

**'Another Jerusalem': Political Legitimacy and Courtly Government
in the Kingdom of New Spain (1535-1568)**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in History at the School of History in
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Abstract

My research focused on understanding how viceregal authority was accepted in Mesoamerica. Rather than approaching the problems from the perspective of institutional history, I drew on prosopographical techniques and the court-studies tradition to focus on the practice of government and the affinities that bound indigenous and non-indigenous political communities. In Chapters two and three I investigate how particular notions of nobility informed the 'ideals of life' of the Spanish and indigenous elites in New Spain and how these evolved up to 1535. The chapters also serve to establish a general context to the political situation that Mendoza faced on his arrival.

Chapters four to seven explore how the viceroys sought to increase their authority in New Spain by appropriating means of direct distribution of patronage and how this allowed them personally to satisfy many of the demands of the Spanish and indigenous elites. This helped them impose their supremacy over New Spain's magnates and serve the crown by ruling more effectively. Viceregal supremacy was justified in a 'language of legitimacy' that became increasingly peculiar to New Spain as a community of interests developed between the local elites and the viceroys who guaranteed the local political arrangements on which their status and wealth increasingly depended.

I conclude by suggesting that New Spain was governed on the basis of internal arrangements guaranteed by the viceroys. This led to the development of what I define as a 'parasitic civic-nobility' which benefitted from the perpetuation of the viceregal system along with the crown. The internal political logic of most decision making and a defined local identity accompanied by increasingly 'sui generis' 'ideals of life' qualify New Spain to be considered not as a 'colony' run by an alien bureaucracy that perpetuated Spanish 'domination' but as Mexico City's sub-empire within the Habsburg 'composite monarchy'.

Acknowledgements

Without the love, generosity and example that my parents, brothers and grandparents have always given me so freely I could not have embarked on my research, sustained it, or navigated it to a safe harbour. I owe them everything and thank them for everything. Without the friendship, expert guidance and respect I received from Professor Felipe Fernández-Armesto, my horizons would have been diminished and I would not have known how to correct my course when I was drifting. Without Venetia Thompson I would not have enjoyed the final impetus to end this voyage or the reinvigorated desire to embark on new ones.

I would like to thank the School of History at Queen Mary, University of London, for their patience and support. The archivists and staff at the Archivo General de Indias in Seville are crucial for any researcher and they were always kind and professional with me. I must mention the help of Dr. Enriqueta Vila Vilar at the Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos in Seville for her advice and for granting me access to the wonderful library and study there. I would also like to thank Professor John Elliott for his advice when I was starting out and Professors Eric Christiansen and Penry Williams for kindly reviewing my thesis and proffering such wise advice. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the debt I owe to Professors Eric Christiansen, David Parrott, Robin Lane-Fox, and Christopher Tyerman who taught me how to think about the past during my time at New College, Oxford.

Terms, names, monetary units, abbreviations and acronyms

All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

All names and terms in a language other than English are rendered italicised and can be found in the Glossary. I have rendered the most familiar Spanish terms in their original language because they are relatively uniform and more familiar. The variety of different Mesoamerican linguistic and cultural groups within New Spain, on the other hand, encouraged me to translate many terms into English. This allowed me to simplify the variety of terms and generalise about specific subjects without favouring a particular linguistic or cultural tradition and for the sake of clarity. The most obvious and recurrent example is the various types of basic political units of Mesoamerica, like the Nahuatl *altepetl* or Mixtec *ñuu*, which I have rendered as 'polities' composed of 'districts' (eg. *calpolli* in Nahuatl). I refer to the head of a 'polity' as a 'prince' and the head of a 'district' as a 'lord' to distinguish them from other 'noblemen' that formed the elites of the polities.

For ease of comparison I have decided to convert all monetary terms (including cacao) into ducats (*d*), according to the methodology in my 'Appendix B'.

- AGI *Archivo General de Indias*
- CDI *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y colonización de las posesiones españolas en América y Oceanía, sacados en su mayor parte del Real Archivo de Indias* (Nendeln : Kraus reprint, 1964-1966 Reproduccion facsimilar de la edición de Madrid, 1864-1884)
- CJV *Cartas del Licenciado Jerónimo de Valderrama Y Otros Documentos Sobre su Visita al Gobierno de Nueva España. 1563-1565* José Porrúa e Hijos, Sucesores eds., (Mexico, 1961)
- ENE *Epistolario de Nueva España* F. del Paso y Troncoso (Mexico, 1939-1942)
- SP *Las Siete Partidas del Sabio Rey don Alfonso el X*, G. López ed., Vol.1, (Barcelona, 1843).
- VEA *Los Virreyes Españoles en América Durante El Gobierno de la Casa de Austria* Vol.1, L.. Hanke, ed., (Madrid, 1976)
- d* 'Ducado': see note on monetary terms, weights and measures

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Part I: Introduction

Historiographical background

Spain's American empire has been characterised as remarkable for being the first 'overseas' empire that was also 'territorial' rather than purely 'commercial'. Furthermore unlike other contemporary 'territorial' empires it was not contiguous with the metropolis; the ecosystems it spanned were unprecedentedly diverse and unfamiliar; and the cultures it encompassed were alien and remote. These peculiarities have focused the attention of historians on how Spaniards acquired such an empire and then how they were able to keep and govern it.

The extraordinary aspects of Spain's empire and its formation at the crest of 'the Renaissance' have shaped the prevalent understanding of how it was governed. The administration of Spain's overseas dominions has been identified as an essential manifestation of the early-modern project of state building - Europe's answer to the contemporary 'bureaucratic' empires of Asia and a precursor of the European imperialism that followed. As a result most historians have focused on the institutions of colonial government. 'By 1600 the machine was installed, huge beyond precedent, blemished here and there with *ad hoc* parts, full of frictions making it creak and groan; but undeniably running...the growth of [Spain's] American empire can properly be seen as a remarkable outcome of that concentration of power achieved in Spain by Isabella and Ferdinand in the

last quarter of the fifteenth century and reinforced by Charles V and Philip II.¹ This view has been increasingly tempered with provisos, but the image of a modern bureaucratic 'machine' operating the Spanish Empire in the Americas, accompanied by a corpus of legislation, trailblazing the path to the modern state, persists:

...the crown, starting from scratch, was better placed than in the Iberian Peninsula, with its accretion of historic municipal privileges and corporate rights, to create a system of government directly dependent on imperial control. If the 'modernity' of the modern state is defined in terms of its possession of institutional structures capable of conveying the commands of a central authority to distant localities, the government of colonial Spanish America was a more 'modern' state than the government of Spain, or indeed of that of almost every Early Modern European state.²

The emphasis on institutional structures has led to a circular explanation in which the very modernity of bureaucratic government allowed the crown to govern its remote domains. 'The most obvious tool of domination was the administrative apparatus that Spain began installing in America within years of Columbus' first arrival' wrote Peter Bakewell '...In Mexico, officialdom was sufficiently rooted barely a decade after the conquest for the *encomenderos*' role as representatives of colonial power to become redundant.' He goes on to sketch the rise of bureaucracy through the removal of Cortés from supreme office in New Spain to the appointment of an *audiencia* and the employment of *corregidores*, 'the salaried administrators of local, rural districts' and finally the appointment of a viceroy in 1535: 'Now the essentials of a bureaucratic panoply were in place.'³

¹ P. Bakewell 'Conquest after Conquest', in *Spain Europe and the Atlantic World: Essays in honour of J.H. Elliott*. R.L. Kagan and Geoffrey Parker eds. (Cambridge, 1995) p.314.

² J.H.Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (Yale, 2006), p. 127.

³ P. Bakewell, 'Conquest after Conquest' in *Spain Europe and the Atlantic World ...*, pp.296-315.

The work of legal theorists has been employed to support the notion of that a legal framework was drawn up by Spanish imperial administrators to govern their colonies in the fashion of a 'modern' state with a well-defined bureaucracy: Vasco de Puga's *Provisiones, cédulas, instrucciones para el gobierno de la Nueva España* of 1563 is perhaps the earliest example of this emphasis followed in 1571 by Juan de Ovando's attempt at collating all the laws and ordinances of the Americas following his *visita* of the council of the Indies- a project that tellingly was not completed until over a century later. In the meantime works like Solórzano y Pereira's *Política Indiana* of 1647 attempted to describe the political and legal theory of the Spanish administration in New Spain.

The sheer volume of papers that survive in imperial archives, including royal instructions and the meticulous records of judicial proceedings, has been cited as evidence for the preponderance of Spain's bureaucracy. They exemplify the degree of control that bureaucrats in Madrid seemed willing and often able to exert.

...justice was the preserve of royally appointed bureaucrats; ecclesiastical patronage was in the king's hands. The administration aspired to regulate the most minute details of the lives of its subjects in Manila and Michoacán, down to the weight of the burdens that native labourers were allowed to carry and the identity of individuals allowed to wear swords in the street. With the exception of a few states of broadly feudal character and some ecclesiastical 'peculiars' where the rights of the Crown were effectively farmed out to religious orders, the overseas empire was run, with all the distortions and inefficiencies that derived from the intractability of time and space, from Madrid.⁴

⁴ F.F.R. Fernández-Armesto 'The Improbable Empire' in *Spain: A History*, R. Carr ed. (Oxford, 2000), p.126.

A New Approach

I have found it useful to adopt Timothy E. Anna's concept of 'authority' and his accompanying definitions of 'legitimacy' and 'power' at the fall of royal government in Mexico City as the framework for understanding the origins of royal government in Mesoamerica:

...authority is not power but the foundation of power. Much less is it "the established government" or "the authorities" for an established government may lose its authority to an opponent or another force without its immediately being clear to observers that this transition has occurred... *Authority* as used in this study is thus similar to the more widely recognised term *legitimacy* but somewhat broader... [but] "authority is not 'legitimate power' as is often claimed, for legitimate power may be without authority a situation which arises in the approach to a revolution"... [authority] is the right to possess sovereignty, the right to govern. It is thus based upon the ability of the established authority to prove to the governed its right to continue governing them.⁵

The novelty and singularity of Spain's empire, in particular its remoteness from the metropolis with its coercive power, make the establishment of authority the crucial variable in the creation and maintenance of the Spanish empire. 'The fact that the system is accepted rather than imposed helps to distinguish an authoritarian regime from a regime of force. In the Spanish political formula, the basic ingredient was acceptance, not violence.'⁶ Without acceptance the Spanish empire did not have the resources or the power to impose its will: 'the regime collapsed with a suddenness that appears all the more stunning when

⁵ T. E. Anna, *The Fall of the Royal Government in Mexico City*, (Nebraska, 1978) xiv.

⁶ *Ibid.* xv.

viewed in the context of its newly revived strength. I believe the explanation of this paradox is that the Spanish imperial system and idea lost its authority.⁷

If authority was the crucial element in the survival of the Spanish regime after 300 years, it was even more important at its inception. Paraphrasing Anna and reading back the implications of his conclusion, my starting point will be that the Spanish regime became established with a suddenness that appears all the more stunning when considering the small numbers and comparative weakness of the few thousand Spanish immigrants in Mesoamerica during the early to mid-sixteenth century. I believe the explanation for the paradox is that viceregal government rapidly gained acceptance of its authority from the elites of New Spain.

With few notable exceptions, by 1568 most of the generation that had experienced the conquest of Tenochtitlan as adults were dead or inactive. Successors to the Spanish *conquistadores* had all but given up hope of feudal lordship, titles or even perpetual *encomienda* holdings in their line after the tragic results of the instability following Velasco's death. The once zealous members of the mendicant orders were entering a period of disillusion caused by the suspicions and suppressions of their authority by the dictates of the Council of Trent and jealous Spanish officials combined with frustrations regarding the progress of their evangelic mission. The indigenous elite was in the middle of a thirty year period of demographic stability, strong government and relative prosperity but the enthusiasm of the first generation of lords for engagement with the mendicant and viceregal culture exemplified in the careers, writings and crusading zeal of alumni of elite

⁷ *Ibid*, xiv

colleges like Tlatelolco was beginning to wane along with mendicant enthusiasm and funding for their academic institutions. The great magnates had gone but the viceroys had failed to establish their own official perpetuity of government over New Spain. Debates about the continuation of viceregal government seemed settled and official viceregal powers were even increased but no subsequent viceroy would rule as long as the first two. In terms of legislation the chaotic 'formative period' up to 1568 was being replaced with 'a complete revision of the imperial administration of New Spain'⁸ under viceroys Martín Enríquez in New Spain and Francisco de Toledo in Peru, echoing similar previous retrenchments in Europe,⁹ and inaugurating a period of legislative 'consolidation'. In short, although continuities outweighed the discontinuities, 1568 feels like the end of a period.

To understand how viceregal authority became established I have concentrated on how the viceroys governed in practice rather than on the creation or development of institutions. In this regard my approach is indebted to the methodology of historians of Tudor government who sought new departures away from the previous emphasis on institutional history that had dominated their field.¹⁰ As we have seen Spanish administration of her American colonies has been held up to be essentially and consciously different from what had preceded it, like Elton's Tudor 'revolution in government'. The new approach pioneered by Penry Williams '[w]ithout ignoring the institutional framework...concentrated on describing the ways in which government actually worked, the

⁸ A.F. García-Abasolo, *Martín Enríquez y la Reforma de 1568 en Nueva España* (Seville, 1983) 'Introduction'. p.12

⁹ J. Hernando Sánchez, *Castilla y Nápoles en el siglo XVI. El Virrey Pedro de Toledo Linaje Estado y Cultura (1532-1553)*, (Castilla y León, Valladolid? 1994), pp.197-8.

¹⁰ P. Williams, *The Tudor Regime*, (Oxford 1979), p. vii.

people who ran it the impact that it made upon society, and the reason for its survival: in short... processes not structures.’ This approach was carried forward by others like David Starkey who explored the operations of ‘courtly’ government and developed notions like that of ‘representation through intimacy’ that I have found particularly useful.¹¹

My approach has also been prosopographical and has focused on the political motivations of both Spanish and indigenous actors (who have been particularly side-lined in the ‘structural’ approach) in order to uncover who benefitted from the developing political arrangements and how these operated in practice to govern New Spain. In addition I have traced the developing benchmarks of legitimacy that motivated, guided and interpreted the expectations and actions of the ‘political nation’ of New Spain. The interaction between the practice of government, benchmarks of legitimacy and the individual political interests that sustained them was dynamic: viceregal authority both guided and was formed by political developments; consequently the subject (and the period in general) awaits a chronological narrative treatment. That proved unfeasible within the bounds of a doctoral thesis. I present here what I hope will be a useful guideline for such a project in the future, and a new description of the nature of Spain’s empire over Mesoamerica.

Viceregal regimes present their own particular problems that historians of royal governments don’t have to contend with. Firstly, viceroys were not sovereign and were bound by legal restraints, competing authorities within New Spain and the need to justify their actions to the king; but they were clearly not bureaucrats either. They were sent to rule an artificial political entity called the ‘kingdom of New Spain’ that was theoretically a

¹¹ Eg. *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, David Starkey, ed. (New York 1987), *passim* esp. pp.82-3.

sub-kingdom of Castile, like Granada rather than *aeque principaliter* like Naples, but operating in practice under more (and developing) exceptions than by Castilian norms. I use throughout the concept of 'two audiences' as judging the actions of the viceroys and other power-brokers: the crown in Spain on the one hand and the elites of New Spain on the other. The verdicts of one affected the perceptions of the other so that ideally both had to be kept content.

Works like Ronald Syme's *The Roman Revolution* provide useful analogous examples: Edward Gibbon gave Augustus the epithet 'that subtle tyrant' and in a sense Syme's book is an attempt to unravel and explain that subtlety which allowed Octavian to transform the limits and the meaning of the ancient Republican offices and titles he held for his political ends and 'auctoritas'. Syme explored how Octavian/Augustus, was able to co-opt and at times coerce the individualistic and fiercely competitive Roman elite into peacefully accepting his *de facto*, if not *de jure* monarchy despite the proud republican traditions and sense of aristocratic *dignitas* that had already caused a bloody and deeply divisive civil war. Syme's aims inevitably led him to investigate the links between the 'imperial family' and the power-brokers of Rome. His study focused on the strategic links of dependence or patronage, marriage and friendship with which Augustus tied the Roman elite to his agendas and linked their fortunes with his own, while concealing it behind a veil of political legitimacy expressed in art, architecture and literature. Augustus became the indispensable keystone of this unofficial and subtle structure of alliances. 'In all ages, whatever the form and name of government, be it monarchy, republic, or democracy, an oligarchy lurks behind the façade; and Roman history, republican or imperial is the history of the governing class'.¹²

¹² R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, (Oxford, 1960), p.7.

Seen from this perspective, the distribution of titles and 'bureaucratic' offices up for grabs in the Roman Empire gain a meaning which transcends the apparent roles and responsibilities that they describe. Instead they become part of an often deadly competition for power mediated by the person of the linchpin *princeps*.

Nicolai Rubinstein's *The Government of Florence Under the Medici* similarly serves to explain the hegemony of a single family within a republic whose institutions were designed specifically to avoid such a monopoly of power. Rubinstein concentrated on the electoral records of the Florentine republic 'to uncover the mechanisms by which citizens with the same status as everyone else wielded such influence'¹³. He ascertained this by finding out who these people were and where they fitted into Florentine society and the Medici networks. Like the *princeps*, the head of the Medici family in Florence came to be acknowledged as the mediator of power internally and internationally: from blessing Florentine marriages to dealing personally with envoys of other states the first citizen became indispensable to the operation of the Florentine state.

Although the origin and nature of viceregal government in New Spain differs in fundamental ways from either ancient Rome or fifteenth-century Florence, there are conceptual similarities that make these areas of study at least comparable. The most obvious connection is that in all three cases the power that individuals wielded surpassed the strictly defined legal limits of their station. In all three cases certain individuals achieved a supremacy over their fellow competitors for power by exploiting the ambiguities of the

¹³ N. Rubinstein *The government of Florence under the Medici 1434-1494*, OUP 1997 (2nd edition), introduction.

systems they operated in by 'elbowing' their way to a position of indispensability ahead of competing claimants.¹⁴

Little has been written on American viceregal courts in the sixteenth century, even less on their use in governing New Spain, while political or administrative history generally has long been out of fashion. An indirect route to understanding the importance of the court in the Spanish world generally has been through works on Iberian courts such as *Instituciones y élites de poder en la monarquía hispana durante el siglo XVI* edited by José Martínez Millán.¹⁵ Although none of the articles in the book relates directly to New Spain there is much useful discussion of how to identify and look for the often obscure webs of clients and mutual dependence within a sixteenth-century Hispanic court; the vocabulary of court power and patronage and a certain culture of service in particular were replicated in New Spain.

For New Spain, interest in this field, though nascent, seems to be growing. As early as the 1974 collection of essays *New Approaches to Latin American History*¹⁶ the contributions of Stuart B Schwartz on 'State and society in colonial Spanish America: an opportunity for prosopography' and Margaret E. Crahan on *Spanish American counterpoint: problems and possibilities in Spanish colonial administrative history* laid out the bibliographical panorama and pointed to many of the avenues that historians could pursue in exploring the non-institutional aspects of the Spanish administration in the Americas.

¹⁴ Eg. N. Elias *The civilising process*, (Oxford 1994), p.335ff.

¹⁵ Eg. J. Martínez Millán (ed.) *Instituciones y élites de poder en al monarquía hispana durante el siglo XVI*, (Madrid, 1992).

¹⁶ *New Approaches to Latin American history*, R. Graham & P.H. Smith eds., (Texas 1974).

Amongst other suggestions a prosopographical approach was advocated to help illuminate bonds of kinship and patronage; the importance of Spanish law in the creation of colonial society; the influence of bureaucratic corruption and the role of the viceroy's court. These proposals have been followed up sporadically and seem to have aroused some scholarly interest, which has been recently outlined in the 2002 write-up of the international congress, held in Toledo: *El Gobierno de un Mundo- Virreinos y Audiencias de la América hispánica*.¹⁷ Of most relevance was Pilar Latasa's contribution 'La Corte Virreinal Peruana' which provides a useful description of the historiographical development of this field which she traces back to the work of Norbert Elias's *The Court Society* through works like Ronald G. Asch and, Adolf M. Birke (eds.) *Princes, Patronage, and the nobility: The Court at the beginning of the modern age*. However as Latasa points out, the viceregal courts were a special case that differed in important respects from better established and sovereign courts in Europe, as well as the other European courts under Hapsburg sovereignty: 'the courts of New Spain and Peru were the only courts in the composite monarchy that were a new creation'. Little has been done with regards to the direct study of viceregal courts of Mexico and Lima, the bibliography she provides is of useful tangential studies on specific issues related to patronage. Nevertheless a set of aims and methodology has gained acceptance. In summary these are: a reconstruction of the viceroy's client networks; an analysis of the power relations between the viceroys and colonial administrative institutions; the design of a system of representation of power and finally the 'configuration of a space of influence and artistic patronage'.¹⁸ The need to lay out specific aims for this

¹⁷ P. Latasa 'la corte virreinal Peruana' in *El gobierno de un mundo- virreinos y audiencias de la américa hispánica*. Feliciano Barrios coord., (Castilla-La Mancha, 2004).

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 345 and pp.347-9.

field, however, illustrates how little has been done and how much is open to investigation. Useful biographical studies exist, but no extant work has sought a comprehensive description of the establishment and extension of viceregal power through the perspective of the court and client-patron relationships.

Ethelia Ruiz Medrano's *Reshaping New Spain*¹⁹ comes closest to a study of viceregal government using the methodology proposed by Latasa. Her work uses the evidence from judicial *visitas* to try to uncover the networks of patronage and mutual advantage of Mendoza's regime. However, she does not attempt to identify in this a method of government but only an explanation of how viceregal corruption deviated from the superior, bureaucratic and rule-bound administration of the professional lawyers of the Second Audiencia, and in the process reshaped the structure of government in New Spain. Nor does it investigate questions of political expectation and legitimacy or their expression in the literature, ceremonial and display of the period as recommended by Latasa. This approach shows the endurance of the 'structuralist' approach to colonial government harking back in particular to the work of Horst Pietschman and before him Ots Capdéqui and others.²⁰

The phenomenon of corruption in Spain's American empire has been studied in the context of a modern bureaucratic administration, of the sort described by Weber,²¹ where it

¹⁹ E. Ruiz Medrano, *Reshaping New Spain: Government and private interest in the colonial bureaucracy, 1531-1550*, J. Constantino and P. Marmasse trans., (Colorado, 2006).

²⁰ H. Pietschmann *El Estado y su evolucion al principio de la colonizacion espanola de America*. (Mexico, 1989); O. Capdequi, *El Estado Español en las Indias* (Mexico, 1986).

