle raising, as confirmed by the information of sergeant Pedro Barrios, who requested to purchase a piece of land that was in the middle of the adjoining ones: Purulhá, Tzulín, the ejidos of Salamá and a ranch belonging to Vicente Mejicano. The land was granted for sale by the authorities.

The land problems during the colony took a long time to be solved, so much so that a piece of land called *Los Ramones*, was the apple of discord between the indigenous people of the common Salamá and the supposed owners (the Ramón family). The disagreements had been dragging on since 1758 (AGCA A1. E. 53270 L. 6037) and arose again in 1811, when the supposed heirs claimed the property as theirs, in consequence, the Royal Court determined that (AGCA A1.45.8 E. 24579 L. 2799 F. 82):

[...] Prosecutor says: that this ministry in its reply of April 18, 1811. \$115 and 116, book first, he stated and founded that the lands in question belong by all the titles to

the common of Salamá: that the Ramones Indians, far from having the right to them, had usurped them, possessing them in bad faith for many years, keeping hidden the titles that accredit the property of the commons, and for all these reasons I conclude by requesting that the claims and requests be declared unfounded. [...]

The court's resolution makes it clear that the land had been used by the Ramón family, but actually, it belonged to the common people of Salamá, so they were granted the right.

As for the expenses incurred in Salamá, they were mostly borne by the natives, who had at their disposal the funds of community boxes and the goods of the brotherhood, which consisted in 1813, of four hundred head of cattle and forty-two yoke of oxen. It was for such reasons that Fray Antonio Ibáñez, the village priest, suggested that the yokes be sold, and rebuilt the semi-destroyed *casa Real* with that money (AGCA A1.21.6 E.7976 L. 383). The money for the work, which amounted to four hundred sixteen pesos and two reales, was taken from the sale of the aforementioned cattle and the work was completed in 1819 (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 15440 L. 2156).

At the beginning of the 19th century, internal changes were taking place in Salamá, in 1814 the word “constitutional” were added to the position of mayor, because the mayor was appointed by election, there was also a *constitutional city council*, where the *constitutional mayor* was the one who had the highest hierarchy and decision-making power, because the other members had no academic preparation and *only two or three* knew how to sign (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 46869 L.5461).

Until that moment it is stated that, the natives had the important political positions, led by the mayor of Verapaz, but on the other hand it is mentioned, that there were already a good number of *Ladinos*, product of the liberation of slaves of the San Jerónimo mill, owned by the Dominicans. What can be inferred is that the speaker is trying to tell the authorities that it was time to change the indigenous mayors and replace them with *Ladinos*, since there were a large number of the latter who could hold the positions (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 46869 L.5461).

It is necessary to mention the importance of the slave labor force in the San Jerónimo sugar mill, of which Cortés y Larraz (1958) also speaks in his writings and which, as the document clarifies (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 46869 L.5461), when they were freed,

they became part of the population of Salamá and increased the number of non-indigenous inhabitants.

In 1818, the lack of water supply was a serious problem (AGCAA1.21.6 E. 15448 L. 2157) the references indicate that Salamá already had water that somehow reached the central square, but the facilities in the year indicated suffered from deterioration, so it was necessary the prompt repair of the pipes to provide the liquid. There were two public water tanks and there were also users who had individual water tanks.

The main problem was the lack of funds, so they had to ask for the voluntary collaboration of all the neighbors, that is, the annual cash contributions; those who had private batteries offered five pesos a year. The parish priest was opposed to giving a contribution and said that *the people should give him water*. The cost of the work was calculated at sixty pesos (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 15448 L. 2157).

As already mentioned above, changes were carried out at the political level in Salamá (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 46869 L.5461), this is confirmed in a document containing information related to the mayors (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 15448 L.2157), in which the indigenous mayors and Ladino mayors of Salamá were

summoned in 1818 to discuss solutions for the repair of the canals used for the conduction of water to the town. The assertion of the existence of Ladino and indigenous mayors can be ratified in another document of the General Archive of Central America (A1.21.6 E.8004 L. 384), which alludes to the mayors mentioned.

Apart from a shared government administration between indigenous and ladinos, it can be inferred that there was a separation of the populations and among others, one of the attributions of the mayors, whether of one ethnic group or the other, was the collection of taxes (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 15448 L. 2157 F. 3).

[...] to the ladino mayors to collect from those of their partiality, whatever they want to give for said composition to the Indian mayors to likewise collect from those of their partiality the contribution they want to give [...]

The economic conditions in Salamá in 1821 were poverty, an infrastructure that if at one time was functional in that year had collapsed, the streets in poor condition, the problem of repairing the water pipe had not been solved and the risk of the loss of the church due to the poor state of the streets, the need for a school, a bridge, a cemetery, among others (AGCA A1.21.6 E. 24606 L. 2800).

The crisis experienced in the town led the *Constitutional City Council of Salamá*, to propose as a solution to obtain funds, the creation of a ladino community fund, considering that in the place lived: *Pardos, mulattoes or freedmen* and to demand a tax for the sale of liquors. In this respect, there is no evidence to prove that the economic levy was put into practice.

Conclusions

It was possible to determine that in the surroundings of Salamá there were pre-Hispanic settlements, inhabitants that later were reduced, of which a part conformed the town of Salamá. It must be taken into account that, as it was indicated in the development of the work, Salamá was part of the territory known as Tezulutlán by the natives, named by the conquerors land of war for the impossible of the subjugation by the armed way and later baptized by the Dominicans as Verapaz. For these reasons, the historical development of the town is linked to that of the entire province. It could be noted that the foundation of the village was carried out after the implementation of the new laws of 1542, but it was not before 1547. One of the special characteristics of Salamá is that as part of the agreements of the peaceful conquest, the indigenous people were not subject to repartition, at least in the

first two centuries of the colony. Salamá during the colonial period was not a town with as much importance as it was Rabinal, because in relation to the Church it was always depending on the curacy of the last indicated town.

Over time, the entire development of the reduction was linked to the agricultural production of traditional products, with little production of textiles and a mill (San Jerónimo) that produced sugar to provide mainly the city of Santiago de Guatemala, in which a large number of workers were slaves of African origin.

By the eighteenth century the town was undergoing transformations, among others we can mention a growth of the indigenous population, which gave rise to requests for land for ejidos since the ones they owned were not enough. On the other hand, there was interest on the part of Spaniards and Creoles, in the lands located around the town for cattle raising, this generated conflicts for the tenure of the land between indigenous and individual proprietors. Another important point is that between 1700 and 1800 a large number of ladinos settled in the town or its surroundings, some of whom were freed slaves of the San Jerónimo sugar mill, which generated a society not only of indigenous and Spaniards, but also of non-indigenous people, so that three

years before 1821 there were already indigenous and ladino mayors.

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A1.45.8 E. 24595 L. 2800
A1.45.8 E. 3777 L. 184
A1.73 E. 7955 L. 382
A1.73 E. 15703 L. 2175
A1.73 E. 15412 L. 2154
A1.73 E. 8034 L. 386
A1.73 E. 48174 L. 5757
A1.73 E. 51203 L. 5919
A1.80 E. 53481 L. 6051
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A3.3 E. 813 L. 41
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