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Sommario/riassunto	In an age of revolution, Mexico's creole leaders held aloft the Virgin of Guadalupe and brandished an Aztec eagle perched upon a European tricolor. Their new constitution proclaimed 'the Mexican nation is

forever free and independent'. Yet the genealogy of this new nation is not easy to trace. Colonial Mexico was a patchwork state whose new-world vassals served the crown, extended the empire's frontiers and lived out their civic lives in parallel Spanish and Indian republics. Theirs was a world of complex intercultural alliances, interlocking corporate structures and shared spiritual and temporal ambitions. Sean F. McEnroe describes this history at the greatest and smallest geographical scales, reconsidering what it meant to be an Indian vassal, nobleman, soldier or citizen over three centuries in northeastern Mexico. He argues that the Mexican municipality, state and citizen were not so much the sudden creations of a revolutionary age as the progeny of a mature multiethnic empire.