²¹ M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, Gunther Roth and Claus Wittich eds., (LA& London), 1978, esp., pp.212-225.

was considered an inherent evil of early modern government, despite the best intentions of the states. For Horst Pietschmann, in the most developed theoretical work on colonial corruption, *El estado y su evolución al principio de la colonización Española de América*, '[t]he state as an ethical and teleological entity was represented by the monarchy, whose actions, while being at the service of the common good, demanded a general acceptance of the law'²² and furthermore that 'the state's most important medium for conducting its aims was legislation'. The tendency he saw in the sixteenth century was a 'suppression of all the traditional and patrimonial elements that persisted [and this] can qualify the colonial empire towards the end of the 16th century as the most developed body of the state in that period heading in the direction of the modern rational- bureaucratic ideal'²³. To achieve this: 'a bureaucratic government needs a body of functionaries of professional education, guided according to high ethical norms and attached to obedience and facts as much as to the legislative foundations of government'.

Corruption arose because the men that composed the administration did not possess these attributes while at the same time 'the social prestige of state functionaries was not harmed by abuses nor by the diffusion of corruption, given that the exploitation of an office for personal gain was considered legitimate and so was tolerated by society'. After demonstrating various examples of 'corruption' or the deviation of individuals from the norms set down by the state, his conclusion tried to explain its ubiquity: '...corruption in America took on the character of a system and it will be necessary to explain it in terms of a more or less permanent tension between the Spanish state, the colonial bureaucracy and

²² H. Pietschmann *El Estado y su evolución...* p.123

²³ *Ibid.* p. 126 and p. 162

colonial society.’²⁴ The ‘tension’ arises from the chasm between the ‘perception’ of how administrators should behave; according to his belief in the operation of a ‘modern rational-bureaucratic ideal’, and the reality of ‘legitimate’ conduct. For Ruiz Medrano the *oidores* of the Second Audiencia symbolise the professional bureaucrats who understood the teleological intentions of state-formation through legislation, even if no-one else did, while the viceroys represented self-interest and corruption: transforming ‘in just a few years, institutions that were vital for safeguarding royal jurisdiction, such as the *corregimiento* – an efficient institutional means for limiting the lordly pretensions of some *encomenderos* and introducing royal authority into the Indian communities’ into merely ‘local interests’.²⁵

Lara Semboloni’s remarkably detailed and well researched doctoral thesis proposes a more nuanced approach within a similar ‘structuralist’ intellectual framework.²⁶ Semboloni agreed that the legislation and bureaucracy of the Spanish administration led to the formation of the state but, following Michel Foucault, she argues that this was the result of a gradual and continuing process wherein she concedes the first sixty years should still be considered a ‘formative period’ followed by one of ‘consolidation’: ‘... the law must be understood as the ordering of social aggregations and, in this sense, it responds to a moment of articulation, that not only orders society, but adapts itself in a process of constant mutation.’²⁷ Furthermore the main agency for this process was not the crown in Madrid but the viceroys in Mexico City because they were responsible for the daily

²⁴ *Ibid* p.159 and p.182 respectively.

²⁵ E. Ruiz Medrano, *Reshaping New Spain...* p. 257.

²⁶ L. Semboloni, *La Construcción de la autoridad virreinal en Nueva España, 1535-1595*. Vol.2, p.296ff (unpublished doctoral thesis, Colegio de México, 6 November 2007).

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp.1-3.

mandamientos that constitute the true judicial norms that came to be known as the *derecho Indiano* quoted by the theorists. The issue of these *mandamientos* represents ‘one of the first attempts to exert effective control of the new territory; that is to say if the viceroy emits a directive to a specific place and so to a specific authority, it means that there is an organisation or the intention of creating one.’²⁸ This internal process within New Spain ‘constructed’ viceregal authority and the state because ‘...the judicial sphere [is the] expression of society as the manifestation of political power’.²⁹

By contrast, Alejandro Cañeque’s *The King’s Living Image*³⁰ challenges the usefulness of the notion of the ‘state’ and ‘the previous emphasis on the institutional and legal aspects of the Spanish dominion in America’ in this period, pointing out that ‘...in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the idea of the ‘state’ as the essential concept that unified and gave cohesion to the political community had not yet entered the political imagination of the Spanish polity.’ His work provides an alternative methodological approach focusing on the ‘language of politics’:

...my aim here is to examine the shared vocabulary, the principles, and the assumptions uniting a number of texts, in order to identify the “constitutive and regulative conventions” of the reigning ideology. This will allow the understanding of the function of language in the theory and practice of viceregal power...political ideas and principles are given a central role in shaping political behaviour, because “in recovering the terms of the normative vocabulary available to any given agent for the descriptions of his political behaviour” Skinner has argued, “we are at the same time indicating one of the constraints upon this behaviour itself.” In other words we cannot expect a

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 232.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p.264.

³⁰ A. Cañeque *The king’s living image: the culture and politics of viceregal power in colonial Mexico* (New York, 2004).

political agent “to have meant or done something which he could never be brought to accept as a correct description of what he had meant or done”.

For Cañeque the ritual ceremonies and visual representations of power produced in New Spain reveal ‘beliefs and practices that constitute viceregal power and the Spanish imperial system of rule... If we are to understand the nature of viceregal power (and by extension, of Spanish colonial rule) most fully and without the constraint imposed by the state paradigm, we must learn to ‘see’ a viceroy as contemporaries would have done and the way to this end is the study of the viceregal institution as both image and ritual’. Cañeque argues that this created a ‘the culture of authority’ and that subscription to this culture gave viceroys authority over the inhabitants of New Spain: ‘...I draw attention to the images and distinctive political languages used to define and refer to viceregal power, to the operation of viceregal symbols, and to the pervasive concern with ritual and gesture. This allows me to understand how viceregal power was constituted, sustained, and contested.’

I have found some of the methodology of these works useful, without agreeing with their all of their conclusions. Broadly speaking, I agree that the concept of the ‘state’ in this period, and its manifestation in a modern rational bureaucracy, is redundant but I am not convinced that the ‘culture of authority’ as described by Cañeque is sufficient to explain viceregal authority, especially at its origin, without understanding the daily practice of government. Liberated from the need to see the practice of government in terms of a ‘structural’ approach, and seeing the viceroys ‘as they were seen by contemporaries’, it is possible to appreciate the individual political logic, limited by the language of legitimacy, that motivated the viceroys’ actions. These interests and the justificatory language of legitimacy evolved in a context of political competition created by ambiguous competencies

and weak legal structures of the Habsburg monarchy and its 'two audiences'. It was the political success of the viceroys that established the authority of viceregal government.

The most glaring omission in the historiography is the role of the expectations and demands of the local population in defining the terms of this competition and consequently the actions of the viceroys and even royal legislation. This is particularly unfortunate with regards to the indigenous population of New Spain whose role in shaping the nature of the Habsburg empire has been largely ignored even when, as Semboloni discovered, as many written viceregal *mandamientos* that survive in the archives went to indigenous lords as they did to Spanish authorities.

Active indigenous participation in 'the Conquest' and in subsequent military ventures has long been accepted as decisive. Similarly the influence of Mesoamerican ritual and traditions of the sacred in adapting Catholicism in its Mesoamerican manifestation, rather than seeing it as an imposition in a 'second conquest', has also gained credence.³¹ However there has been little effort to understand the political context in which these events occurred or the degree of commitment that many indigenous individuals and by extension their polities demonstrated to New Spain. The historiography of the period does not explain why so many polities, like Texcoco, that had not lost out from the Mexica empire eventually sided with the Spanish confederation or why they continued fighting, remained peaceful and collected tribute for Mexico City, beyond the notion that the Spaniards did not interfere in their self-government; rewarded certain individuals; that epidemics sapped their potential to resist; or that they grudgingly accommodated the parasitic presence of the

³¹ Eg., M. Restall *Seven myths of the conquest* (Oxford, 2003); *Indian conquistadors: Indigenous allies in the conquest of Mesoamerica*, E. Matthew & M. Oudijk eds., (Oklahoma, 2007).

distant Spaniards but resisted in underhand, culturally exclusive ways; or even that Spanish military and technological domination kept them suppressed.³² The possibility that has not been entertained is that successful elites were active participants and interested parties in the survival of viceregal authority and that they were sufficiently enfranchised within the viceregal system.

A political and prosopographical approach shows the extent of indigenous participation and the political motivations behind this. James Lockhart's study of the Nahuas after the conquest remains the most important general source for the survival of indigenous political organisations, but the diversity of indigenous polities means that it should be read with the increasing number of regional histories or biographical studies, including Gerhard's *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*.³³ Collections of printed documents, especially correspondence wills and letters of merit aimed at illuminating the biographies of particular individuals are indispensable.³⁴ There have been an increasing number of specific studies of the 'mental world' and new identities of the post-conquest elites and how they developed in this period which are essential for understanding the attitudes, expectations

³² Eg. 'Nueva Roma : del señorío indígena novohispano y su asimilación política (La orden de caballeros Tecles, el colegio imperial de Santa Cruz y las nuevas elites de poder local)', in *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa (1530-1558)* (Madrid 2001) Vol 4., J. Martínez Millán coord., p.15ff; M. Harris, *Aztecs, Moors and Christians: festivals of reconquest in Mexico and Spain* (2000).

³³ J. Lockhart, *Los Nahuas después de la conquista*, (Mexico, 1999); C. Gibson, *Tlaxcala in The Sixteenth Century* (New Haven 1952); K. Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of colonial Oaxaca: Ñudzahui history, sixteenth through eighteenth centuries* (Stanford 2001); *El cacicazgo en Nueva España y Filipinas*, M. Menegus Borneman & S. Aguirre eds., (Mexico, 2005); M. Menegus Bornemann, *Del señorío indígena a la republica de indios: el caso de Toluca, 1500-1600*. (Mexico, 1994); *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous allies in the conquest of Mesoamerica*, L.E. Matthew & M.R. Ouidjk eds., (Oklahoma, 2007); P. Gerhard *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*, (Cambridge, 1972).

³⁴ *La nobleza indígena del centro de México después de la conquista*, E. Pérez-Rocha & R. Tena eds. (Mexico 2000); *Cacicazgos y nobiliario indígena de Nueva España*, G.S. Fernández de Recas ed., (Mexico 1961); *Mesoamerican voices: native-language writings from colonial Mexico, Oaxaca, Yucatan, and Guatemala* M. Restall, L. Sousa, K. Terracino eds., (Cambridge, 2005); D. Wright *Conquistadores Otomis en la Guerra Chichimeca*, (Mexico, 1988).

and political interests of the indigenous elites.³⁵ These contributions represent the most exciting research on the period and much more remains to be done. Unfortunately the field has generally remained artificially compartmentalised into indigenous and Spanish and there has been scant effort to integrate both into the common history of government in New Spain as a whole. I have tried to avoid this compartmentalisation in my thesis.

Archival sources

A full list of the archival material I consulted and I reference in the text is provided as part of the bibliography. Here I will discuss the merits of the documents I relied upon the most in the formulation of my thesis.

Unofficial links of patronage, blood, trust and mutual interest in early modern administrations are traditionally difficult to identify. Without the benefit of experiencing the daily practice of courtly government, historians are left needing to tease out these connections by inference, circumstantial evidence and careful analysis from a wide array of disparate documentation: from household accounts (which I was unable to locate for either viceroy), to memoirs to lists of appointments and many other sources.³⁶ It is fortunate that one of the main aims of *visitadores* Francisco Tello de Sandoval and Jerónimo de Valderrama was to reveal such unofficial connections within the viceregal regime and that they could experience its workings and first hand. Their intentions were to discredit the viceregal

³⁵ S. Wood, *Transcending Conquest: Nahua Views Of Spanish Colonial Mexico*. (Oklahoma, 2003); S. Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture*, (Oklahoma, 1995); Francisca Perujo 'La nueva identidad de Don Francisco de Sandoval Acaziti' and Elke Ruhnau, 'Titlaca in nican Nueva España (Somos la gente aquí en Nueva España): la historia novohispana según los historiadores indígenas (siglo XVI y principios del XVII)' in *La formación de la cultura virreinal 1. La etapa inicial*. K. Kohut & S.V. Rose eds. (Madrid 2000-2006).

³⁶ *Instituciones y élites de poder en la monarquía hispana durante el siglo XVI*, J. Martínez Millán ed., has a useful summary of these in the 'introducción' passim.

regimes they were investigating but in so doing they prompted an intensification of the debate on the nature of viceregal government which was recorded and has survived under the guise of a judicial process. The documents produced by the *visitas* directly and tangentially formed the basis of my documentary evidence for prosopographical information, attitudes to how New Spain should be governed and for the role of judicial processes in this period. Lewis Hanke published several important documents from Mendoza's *visita* which complement those that I focused on.³⁷

AGI Justicia 258 proved particularly useful because it contains the testimony of various witnesses to 117 questions devised by Tello de Sandoval with the intention of uncovering networks of patronage and favouritism that would portray Mendoza's self-serving and tyrannous character at odds with serving the crown's interests. As such the evidence needs to be treated carefully and seen in its context. The witnesses are predominantly, but not wholly, Spanish members of the 'political nation' and different witnesses vary from support for the viceroy to denunciations on all sorts of points. Most telling are the digressions in which the witnesses seized the opportunity of answering a question before a direct representative of the crown to express their personal gripes, concerns or opinions of what constitutes good government. The identity of the witnesses, their support or rejection of the viceregal regime and their opinions as to the nature and purpose of the viceroy's distribution of patronage provides useful prosopographical evidence for key players in New Spain's Spanish elite. Understanding the concerns and allegiances of particular individuals allows the historian to fathom the context of their actions and their other writings. Their digressions provide evidence for the expectations

³⁷ VEA Mendoza, Docs., 7&8.

these individuals had of the viceregal regime and anecdotal descriptions of how it operated. Their testimony first alerted me to the competitive nature of Spanish society, the terminology of the political debates Spanish residents engaged in and the rewards that they sought.

Tello de Sandoval asked for a copy of Mendoza's instructions to the treasury naming the recipients of disbursements from the *quitas y vacaciones* fund and other individuals who the viceroy wished to compensate from the treasury. The list was compiled towards the end of Tello de Sandoval's *visita* in August 1546 and was taken from the 'libros de la contaduria' or accounting books from the treasury in Mexico City, which have not survived. In this *relación* individuals are named, the services that justify the disbursements are briefly described and the amount of money they received was recorded. Like Tello de Sandoval (and Valderrama as we will see) these disbursements under viceregal authority represent yet more evidence of Mendoza's appropriation of royal prerogatives, the individuals involved in his patronage networks, and the sort of services that justified his favour. The list of *corregidores* and *tenientes* appointed by Mendoza is also contained in this *legajo* and is published by Ethelia Ruíz-Medrano.³⁸

Some indigenous noblemen of Mexico City answered questions specifically related to the recruitment, pay and provisioning of the Mexica contingent that participated in the expedition to Cíbola rather than the full range of questions put to the Spanish witnesses. Their answers provide interesting evidence for the terms of voluntary indigenous participation in military expeditions, their expectations and complaints. They also provide

³⁸ E. Ruiz Medrano, *Reshaping New Spain: Government and private interest in the colonial bureaucracy, 1531-1550*, J. Constantino and P. Marmasse trans., (Colorado, 2006), Appendix.

prosopographical evidence, which is generally scarce, for the noble indigenous elite of Mexico City and some of their attitudes.

The *legajo* also contains a memorandum in list form of the Indians who received licences to carry Spanish weapons and ride horses from Mendoza. The list is much longer than that published by Hanke as part of Mendoza's defence.³⁹ The memorandum names the recipients and explains briefly the reasons for the viceregal grants shedding light on the identity of local indigenous magnates. It illustrates the viceroy's personal choice of individuals to reward and as such is complementary to other viceregal uses of 'bastard feudalism' like the creation of knights Teclé. The geographical location of the recipients and the motives for granting them the rewards helps to illustrate the strategic logic of viceregal patronage.

The following *legajo*, AGI Justicia 259, is useful for the list drawn up by Antonio de Turcios of the men officially appointed to the 'guard and accompaniment of the person of the viceroy'. The crown had assigned 2,000*d* for the upkeep of a viceregal bodyguard but as several witnesses made clear they were rarely on active duty so that the individuals in Turcio's list were favoured members of the viceregal household who received a more regular salary for their upkeep than other householders.

It also contains Mendoza's defence deposition which is very useful as evidence for the viceroy's perception of his responsibilities and of the logic he used to justify some of his more controversial actions like arming certain indigenous lords or favouring some Spaniards above others. Mendoza's formal defence and *recusación* can be found in AGI Justicia 277.

³⁹ VEA, Mendoza, Doc.7, cargo XVII.

These documents serve as a corrective to some of the accusations levied against Mendoza and offer an insight into the different interpretations of good service to the crown that predominated in New Spain. They also expose the language and the ideas that were employed to justify political projects and governmental actions. As with much of the surviving evidence Mendoza's defence focused on establishing the particular merit and worth of individuals to hold office or discharge responsibilities in the name of royal service. On the other hand it depended on discrediting other individuals and establishing their particular 'passions', prejudices and allegiances to undermine their testimony. Once again this provides useful prosopographical evidence about the stance and opinions of various influential individuals in Mexico City.

Valderrama's *visita* did not produce witness depositions, perhaps because the judicial process was stunted by Velasco's death, but his investigations sought to illuminate similar features of the administration. Many of the most relevant documents pertaining to Valderrama's *visita* have been printed from AGI Patronato, 182, especially R.13\1-6.⁴⁰ Like Tello de Sandoval many of the conclusions focus on the recipients of largesse from the *quitas y vacaciones* fund, or loans from the treasury or appointment to office. Valderrama sought to uncover the links between the individuals who benefited from this *largesse* and the viceroy, his family or strategic allies. Comparing the individuals that Valderrama identified as the favoured members of Velasco's regime with those that emerge from Tello de Sandoval's *visita* as Mendoza's favourites allows us to identify the development of a 'viceregal party' that provided continuity between viceregal administrations. Once these links have been established the interests of this politically important elite, and how they

⁴⁰ CJV pp.204- 267

influenced the nature and development of the viceregal regime, begin to emerge. They help us to better understand the context and intention behind the intensification of factional conflict that came to a climax after the death of Velasco and the repression that followed the accusations made against the Avila and Cortés brothers. The evidence for the case rests largely in AGI. Patronato,203,R.2\1\1 and remains to be explored fully in the context of political competition that developed from the practice of viceregal government.

Printed sources for Velasco's disbursements are supplemented by archival evidence found in AGI, Contaduría, like that in 663B, for the difficult years 1553-1556, dealing with the treasury of Mexico City and the accounts of the treasurer. They provide further evidence of who the viceroy supported economically but also provide a broader context and justification for why Velasco chose to help certain individuals. For example the first document describes how the viceroy singled out certain individuals as having too many tributaries in their *encomienda* and helps to illustrate Velasco's appropriation of the tributary dues owed to *encomenderos* and its manipulation to increase the viceroy's potential for patronage as described in chapter 4. On the other hand in the fifth document and 13th *pliego* the viceroy's patronage of friars from the treasury is established as a general policy or how the *oidores* were granted extra funds for their maintenance.

Letters and reports to the crown in AGI, Gobierno, Audiencia de Mexico, become particularly useful when prosopographical information about sender or subjects is known. They signify the 'paper representation' (see chapter 8) of New Spain's political nation before the crown and shed light on the political debates of the time. I found the letters in *legajo* 323 containing the charges and reports of the royal officials of Mexico particularly useful because the royal officials became deeply implicated with the viceregal administration. The

royal officials were consequently affected by the *visitas* and the accusations levied generally against the regime and its management of the royal funds in particular. This prompted the royal officials to present a defence of the logic of viceregal government and New Spain's internal arrangements. This became acutely pertinent during Valderrama's *visita* and the political turmoil that ensued after Velasco's death. Tribute collection and allocation became contentious and the royal officials led by Fernando de Portugal and Hortuño de Ibarra became prominent bulwarks of the increasingly defined 'viceregal party'.

Tello de Sandoval's letters and reports in *legajo* 68 were also useful for his general opinions on the nature of government in New Spain. By highlighting for criticism the salient elements of Mendoza's regime compared to the expectations of the *letrado* members of the Council of the Indies or the differences that a contemporary perceived between practice and custom in Spain and New Spain the particular practices of government that developed in New Spain become clearer. Tello de Sandoval's letters also provide a useful comparison with those of Valderrama (which are published) as to the changing perceptions of how New Spain should be governed. Together with the letters and depositions of the viceroys, like Velasco's letters in *legajo* 19, and other members of the political nation they offer overviews of political positions in the debates that shaped the administration of New Spain.

Other *legajos* of AGI, Gobierno, Audiencia de Mexico, like 96 'Cartas y expedientes de personas seculares 1545-1559' illustrate the variety of correspondents that interacted with the crown and the many intentions and opinions they expressed in their 'paper representation'. Similarly Patronato contains certain specific recommendations and reports to the crown that can be seen in a similar vein for example *legajo* 180, R.72/24-01-1539 where don Luis de Castilla and other miners appealed to the crown to retain lower taxes of

10% on their silver production in order to incentivise entrepreneurial activity in the dangerous mining frontier illustrate this. These documents shed light on the flexible, political and participatory, rather than modern-bureaucratic, ethos of the debate between the political nation of New Spain and the crown.

Part II: Ideals of life

Chapter 2: *Hidalguía* in New Spain up to 1535: Expectations and 'ideals of life'

Cortés liked to encourage his followers at difficult moments during the campaign against Tenochtitlan by claiming that they would all become 'Counts or Dukes and lords by honorific title' if they prevailed. According to *conquistador* Francisco de Aguilar 'With these promises, from lambs we became lions'.⁴¹ For a short time after the conquest, when the moveable spoils had disappointed many *conquistadores*, Cortés continued to raise similar expectations.⁴² These promises and the effect they had on the *conquistadores* reveal their most cherished ambitions.

These were particularly relevant ambitions for the individuals that constituted the first Spanish expeditions and settlements of New Spain because they were of ill-defined status in traditional Spanish society. Like a dissonant chord, the *new man* was an unstable element in sixteenth century political thinking adding tension but also potential to society and finally needing resolution within one of the three estates that composed the ideal notion of the harmonious commonwealth. Their ambitions were different from those of a purely piratical interest in wealth (though these played a part) or the established noble dynast's desire to extend his influence, honours and benefices; they were not the ambitions of *routiers*, mercenary companies or *condottieri* who were their own masters and fought

⁴¹ J. Miralles Ostos, *Hernán Cortés: Inventor de México*, (Barcelona, 2001), p. 447.

⁴² H. Thomas *The Conquest of Mexico*, (London, 1988), p.543.

under contract for specific periods and specific rewards; neither were the *conquistadores* fighting to carve out an autonomous new kingdom for themselves like the fifteenth century 'Catalan Company' in Greece or the Norman adventurers of the eleventh century. The *conquistadores*, settlers and officials that followed were guided by the ideal of re-affirming and strengthening their links with their sovereign expressed in royal *mercedes* and within the context of service to their king and commonwealth: '...for the sake of gaining recognition as serving Your Majesty and his royal and imperial crown, I have put myself through such travails and sufferings' claimed Cortés.⁴³ *Visitador* Jerónimo de Valderrama reiterated the same formula when he informed the crown towards the end of our period that Melchor, son of Miguel López de Legazpi, captain of the first successful expedition to the Philippines, had left Mexico City for Spain. 'He goes in the name of his father to give account of the voyage [that his father] was instructed to make and of its success and to ask that a *merced* might be granted to his father'. Thinking also of his own imminent return after two turbulent years of service in New Spain he went on to spell out the commonly accepted motivation for Spanish presence and actions in the *New World*: 'it is this hope [of receiving *mercedes* for their services] that makes all men or most of them, leave their homes and tranquillity to place themselves in great dangers and to accomplish deeds of importance.'⁴⁴

Nobility removed, in theory, future arbitrary obstacles to advancement, office or privilege. Despite huge material differences between noblemen in Spain an *hidalgo's* formally recognised virtue, honour and purpose within the commonwealth theoretically

⁴³ H. Cortés, *Cartas de Relación*, Porrúa eds. (Mexico 1973), 5th letter, p.280.

⁴⁴ CJV, p.183.

created a sense of equality between him and all his fellow nobles. In an instantly recognisable comic caricature, an archetypal penniless young hidalgo could claim to have left his native town over a row with his richer neighbour because the latter had failed to greet him properly in the street: 'for an hidalgo owes nothing to anyone save to God and to his king'.⁴⁵ This mental outlook was more usually expressed as a comparison between the most basic elements that differentiated nobles from workers; so for instance in the late sixteenth century the Duke of Nájera could put it simply to the *Cortes* of Toledo: 'The difference that exists between *hidalgos* and *pecheros* is between personal and monetary service [to the king] and in this we know one from another.'⁴⁶ The implied directness of the relationship of trust and vassalage that a nobleman enjoyed with his king differentiated him from commoners. One of Miguel de Cervantes' characters could go so far as to associate the qualities of nobles and workers with those of two different species: 'The spirit of a knight, brother, is to put one's life on the line, when and if it is necessary and to do so willingly; but to suffer every hour a thousand deaths carrying sticks and bundles without ever dying is more for horses (*caballos*) than for knights (*caballeros*).'⁴⁷ As I.A.A Thompson concluded, 'In Castile the ideological bonding of the noble-estate was stronger than socio-economic differences within it, and this made for a unity of consciousness which contributed both to

⁴⁵ *Lazarillo de Tormes. Vida del buscón don Pablos / de Francisco de Quevedo* ; G. Díaz-Plaja ed. (Mexico, 1973), 'Lazarillo de Tormes' bk., 3.

⁴⁶ J-G. Georges *Hidalgos Hidalgúa dans l'Espagne des XVIe- XVIIIe siècles*, (Paris 1989), p.12.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 13.

internal mobility and to the broad political cohesiveness that existed across the different sectors of the Castilian-dominated elite...'⁴⁸

Notions of belonging to this noble caste informed the 'ideals of life'⁴⁹ that shaped Spanish aspirations and motivated their actions in the New World. These had an impact on their behaviour, their sense of justice and their expectations: '...where all individual acts were in the public domain, personal values corresponded faithfully to social values... we insist that the ideal of *hidalguía* moved men to action'.⁵⁰ Exploring these ideals and how they were affected by the conditions in New Spain after the conquest will help us to frame, in subsequent chapters, the political solutions that the viceroys would adopt to establish their authority over the Spanish settlers.

The aspects of nobility emphasised by New World Spaniards were coloured by the theoretical justifications for noble status in the *Siete Partidas* printed to a wider audience in 1491 on the eve of the conquest of Granada and of Columbus's first expedition to America. Proof of the continuing impact of this law-code is that Hernán Cortés, who was not a professional lawyer, knew it well enough to have used it to 'justify and legalise his own very difficult position after breaking with the governor of Cuba... and setting off unauthorised on the conquest of Mexico'.⁵¹

⁴⁸ I.A.A Thompson, 'Neo-noble Nobility: Concepts of *hidalguía* in Early Modern Castile', *European History Quarterly* Vol.15 (1985) p.397.

⁴⁹ J. Huizinga, *Men and ideas: history, middle ages the renaissance*, 'Historical ideals of life' J.S. Holmes and H. van Marle trans. (London, 1960), pp.77-96.

⁵⁰ P. Sanchiz Ochoa, *Los Hidalgos de Guatemala*, (Sevilla, 1976), p.11.

⁵¹ J.H. Elliott 'The Mental World of Hernán Cortés' *Spain and Its World: 1500-1700* (New Haven & London, 1989) pp.29-30.

The most resonant elements of the *Siete Partidas* to the Spanish-American settlers were those that show the Thomist influence of Aristotelian political theory because it emphasised service to the commonwealth and 'virtue' as the essential justifications of privileged status. In the *Siete Partidas* Aristotle's 'citizens' were generally equated with Spanish *hidalgos*. They were free men voluntarily participating in politics and war for the good of the commonwealth most notably as 'warriors' and 'counsellors' of the commonwealth. Consequently they 'must not lead the life of mechanics or tradesmen since such a life is ignoble and inimical to virtue... since leisure is necessary both for the development of virtue and the performance of political duties': virtuous citizens produced a virtuous state. In further defining the characteristics of the *citizens* in 'the ideal constitution' Aristotle concluded that 'the ruling class should be the owners of property, for... the citizens of a state should be in good circumstances; whereas mechanics or any other class which is not a producer of virtue have no share in the state'. The same individual should act as both a 'warrior' and a 'counsellor' not only because 'it is an impossible thing that those who are able to use or to resist force remain always in subjection' but also because these activities could ideally be performed by the same person even if at different times of life.⁵²

The *Siete Partidas* coincided with Aristotle to arrive at the norms regarding noblemen or *hijosdalgo*. Titulo XXI of the 2nd *Partida* for instance described their essential function in the commonwealth as *defensores*, to be differentiated from *labradores* (Aristotle's mechanics) and *oradores* (Aristotle's priests). In a rationalising origin myth, the *defensores* went from being relied on for their strength to being selected for their *virtue* because their position in the commonwealth demanded good and responsible men more

⁵² Aristotle, *Politics (Politica)*, bk.VII, ch.9. Aristotle II, B. Jowett tr., (Chicago 1952), p. 533.

than erratic brute force. As with Aristotle's *citizens* virtue and its propagation became the end for the *defensores*. The main difference with Aristotle was the emphasis the *Partidas* placed on lineage, but the teleological aim of good birth was the same: to grant responsibility and its concomitant rewards to men of *virtue* 'Men of good lineage who would guard themselves against committing any shameful deed [for the sake of their ancestor's reputation] and hence they are called *fijos dalgo* which is the same as saying 'sons of virtue' or in other places, gentle-men... or the 'noble and good'"⁵³.

Despite the importance of lineage, good birth was in theory just another guarantee of an individual's 'virtue' because an ancestor's honour could be inherited as directly as furniture. Consequently the king retained the right to disenfranchise nobles if they conducted themselves unworthily - after a ritual humiliation symbolizing the loss of rights and status - and 'furthermore, he must not receive any office from the king or the council nor can he accuse or challenge any knight'.⁵⁴ Conversely the king could knight men who had shown a previously unrecognised but inherent nobility demonstrated in their actions and way of life. This would be the first step that could lead to full recognition of an individual's nobility. Not everyone was eligible in Spain, but strictly speaking there was no Venetian 'golden book' of prescribed families, nothing pre-ordained or divinely sanctioned about membership of the nobility. Rather a tradition had developed by the 15th century that saw many Spaniards as the heirs to a slumbering nobility that dated back to don Pelayo's surviving Visigothic followers who elected him as king and were all granted *hidalguía* in exchange to kick-start the *Reconquista* and allow them to carry on the fight. 'Old Christians'

⁵³ SP, 2nd Partida, titulo XXI, Lex II.

⁵⁴ SP, Lex XXV.

could count on a nobility temporarily suppressed by the hand of fortune, but no newer than that of the king of Castile, if only it could be stirred and then recognised: as Jorge Manrique put it in 1476 'For the blood of the Goths/ and elevated lineage and nobility/ through how many means and ways from its great height can be lost/ in this life! Some for being worth so little... and others for not having enough/ are forced with unworthy offices to maintain themselves'⁵⁵.

The sentiment was echoed by Bernal Díaz del Castillo in judging his companions: 'We were all *hijosdalgos*, even if some of us were not of such clear lineage, because as we all know, not all men are born equal in this world, either in ancestry⁵⁶ or in virtue.' Following this logic, some went so far as to argue that 'there is no true *hidalguía* that is not created by the king' and even the king could only trace his royalty to the election of don Pelayo. Consequently 'the republic also creates *hidalgos*, because in knowing a man to be brave and of great virtue and rich, it doesn't dare to subject him, since this would be disproportionate, and he deserves... to live in liberty and not to be equalled with plebeian people; this esteem being handed down to his sons and grandchildren becomes nobility and they begin to acquire rights against the king.'⁵⁷

⁵⁵ J. Manrique, 'coplas por la muerte de su padre'; *Floreto de Anecdotes y Noticias Diversas. (Que recopiló un fraile Dominicano Residente en Sevilla a mediados del siglo XVI)* F.J. Sánchez Cantón ed., (Madrid 1948 (Hereafter, *Floreto...*), p.355.

⁵⁶ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista de la Nueva España*, J. Ramírez Cabañas intro. (Mexico 1974) Ch. 207 Interestingly he uses the word *generosidad*, an archaic term for nobility derived from the Latin *genesis* and or birth and *generositas*, the archaic *generosity* in English had the same meaning and in both cases obviously associated with our current use of generosity which in turn is related to concepts of *magnanimity* or greatness of spirit that revert in their most famous form to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

⁵⁷ *Floreto...*p.357-8.

As has been noted with regards to Spanish notions of inherited nobility of this period: 'cast like ideals [which] suggest that the sanguine aetiology of worth was primarily of symbolic importance, expressing not a 'principle of exclusion'... but a 'principle of association'. What was in practice necessary was not so much to possess noble blood as through the sophistries of the genealogists and the historian, to be able to profess it, and hence to subscribe to its creed.'⁵⁸ This was facilitated by the transmission of nobility to all the offspring of a nobleman (like classical *citizenship*) and contrasts, for example, with English notions of peerage where the legal status of the younger siblings of a lord was that of commoners, which led to a different 'principle of association' between the nobility and the commons than that which developed in the Spanish world. To shore up these credentials the *conquistadores* sought marriage to established noblewomen. In New Spain during the 1520s this could mean either local indigenous women, as in the case of Juan Jaramillo and doña Marina or Alonso de Grado and doña Isabel Moctezuma; or (preferably) Spanish noblewomen like those that Cortés or Alvarado married.

Being a 'free man' was a fundamental pre-requisite of *citizenship* or nobility because only freedom could foster *virtue*. Anyone who worked for a salary or was in any way dependent on someone else's will automatically abandoned his freedom because his actions and his opinions would be conditioned by those of his master or the financial obligations of his employment. This explains why men who engaged in banausic activities, from labourers to merchants, were considered inherently un-virtuous and dishonourable and were (theoretically) excluded from qualifying as noblemen. It also explains why inherited wealth and the leisure that ensued was such a useful supplement to nobility (or classical

⁵⁸ I.A.A Thompson, 'Neo-noble...' *European History Quarterly* Vol.15 (1985), p.397.

citizenship): ‘some have likened nobility to the number zero, which by itself is worth nothing but together with another number, it makes it increase’.⁵⁹ Only someone independent of anyone else could speak according to his own conscience and act by his own *voluntas*; consequently only a free-man’s actions and opinions were truly valuable. So while the *Labrador* served the commonwealth (and thereby the king) indirectly through the economic contribution of his tribute; and the *Orador* mediated with the divine through his prayers and spiritual guidance, the *Defensor* was worthy to serve the king and commonwealth voluntarily with his own person, in war, government or council.⁶⁰ Not surprisingly much of the *relevant Titolo* in the *Siete Partidas* dwells on how *hijosdalgos* should behave if they are to be considered *virtuous*. Amongst much else they should use their leisure in ‘becoming educated, as this is what makes a man most upright and accomplished in his doings’⁶¹ or ‘That they [*hijosdalgo*] should not doubt to die for their lord, not only in protecting him from harm or evil, but increasing and improving his land and his honour, as far as they can do and know and in doing so they will act for the common good of their land.’⁶²

In exchange the king had his own responsibilities towards this *virtuous* elite: ‘Kings should honour them [*hidalgos*] as those with whom they share their work, keeping them and honouring them and increasing their power and honour’⁶³. To serve the king was perfect freedom because he was the legitimate sovereign authority, head of the

⁵⁹ Floreto, pp.360-61.

⁶⁰ SP... 2nd Partida Titolo XXI, *prologo*.

⁶¹ *Ibid* ... 2nd Partida Titolo XXI Lex V.

⁶² *Ibid*... 2nd Partida, Titolo XXI. Lex XXI.

⁶³ *Ibid* ... 2nd Partida Titolo XXI, lex XXIII.

commonwealth and the ultimate dispenser of justice and guarantor of status. Nobles therefore served the king voluntarily and did so because they were virtuous and upheld their oaths of vassalage to him, not because they had been coerced by force or economic dependence. As a result, a nobleman ideally did not receive a fixed salary for his service but a *merced* from the king. To further emphasise that a nobleman's service was personal he was exempt from direct taxation or tribute. His freedom from coercion was also safeguarded by immunity from confiscation of his house, his horse or his sword for debt, and also from torture during judicial proceedings. Only the king could punish a nobleman for breaking the law and in extreme cases where the penalty was death, a nobleman could expect the honour of decapitation rather than the gallows. As a final symbol of his elevated status, the nobleman was not only trusted to appear armed in public but was legally bound to carry his sword with him at all times. This became the famous *espada ropera*⁶⁴ which marked its wearer out as well as embodying the virtues that an *hidalgo* espoused: 'wisdom' was represented in the handle, 'fortitude' in the pommel, 'measure/proportion' in the guard and 'justice' in the straight and double-edged blade.⁶⁵

The centrality of *virtue* and merit in the theoretical justifications for *hidalguía* formed an important part of the intellectual debate, which continued throughout the sixteenth century in both Spain and America regarding its nature. Writers and theoreticians at the time dwelt much on the interrelation between virtue, merit and birth with regards to nobility because Castile's dynamism since the late fifteenth century had brought the question to the fore of social, legal and theoretical debate. Erasmus' condensed work

⁶⁴ R.F. Burton. *Book of the Sword*, (New York, 1987) p.122 f. It was soon adopted by other European elites, called in France the *épee ropier* and rendered in English as the rapier.

⁶⁵ SP.Lex 4.

'*Enchiridion* or manual of the Christian knight' for example purported to show the path to *virtue* and was extremely popular in Spain and Spanish America. In 1526 it first appeared in Castilian and it sold out so quickly that a second edition was printed the same year. *Oidor* Delgadillo in Mexico asked a colleague in Spain for a copy and we know that it featured in the Episcopal library of Juan de Zumárraga.⁶⁶

Erasmus's equation of *virtue* with honour resonated and was taken up in the dialogue of many in the Americas who wished to be seen as *hombres de bien*⁶⁷ but were living in a new context without the established certainties and hierarchies of Spain: virtue unlike tradition was not bound by place or memory and required no *solar conocido*. More anecdotal writers like the anonymous 'Dominican friar living in Seville'⁶⁸ followed this tradition and devoted their entire written corpus to issues that defined nobility and debated ennoblement. In satirical-philosophical works like Cristobal de Villalón's dialogues in *el Crotalón*, the same questions are raised repeatedly.⁶⁹ These works were filled with popular anecdotes like that of a veteran from the Italian wars who claimed his own right arm as his 'father' and argued against yet another arrogant noble by asserting that 'we [his arm and him] are more worthy than you or your lineage.' By the time of Cervantes Quixote could advise his listener, by then sounding resonantly anachronistic, to 'make virtue the medium of all thy actions, and thou wilt have no cause to envy those whose birth gives them titles of

⁶⁶ G. Tovar de Teresa, M. León-Portilla, S. Zavala, *La Utopía Mexicana del Siglo XVI: Lo bello, lo verdadero y lo bueno* (Mexico, 1992), p.59.

⁶⁷ E.Otte, *Cartas privadas de emigrantes a indias 1540-1616*, (México 1996), p. 34-35.

⁶⁸ *Floreto...passim*.

⁶⁹ 'El Crotalón' in *Nueva biografía de autores españoles, II: Autobiografías y memorias*, M. Serrano y Sanz ed (Madrid 1905).

great men, and princes; for nobility is inherited, but virtue acquired: and virtue is worth more in itself, than nobleness of birth.'⁷⁰ In 1624 the crown had become so involved in defining sensitive matters regarding an individual's noble standing that Olivares tried to formalise the matter of ennoblement using legislation to create a legally binding distinction and hierarchy within the *hidalgo* class itself, which pleased no-one.⁷¹ In the early sixteenth century, however, the potential of the 'new man' was still untested and seemingly unbound for the Spaniards who first arrived in New Spain.

The laws that had governed the Spanish colonisation of America further encouraged these attitudes of royal recognition of slumbering nobility in the colonists. The foundational royal decree of April 10th 1495 encouraged a sense of direct relationship and recognised service between monarch and Spanish settler in America which was a fundamental element of *hidalguía*. After the decree, settlement and exploration were considered services in themselves to the crown and were rewarded with certain privileges including exemption from direct tribute to the crown of the sort that only *pecheros* paid in Spain.⁷² Tapping into the voluntary ethos of *hidalguía* provided an extremely efficient means of exploring America for the Spanish crown. The royal treasury spent no money but could still demand its judicial and monetary rights as the tokens of loyalty from its explorers and settlers; the same remained true in Europe where '*hidalgos* were still the backbone of the tercios' that formed

⁷⁰ M. de Cervantes *Don Quixote* ch.XLII, P.A. Motteux trans., (Hertfordshire, 1993), p.604.

⁷¹ B. Carceles, 'Nobleza, Hidalguia y servicios en el siglo XVII Castellano' in J-G. Georges, *Hidalgos et Hidalguía, dans l'Espagne des XVIe- XVIIIe siècles*. (Paris 1989) p. 75.

⁷² H. Thomas, *Rivers of Gold, The rise of the Spanish Empire from Columbus to Magellan*. (New York 2003), p.158-9.

the core of Habsburg armies from Pavia to Rocroi.⁷³ The freedom of action that this sense of direct relationship with the crown allowed its settlers to feel goes a long way towards explaining the number of expeditions and the speed with which the kingdom of Castile and her subjects extended their dominions in America.

Myth and recent historical precedents made *conquistador* ambitions of ennoblement seem attainable and desirable. Castilian triumphs in the conquest of Granada and military victories in Italy under glamorous commanders like Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba reinvigorated the old allure of military adventure as a means to ennoblement. Its appeal was enhanced by the practical benefits that could accrue from it. It has been estimated that between 1465 and 1516 around one thousand patents of *hidalguía* were issued by grateful monarchs to reward their successful soldiers⁷⁴. Rewards were not confined to penniless *hidalgos*; the titled nobility of early sixteenth century Spain sometimes known as the *Nobleza Nueva* owed their titles to the Trástanaran usurpation of 1369 and most titles had only been granted in the mid and late 15th century.⁷⁵

Conquest and the subsequent political, military or administrative requirements associated with the government of conquered lands provided ample opportunities for advancement within a context of ennobling royal service. In both Granada and Italy salaried administrative titles or offices also became available for distribution. Antonio de Mendoza's father was given the governorship of Granada which then passed to the viceroy's older

⁷³ A. Dominguez Ortiz *The Golden Age of Spain 1516-1659* (London, 1971), p. 116.

⁷⁴ H. Kamen, *Spain 1469-1714: a society in conflict.*, (2006), p.23.

⁷⁵ H. Thomas, *Rivers of Gold: the rise of the Spanish Empire, from Columbus to Magellan*, (New York, 2004), p.41.

brother Luis, establishing a hereditary principle within an administrative office, while other administrative positions like the viceroyalty of Navarre and of Naples were also dispensed to deserving lords. Many lesser offices also became available to able but often impoverished *hidalgos* like Francisco de los Cobos in Granada, a platform that would elevate him to becoming the most powerful man in Spain.

Conquered land had become available in the kingdom of Granada and acting like magnanimous monarchs, the Catholic kings accompanied their grants of titles with often enormous *repartimientos* of land and tributary rights. Far from weakening the Catholic Kings these grants reinvigorated the notion of the crown as the most important dispenser of grace, rewards, patronage and an agent of ennoblement. Direct royal justice would lead to recognition of *conquistador* merit: hence one of Cortés's favourite sayings '*let the king be my fighting cock*'.⁷⁶ Royal appropriation of the *mastership* of the three knightly orders in 1476, 1487 and 1494 reinforced this perception.⁷⁷ Old notions of service rewarded by just and liberal monarchs seemed palpably real to the generation that embarked for America.

Literature at the turn of the century reflected the optimism with bestsellers of chivalric romance like Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's c.1503 edition of *Amadís de Gaula* 'the most successful printed book of the early sixteenth century in Spain' and later additions to his saga. This hero's most prominent attribute was fidelity to his beloved and to his king and after fantastic voyages trials and reversals of fortune he was rewarded. The generation that produced the conquistadores were aware of the feats of Spanish arms and read and

⁷⁶ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés the life of the conqueror by his secretary*. tr.&ed., Lesley Byrd Simpson, (California 1965), p.385.

⁷⁷ J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*, (London 1990), p.88-89.

were enthralled by chivalric stories. Bernal Díaz del Castillo was born in Medina del Campo where Rodríguez de Montalvo was a *regidor* of the town contemporaneously with Bernal's father.⁷⁸ In this hopeful spirit Pedro de Alvarado was said to have worn his uncle's cross of Santiago on a tattered old velvet jerkin throughout his early penniless wanderings and adventures in America.⁷⁹ Cortés also inherited the tradition of martial glory from his father who had served in the war against Granada and, equating the notion of service anywhere with royal rewards, Cortés at one point considered seeking his fortune with the *tercios* in Italy before deciding to try his luck in America during his time in Valencia.⁸⁰ The link endured in Cuba where Cortés's friend Amador de Lares who had been *maestresala* to Fernández de Cordoba and according to Las Casas often related the deeds of the *Gran Capitán*. Another link between Spanish feats in Italy, chivalric romance and American colonization can be found in Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo who had also served the *Gran Capitán* as secretary in Italy before assuming his administrative offices in Hispaniola where many of the *conquistadores* began their American careers. Oviedo himself wrote a work of chivalric romance called 'the book of the most vigorous knight of fortune called don Claribalte' printed in 1519 as Cortés was setting off from Cuba.⁸¹

These men paid homage to their upbringing in the references they made to the classics, to history and romance in their writings, making numerous references to their

⁷⁸ See *Amadís de Gaula*, A. Souto Alabarce (intr.), (Mexico 1969), p. IX ff. with, H. Thomas. *Rivers of Gold...*note 54, p. 702.

⁷⁹ H. Keniston *Francisco de Los Cobos: Secretary of the Emperor Charles V* (Pittsburgh 1960) p.106.

⁸⁰ J.L. Martínez, *Hernán Cortés...*pp. 113-4.

⁸¹ J.M. Vallejo García-Hevia, *Juicio a un conquistador: Pedro de Alvarado* (2 vols), (Madrid 2008), Vol. 1, p.46.

mytho-historical notions of *hidalguía*, the new *hispanidad* and Castile's role in it.⁸² In turn their behaviour emulated and reinvigorated the popularity of such works. Historical and mythical example played a role akin to that of evidence and legal precedence in Spanish-American self-justificatory discourse. Examples from recent history were brought to mind to bear witness to their merit: 'King James of Aragon defeated the Moors and took much of their land which he divided amongst the knights and soldiers that participated in the conquest and since those days they have their coats of arms and are brave, the same happened when Granada was captured, and in the time of the Great Captain at Naples, where lands and lordships were distributed to those that helped in wars and battles.'⁸³ It was a subtle history lesson to instruct Philip II on how a magnanimous king rewarded his deserving noblemen. Even 'el Gran Motecuhzoma', who had become a sympathetic and regal figure to the Spaniards after the conquest, was used as a similar device and to emphasise how natural and obvious their noble status was: 'Bernal Díaz seems to me of very noble condition' the emperor had apparently noticed, in part as a result of Bernal's demeanour and in part (somewhat improbably) because Motecuhzoma recognised the merit in his efforts after being told that Bernal had already been on 'two trips to discover this New Spain'. Seeing his '*motolinia* (need or poverty in Nahuatl) in clothes and gold' he felt obliged to remedy the situation giving him a 'merced', of clothes, gold and a princess: 'treat her very well, she is the daughter of a principal man' the wise emperor had advised. The great *Tlatoani* knew admirably well how to treat men who exuded nobility as obviously as Bernal, so it should have been even easier for the Spanish crown:⁸⁴ 'I have brought this to

⁸² E. Otte, *Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias 1540-1616*. (Mexico 1996), pp.24-27 and 34.

⁸³ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista...*, ch. 207.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, ch. 197.

mind so that our many good and notable services that we performed for the king, our lord, and for all of Christianity, and let these be placed on a balance and each thing measured in its quantity and it will be found that we are worthy and deserving of being elevated and remunerated like the knights previously mentioned by me...⁸⁵

To humanist intellectuals in Spain such as Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, Francisco López de Gómara or Ginés de Sepulveda, who found the classics ‘good to think with’ the *conquistadores* and their warlike deeds seemed to embody *virtue*.⁸⁶ Cervantes de Salazar was so impressed by Cortés that he went on to dedicate one of his books to him and subsequently emigrated to New Spain. He is a useful source to the attitudes of New Spain because his newcomer’s enthusiasm mixed with his scholar’s erudition, meant he interpreted and intellectualised his experiences in a language of stock allusions that translate well through time. In one of these, he described a dream that the future marquess had when he was still a penniless scribe, half starving on Hispaniola. Cortés was characterised as having dreamt of glory and to have decided there and then to pursue it. After the dream he explained to his friends that he would ‘dine to the sound of trumpets or die in the gallows’. Cortés then drew a wheel of fortune and with his dagger fixed it at the highest point: a man controlling his own fortune. A professor of rhetoric at the University of Mexico, Cervantes de Salazar was using this dream to portray the essence of the future conqueror as the familiar ‘man of destiny’ who displayed the inherent characteristics of

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, ch. 207.

⁸⁶ D. A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical models in sixteenth century Spain*. (Michigan 2003), p. 32, paraphrasing Lévi-Strauss ‘*mot* on the Amerindian’s use of animals in myth, Spaniards in the New World found Romans “good to think with”’. Also generally in how a tradition like the classical model could be interpreted and used to support opposing views or diverse practical ends.

greatness even in his poverty-stricken youth where no-one would have expected to find it.⁸⁷

It also betrays the fact that even an admirer of Cortés saw him as a self-made man that could as easily have been considered a plebeian criminal: true noblemen were exempt from the dishonour of the gallows; their death sentence would have been commuted to decapitation.⁸⁸

Spanish-Americans portrayed their own actions in New Spain to the crown by infusing them with allusions to the values first espoused in the *Siete Partidas* and popularised in myth and positive literary portrayals of *virtuous* 'new men'. Andrés de Villanueva, whose heroics during the unlikely defence of Guadalajara in 1541 earned him a coat of arms, for which he chose a motto that appealed directly to the values of chivalric voluntary service and gratitude to the crown: 'Such as I have always done, with my fortune and my person, I will serve thy crown'.⁸⁹ More than thirty years later Díaz del Castillo writing in the provincial but suggestively named Santiago de los Caballeros made the most comprehensive appeal to the same ethos: 'apart from our ancient nobility, with the heroic acts and great deeds that we performed in war ... serving our king and lord, discovering these lands and even conquering this New Spain and the great city of Mexico and many other provinces, all at our own cost, being far from Castile or any other source of help save that of Our Lord Jesus Christ...with these we revealed ourselves to be much more than what came before.'⁹⁰

⁸⁷ F. Cervantes de Salazar *Crónica de la Nueva España*, M. Magallón y Cabrera, (Madrid, 1971), Ch. XVII.

⁸⁸ SP, Lex 24.

⁸⁹ J. López-Portillo y Weber *La rebelión de la Nueva Galicia*, (Saltillo, 1981), p.500.

⁹⁰ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista...*ch.207.

For the *conquistadores* and their later humanist allies, the suffering involved in the travails of the conquest should have acted like an expiation of their doubtful origins; Saint Hippolytus' day, when Tenochtitlan fell, should have been, the day to 'gentle their condition'. Success in martial endeavours in the service of the crown, the essential ambit of the *defensores*, should have been the most obvious means of revealing the hidden nobility of the *conquistadores* and of assuring the concomitant rewards of hereditary feudal lordship from their king and the enhanced possibilities of future services to the crown that their status warranted. Instead the 'the conquest' would become New Spain's original sin undermining all attempts at establishing merit, its due rewards, or a stable governing hierarchy.

Political modifiers

Political circumstance affected the 'ideals of life' of the *conquistadores* and settlers of New Spain. The sense of *hidalgo* liberty and the path to ennoblement that the Spaniards subscribed to emphasised the precedence of royal judgement over tradition or law in establishing merit. The king's judgement of the colonists' merit was affected by political interests in Spain and the crown's interpretation of developments in New Spain. The latter was coloured by preconceptions about the Spaniards in Mesoamerica and their ability to represent their case across the distances (physical and conceptual) that separated Spain and Mesoamerica.

The context in which the *conquistadores* presented their merit was formed by the coincidence between the revolution that Cortés led against Tenochtitlan in 1521 and the total defeat of the Castilian rebellion of the *comuneros* against Charles V. Both uprisings resulted in political re-alignments where the victors attempted to concentrate power and

reward their allies: Cortés became the arbiter of new political settlements in many Mesoamerican polities and he negotiated tributary rights from these polities for himself and his closest adherents under the suggestive name of *encomienda* (against specific royal instructions)⁹¹ as a *repartimiento* (apportion) that represented the first step towards the titles and honours they had all hoped for. He distributed offices, military commands and moveable wealth amongst those Spaniards he favoured most as well. Simultaneously in Spain Charles V began concentrating power on the royal court and set about rewarding his most loyal vassals for their loyalty and services during the *comunero* uprising with offices benefices and positions at court.⁹² Amongst the rewards available to Charles V for distribution were the offices that required to run the king's new domains in Mesoamerica and the benefices that came with them. Royal interest in Mesoamerica could prove to be an opportunity for the Spaniards that had conquered it, so long as their interests did not clash with the crown's.

The king's judgement had been exalted as the deciding factor in establishing merit but Charles V's accession to the throne and the aftermath of the *comunero* uprising altered the crown's priorities when compared to the 'ideals' that the *conquistadores* had hoped to fulfil. Afraid of rebellion and conscious of the universalist dimension of Charles V's authority, the Castilian court intended to centralise power over New Spain and to establish a reliable means of 'conveying the commands of a central authority to distant localities...directly dependent on imperial control'⁹³ but there was nothing 'modern' about either the intention

⁹¹ J.L. Martínez *Hernán Cortés* ...pp.382-3; J. Miranda *El tributo indígena en la Nueva España durante el siglo XVI*, (Mexico, 2005), po.74-5; H. Cortés *Cartas de Relación*, (Mexico 1973) 4th letter 15 October 1524 *passim*.

⁹² J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*, (London 1990), pp.159-163.

⁹³ J.H. Elliott *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830*, (Yale, 2006) p.127.

behind this or the means in which the crown tried to achieve its aims. Rather, the preponderance of the court 'was possible because in the court resided the king, the fount from which all grace emanated'.⁹⁴ Confidence in the virtues of 'intimate representation', the familiarity of personal friendship and confidence where the particular characteristics of the individual mattered more than appeals to selective historical precedents or theory – let alone the impersonal workings of 'modern' bureaucratic rules and 'institutional structures' – in deciding merit.

Representation

From the start the legitimacy of Cortés' expedition and his authority had been contested because he had gone against the authority of Bishop Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca and his hegemonic trans-Atlantic network of patronage, without establishing an alternative mandate from the crown. This network was important because Fonseca had come to dominate the organisation of the Castilian expansion in the Indies. Fonseca had originally used the decree of 1493 and its ethos to 'break Columbus's monopoly' over the process of colonisation in the Americas but he had then substituted it with his own informal authority.⁹⁵ He soon bolstered his authority further by creating and dominating legitimising organs such as the *Casa de Contratación* and leading those members of the *Council of Castile* who dealt with American affairs – the group that would eventually coalesce into the *Council of the Indies* around 1520. This in turn allowed Fonseca to dispense the most valued kind of patronage in the Americas: he promoted with offices and benefices his allies (often from his circle in Seville) like Diego de Velázquez in Cuba or Francisco de Garay in Jamaica.

⁹⁴ *Instituciones Y Elites De Poder En La Monarquía Hispana Durante El Siglo XVI*, J. Martínez Millán ed. (Madrid, 1992) p.17.

⁹⁵ H.Thomas, *Rivers of Gold...*, p.159.

These rewards were a confirmation of trust in an individual and his personal administrative services symbolised *de facto* his noble status. Dissenters (often Extremaduran) like Nicolás de Ovando or Vasco Nuñez de Balboa were deposed and even executed as rebels.⁹⁶ King Ferdinand, whose main preoccupations lay in the Mediterranean, allowed Fonseca a free hand over the American theatre. Recognition of his unofficial preponderance came from Pope Leo X who granted him the sobriquet 'Patriarch of the Indies'; his enemies, on the other hand, claimed he ruled affairs in the New World 'like an absolute ruler'.⁹⁷

Fonseca's ability to dispense legitimate and legitimising patronage through offices in turn strengthened his political standing at court and perpetuated his control over affairs in the Americas. It is important to note, however, that Fonseca's authority derived from his position of influence as the broker that guaranteed office-holding and political support in Spain for his allies and not because he was the head of some clearly established or legally sanctioned bureaucratic hierarchy. His rise and influence were therefore open to emulation by new favourites.

Without the protection that these trans-Atlantic networks afforded, the authority of offices or rewards in America could be undermined by rival appointees or nominal subordinates with the ability to appeal more directly to the crown: as another saying went only 'chin to chin honour is respected'.⁹⁸ Balboa's undoing is particularly illustrative in this regard: the *Fonsequistas* were able to encourage Balboa's own partners, like Pedrarias Davila, and subordinates, like Francisco Pizarro, to overthrow him in the name of the king

⁹⁶ *Ibid...* pp. 257-8 and 359; José Luis Martínez *Hernán Cortés...*p.373.

⁹⁷ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés ...*p.327-8.

⁹⁸ F. López de Gómara *Cortés...*p.393.

despite all the legitimising attributes he had acquired in America. The conspirators were then protected from any consequences and even granted authority over Balboa's discoveries through Fonseca's legitimising organs and his access to the crown in Spain.⁹⁹ The politics of the court in Spain could always trump attempts at political legitimisation in America and both remained intimately linked throughout this period. The development of Fonseca's irregular hegemony and the centrality of trans-Atlantic networks of patronage and 'intimate representation' were symptoms of the paradoxical effects of the ethos of *hidalgo* liberty which emphasised an *hidalgo's* notional direct link to the king but often bound him to patrons in order to achieve it.

Hidalgo liberty also affected the ability of Cortés to establish his authority over the Spanish settlers. The *conquistadores* that had elected him and his plan in the *cabildo* of Veracruz in 1519 had been supplemented by relatively large numbers of later arrivals, many of whom had originally sailed with Narváez and other captains opposed to Cortés. The men that participated in the capture of Tenochtitlan were of mixed loyalties but held together by the promise of rewards. When these did not materialise on the scale they had imagined or seemed weighted towards the favourites of Cortés, their loyalty began to waver. Cortés seemed at first unable to demonstrate that he had the support of the crown or reliable means of access to it compared to the *Fonsequistas*. Furthermore it was galling to many that their social equal was appropriating the trappings of power, surrounding himself with a noble indigenous entourage and seemed to be governing them whimsically without royal sanction.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ H. Thomas, *Rivers of Gold...* pp. 257-8 and 359.

¹⁰⁰ B. Díaz del Castillo *Conquista...* p.376

Cortés almost ended up like Balboa. The *Fonsequistas* launched a concerted effort involving force, political manoeuvring and the law to destroy Cortés which continued from Narváez's expedition in 1520 until Fonseca's death in 1524. They almost succeeded on several occasions, in the last and most transcendental instance convincing Cristobal de Olíd to rebel in Honduras in 1524. The unprecedented scale of Cortés's achievement may have encouraged greater loyalty from his followers than that given to other commanders in America, but it could just as easily feed on their ambition instead.

Cortés survived because, fortunately for him, he had become politically useful to rising new courtiers that wanted to displace Fonseca and dominate the American sphere in order to take advantage of the opportunities that New Spain offered and thereby strengthen their political standing at court. Ambitious courtiers of the king's inner circle like the Duke of Béjar and in particular Francisco de los Cobos soon displaced Fonseca and eventually Gattinara as well.¹⁰¹ These political calculations allowed the agents of Cortés at court a chance to circumvent Fonseca's hostile network and strike a deal directly with new favourites.

Rather than enforcing the rival claims of *Fonsequistas*, the crown granted Cortés the governorship of New Spain in October 1522, praising 'his deeds in service of God and [the king]' although he and his captains were put on the probation implicit in the trials of *residencia* ordered by the crown.¹⁰² For the moment Cortés was also allowed to arrange matters in New Spain in his own way even if it contravened direct royal instructions.¹⁰³ On

¹⁰¹ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés...* pp.327-8.

¹⁰² J.L. Martínez *Hernán Cortés...*p. 377.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* p.380-3.

the other hand Fonseca was accused of corrupt favouritism, particularly in his collusion with Diego Velázquez; which prompted him to withdraw from court altogether.¹⁰⁴

Interests of the court

The interests of the court soon prevailed over those of Cortés. Power was increasingly centralised at the Spanish court, or more specifically around the domineering orbit of the rising star Francisco de los Cobos. By 1523 he was secretary of every Council of state except three, and increasingly displaced or absorbed other networks of patronage as he outmanoeuvred the elderly Italian Gattinara for influence within Castile.¹⁰⁵ Offices and rewards went primarily to family members and allies of Cobos from the Castilian court throughout the lands that owed obedience to Charles as the king of Spain. Outside Castile local agents like Cardinal Colonna, who had been governing Naples, or conquistador captains like Hernán Cortés were side-lined as the highest representatives of royal authority in favour of the favourite's adherents, tying the politics of the Spanish court to the development of its imperial administration.

The political interests of the new courtiers can be seen most clearly in the choice of royal officials that were appointed to New Spain. None were Fonseca's men, let alone 'professional' bureaucrats; instead all were veterans of the *comunero* uprising, trusted courtiers or adherents of the rising favourite Cobos. The *factor* Gonzalo de Salazar had been a page at court since he was a child and had subsequently aligned himself with the network of patronage that Cobos had established in eastern Andalucía of which Peralmíndez Chirino, the *veedor*, also formed part. The *treasurer* Alonso de Estrada was considered an

¹⁰⁴ F. López de Gómara *Cortés...*p.328.

¹⁰⁵ J.H. Elliott *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*. (London 1990), p.174-181.

illegitimate son of King Ferdinand. He grew up at the royal court and was entrusted with several important military commissions and a naval command in Naples and Sicily for which he had been rewarded in Spain with offices and benefices. His reputed birth could have been considered a potential nuisance to Charles V but Estrada had displayed loyalty and merited some reward. *Contador* Rodrigo de Albornoz had also made his career at court. Before his appointment to New Spain he had been one of Charles V's personal secretaries and had become intimate enough with the monarch to discuss the merits of Mesoamerican hunting-hawks in correspondence.¹⁰⁶ He was held in such confidence by the Council of the Indies and Peter Martyr in particular that he was given a secret code with which to transmit delicate information secretly back to the Council without fear of interception. The higher salaries that the Officials received compared to Cortés, for example, also suggest the confidence that the king and Cobos placed in these allies and their intentions for them in New Spain, much to the *conquistador's* chagrin.¹⁰⁷

The later elevation of Nuño de Guzmán to governor of Pánuco and then to president of the first audiencia followed the same logic of 'intimate representation'. He 'received consideration for an appointment in New Spain because of the prestige and service of his family, but a far more important factor was Nuño's own position in the court of Charles V.'¹⁰⁸ Like the royal officials he belonged to the untitled but upwardly mobile nobility who had much to gain from daring services to the crown. He had also been close to Cobos and

¹⁰⁶ *Colección de documentos para la historia de México*, Joaquín García Icazbalceta ed. Vol 1, p. 484f.

¹⁰⁷ H. Cortés *Cartas de Relación*,... 4th letter 15 October 1524, p.217.

¹⁰⁸ D.E. Chipman, 'New light on the career of Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán', *The Americas* Vol.19, No. 4 (April 1963), p.341.

had served as his secretary before the king's return to Spain in mid-1522¹⁰⁹. All his brothers displayed a similar impulse to crown service: of his four brothers, the eldest became a prominent Franciscan and was appointed by the order as *comisario general* of New Spain in 1531, only for his post to be blocked by the Council of the Indies to avoid further conflict between the Guzmanes and fray Juan de Zumárraga the bishop of Mexico. Two were amongst the escort which brought the captive Francis I, King of France, to Spain and all three were granted membership to the order of Santiago by a grateful king. Like Nuño himself, they had all fought for the royal cause during the *comunero* rebellion. Nuño became one of the king's *continuos* or personal bodyguards along with his brother Gómez Suárez and was used for delicate diplomatic missions by the king.

Cortés tried to take advantage of the opportunity to integrate into the new ascendant network by allying himself with these 'intimate representatives' of the court, not least by granting them some of the richest *encomiendas* in New Spain:¹¹⁰ López de Gómara noted of Cortés' disposition towards them '...as the saying goes *The magistrate was their father-in law*, for they were the henchmen of Secretary Cobos, whom Cortés did not wish to offend, lest he suffer in other and more important matters.'¹¹¹ The problem for Cortés was that others followed his reasoning, in particular those whom he had not been able to reward sufficiently or who despised him for factional reasons. The royal officials were a direct conduit to the court that could by-pass Cortés. As a result their authority in New Spain soon became much greater than the official remit of their offices or of comparable

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ J. Benedict Warren, *The Conquest of Michoacán*, (Oklahoma 1985) p.158.

¹¹¹ F. López de Gómara *Cortés...*p.386.

treasury officials in Europe and rivalled that of Cortés. The officials came to New Spain with their own dependents and their own ambitions for rewards in exchange for serving the crown and their allies at court. It is probably not coincidental that after the death of Fonseca and Diego Velázquez in 1524, the royal officials and their patrons began to disregard and undermine the authority of Cortés as governor: he had become less useful in the political struggles at court in Spain while opposition to his administration in New Spain could be harnessed for the officials' own political advantage.

Perceptions of the *conquistadores*

The disorder that the conflicting authorities and interests brought affected the ability of Cortés to govern effectively and undermined both his claims to deserve such responsibility and by extension the legitimacy of all *conquistador* claims to be worthy of acting as representatives of royal government. Within months of the conquest Díaz del Castillo remembered that Spanish settlers opposed to Cortés began accusing him with graffiti verses on the whitewashed walls of his palace in Coyoacan of tyrannical injustice in his exercise of power: unjustly favouring his indigenous entourage more than the true *conquistadores* and of setting his own will above that of the king. 'White walls are the paper of fools' Cortés retorted, only to find the following morning the warning: 'or rather of the wise and of truths and His Majesty will know all very soon'.¹¹² The disastrous expedition to *Hibueras* and political opportunism of the royal officials in Mexico City halted the momentum generated by Cortés' previously continual success. Simmering complaints had found a conduit that led them to the crown in the shape of the courtier-officials during Cortés's absence and presumed death in *Hibueras*. By the time he returned, the officials had

¹¹² B. Díaz del Castillo *Conquista...* p.376.

created their own power-bases, ‘...there have been in these parts and amongst the vassals that have come to lord over the land [and] others to govern, they have counted on the Indians for help; one Christian against another...’ complained Albornoz.¹¹³ Cortés’ allies in Mexico City were displaced and the victors helped themselves to his property.

Efforts to undermine Cortés in Mexico City combined with the long-standing complaints of rivals like Narváez at court and discredited Cortés. Cobos meanwhile protected his adherents from their factionalism and mal-administration during these years.¹¹⁴ By September 1526 Cortés was informed categorically by Juan de Ribera, his representative at court, that he was out of favour.¹¹⁵ An order was made for his arrest and his trial was to be conducted by lic. Ponce de León who arrived with a large retinue that included several gentlemen ready to take over the government of New Spain. Ponce de León and many of his retinue fell ill and died soon after their arrival and the crown appointed Alonso de Estrada as interim governor: Cortés on the other hand was exiled from Mexico City and left voluntarily. López de Gómara believed that only the timely arrival of treasure Cortés sent to the king and the lobbying of the Duke of Béjar (whose niece had by then been betrothed to Cortés) at court forestalled the crown long enough to allow him to return to Spain to face his accusers.¹¹⁶

At court in 1528, Cortés had made light of meeting the man who not long before had been charged with arresting and decapitating him: ‘long voyages lead to long lies’ he is

¹¹³ *Colección de documentos para la historia de México* Joaquín García Icazbalceta ed., vol. 1, p.484f.

¹¹⁴ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés...* p.385.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.291.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid...*p.379.

reputed to have quipped¹¹⁷, but the physical distance of New Spain from the court combined with a distance of status, culture and trust undermined his chances, and those of other outsiders, of being granted the government of New Spain. Unlike nobleman of *bona fide* name and reputation or the accepted members of trans-Atlantic networks of patronage, Cortés was not considered intrinsically trustworthy and was not given the benefit of the doubt like Gonzalo de Salazar or Alonso de Estrada who seemed to be immune from punishment despite their repeated mismanagement of New Spain. The audience in Spain fell back on its underlying suspicions of the virtue of *new men* like Cortés. The literature that accompanied the sense of potential social mobility of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries also produced an alternative tradition that associated the rise of 'new men' with the triumph of hypocrisy: display over substance. It bred a comic tradition harking back to Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*, which in Spain was reinterpreted as *picaresque* stories. At the end of *Lazarillo de Tormes* the eponymous hero believed that due to his 'labours and fatigues [he] could climb the first step towards the good life'. He saved enough to 'dress very honourably, though in the old style' with a second-hand doublet, tunic and cape; finally he bought 'a sword, one of the old ones of the first kind from Cuéllar'. However Lazarillo was not a nobleman, he was the orphaned son of a criminal and a whore who by dint of cunning, corruption and hard work had saved enough money to appear before the world like the young squire he had briefly served in Toledo as a boy. 'Since the first moment in which I saw myself looking like a gentleman (*hombre de bien*), I told my master to take back his donkey because I no longer wanted to follow that occupation.' Donning his new persona greater opportunities lay open before him and with the help of

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.393.

some friends he 'achieved [his] purpose which was an *oficio real*, realising that without having one no one can prosper'. Amadís became a prince and married his loyal and beloved princess Angelica; Lazarillo ends up as a town crier and wine hawker married to a maid who almost certainly cuckolds him with his socially superior patron. The bitter sting in the story came from Lazarillo's interpretation of *hidalguía* as a purely practical career move which the lowliness of his actual achievement belied. It emphasised the shabby supremacy of appearance in the *afan nobiliario* over substance in the claims to *hidalguía* made by 'new men'.¹¹⁸

It came down to the attribute of trust. At court in Spain the *conquistadores* and settlers of New Spain were often seen at best as unknown *new men* come good, at worst as *pícaros* out for their own self-interest: an archetype who like Lazarillo (perhaps even more literally) had 'rowed themselves, through strength and guile, to a good harbour' but lacked the real substance of a true noble deserving of autonomous lordship or as Cervantes would put it 'A braggart with sword and wide breeches/ who sacrifices a thousand lives to his own/ tired of the office of the pike (pica)/ but not the picaresque profession (*oficio picaresco*)'.¹¹⁹

The *conquistadores* overplayed their hand in boasting of their military achievements against their various indigenous foes. Accounts of heroic deeds from the New World had to appeal to common cultural points of reference which led to the reflex use of rhetorical devices to help to convey the notion of their merit which they wished to portray. The distrust at court for the inherent qualities of the *conquistadores* rendered their boasts

¹¹⁸ A. Deyermund *Lazarillo de Tormes*, (London, 1993), ch.9.

¹¹⁹ *Lazarillo de Tormes. Vida del buscón don Pablos / de Francisco de Quevedo* ; G. Díaz-Plaja ed. (Mexico, 1973) 'Lazarillo de Tormes' Introduction.

almost meaningless: hallowed classical models, so ‘good to think with’, threatened to make the *conquistadores* who wrestled with them in their reports seem bombastic and ridiculous: could Cortés convince the crown he was greater than Alexander?¹²⁰ A sceptical metropolitan audience interpreted their claims, not as a product of the seemingly superhuman qualities of the *conquistadores*, but as the feebleness of barbarism in the Indians. The Indians were soon seen as the victims of greedy bullies: Jerónimo López noted with frustration the common attitude of new arrivals from Spain: ‘...those who had come over with the viceroy had at first mocked the conquistadores, saying that they were merely conquerors of chickens but after [the Mixtón war of 1542] they said that they had never seen a Frenchman or a Turk that was as fierce [as the Indians].’¹²¹ The self-interest implicit in hypocrisy lent credence to accusations of tyrannous behaviour that discredited Cortés’s claims to useful service in the government of New Spain: the sort of authority that was coveted the most because it determined the just *repartimiento* of rewards and the political organisation of the kingdom.

Courtliness became an attribute that the settlers had to master in order to present their services in the best light: Salazar was known for this ability¹²² and *conquistador* captains like Pedro de Alvarado, who picked the right ally at court when he became dynastically and economically allied to Cobos¹²³, profited from his preponderance as much

¹²⁰ D. Lopher, *Romans in a New World...* p. 2f and *passim*.

¹²¹ C. Pérez de Bustamante, *Don Antonio de Mendoza...* (Santiago 1928). Doc. XX.

¹²² B. Díaz del Castillo *Conquista...* and p.443 and 460 for the famous poem by Gonzalo de Ocampo on Salazar’s polished rhetoric. Oh, fray Gordo de Salazar/factor de las differenceias!/Con tus falsas reverencias/ engañaste al provincial./ Un fraile de santa vida me dijo que me guardase/ de hombre que asi hablase/ retorica tan polida.’

¹²³ H. Keniston *Francisco de los Cobos...* pp.102-5.

as Cortés suffered from blunders at court where he alienated Cobos in favour of the duke of Béjar: Contemporaries like Díaz del Castillo, who chronicled these missteps, saw the importance of such blunders that have too often been dismissed by historians as mere gossip.¹²⁴

A preference for the intrinsic qualities of noble birth over the new man's display continued to matter throughout this period. Popular stories abounded to demonstrate the difference such as the one where 'emperor Sigismundo [who] was asked [by a loyal servant] to turn him into a nobleman, and the emperor answered *rich and exempt I can make you, but not noble* and the reason is this: there are two types of *hijosdalgo* in Spain: some are of *blood* and others are *by privilege*'.¹²⁵ The original *conquistadores* were unable to fully shake off the disadvantage of their birth. In an illustrative outburst of sardonic contempt for this prejudice against the *conquistadores*, Cortés mocked don Luis de Castilla (his new kinsman by marriage and direct descended of king Peter I) after his humiliating failure to capture Guzmán in 1531, and with him implicitly all the arrogant recent arrivals with resounding names whose pretensions floundered in New Spain: 'My lord don Luis, it pains me that things have gone so badly for your lordship... It seems to me that the Castilla in New Spain are more suited to very peaceful activities rather than to matters of high-spirits and warfare'.¹²⁶ The epilogue to this anecdote is more revealing. Humiliated don Luis returned to Spain soon after. At court, where his brother Diego was master of the horse to the

¹²⁴ B. Díaz del Castillo *Conquista...* Ch. CXCIV *passim* esp. pp.523-528 and ch.4.

¹²⁵ *Floreto...* p.356.

¹²⁶ J.L. Martínez, *Hernán Cortés...* p.678.

emperor¹²⁷ the emperor made Luis, scion of the old royal house, a knight of Santiago and granted him a life-long seat in the *cabildo* of Mexico City. Don Luis attached himself to Mendoza's entourage before returning to New Spain. As with Gonzalo de Salazar and other courtiers the crown preferred to support their old courtiers and established nobility, despite their failures because they trusted them.

In Spain Cortés was rewarded for his services with the title of marquess, a noble marriage and the title of *captain general* of New Spain but not with the governorship that he craved. It had the effect of reinforcing his personal 'vertical' links of service to the crown but diluted his 'horizontal' links with the *conquistadores* of New Spain, his natural constituency. It implied that the *conquest* in itself was intrinsically insufficient to automatically merit the highest *mercedes*. Unlike the heroes of Granada or the conquerors of southern Italy, the king could not even imagine the landscape of his distant possessions in New Spain: Mesoamerica had little of the deep emotional significance that imbued Granada or Italy with meaning for the judges of merit in Spain and its image was consequently dimmed in the royal imagination. All that the king knew about his American subjects' performance came at the remove of accounts which were often conflicting or seemed untrustworthy. The disdain of the court for these showy *new men* and their unjustified and threatening new wealth grew entrenched. When Cortés returned to Spain again in 1541 and sought another audience, along with Nuño de Guzmán, Hernando Pizarro and Bernal Díaz del Castillo, each with their respective retinues, all in unsuitable mourning clothes a full year after the death of the empress, the viperous courtiers quickly turned the outsider's

¹²⁷ J.I. Rubio-Mañe, *El Virreinato, I: orígenes y jurisdicciones, y dinámica social de los virreyes*. (Mexico 2005), p.221.

exaggerated punctiliousness in outward appearance of dress into a joke disparaging them as nothing more than '*indianos peruleros enlutados*'.¹²⁸

According to López de Gómara the king refused to grant Cortés back the government of New Spain in 1528 'so that no conquistador ever thinks that it is owed to him'.¹²⁹ This verdict was pronounced despite the arrival of the first reports on the maladministration of the royal officials and it served as a warning to coincide with the eve of Pizarro's expedition to Peru. Notions of what constituted merit in New Spain became increasingly paradoxical: Of the *conquistadores* no-one could claim greater rewards than Cortés but the crown made it clear that he could not be trusted to govern. His discredit affected the crown's attitude towards its obligations to all the *conquistadores*. This may have had political or economic motives but the effect was to subvert the traditional benchmarks of what constituted the most deserving service and of the traditional ethos and expectations of warrior-*hidalguía* in New Spain without suggesting a new route to merit.

Alternatives to conquistador government

Justice was 'the highest and most noble virtue in the world, especially because its defence, maintenance and execution was entrusted by God to kings.'¹³⁰ This gave lawyers in theory a privileged position because they could deploy their expertise in the most useful possible service to the commonwealth. The failure of attempts at establishing *conquistador* government meant that the arrival of the *letrados* that composed the *First Audiencia*, with a

¹²⁸ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista...*, p.549.

¹²⁹ J.L. Martínez, *Hernán Cortés...* p.512.

¹³⁰ *Felipe II y el oficio de Rey: la fragua de un imperio*, José Román Gutiérrez, Enrique Martínez Ruiz, Jaime González Rodríguez coords., (Madrid, 2001), pp.399-400.

trusted courtier like Guzmán at its head seemed to fulfil the pleas of settlers like Albornoz who had warned that ‘nothing will be achieved nor mended until your majesty sends us, as soon as possible, the remedy in the shape of a governor and a prudent *audiencia* without covetousness and with authority’.¹³¹ The *letrados* enjoyed immediate ‘expert authority’ and consequently they acquired attributes that exceeded that of their counterparts in Europe. Their professionalism and links to the *letrados* of the Council of the Indies appeared to give them a greater authority to rule and theoretical proximity to the royal will than other settlers. With Guzmán at their head access to the court was guaranteed as well.

Despite these hopes, the *First Audiencia* proved incapable of governing effectively. Guzmán won over his fellow courtier-officials but at the cost of alienating many followers of Cortés who were persecuted and dispossessed. Cortés was unable to protect his property or his adherents from Spain while other potential rivals to the *audiencia* like Alvarado were driven from Mexico City. Most seriously, in their bid to extract more tribute from indigenous polities Guzmán began revising the arrangements made by Cortés and the indigenous polity elites with the support of the mendicant orders.¹³² As a result the *First Audiencia* soon entered into conflict with the Franciscans led by Zumárraga, who had been appointed bishop of Mexico City and granted a potentially decisive authority as ‘protector of the Indians.’

Guzmán’s conflict with the Franciscans and the complaints from the indigenous polities brought to the fore and exacerbated previously simmering questions over the morality of conquest and the rights of the *conquistadores* and settlers over the new

¹³¹ *Colección de documentos para la historia de México* Joaquín García Icazbalceta ed., Vol.1 pp.484f.

¹³² See ch.3.

indigenous vassals of the crown. Fr. Antonio de Montesinos had inaugurated a tortuous and at times highly edifying debate taken up by a variety of influential Spanish thinkers about the nature of Spanish imperialism with his beautiful sermon on the Sunday before Christmas 1511 in Hispaniola. The ensuing dispute distorted the traditional benchmarks of legitimacy found in the *Siete Partidas* and its historical manifestations, the very script that the actors on the American stage were trying to follow, by emphasising a new moral element to virtue that seemed at odds with the warrior ethos.

Guzmán for example was self-consciously scrupulous about legal formalities, even comparing the legality of his own conquest to the illegality of expedition led by Cortés.¹³³ His discredit was on moral grounds and the expectations placed on royal justice upheld the claims of this morality over the letter of the law. From the pulpits of New Spain the Franciscans declaimed Guzmán and even excommunicated him. Cortesian foci of discontent coalesced around the sympathetic Franciscans to heap complaints on the *audiencia*.¹³⁴ The mendicant orders had their own trans-Atlantic networks that could be very influential because they led back to the king, who was their patron through the *Patronato Regio*, and to the Vatican, from where Spain's claims to half the globe were justified in exchange for evangelical responsibilities, and which consequently gave a European perspective to the discredit that could become embarrassing for the king if he did not react. The imminent return of Cortés to New Spain with the crown's support was the final blow to the authority

¹³³J. López-Portillo y Weber, *La Rebelión de la Nueva Galicia...* p. 7, with J. Krippner-Martínez, *Reading the Conquest*. (Pennsylvania 2001) *passim*.

¹³⁴J.L. Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*. (Los Angeles 1956), Ch.III *passim* esp. p. 28.

of the *First Audiencia*. The *letrados* were recalled in disgrace and Guzmán reverted to the fundamental service of 'increasing [the king's] land and his honour' setting off to conquer New Galicia in the hope of redemption.

The moral basis of the complaints against Guzmán as an administrator and a conqueror could be used by men like Bartolomé de las Casas to condemn the whole secular Spanish presence in New Spain because it too had originated in violence. The *new men* who settled there were characterised once again as self-serving and consequently unfit to rule on behalf of the king.

Many settlers became disillusioned with the possibilities available to them from remaining in Mexico City. They were driven away by the discredit they had encountered, the paucity of rewards and the political instability; they were lured instead by allegiance or dependence on a magnate like Guzmán or Cortés, by the news of new expeditions of conquest in other parts of Mesoamerica or stories of the vast moveable wealth that Pizarro had uncovered in Peru.¹³⁵ The Second Audiencia was unable to provide an incentive to stem the flow of Spanish settlers from leaving Mexico City. Their policy of encouraging the escheat of *encomiendas* (53 *encomiendas* escheated under the Second Audiencia) was resented while they were unable to provide an alternative means of sustenance for the Spaniards that had depended on them. The *corregidores* that the *audiencia* appointed to run the royally administered polities were despised by the indigenous population because they changed every year and did their best to extract as much tribute from them as possible to increase their incomes. Furthermore the *audiencia* often had to turn to neighbouring

¹³⁵ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés...* p.395.

encomenderos to fulfil the role of *corregidores* because they were unable to find other suitable candidates, concentrating wealth and power amongst the settlers even more.¹³⁶ These settlers reacted by reviving and strengthening the *cabildo* of Mexico City as a means of defending their oligarchic interests.¹³⁷

For the first time since the fall of Tenochtitlan indigenous unrest led to armed rebellions in central New Spain which were serious enough to result in the capture of 2,000 prisoners in 1531 after its suppression by Cortés and his lieutenants.¹³⁸ The foundation of Puebla, which already implied a large appropriation of fertile land around Huexotzinco faltered and was saved only by the forced labour, and eventually even the forced settlement, of indigenous workers from neighbouring polities which caused increasing resentment even in key polities like Tlaxcala which still worried Mendoza in 1537.¹³⁹

The *audiencia* relied on Cortés to repress the recalcitrant indigenous polities. There was nothing objectionable from the crown's point of view in Cortés fulfilling his role as Captain General except that it made the *audiencia* beholden to him to the extent that they failed to even conduct the review of his *marquesado* and in particular the counting his vassals as instructed by the crown. Cortés was distrusted by the old *conquistadores* of the *cabildo* and by neighbouring magnates like Guzmán who distanced themselves even further

¹³⁶ CDI, Vol.2, p.181f.; E. Ruiz Medrano *Reshaping New Spain: government and private interest in the colonial bureaucracy, 1531-1550.*, (Colorado, 2006), p. 47.

¹³⁷ H. Nader, Ch.1 'The Spain That Encountered Mexico' in *Oxford History Of Mexico*, Helen Nader ed., (Oxford, 2000), *passim* esp. pp.20-21&120f.

¹³⁸ F. López de Gómara *Cortés...*p.396.

¹³⁹ CDI, 2.162, 'Mendoza to the king' 10 December, 1537, p.181ff.

from the *audiencia's* authority.¹⁴⁰ The reliance on Cortés exacerbated the growing decentralisation of authority in New Spain and the rising power of the magnates like Guzmán, Alvarado, Montejo and Cortés himself who provided opportunities of traditional glamorous opportunities for many frustrated settlers.¹⁴¹

All of these problems were highlighted in the royal instructions given to Mendoza on the eve of his departure.¹⁴² The *letrado* advisors in the Council of the Indies suggested sending a 'Reformer of New Spain' but Charles V opted for a similar solution to the question of governing New Spain as that which he had recently begun to employ in other dominions like Naples. The individuals that the crown chose as viceroys shared many characteristics, suggesting a similar intention behind their choice. Like Mendoza, Pedro de Toledo, who was appointed as viceroy to Naples in 1532, was a younger son of one of the most successful dynasties since the Trastámaran usurpation. Both had made their careers as courtiers and cemented their reputation for loyalty and merit by fighting for the king against the *comuneros*.¹⁴³ The crown fell back on intimate representatives but men like Mendoza and Toledo belonged to more illustrious families and they were authorised to exercise greater powers than similar appointees in the past. Even Cortés' biographer seemed to agree that Mendoza's birth made him a suitable appointment to govern New Spain.¹⁴⁴ The wealth that came from the conquest of Peru had reignited the royal imagination and restored the merit

¹⁴⁰ F. López de Gómara *Cortés...* pp. 395-6; J.L. Martínez *Hernán Cortés...*p.542-3.

¹⁴¹ See Ch.6.

¹⁴² VEA, docs. 1-4.

¹⁴³ C. J. Hernando Sánchez, *Castilla y Napoles en el siglo XVI. El Virrey Pedro de Toledo Linaje Estado y Cultura (1532-1553)*, (Castilla y Leon 1994), p.8f.

¹⁴⁴ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés the life of the conqueror by his secretary*. tr.&ed., Lesley Byrd Simpson, (California 1965)p. 405.

of conquest. After the departure of so many Spaniards from New Spain the importance of secular Spanish settlers, willing to fight for the crown or launch expeditions of exploration and conquest, once again became evident to the judges of merit in Spain. Mendoza came with instructions to review and reinstate *encomienda* as a viable reward and the longed for promise of perpetuity was again dangled before the noses of the *conquistadores*. It would be in the gift of the viceroy to decide on the *repartimiento*. In troubled times the crown reverted to courtly patrimonial solutions.

Uncertain legitimacy

By the time of Mendoza's appointment, the benchmarks of legitimacy in New Spain were contradictory and uncertain, debasing the ideal of *hidalguía*. The crown claimed to recognise that the *conquistadores* deserved rewards for their services but even the identity of the 'true *conquistadores*' was often disputed; the *encomiendas* they received resonated of feudal titles during the *Reconquista* but they were not granted in perpetuity and never became the equivalent of a baronial grant of the style enjoyed by William the Conqueror's Norman followers or the historical examples Cortés had had in mind, yet the crown did not deny this possibility categorically either. In the meantime the *conquistador-encomenderos* became the nominal elite of the Spanish settlers but they were deemed unworthy of administrative offices or rights to the dispensation of justice; while courtiers, officials, friars and *letrados* often enjoyed greater authority and wealth because of their implied link to the royal will. On the other hand legal formalities mattered but could be overridden by royal justice; mendicant morality affected royal justice unless it interfered too much with its economic or security interests.

The ideal of *hidalgo* liberty the secular Spanish elite in New Spain aspired to created an illusionary identity for them as direct vassals of the king. This exaggerated the settlers' intellectual link to royal justice but made them dependent on trans-Atlantic networks of patronage and dependence in order to represent their merits and interests to the crown: their 'mind-forged manacles' kept the settlers loyal to the crown rather than to each other or the local arrangements made by the hierarchical structures that were created in New Spain. This meant that the patronage of magnates became increasingly important fracturing authority in New Spain between the various foci of political power. The uncertainty and illusory quality of status and self-perception was echoed in the literature of New Spain: 'Mines without silver, or even real miners,/merchants greedily eager to possess them/ knights, of being such wishful, but in fact pretentious tavern-keepers... a thousand pretenders hanging from the viceroy...'¹⁴⁵

Despite these uncertainties there remained a sense of potential for those that had been able to endure in New Spain. Most of them had improved their status or still hoped to do so, the others had emigrated. In addition to exemption from direct taxation, the *conquistadores* that applied for licences of *hidalguía* generally received them and were granted the coats of arms to carve, like Díaz del Castillo, above the entrance to their houses; and a large proportion of the *conquistadores* and prominent settlers enjoyed tributary rights, even if these were temporary or conditional. Service remained the avenue to self-improvement and the chivalric ethos that it entailed endured:¹⁴⁶ Hernando de Illescas for

¹⁴⁵ *Mil y un sonetos mexicanos*, anonymous poem p. 189. ed. Porrúa, Mexico 1971 and quoted by Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza author of the *Sumaria relación de la Nueva España*.

¹⁴⁶ , F.F.R. Fernández-Armesto 'The Improbable Empire' in Raymond Carr, ed. *Spain, a history* Oxford, 2000, p.127 and Hugh Thomas, *The Conquest of Mexico*, London 1994, p. 61-2.

example had been forced to sell his house in Santiago de los Caballeros in Guatemala and lived in an impoverished hut in the wilderness but people commented approvingly that 'despite his poverty he treated himself with honour and always kept two fine horses and weapons';¹⁴⁷ these and the hope of eventual recognition were always the last to go: Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza, like Bernal a polemical defender of the rights of 'true' conquistadores, insisted he had helped to bury men who had died of starvation rather than work for a salary or in some trade, in their stubborn insistence on their honour. The hope that honour and ennobled status would be rewarded eventually could drive men to such lengths. The ethos of service united the legitimate aspirations of the *conquistadores* and settlers: from *letrados* to friars and administrative officials.

¹⁴⁷ P. Sanchiz Ochoa, *Los Hidalgos de Guatemala*, (Seville, 1976), p. 44.

Chapter 3: *Tlatocayotl* up to 1535

Waiting to embark on the flotilla bound for New Spain in 1535 along with the newly appointed viceroy Antonio de Mendoza and his entourage, which included the *nahuatlato* Pedro Garcia,¹⁴⁸ were three Tlaxcalan lords who, on being baptised, had taken the names don Diego Maxixcatzin (though strictly speaking his surname should have been Tlilquiyahuatzin), don Martín, and don Sebastián. They had been in Spain, petitioning the emperor for a year, accompanied at first by the judge Juan de Salmerón who had formed part of the conciliatory *Second Audiencia* that had been governing New Spain since 1530.¹⁴⁹ Charles V had taken a personal interest in his new American subjects, even making a habit of giving his visiting petitioners velvet capes to protect them from the cold.¹⁵⁰ The Tlaxcalan lords' effective personal presentation of their services to the emperor produced the desired effect: don Diego was confirmed as governor of Tlaxcala and head of the *cabecera* of Ocotelulco and the Maxixcatzin clan despite rival claims in Tlaxcala;¹⁵¹ the king also promulgated two *cédulas* to reward Tlaxcala: one guaranteed that Tlaxcala and her hinterland would always be governed directly for the crown by her own elites without further Spanish intermediaries; the second granted her a Spanish-style coat of arms and the title of 'Loyal City of Tlaxcala' in recognition for her services since 1520. What was not stipulated explicitly was that Don Diego Maxixcatzin would dominate Tlaxcalan politics throughout the 1530s until his death or that his kinsmen from Ocotelulco would hold the co-

¹⁴⁸ VEA, 'Mendoza'... Doc.8.

¹⁴⁹ Charles V was in Spain from April 1533 to April 1535. See J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain...* p. 164.

¹⁵⁰ H. Thomas, *Conquest* p.598, S. Wood *Transcending Conquest* (Oklahoma, 2003) p.40.

¹⁵¹ C. Gibson *Tlaxcala en el siglo XVI*, (Mexico, 1991), p.105.

governorship for the next decade; or that he and his two companions would be given preferential treatment by the viceroy, shown in part by granting them formal licences to carry European swords and for Don Sebastián to ride horses as well- a favour that would be extended to other relatives like Don Francisco Maxixcatzin.¹⁵²

Three vectors took a Tlaxcalan lord like don Diego Maxixcatzin to present himself before Charles V: indigenous concepts of nobility; the whirlwind of events that led to the overthrow of the imperial polity of Tenochtitlan and its rebirth as Mexico City; and thirdly developing Spanish notions of Mesoamerican political legitimacy which interacted with memories and representations of the conquest and pre-conquest past.

Pre-Conquest 'polity-nobility'

For the preponderantly Nahuatl-speaking polities the inherited sense of nobility was complicated by their particular foundation myths. Noblemen differentiated themselves sharply from the rest of the population. *Pilli*, the generic name for nobleman in Nahuatl, like the Spanish term *hidalgo*, meant 'son of something' and these patricians considered themselves as such because they were descended from past elites who claimed responsibility for the greatness of their communities.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Castilian *hidalgo's* creation myth in the sixteenth century sprung from a combination of the ennobling resistance in Asturias to the Moorish conquest with the subsequent re-conquest of the peninsula and of their ancient Visigothic and Roman inheritance. For the Nahuas, Otomi, Purehpecha, Mixtecs, Zapotecs and a host of other dominant ethno-linguistic cultures in Mesoamerica the sense of lordship

¹⁵² AGI, Justicia, 258, Antonio de Turcios 'Relación e Memorial'; C. Gibson *Tlaxcala...* p.168; Appendix A.

was more akin to the triumphalist usurpations of the competing Germanic barbarian leadership after they crossed the Roman *limes*, occupying and parcelling out parts the old empire. Both had two origin myths that justified the dominance of their elites: one that looked back to the dynasties that led their conquering migrations and another that identified with descent from the prestigious ancient cultures they had overcome. For the Nahuas who dominated central Mesoamerica and whose language, colonists and certain cultural attributes had spread even beyond, a nomadic warrior past combined with the inheritance of Tula.¹⁵³

The very titles of the Nahua princes, such as Chichimecatecuhtli, the appellation of the princes of Texcoco meaning *Chichimeca*-lord, proclaimed their nomadic origins; even if they adopted many of the customs of the settled populations they overcame, they retained echoes of their tough war-like nomadic past, like Ottoman horse-mane standards and Istanbul's Topkapi palace's evocation of camp-sites on the steppe. It was engrained enough that Don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli, prince of Tlalmanalco, danced in armour and 'sang the Chichimeca songs' to celebrate Christmas 1541 under the peaks of Xalpa, deep in *Chichimeca* (more accurately Caxcan) country, with their recent (and excitingly authentic) *Chichimeca* collaborator Don Pedro during a cherished lull in the Mixtón War ending in the exchange of gifts and a firm friendship between the two men.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Eg. T. de Benavente o Motolinia, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, E. O'Gorman ed. (Mexico, 1973), p.3-6.

¹⁵⁴ G. de Castañeda, 'Relación de la jornada que hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli, cacique y señor natural que fue del pueblo de Tlalmanalco, provincia de Chalco, con el señor visorey don Antonio de Mendoza cuando fue a la conquista y pacificación de los indios chichimecas de Xuchipila', P.Vázquez trans., in J. García Icazbalceta, *Colección de documentos para la historia de México*. Vol.2, (Mexico, 1980), p.307ff (henceforth: 'Relación Acazitli').

These dual origin myths did not create a sense of solidarity amongst the *Nahua*-speaking elites of the different polities or between them and other cultural and linguistic groups that inhabited Mesoamerica within and beyond Tenochtitlan's empire. Instead they helped to justify the many levels of identity and dominance within these groups. For example the Nahua speakers considered their close Otomi neighbours as boorish even though they too were descendants of *Chichimeca* immigrants and often formed active (if unequal) part of close-knit confederations like Tlaxcala.¹⁵⁵ These differences mattered even amongst the Nahua-speakers and created prejudices like those felt by the Texcocans towards the Mexica for being more recent immigrants barely escaped from their previously servile status.¹⁵⁶ Within the Chalca confederacy, the lords of Tlalmanalco who claimed descent from the 'followers of Red Tezcatlipoca,' were by tradition a more exalted (possibly more anciently settled) group than the rest of the Chalca and consequently enjoyed precedence over their neighbours, embodied in their titles *teohua teuhctli* and *tlatic teuhctli*. Yet such was the mosaic of loyalties within a polity that despite the fact that the suburb of Sula within Tlalmanalco had long been considered as part of the larger town its inhabitants proudly retained the collective memory of two powerful independent ancestral leaders.¹⁵⁷

Nahuas maintained deep reverence for the more ancient cultures they had encountered and supplanted. Famously the entire Mexica nobility, who were among the last groups to migrate to central Mesoamerica liked to claim descent from their foreign prince

¹⁵⁵ C. Gibson *Tlaxcala...*, p.4-6

¹⁵⁶ F. de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *Historia de la nación Chichimeca*, G. Vázquez ed.,(Madrid, 1985) *passim*.

¹⁵⁷ S. Schroeder, *Chimalpahin and the Kingdoms of Chalco*, (Arizona, 1991), p.98, with J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas...*pp.44-5.

Acampichtli - a scion of the royal family of the more ancient polity of Culhuacan - and the various Mexica ladies he took as his brides. Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin emphasised this aspect of his nobility throughout his life, taking as his first wife, when he was still only a promising young noble warrior, a princess from Tula- by the 15th century a provincial backwater, but in the collective memory of central Mesoamerica the capital of the seminal Toltec civilisation.¹⁵⁸ Motecuhzoma was thus emphasising a lineage that dated back to Chalchiutlantzin who ruled Tula in 562 AD and an imperial tradition that resonated with Motecuhzoma's image of the Tenochca Empire. These layers of identity and legitimacy mattered depending on the context in which they were expressed, and were often exploited for political ends before and after the conquest as we shall see.

Another determining element that confused the issue of nobility was Nahuatl attitudes to marriage and succession. Regard for birth was ubiquitous in Mesoamerica and pre-conquest *tlatocamecayotl* (genealogies of lordship) amongst a *tlatocatlacamecayotl* (ruling dynasty) that survive to this day along with post-conquest dynastic accounts attest to its importance in determining status. Tellingly these genealogies tend to highlight the continuity between individuals that held lordship within a single extended clan, rather than lineal familial inheritance by primogeniture.

In the polities of Mesoamerica all the offspring of a *pilli* (nobleman) could claim -if not always secure - the respective privileges of nobility. Potentially each new generation could produce a very large number of noblemen: prince Nezahualpilli of Texcoco for instance was reputed to have engendered 144 offspring with his various wives. This could

¹⁵⁸ J.M. Carrillo de Albornoz *Moctezuma: El semidios destronado*, (Texas, 2004), p. 114.

have important consequences for an individual's status and the cohesion of a community's nobility as a caste. Not all potential noblemen could be accommodated so that each generation saw a proportion of the nobility by birth displaced in favour of the new *tlatoani's* favoured kinsmen and descendants. One of Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin's first acts after being elected was to purge the royal palace of a large number of individuals whose interests and status were linked to the previous generation, accumulated by the successive reigns of three brothers. This retrenchment was designed to redefine the nobility of Tenochtitlan and effectively meant the derogation of many from noble status. Impoverished noblemen or factions and branches that lost out in the political struggles faced being subsumed within the general mass of the plebeian population. In Tlaxcala (and elsewhere) the ambiguous status of these individuals earned them the denomination *teixhuiuh* literally 'the grandsons of someone [important]' to contrast them with *pilli* (son of someone) and in some cases this could be literally true if a ruler like Nezahualpilli or Acampichtli's many offspring came to dominate an *altepetl's* palaces to the detriment of their cousins.

Individual Mesoamerican noblemen owned land that was worked for them by serf-like dependents or tenant farmers known variously (from post conquest documents) as *mayeques*, *naborias* or *terrazgueros*. The majority of the population of most polities was composed of small land-owners with varying private and communal labour arrangements; these included rotations of communal labour for the polity directed by the nobility. Nevertheless, notions of Mesoamerican nobility tended to be in essence more lordly or seigniorial than property-owning or patrimonial.¹⁵⁹ Noble status and its attributes were

¹⁵⁹ *El cacicazgo en Nueva España y Filipinas* (Mexico, 2005), M. Menegus Borneman & S. Aguirre, coords, pp. 16-17 for a summary of the debate so far.

intrinsically linked to political power within the polities rather than to clear-cut patrimonial structures of inheritance.

Fears of such generational derogation are evident in the *Huehuehtlahtolli*: whatever you do, one dialogue warns: 'don't lose your station, don't lose your command; don't dive into the water, don't jump from the cliff (ie. Don't risk everything on an uncertain or risky venture), don't lose strength, don't lose consciousness.'¹⁶⁰ Otherwise 'there you will lose your lineage, the bond with your descendants; you will deserve the old truss, the old cape.' To do so might condemn one's family to live harsh lives far from grace or civilisation or the *tecpan* '...you will be cast away, you will be persecuted, you will make rabbits, you will make deer of your wife and your children. Nowhere will be your house, you will never see the interior of your home...' ¹⁶¹ Laments over such a fate remained a common feature of post-conquest literature and petitions. In pre-conquest polities the stakes were high enough that it was not unusual for a 'blood-bath' to accompany a disputed succession.¹⁶²

Such struggles and other more peaceful competition aimed at control of the fixed number of titles and benefices within each polity. These were inextricably linked to control of a polity's palaces. In Mesoamerica, palaces harked back to the collective foundation myths of individual polities and were essential to a polity's sense of identity. Etymologically the various names for palaces like *tecpan* or *tecalli* were derivations of 'lord's house'. Settlements had coalesced around the palaces of the leaders of the new immigrant elites. A similar pattern of political organisation seems to have arisen throughout Mesoamerica: a

¹⁶⁰ M. León-Portilla *Huehuehtlahtolli: Testimonios de la antigua palabra* (Mexico, 1991), p. 145-148.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid* p.174.

¹⁶² J. Lockhart, *Los Nahuas...* p. 53.

polity, ruled by a prince, was composed of constituent units- 'districts'-, in Nahuatl *calpolli* or *tlaxicalli*- ruled by a 'lord'- *teuctli* in Nahuatl.¹⁶³ Each of these districts notionally recalled one of the migratory groups that had come to constitute the polity; however, the number of districts (usually four, eight or seven) was tailored to artificial numerological or practical considerations, rather than historical accident.¹⁶⁴ This suggests that the polities were organised around 'rational' lines, pointing to the power of the palace-dwelling elites in shaping their societies.¹⁶⁵ The population of each district, however ethnically or linguistically diverse, identified with a dynastic governing palace –hence, for instance, the literal meaning of *calpolli*: 'large house'- and their ancestral divinity's temple; there were no other civic buildings of any significance like a Hispanic *cabildo* in the polities. A dominant district provided the prince of the polity as a whole, though this could change generationally.¹⁶⁶

Further sub-divisions could occur within some of the larger districts, each represented by its own smaller palace. The limits of an urban area did not necessarily denote the limits of an individual polity's sense of community, which could include scattered hamlets or townships 'beyond the pale' or what Spaniards often took to be subject towns to a *cabecera* or capital city: identity was defined more accurately by loyalty and ties of obedience and tribute owed to the dynastic head of the palace to the lords of each district and through them to the prince of their polity as a whole. The very physical and psychological layout of indigenous districts within a single polity spoke to the importance of

¹⁶³ J. Lockhart, *Los Nahuas...* p.145; p.149 with references to Sahagún in note 34. Also see *el cacicazgo en nueva españa...* p.253ff.

¹⁶⁴ J. Lockhart, *Los Nahuas ...* (Mexico, 1999), Ch. 2 *passim*.

¹⁶⁵ For a discussion about the term 'rational' I am referring to see O. Murray 'Cities of Reason' in *The Greek City: from Homer to Alexander*, O. Murray & S.R.F Price eds., (Oxford, 1990).

¹⁶⁶ J. Lockhart, *Los Nahuas...* p.145-6.

the palaces and their noble inhabitants for a community's identity and cohesion. As Lockhart has observed, 'neither the *teuctli* nor the *pilli* existed separately from the *teccalli* (palace)'.¹⁶⁷

Fray Bernardino de Sahagún's Nahuatl informants described such palaces often and unequivocally: 'royal houses, where the lords live. They were the houses of the polity ('casas del pueblo') where the law-courts gathered and the lords came together to determine public affairs'. In surviving pictograms and codices stylised Mesoamerican lords are almost always depicted sitting inside or outside their palace in a linked conceptual identity. Conversely the conquest of a polity was represented using the image of a captured lord being dragged away from his toppled palace. Titles were linked to the control of palaces or to offices within them. They had entailed labour and tribute dues to maintain these institutional complexes that were independent of the individual holder but were enjoyed by the prince or lord that had been elected or selected to rule from there: the palaces were thus the embodiment of *tlatocayotl* in the polity.

Sahagún's Florentine Codex also contains a detailed chapter dedicated specifically to describing the role and importance Motecuhzoma's *tecpan*.¹⁶⁸ In it his informants listed and named various chambers in which justice was dispensed in courts and '*audiencias*' for various different offences and social ranks (the *tlaçitlan* for criminal cases and the *teccalli* or *teccalco* for civil cases and the *tecpilcalli* to pass judgement exclusively on noblemen-warriors. A different room housed the council of war (*tequihuacacalli*) where military

¹⁶⁷ J. Lockhart, *Los Nahuas...* p.p.151-2.

¹⁶⁸ B. de Sahagún *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España*, vol. 2. Josefina García Quintana and Alfredo López Austin eds., (Mexico 1989). bk. 11 ch. XII p. 813.

commanders were named and appointed; another chamber for the construction of public works (*cuicacalli*); there were quarters to host and entertain visitors and even enemy emissaries under the protection of safe-passage and store-rooms to see them leave with presents as guest-friends (*coacalli*- surely where Cortés and company were received) there was also a prison (*malcalli*); rooms for the many entertainers, musicians and hangers-on that made palace life pleasant (*the mixcoacalli*).¹⁶⁹

The palaces were the setting for all diplomatic relations and internal political decision-making: In times of crisis councils that included all the polity's noblemen gathered in the principal palace. In Tlaxcala for instance a council of 220 noblemen continued to assemble into the post-conquest period.¹⁷⁰ Motecuhzoma's palace impressed those Spanish conquistadors who described it as well, not least because they were able to grasp the significance to Mesoamerican society of those palatial functions that seemed ostensibly familiar to those discharged within the European palaces.

If, as Sahagún's informants imply their descriptions can be generalised to palaces throughout Mesoamerica,¹⁷¹ then within the palaces there were also administrative offices (*calpixcalli*) that dealt with the collection and accounting of the goods accumulated and enjoyed by those in charge of the palace. These included tribute owed to the prince or lord of the palace along with the produce, especially the food-stuffs, of the palace's entailed land and labour and presumably also including whatever private income the lord possessed as

¹⁶⁹ See also the depiction of the *tecpan* in the *Codex Mendoza* printed eg. F. Benítez, *La ciudad de México, Tomo I.* (Mexico, 1981), p.95.

¹⁷⁰ C. Gibson, *Tlaxcala...*p.110-12.

¹⁷¹ B. Sahagún, *Historia General...* bk. 8 ch. XIV *de la manera de las casas reales*, p. 517f.

well. Apart from the tributary or tax dues paid to a palace each was endowed with lands (*tecpanlalli*) and the labour service of tenant farmers and serfs for its upkeep, along with the rotating labour dues of free *macehual* vassals that were entailed to the palace itself and not the private property of its current lord.¹⁷² These goods were kept in the storehouses of the palace (*petlacalco*) and supervised by a further official. These storage rooms must have been very large since they sufficed 'for the provision of the city and republic' according to Sahagún's informants who claimed that there was enough space in just one of the several maize storage-rooms (the total number is unspecified) in Motecuhzoma's palace for 2000 *fanegas* - about 110,000 litres - while similar rooms stored quantities of other staple goods including the all-important salt reserves and various seeds for future harvests. Díaz del Castillo also dwelt on the size of the palace, the number of rooms and its uses and added to those already described, Motecuhzoma's large armoury and a room with many idols.¹⁷³

A palace's practical influence over its polity or district was underwritten by its use as the community's most important storehouse: there is no record of other communal granaries or public storage facilities. Even in times of plenty, the non-monetised barter economy of Mesoamerica meant that the palace nobility could corner valuable resources, control their distribution through patronage and regulate regional markets more easily.¹⁷⁴ This last was an attribute of their *tlatocayotl* and they could expect to collect dues from these markets as well, which were an important addition to their income.

¹⁷² J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas...* p.223f and *El Cacicazgo...* M. Menegus Borneman and Aguirre Salvador eds. pp.27f.

¹⁷³ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista de la Nueva España*, J. Ramírez Cabañas intro. (Mexico 1974), pp.168-170.

¹⁷⁴ *El Cacicazgo ...* M. Menegus Borneman and Aguirre Salvador eds, pp.165f, f or the cornering of salt production for example by post-conquest lords of Tehuantepec see Machuca, L. ' "como la sal en el agua" la decadencia del cacicazgo en Tehuantepec (siglos XVI-XVIII)'; For its importance in funding military activity see Sahagún *Historia General...* p.523; and J.Lockhart, *Los Nahuas...* pp.65-70.

Palace store-rooms also helped to concentrate power in the hands of the nobility because the surplus of goods within supplied the polity's military activity or fed allied or imperial armies marching through their territory. Luxury products received as tribute or through trade were also kept in the palaces, allowing the princes to dispense largesse and patronage to their family and allies. Given perennial food shortages that plagued Mesoamerica –whose agriculture was so dependent on rain- and the importance of rare luxury products these reserves may have served to stabilise the community's food supply and strengthen the paternalistic patronage-based power of the palace-nobility.¹⁷⁵ Unsurprisingly the palaces became the setting for the assignment of offices and appointments, leading to the development of a recognisably courtly and patronage-based culture of petitioners, negotiators and attendants at the palace.¹⁷⁶

A nobleman's power, his sense of legitimacy and to some extent his identity was also bound up with his position within the palace hierarchy. This nexus was expressed in the convoluted rites and ceremonies that accompanied the inauguration of a new lordship, where only the temple and the image of the local deity competed with the palace as a setting for the legitimising ceremonial.¹⁷⁷

In order to try to resolve the potential political tensions that this concentration of power could create, Mesoamerican polities relied on elections or selections to complement dynastic inheritance and determine and emphasise the legitimacy of an office holder. They

¹⁷⁵ A. Knight, *Mexico: From the beginning to the Spanish conquest* (Cambridge, 2002), p.165ff, & p.181f.

¹⁷⁶ J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas despues de la conquista* ...p.67.

¹⁷⁷ P. Carrasco, in *Tlalocan: Vol. V* (1966), no.2, *El Rango de Tecuhtli entre los Nahuas tramontanos* p.133f. esp.138; for a discussion of these including the most famous in B. Sahagún *Historia General...*, bk.8 ch.XVIII.

considered ennobling attributes of excellence and virtue that the elected were supposed to possess. This has led some writers to view Nahua society as meritocratic.¹⁷⁸ However, it should be emphasised that the electors, the elected and the disenfranchised were self-consciously exclusive members of a jealous competitive and (if we can extrapolated from information of the viceregal period) large elite that emphasised noble virtues as a means of gaining and justifying political power and the favour of the gods. This in turn had important consequences for elite attitudes and behaviour.

A concept of legitimising noble *virtue* developed as the operative intellectual justification for nobility. It followed a powerful paternalist ethos of government, personal service and loyalty to the polity, deeply rooted in the rituals and teachings that sustained *Nahua* notions of nobility and patriotism. These took many forms: palace walls were hung with what would later be termed *lienzos* or painted with frescoes that described the more glorious episodes of the polity or its dynasty's past triumphs, from divinely inspired migrations to successful military exploits, in pictographic terms not too unlike in concept to the tapestries and murals of European palaces.¹⁷⁹ The verses of the *Huehuehtlahtolli*, or 'ancient words' expressed these ideals in memorable verses spoken as ritualised dialogues that *Nahua* noblemen learnt by heart and recited to the rhythmic beating of a *Tlatol* drum. The *Huehuehtlahtolli* that survive were compiled from various oral-sources throughout the sixteenth century, most notably by fr. Bernardino de Sahagún. On the whole they represent a pre-conquest tradition that survived the conquest, in part because they were so recognisable to Europeans- particularly the friars that lived amongst the Indians. It is also

¹⁷⁸ N. Cheetham, *New Spain, the birth of modern Mexico*, (London, 1974), p. 48.

¹⁷⁹ *Indian conquistadores: Indigenous allies in the conquest of Mesoamerica*, L.E. Matthew & R. Oudijk eds., (Oklahoma, 2007) p.18.

remarkable how seamlessly the *Huehuehtlahtolli* came to incorporate Christian imagery and Castilian administrative titles into their traditional expressions of morality, beauty, and society.

In worldly terms the advice given to young noblemen would not seem out of place amongst similar dialogues found from Homer to Castiglione's courtiers, were it not for the references to Jaguars and Quetzal feathers. In one dialogue the father asked of his son 'Will you defend and give lustre to your nobility; that of your descendants; that which carries the attribute of the eagle, the jaguar and will you work hard like the eagle, like the jaguar that you may walk tall like them?'¹⁸⁰. Like most European nobles they associated nobility with predatory animals in contrast to the vulnerable rabbits and deer referred to later of the poor the vulnerable and the dispossessed. Later the nobleman was urged to take his opportunities and display his virtue to assure preferential treatment: 'Only tell the truth, that which is straight with regards to whether you can accomplish a mission or if it is impossible; but don't proclaim it half-heartedly, or someone else might get the command... position yourself well, take charge of things well, fix them well, throw down roots...'¹⁸¹. There is much emphasis on discipline and responsibility whether to parents, the community or in the versions we know to God, Jesus and the Virgin Mary. 'Don't become vain and boastful [along with those who exploit their lordship] just because you have lineage. It is meet that you should lower your head; that you bend down with humility, that you up-hold your self-respect... In this way [courteously] you will talk with [the people] and they will be grateful; they will recognise in you one of lineage, who doesn't get drunk with power, who

¹⁸⁰ M. Leon-Portilla *Huehuehtlahtolli: Testimonios de la antigua palabra* (Mexico, 1991), p.113.

¹⁸¹ M. León-Portilla, *Huehuehtlahtolli...* p.131.

does not become arrogant with his nobility, the bond of lineage.’ As leaders of men they had to struggle constantly ‘because you are the mother of the people, their father; because you educate men, you teach them; you are their protector, the one with the broad back who carries them; what you carry on your back is great indeed, great is your responsibility, because you are *ceiba*, *ahuehuate*; because you give shadow, you give protection; you give shelter; you are the relief and the remedy. Next to you come your vassals, those who share your blood and your colour; those who rise from you, your dependants, your family, your relatives, your kin...’ To behave like a true lord will guarantee that ‘your fame will never be forgotten or lost...God, lord of the earth has favoured you; let Him give you honour, heighten your attributes of mother, of father, your charge, your lordship, your government, your fame, your honour...’; They often end with the admonition to ‘work hard my son!’ Such admonitions were a constant reminder of the importance of lordship rather than merely received nobility within the polity and the competitive ethos that maintained it. As with Spanish *hidalguía* virtue played an important part in the ‘ideals of life’ of Mesoamerican noblemen echoed in other sources such as Sahagún’s tenth book.¹⁸²

Similar intentions are evident behind the rituals that accompanied the selection or election of a new lord or a prince. According to Sahagún’s understanding of his informants, when a lord or prince died all the more prominent nobles of various degrees and stations gathered in the *tecpan* to deliberate upon his successor by unanimous consent, choosing ‘one of the most noble of the line of the previous lords, who was a brave man, well versed in war-like matters, daring and full of spirit, who did not know how to drink wine, who was prudent and wise, who had been brought up in the *calmecac*, who was eloquent and well

¹⁸² B. Sahagún *Historia General...*ch’s IV to VI which clearly resonate with the didactic injunctions of the Huehuehtlahtolli.

informed and honest and loving'. At the climax of the ritual process that followed the virtuous man's election, after weeks and even months of rites that involved cleansing, fasting, self-sacrificial acts and the constant distribution of presents and the hosting of banquets to the nobility that had elected him and the priesthood that had blessed him; he was left (symbolically?) bereft of property and alone in his palace at which point his 'afflicted' relatives and their plebeian vassals would come to redeem him- renewing the bonds and covenants between lord and community tangibly represented in these memorable displays of a community's renewed solidarity: 'and though everything he had given and spent had come from them, they in turn offered to give him everything they possessed because he had been left with nothing, because they had pity on him and because he would take it anyway if they did not give it to him.'¹⁸³

Like their Spanish counterparts the Nahua nobility's most prestigious service to their polities came from their leadership and participation in warfare which in pre-conquest Mesoamerica had become 'procedural':¹⁸⁴ 'The most principal office of a lord is warfare either to defend himself from his enemies or to conquer foreign provinces'.¹⁸⁵ Prowess in warfare was often quantifiably linked to the capture of enemy warriors, destined to enslavement or the appeasement of the Gods and glory of the polity through prestigious human sacrifices; in both cases redounding to the fame of their captor: '...reports were made of who had done best in combat, that they may be rewarded with honour and gifts,

¹⁸³ B. Sahagún *Historia General...* bk.8 ch.XVIII, p.527. Carrasco, P. in Tlalocan Vol. V 1966 no.2. *Rango de Tecuhtli entre los Nahuas tramontanos*, p.133 ff.

¹⁸⁴ *Indan Conquistadors...* .E. Matthew & R. Oudijk eds., p.23.

¹⁸⁵ B. Sahagún, *Historia General*, bk.8ch.XVII entitled 'on the things which the lords devoted themselves to in order to govern well their domains' p.522.

especially if they were of noble lineage.’¹⁸⁶ As the quotation suggests, and as Spanish *new men* discovered in their own culture, the odds were stacked in favour of the established nobility because of their access to centres of patronage and material advantages in weaponry and training. Given the competition amongst the nobility and their extended kinship groups for the highest positions in the polity, conspicuous displays of martial virtue by individual noblemen were common. These were accompanied by the various symbols of prowess and the privileges or distinguishing accoutrements of dress that marked out a successful warrior from his peers. Other indications were the displays of bravado in the *Tlacaxipehualiztli* festival where warriors fought captured prisoners in single gladiatorial combat over ‘sun-stones’ like the totemic monolith often misnamed the ‘Aztec calendar’, now displayed in Mexico City’s Anthropology museum. The loser was offered to the gods. This suggests to me that capturing prisoners was difficult and dangerous compared to more common slaughter and not that pre-Columbian warriors were averse to killing on the battlefield. Certainly there are plenty of instances of very bloody confrontations like the reputed deaths of 20,000 Mexica soldiers at the hands of the Purehepecha in Axayacatl’s reign, whose bones were still visible on the battlefield, like those of Quintilius Varus’s legions, to Spaniards in the mid sixteenth century.¹⁸⁷

Noble ‘ideals of life’ mattered to the extent that if displayed by plebeians, they could be ennobling. Through military excellence *macehuales* were known to have ascended to positions of prominence, in the first generation at least as a *cuauhpilli* the term applied to nobleman by merit in Nahuatl (literally son of an eagle or noble eagle) who often served in

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p.524.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p.534

war councils and as commanders in subsequent campaigns and were ideally suited as independent *cuauhtlatoani* or outsider interim governors while a succession to a palace was decided and the rituals completed. In Mesoamerica, as in contemporary Spain, there was scope for merit to be rewarded within a 'principle of association' with noble values, as well as the notion of rewards in exchange for services to the commonwealth. As in Europe this was a particularly valid proposition for enterprising individuals in dynamic expanding polities like the Mexica who could afford to reward a larger proportion of their population. The *cuauhpilli* could preside over their own acknowledged household called a *yaotequihuacacalli*, though on a much smaller scale than a *tecpan*.¹⁸⁸

Wealth too seems to have eased the path to nobility; mercantile entrepreneurs or *pochteca* held a privileged position within the plebeian classes. They were exempt from direct tribute on staple agricultural products or from personal services to the lords in exchange for a levy on the more exotic products they traded and of course they were bound by the lord's control and organisation of the markets. They also enjoyed social prestige from their knowledge of routes to distant areas, as well as their many distant contacts and for the news they brought from the territories they visited. Consequently the wealthier *pochteca* were known to have married into noble families and for their descendants to have enjoyed the attributes of nobility forming a part of the hereditary palace cliques within the districts or polities.¹⁸⁹

The *pochteca* and the *cuauhpilli* pointed the way to recognised paths for plebeian advancement within these hierarchical societies. On the other hand there were also many

¹⁸⁸ J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas...*p.161f.

¹⁸⁹ J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas...*p.149.

impoverished noblemen and women who subsisted on the patronage of their wealthier kinsmen in exchange for various often lowly services which ranged from fighting in wars to serving in lowly administrative positions or even working as craftsmen, since learning various craftsmen's skills formed part of the early education of a *nahua* nobleman. Like poor *hidalgos* these lowlier noblemen were constantly at risk of being subsumed within the general mass of plebeians. They evoke the *hidalgos labriegos* common throughout Spain or those who merely cherished the notional nobility of any 'old Christian' lost by the caprices of fortune, who offered potentially the most dynamic element of society.

Supra-polity modifiers to traditional *tlatocayotl*

A final variant to securing *tlatocayotl* that polity elites incorporated into their outlook involved the opportunities and dangers of forming part of one of the confederations or empires that dominated much of Mesoamerica. Confederations like Tlaxcala or the Chalca coordinated some elements of polity decision-making like foreign policy or the election of lords or the distribution of commissions and rewards that affected all communities. Even the highly unified confederacy of Tlaxcala which was composed of four principal *altepetl* that acted in close consultation, did not *synoekise* into a single greater *altepetl* in the pre-conquest period. An extension of this were the 'empires' of Mesoamerica, like the Cazonci's Purehepecha domains in Michoacán centred around lake Pátzcuaro but maintained by territorial dynasts; or the confederation of *altepetl* led by Tenochtitlan which controlled the largest tributary empire in Mesoamerica. These supra-polity organisations never supplanted the polity as the basic political unit. The Mexica even remained divided between the *altepetl* of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco within their lake-bound island of eight to thirteen kilometres squared. The 'Mexica' Empire, was a shared

venture of mutual advantage between four *altepetl* (three after Tenochtitlan's suppression of Tlatelolco in c.1473), each with its own dominion: Texcoco's *acolhua*; Tacuba to the West and Tlatelolco to the north and Tenochca extended in all directions but predominantly to the south.¹⁹⁰ Tenochtitlan's empire was essentially parasitic and served the polity's interests.

From 1502 Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin was the *huey tlatoani* (high prince) of Tenochtitlan but he had no other regal title that implied any identification, individual relation or rights over the polities subjected to his own beyond Tenochtitlan's parasitic demands for tribute and military assistance or the dynastic bonds contracted with other ruling dynasties. Nor was the Tenochca Empire presented as a hyper-*altepetl* with the subject polities as its *calpolli* in the same way that European kingdoms included seigniorial and civic-republican traditions within one common identity as a kingdom.

For Motecuhzoma and the Tenochca nobility the protective feelings towards their subjects that were extolled in the *Huehuehltlatohlli* extended only to the Tenochca polity or their kinsmen in other polities. Codex Mendoza illustrates the militaristic mind-set of dominion graphically in the depiction of Mexica rulers toppling the palaces and temples of conquered *altepetl*. Tribute and prestige through religious-military glory were the objectives of domination. There was no imperial institutional mechanism for the representation of the subject polity's grievances apart from the diplomatic deputations one might expect between different polities. Instead remonstrance took the form of frequent rebellions, which may

¹⁹⁰ *La nobleza indígena del centro de México después de la conquista*, E. Pérez-Rocha & Rafael Tena eds., (Mexico, 2000) p.45f; My ch.6.

explain why in the surviving catalogues of Tenochca conquest, the same provinces appear more than once.

According to viceregal-period traditions, Tenochtitlan's hegemony began as a rebellion of allied polities against the empire of Azcapotzalco and her allies, but had expanded into an empire by conquest or intimidation, as might be expected from this fractured world. This made relations between the subject *altepetl* elites and Tenochtitlan relatively simple, if not necessarily amicable. After they had been bullied into compliance, or overcome militarily, a subject *altepetl*'s elites could expect to maintain their own power and wealth within their communities. By the time the Spaniards arrived, Tenochtitlan received the tribute or military support of around four-hundred other individual polities. With the influx of tribute and the accompanying commercial activity, the island-city's population swelled with immigrants who were in turn increasingly dependent on the tribute of subjected polities. Tenochtitlan's population and the expansion and experience of the city's extended warrior-nobility, made her a formidable military power relative to any one of her neighbours.¹⁹¹ This dominance was expressed on Tenochtitlan's ever larger pyramids where history's rawest and most awe-inspiring spectacles of grandeur and power were played out, claiming more thousands of human sacrificial victims every year.¹⁹² At the same time the city's success sustained an ever-larger martial nobility with rewards and benefices within

¹⁹¹ See H. Thomas, *Conquest...*'Appendix A' for a general discussion & S.F. Cooke 'The Indian Population Of Central Mexico 1531-1610' *Iberoamericana*, 44 (Berkeley Los Angeles, 1960), using rates of consumption to the amount of foodstuffs imported into Tlatelolco-Tenochtitlan, it has been estimated that the city could have sustained up to 200,000 people. Although the analysis is heavily disputed, (not least in my view because it suggests a population density comparable to today's in the same area: the Delegación Cuauhtémoc 32.44 km² with a current population of 516,255 and remains amongst the most densely populated parts of modern Mexico City, while the ancient island-city, measured between 8 and 13.5 km² measures).

¹⁹² H.Thomas *Conquest...* p.27 & p.31.

the city and in the form of land confiscated from subjugated polities that bound them to the city's imperial venture in a hostile environment.¹⁹³

Subjugation of an *altepetl* could be accompanied by confiscation of land for distribution amongst the increasing numbers of deserving Tenochca noblemen or for the settlement of Tenochca warriors and *macehual* settlers.¹⁹⁴ For strategic reasons this often came with the super-imposition of Tenochca *Tlenamacaque* and *Papahuaque* which Sahagún identified as 'Satraps'. These appointments were particularly evident in remote provinces or those that had shown particularly stubborn resistance.¹⁹⁵ After 1473, by traditional reckoning, Tlatelolco's ruling dynasty was supervised by a Tenochca governor as were the twenty five lords and princes of the Chalca confederacy. Archaeological evidence from Castillo de Teayo in the rebellious province of Tochpan also offers interesting insights into this Tenochca colonization. The area has been identified as a likely Nahuatl colony given the range of architectural and material remains that are not only closely related to Tenochtitlan but in many cases were made and enjoyed locally, rather than imported, but imitating metropolitan tastes. Individual lords of Tenochtitlan also profited from confiscated lands in other states and with their wealth bypassed even the discipline of their own *calpolli* in their political struggles. By 1519 there were an estimated thirty-seven of these Tenochca colonies and garrisons.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ N. Cheetham *New Spain...* 48f.

¹⁹⁴ M. Menegus Bornmann *Del Señorío a la república de indios: el caso de Toluca: 1500-1600* p. 68ff.

¹⁹⁵ B. Sahagun *Historia Genera... Vol.I* p. 527.

¹⁹⁶ S. Toby-Evans, *Ancient Mexico and Central America archaeology and culture history*. (London 2008) p.487 quoting Umberger, E. 1996 'Aztec presence and material remains in the outer provinces' in *Aztec Imperial Strategies* Berdan et.al. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington DC., p.178.

In some cases these colonies were maintained as a dominant class by the labour of the local population and in others they repopulated wholesale areas that been deserted following war or repression. Don Hernando de Tapia throws some light on the methods and purposes of this Tenochca colonization in his description of three colonies, including the rich but distant Soconusco, which were colonised by Mexica along with serf-like immigrants from other areas that had been forced to settle there and pay tribute to the Mexica presumably from the cultivation of those products that were most desired by the metropolis.¹⁹⁷ Fr. Diego Durán offers perhaps the most detailed insight into the motives and organization of Tenochca colonization in the example of the re-foundation of Oaxaca, which the Tenochca re-populated following the extermination of a large proportion of the local population in retaliation for the murder of a protected *pochteca*.¹⁹⁸

There is an obvious strand of continuity with the Spanish and allied-Indigenous colonising efforts after the conquest as co-ordinated from Mexico City. There are clear echoes of Spanish *repartimiento* system of labour allocation and the development of distant mining settlements and the comparison extends to the encouragement of other allied polities to join in the venture. In both cases some of this colonising effort may have been made politically viable as a result of the severe depopulation that occurred in certain areas of Mesoamerica: a disastrous cycle of crop-failure and disease swept the region in 1454 and subsequent years when even the *Tenochca* were reduced to near starvation, much like the infectious diseases and agricultural contraction that followed the Spanish *conquest*, but less

¹⁹⁷ *La Nobleza Indígena...* doc. 3 p.101.

¹⁹⁸ D. Durán *History of the Indies of New Spain* (1994), p.236.

enduring.¹⁹⁹ The intentions of control and the distribution of rewards between the two assertions of Mexico City's hegemony are also comparable.

The Spaniards encountered many of these Tenochca settlements throughout Mesoamerica. They maintained a separate identity from their neighbours adding to the complicated identities of Mesoamerica in a way that often served Spanish interests. As late as the 1550s the Zapotec lord of the important province of Tehuantepec, was accused of 'tyranny' to the Spanish authorities and one of the charges related to his beating of a member of a Mexica settlement within his province that persisted with its own identity from the time of Motecuhzoma and retained an almost Roman sense of its imperial immunity from such humiliation.²⁰⁰ Pedro de Alvarado also encountered various Tlaxcalan and other Nahuatl colonies and recruited them for his campaign to Guatemala.²⁰¹ As in the Tenochca case, these allies settled alongside their Spanish partners, lording over defeated Maya kingdoms and spreading the Nahuatl language at least as fast as Spanish in the region so that to this day Nahuatl is spoken in parts of El Salvador.

Within the Mesoamerican tradition a polity lost its liberty by being unable to determine freely its relations with other polities unbounded by obligations, coercion or the threat of force; by the arbitrary impositions of tribute, confiscation of polity land and the need to supply military assistance to its imperial overlord. Nevertheless even under these circumstances a polity rarely lost its autonomy- the ability to determine its own internal affairs- and this was embodied by the endurance of the *tlatocatlacamecayotl* (ruling

¹⁹⁹ B.C. Brundage, *Lluvia de dardos, Historia política de los aztecas mexicas*, (Mexico 1982), p. 190.

²⁰⁰ *El Cacicazgo...* M. Menegus Bornemas et.al. eds.,p.172-3.

²⁰¹ *Indian Conquistadors..*, Ch.4 *passim*.

dynasty) as the legitimate bearers of authority. Thus after the final defeat of the Chalca confederacy in 1465, Chalca princesses were requested by the Tenochca and were visibly in attendance to Axayacatl (ruled 1469-81) who was encouraged by a Chalcan entertainer's song to consummate the domination of Chalco in the bedroom. Compliant Chalcan princes were allowed to rule their province again by 1486 (according to post-conquest tradition), albeit subject to selection by the Tenochca *tlatoani*.²⁰²

Cuauhtémoc, an exalted member of the Tenochca royal family, was also a descendant of the suppressed Tlatelolca royal house. Polygamous unions were the accepted corollaries to diplomatic alliances and even the harshest subjugations were often followed by such dynastic arrangements. Polygamous practices facilitated this diplomatic flexibility. Furthermore the importance of direct descent from a prince, who were known to have tens of offspring, cemented such practices and established a new governing generation. Indeed Motolinia claimed that some princes and lords had so many wives that there were scarcities of marriageable women within certain polities.²⁰³ Clearly it was prestigious to have many wives as it reinforced the paternalistic ethos of polity authority.

For the favoured subjects of empire, the attractions have been similar throughout history: there may have been a glamour and security in being associated with the dominant power of Mesoamerica; the greatest, richest, most terrible city in the known world. Membership of the empire permitted reliable access to imperial markets: rare and prized products, often the most valued status symbols, as popularised by the imperial elite, like

²⁰² S. Schroeder *Chimalpahin and the Kingdoms of Chalco* (Arizona 1991), p.96f.

²⁰³ T. de Benavente o Motolinia *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*. Edmundo O'Gorman ed. (Mexico,1973), p.97-8.

Quetzal feathers, cacao beans and jaguar pelts, arrived in Tenochtitlan from the remote and rich lowlands of the south as did essential products like salt from Tehuantepec. Enemies, like Tlaxcala, were excluded from the bonanza, a fact they bitterly resented.²⁰⁴ In the context of Mesoamerica's endemic warfare the Tenochca were winners, guaranteeing the status quo for governing elites as well as relations between polities that embraced the empire - some of whom had been previously subjected by their neighbours and others who feared their potential aggression. Thus shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards, Huexotzinco, until then a proudly independent polity that had resisted the Tenochca advance began to consider submitting to the protection of the imperial *altepetl*. Her immediate neighbour the ritually prestigious *altepetl* of Cholula had submitted to the empire, giving the Tenochca access into the modern day valley of Puebla that Huexotzinco now shared with an implacably anti-Tenochca Tlaxcala to the east and a new Tenochca satellite to the West. Under pressure from Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco asked for Tenochca military assistance; in exchange they were ordered to surrender Camaxtli their local goddess to be displayed in the pyramid of conquered deities in Tenochtitlan. Huexotzinco vacillated until the arrival of Cortés radicalised the matter as we shall see.²⁰⁵

In military and diplomatic relations with the imperial polity, individual members and their factions within a polity could lose their status only for more compliant kinsmen to take their place. Indeed 'conquest' rarely meant the obliteration of previous political organisations like the *tecpan* or the ruling nobility of the conquered polity. 'Even when a polity was conquered or 'destroyed' 'in Nahuatl only political sovereignty was lost... but as

²⁰⁴ C. Gibson *Tlaxcala...*p.14ff.

²⁰⁵ H. Thomas, *Conquest...* p.37-8, and my Ch.5.

long as the traditional royal lineage (*tlatocatlacamecayotl*) and rulership (*tlatocayotl*) were intact and operating, the society and polity continued.’²⁰⁶ *Tlatocayotl* within the polity and its domains remained the vital objective of individual members of the largely particularist polity nobility even when they had been subjected by Tenochtitlan.

The support of a super-polity power could even guarantee the concentration of authority in the hands of fewer individuals. After the shock of conquest, subjection to an empire only added to the means by which patricians could compete for power and the ways in which they could perceive, present and enforce the legitimacy of their political projects to secure their status. Essentially the new element in the struggle for lordship was competition for ingratiation with the imperial power. Stable administration that allowed for peace and the regular supply of tribute to Tenochtitlan; military services; and dynastic alliances with the imperial house all traced the path to imperial acceptance. Participation in martial activities was costly and dangerous but it was also the most prestigious service a prince could perform for the empire and for his personal standing within his polity. This was not only because of Tenochtitlan’s almost perennial campaigning, but because, unlike the imposed protection-money called tribute and gifts, a prince, fighting under the insignia of his own polity, could win glory in his own right and bring advantage both to the grateful imperial hegemon and to his own polity.²⁰⁷ Successful campaigns brought booty and in some cases tributary lordship to individual polities and dynasts over their neighbours. The dominion and tribute enjoyed by the lord of Tepexi de la Seda on the eve of the Spanish arrival, known to us as Don Gonzalo Matzatzin Moctezuma, best expressed the successful

²⁰⁶ *Indigenous Conquistadors...* p.12.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p.55-6 & my ch.5.

balancing act a subject *tlatoni* could perform: to appear to Tenochtitlan as the legitimate lord of his *altepetl* and to his own people as the friends of the Tenochtitlan. Matzatzin was related by birth to the Tenochca royal house, had proved a successful commander in Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin's campaigns against the Mixtecs and had consequently established and expanded a successful lordship for his *altepetl* over the strategic gateway to Oaxaca.²⁰⁸ In turn, his *tlatocayotl* was unquestioned.

There is no indication that on its own the Tenochca political settlement was inherently unviable. Indeed not long before the Spaniards arrived in Veracruz, the empire had expanded dramatically in Oaxaca and had won over the ritually and strategically important *altepetl* of Cholula, giving Tenochtitlan a vital base in the fertile valley to the east of the volcanoes. Other known potential threats to the empire from the Mixe or Zapotecs of Oaxaca or the 'Tarascans' of Michoacán, or even the various Otomi and Chichimeca peoples to the north were known elements in the geo-political calculations Mesoamerica's polities. Only the arrival of Cortés and his company was unaccountable and unexpected. The events that led to the death of Motecuhzoma and the complete breakdown in negotiations between the Spanish and the Mexica were enough to undermine the assumptions that held Tenochtitlan's empire together.

Adaptation to Spanish hegemony

It has not been generally acknowledged how profoundly the polity-nobility's search for secure *tlatocayotl* shaped the nature of the conquest of Tenochtitlan and the subsequent political settlement that emerged under the hegemony of the Spanish

²⁰⁸ *Indian Conquistadors...* p. 34 f. esp. note 14.

interlopers. The legacy of the events that occurred from 1519 to 1521 and the combination of Mesoamerican political traditions with the attitudes and expectations that the newly hegemonic Spaniards brought with them, informed the way in which the indigenous nobility sought to safeguard their *tlatocayotl* within the new political settlement. The resulting indigenous attitudes towards legitimate lordship would affect the unfolding development of viceregal government after 1535.

The insurrection against Tenochtitlan had echoes in Mesoamerican history and in similar political calculations by patrimonial elites throughout history. Comparable calculations applied in the case of the patrimonial elites of Europe where, for instance, the nobility of northern France (decisively in the case of the Duke of Burgundy, like Texcoco for Cortés) defected to Henry V *en masse* after he returned to France in 1417 almost two years after his fluke victory at Agincourt while retreating with a depleted army to the safety of Calais. Tenochtitlan herself had arisen as an imperial power out of an alliance of *altepetl* that sought to overthrow the previously hegemonic confederacy of Azcapotzalco and Coyoacan.

Events moved much faster in 1520-21, encompassed a greater number of polities and occurred with a greater level of disruption than at any point in Mesoamerica's tradition: while the Tenochca built up their empire by relying on two main allies over the course of a century, within two years the Spaniards came to head an alliance composed of more polities than Tenochtitlan's empire at its height. Despite the Spaniards' great numerical disadvantage²⁰⁹ and the fact that they did not count on the attributes of a constituted

²⁰⁹ 2,100 Spaniards participated in the downfall of Tenochtitlan in total, slightly more than the 2,000 that participated in the nearly contemporary campaign that culminated at the battle of Pavia (Kamen H, *Spain's Road to Empire* pp.60-1) and about 60% of them perished in the attempt, laying bare their claims to

polity, this suddenness had important consequences in minimising the dependence of the Spaniards on the interests of any single allied polity and consequently for the relative importance and claims to precedence of each individual ally. This was part of the 'stranger effect' that helped establish the Spaniards as credible external arbitrators throughout the Americas.²¹⁰

The number of allied polities meant that the Spaniards could afford to simplify matters, welcoming and promoting any supporters and attempting to destroy any real or perceived rivals. Tlaxcala offers the most illustrative example of the devaluation of individual polities in this context. The four *altepetl* of Tlaxcala soon displaced Tlacochohcalcatl (the 'fat cacique') and the Spaniard's original Totonac allies in importance. The first formal political settlement we know of between Tlaxcalans and Spaniards occurred soon after *la noche triste* (30 June 1520) when the remnants of the Cortesian forces arrived in Tlaxcala after suffering terrible losses in their near-run escape from Tenochtitlan and the plains of Otúmba. Tlaxcala's lords concluded a treaty with Cortés that is illustrative of that *altepetl*'s original expectations: Tlaxcala would have control of Cholula, with its talismanic ceremonial centre and perhaps as revenge for her recent hostile *volte-face* and alliance with Tenochtitlan. They also wanted to occupy a fortress within Tenochtitlan itself to guarantee their security against their ancient rivals. Spoils and booty were to be divided between them and the Spaniards and finally they should be perpetually exempt from having to pay tribute

invincibility (*Indian conquistadores...* p.25, note 22). At the time the *bergantines* were launched from Texcoco there were only about 1,000 'Spaniards' under Cortés's command (H.Thomas *The Conquest ...*p.491 & n.30) The Spaniards did have the marginal benefits of steel swords and about 90 horses. But by their own frequent admission these would not have been enough to tip the balance had they not counted on the political advantages described above.

²¹⁰ F.F.R. Fernandez-Armesto, *The World: A History* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson/Prentice Hall 2007), p.557.

to whoever ruled in Tenochtitlan, which would otherwise go to the Spaniards. Clearly the Tlaxcalans were sowing the seeds of an alliance that might have resembled the origins of Tenochtitlan's alliance with Texcoco and Tacubaya against Azcapotzalco, with Tlaxcala as the dominant or equal partner.²¹¹ Tlaxcalan noblewomen had already formed the mutually recognisable sexual-dynastic alliances with the Spanish captains that sealed such treaties in Mesoamerica. Henceforth the combined forces would fight to the cry of 'Santiago y Tlaxcala!'

As other powerful *altepetl* joined the Cortesian alliance, like Huexotzingo, which enjoyed a troubled relationship with Tlaxcala; or Texcoco, which had been the second polity of the empire and gave the Spanish alliance access to the shores of the lake; or the powerful old Chalca confederacy, that controlled the most fertile land in the basin, the individual bargaining power of Tlaxcala diminished: when the Tlaxcalan lord Xicotencatl the younger dissented during the siege of Tenochtitlan he was accused and captured by other indigenous allies of the Spaniards. Cortés tried and executed him without significant Tlaxcalan protests, only the Spanish captain Pedro de Alvarado, whose mistress Maria Luisa was the accused man's sister, and hence his clan's ally, raised a protest.²¹² In the end, even the defeated Tenochca and Tlatelolca ruling elites were redeemed and welcomed into the Spanish alliance.

The breakdown of Tenochtitlan's authority offered a chance for discontent within the various polities to radicalise and break out in civil strife. The situation was also exacerbated by the epidemics that spread throughout Mesoamerica from 1520 and could

²¹¹ H. Thomas, *The Conquest...* pp.427ff.

²¹² *Indian Conquistadors...* p.127ff; H. Thomas *The Conquest...*491.

carry with them some key individuals of the elite. These disruptions combined with others that affected tributary, agricultural and commercial patterns of resource allocation. Many of the defections to the Spaniards occurred in the context of *stasis*- internal strife- within the polities for control of palaces and lordship. In this respect an analogy can be drawn between the essentially provincial nature of the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910 and the even more localised upheavals that erupted in 1519-21: in both cases it 'arose in the provinces, established itself in the countryside, and finally conquered an alien and sullen capital'.²¹³

Of the plethora of factors that determined the organisation and outcome of the overthrow of Tenochtitlan, from the diplomatic skill of doña Marina to the effect of Spanish steel, the internal political motivations and calculations of the competitive polity elites of Mesoamerica has been the least studied but arguably the most fundamental in explaining the course of their allegiances and in helping us to understand the subsequent political development of New Spain. After the Spaniards arrived varying degrees of internal strife affected almost every polity on which we have information. Thirty years after the event, and following a viceregal enquiry the victorious pro-Cortesian party in Huexotzinco confessed: 'In our town of Huexotzingo there arose amongst our ancestors two factions, until one of them defeated the other and killed them and then confiscated everything they had, both land and moveable property. They left nothing for the sons of the dead and instead distributed it amongst themselves; and their descendants have kept this even now that we are Christians'.²¹⁴ Similarly, Texcoco's crucial alignment with Cortés only came after a

²¹³ A. Knight, *The Mexican Revolution* Vol.1, (Cambridge, 1986), p.2.

²¹⁴ P. Carrasco, *Tlalocan Vol.V. 1966, Vol II.* 'Documentos sobre el rango de Tecuhtli entre los Nahuas tramontanos.' P.156, & my ch.5.

generation-long family feud, aggravated by Motecuhzoma's interference, was resolved by the victory of the previously excluded rebel prince Ixtlilxochitl and his faction.²¹⁵ Even Tenochtitlan–Tlatelolco itself suffered from internal strife, as suggested by the claims of Motecuhzoma's descendants with regards to the execution of Motecuhzoma's son Atlixcatzin and others by Cuauhtémoc when he took over control and enforced the primacy of Tlatelolco in preparation for the last stand against the Spaniards and rebels.²¹⁶

The upheaval caused by the conquest campaigns offered many opportunities to rebels, usurpers and perceptive established elites who aligned themselves with the Cortesian alliance to increase their power. In Cholula a faction that had been excluded from power, reduced to the status of 'secondary nobility', (possibly as a result of the re-alignment of Cholula with Tenochtitlan in the early years of Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin's reign) and had even been imprisoned by Motecuhzoma's agents aligned themselves with Cortés and became the main beneficiaries of the Hispano-Tlaxcalteca bloody suppression of the polity.²¹⁷ The liberation of the Chalca confederacy from the Tenochca Empire came with the price of the elevation of the brothers don Francisco de Sandoval Acaziti and don Hernando de Guzmán Omacatzín. This was achieved by the timely delegation that their father Necuametzin, Motecuhzoma's approved lord of Tlalmanalco, sent to Cortés. It forestalled any rival claims for recognition, not least from the 15,000 Chalca exiles in Huexotzinco,²¹⁸

²¹⁵ H. Thomas, *The Conquest...* p. 38-9 and notes.

²¹⁶ *El Cacicazgo...* Menegus Borneman. p.17. Andres de Tapia Motelchiuhtzin claimed to have always supported the Spanish cause, see G.S. Fernández de Recas, *Cacicazgos y nobiliario Indígena de Nueva España*, (Mexico 1961), p.230.

²¹⁷ N.A. Castillo Palma and A.F. Gonzales-Hermosillo 'Nobleza Indígena y cacicazgos en Cholula, siglos XVI-XVIII' *passim*. In *El Cacicazgo...* though I dispute some of their conclusions.

²¹⁸ S. Schroeder, *Chimalpahin and the Kingdoms of Chalco*, (Arizona, 1991), p.97

which allowed him to present himself and his dynasty to the Spaniards as the legitimate authority over all of Chalco, which had traditionally been divided into four main polities with twenty five lords and princes. The epidemic also helped by disrupting the leadership structure in Chalco and confusing the election of new princes but Cortés's blessing bypassed the need to reconstitute the defunct mechanisms of the old Chalca confederacy. Instead the anointment of Acazitli and Omacatzin as *tlatiic teuhctli* and *teohua teuhctli* respectively resembled the selection made by Tenochtitlan in 1486 (see p.100f.). For the ruling dynasty of Tlalmanalco, reliance on external support for their authority was essential in the face of the internal competitions for power within the province. Power remained centred in Tlalmanalco and seems at some point Acazitli extended his authority beyond the old confederacy up to Xochimilco on the shores of the lake.²¹⁹ Their ascendancy through the mid sixteenth century still displeased the historian Chimalpahin from Amecameca a Chalca *altepetl* that came to dominate the region in the 17th century.²²⁰ Equally the cunning *tlatoani* of Tepexi de la Seda, Don Gonzalo Matzatzin Moctezuma, may have exploited the confusion in Tenochtitlan to seize various towns in Oaxaca for his own advantage, but he had done so with the blessing of Cortés and held them for a while only by his leave.²²¹ Cortés would later retain his self-perception as the guarantor of the new political order against the 'old authorities' of the polities of New Spain.²²²

²¹⁹ As suggested by Acazitli's claims. G. Castañeda, 'Relación de la jornada que hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli, cacique y señor natural que fue del pueblo de Tlalmanalco, provincia de Chalco, con el señor visorey don Antonio de Mendoza cuando fue a la conquista y pacificación de los indios chichimecas de Xuchipila', P.Vázquez trans., in J. García Icazbalceta, *Colección de documentos para la historia de México*. Vol.2, (Mexico, 1980), p.307ff. (henceforth: 'Relación Acazitli').

²²⁰ S. Schroeder, *Chimalpahin and the Kingdoms of Chalco*, (Arizona, 1991), p.89-91&101.

²²¹ *Indian Conquistadores...* p.48f. & see below.

²²² J.L., Martínez *Hernán Cortés...* p.383.

Uncertain legitimacy

Around many of these opportunistic new arrangements with the Spaniards clung doubts regarding the victors' sense of political legitimacy.²²³ Their sense of entitlement traced its genesis only back as far as the services rendered nominally on behalf of the Spaniards during the conquest and inevitably every time one faction was supported, others were disappointed by the failed expectations the Cortesian shake-up had created. Their actions had been motivated by grievances born of exclusion or by shrewd political calculation in the search for lordship.

Motolinia suggested that, with God's intervention, it was largely these divisions and competition that saved the Spaniards from facing a successful Indigenous revolt despite their repeated mismanagement throughout the 20s and early 30s.²²⁴ But it was more than just 'divide and rule': Cortés' letters to Charles V from these early years, especially the third (1522) and fourth (1524) deal with the 'good governance of the land' and are replete with his response to petitions from polities asking him for protection, for mediation in the selection of their leaders or to settle internal disputes. The resultant dynamic of competition within and amongst polities resulted in an indigenous pressure to recreate a stable hegemonic polity that could mediate this competition and ensure the stability of their newly won *tlatocayotl*. The Spanish outsiders, with the prestige they had accrued from their leadership in the revolution against Tenochtitlan, were a far more palatable option than indigenous neighbours like a vengeful Tlaxcala. Their neighbours in their polities or other influential polities, with whom they shared old complicated entanglements, could not be

²²³ Motolinia *Historia de los Indios...*p.64 and ch.5

²²⁴ Motolinia, *Historia de los Indios...*p.52.

trusted to secure the new status quo; only the more detached Spanish newcomers could be manipulated into guaranteeing a newly won status they did not fully understand. Consequently allied polities competed to help in the reconstruction of Mexico City and the great palace which provided the most tangible symbol of the restoration of the city as the hegemonic power of Mesoamerica.²²⁵ This dependence on the arbitration of the Spanish power-brokers was advantageous to the successful factions but would become the Mesoamerican nobility's cross to bear in exchange for security of status.

Cortés, who was followed everywhere by an indigenous entourage, to the chagrin of his fellow Spaniards, became the obvious first mediator.²²⁶ He overrode his original treaty with Tlaxcala and did not give them control of Cholula; instead he handed power to those Cholulan noblemen that appealed to him for protection in 1522, possibly the same as those who had also done so in 1520.²²⁷ The heirs of dispossessed Huexotzinca noblemen may have bemoaned the unjust confiscation of their lands but their victorious neighbours had been the ones to pick the winning side and they received the support of the Spaniards in Mexico: for commentators like Motolinia in the 1530s Huexotzinca loyalty entitled them to be considered as the second pillar of the Spanish alliance after Tlaxcala.²²⁸ Similarly, Ixtlilxochitl and his faction had finally gained control of Texcoco bringing to an end a tragic dynastic saga of internecine strife that had continued to simmer for decades right up to the arrival of Cortés. So too Tlaxcala may have been despised by her neighbours or the survivors from the

²²⁵ R.C. Padden, *The hummingbird and the hawk* (Ohio, 1967), p.226.

²²⁶ J. L. Martínez, *Hernán Cortés...*p.386-7.

²²⁷ See above and H. Cortés, *Cartas de Relación*, Porrúa eds. (Mexico 1973), Third Letter, p.105.

²²⁸ Motolinia, *Historia de los indios...* p. 92.

massacre at Cholula, in which they took such an active role; she may have been dismissed as an upstart by the haughty princes of Texcoco or the Mexica nobility that had hounded her until very recently, but Tlaxcala assumed a special status in Mesoamerica that she had never had before, as the second city of New Spain in the reconstituted empire of Mexico City all for their seminal role in the Cortesian alliance. It would amount to an even greater role than that played by Texcoco to Tenochtitlan. This co-dependence with Mexico City increased the prestige of its Spanish inhabitants and refashioned the polity-elite's modes of thinking about political legitimacy within their polities.

Just as Robert Ricard's notion of 'the spiritual conquest' has been supplanted by the recognition that Catholicism in Mesoamerica adapted by emphasising those practices that coincided with native religious traditions,²²⁹ so it should be acknowledged that much of the agency behind the political settlement that followed the defeat of Tenochtitlan was founded upon the overlapping ideas of legitimate authority between indigenous and European cultures. These complemented each other most successfully at the level of shared notions of nobility: these shared values shaped the nature of authority in New Spain much more fundamentally than the Spaniards could have done through attempted coercion or imposition of their own ideas (even if Cortés and company had been political theorists as some of the later Spanish administrators claimed to be). Legitimacy in Mesoamerica would be determined by a combination of the traditional patterns of political arrangements of individual polities modified by Spanish expectations.²³⁰ These latter were simplistic but not wholly incompatible. For a simple *conquistador* the Indians of New Spain 'had a great lord

²²⁹ *Indian Conquistadors...* pp.7-9.

²³⁰ My ch.2.

who was like an emperor. They also had, and still have, others like kings, dukes, counts, governors, knights, squires, and men-at-arms. The lords have their governors, administrators and other officials in their own lands'.²³¹ The Spaniards often expressed the hope of filling the role of Motecuhzoma and his nobility.²³² The difficulty for the polity elites, as for the first Spanish settlers and conquistadors in the pre-viceregal period, was to know how to present their legitimising merits effectively and to whom, since the Spaniards did not initially act as a coherent imperial polity.

At a fundamental level the Spaniards and Indians shared a mutual acknowledgement of the importance of sexual alliances and dynastic inheritance. The importance of legitimacy by blood for both cultures became apparent almost from the first contacts when the polity elites sealed their alliances with the Spaniards by giving them women. As such, these women have rightly been called 'the first important mediators of meaning between the cultures of the two worlds'.²³³ Even if the Spaniards may have been loath to admit it to their royal authorities, their indigenous 'concubines' that even a lowly foot soldier like Díaz del Castillo was rewarded with, were in effect noble common-law wives which ennobled them and with whom they often co-habited for long after the conquest. In the eyes of their Indian allies and in the context of Mesoamerica these sexual alliances would have seemed at first sight indistinguishable from the polygamous traditions of the land.²³⁴ This link was made explicitly by certain unnamed lords in defending their own polygamous practices to

²³¹ *The Conquistadors*, Patricia de Fuentes ed. (Orion 1963), p.174.

²³² C. Pérez de Bustamante, *Los Orígenes Del Gobierno Virreinal En Las Indias Españolas: Don Antonio de Mendoza Primer Virrey De La Nueva España. (1535-1550)* (Santiago, 1928), Doc. XIX.

²³³ C.S. Kidwell, 'Indian Women as Cultural Mediators' in *Ethnohistory* 39.2 (1992), p.97f.

²³⁴ *Indian Conquistadors...* Ch.4 *passim*.

Motolinia.²³⁵ The effects of the sexual alliance between Cortés and doña Marina is the best known example. It has also been convincingly argued that the presence of women with the dynastic prestige of doña Luisa Xicotencatl was an important component in recruiting and convincing indigenous allies, in this case Tlaxcalans from Tizatlan, to fight and settle in distant campaigns under Spanish captains. The political importance of dynastic alliances may explain why friars found polygamy the most difficult indigenous practice to extirpate. Its usefulness was not lost to the Spaniards and it survived masked behind concubinage at least in the first generation in the shape of wide-spread Spanish cohabitation with indigenous women, at times alongside a Spanish wife.

Apart from their inherent prestige, noble-women could also inherit and transmit rights and property, a fact accepted in both cultures, and as such, the more powerful of them became attractive prizes for the status-anxious *conquistadores* and first settlers. Conversely marital alliances to the new Spanish lords of Mexico City replicated similar dynastic links to the Tenochca nobility and were useful in making more tangible the advantages produced by the 'stranger effect'. This gave some aristocratic princesses a degree of initiative, exemplified in the dynastic career of the remarkable Tecuichpo, allegedly Motecuhzoma's favourite daughter, married to the two last Mexica *huey tlatoani*, mother of a daughter by Cortés and then, as doña Isabel Moctezuma, the holder of large dynastic properties and valuable tributary dues both in her own right and as the wife of three Spanish *encomenderos*. Motolinia mentioned with great satisfaction formal Christian marriages between Spaniards and Indigenous women were becoming common particularly among the first wave of Spanish settlers and most noticeably in Puebla with women from

²³⁵ Motolinia, *Historia de los Indios...* p.97-8

important indigenous polities that surrounded the new 'Spanish' settlement.²³⁶ Indigenous noblemen like don Hernando de Tapia are also known to have married Spanish women.²³⁷

In the documents that I have surveyed pertaining to the more famous and successful indigenous dynasties it is the norm to find within their lineages varying degrees of Spanish blood in spite of their legal definition as *Indios*: similarly, it has been estimated that half of the most noble families of the elite of Mexico City (the city with the greatest number of elite European immigrants) could trace their ancestry to indigenous nobility at the time of independence, despite their classification as 'Spanish'.²³⁸

Inviting prominent Spaniards, especially friars, to witness and even preside over a dynastic union within the indigenous nobility was an effective way of reinforcing its legitimacy and its importance within the community before the Spanish audience. Great displays at Christianised weddings became increasingly normal. Motolinia recorded the most glamorous occasion of Texcoco's social (and political) calendar of 1526: the wedding of don Hernando de Alvarado Pimentel Nezahualcoyotl, the nephew of the usurping prince Ixtlilxochitl, along with seven other prominent lords in a Christian ceremony attended by prominent Spanish guests and their wives, including a representative of Cortés, that later grew to encompass very traditional indigenous dances, processions and pageantry involving thousands of participants.²³⁹ The importance of Spanish witnesses or Christian certificates of legal marriage become clear when one studies the claims and petitions for 'legitimate

²³⁶ *Ibid...* p.95.

²³⁷ *La nobleza indígena...*p.40.

²³⁸ T.E. Anna, *The fall of the Royal Government in Mexico City*, (Nebraska 1978), p. 9.

²³⁹ Motolinia *Historia de los Indios...*p.97.

lordship' later in the century, which abound with the testimony of prestigious Spanish witnesses. Approval from the metropolitan elite reinforced dynastic status within the *altepetl*. Don Hernando would in turn govern Texcoco from 1545.²⁴⁰

The Spaniards always claimed to support the legitimate *tlatocatlacamecayotl* (royal blood-lines) of a polity. They Paralleled the previous Tenochca practice, even in areas that had been apparently 'destroyed' by the conquest, like Cholula or Tlatelolco, Tenochtitlan and the Huasteca lordships of Pánuco but which soon seemed to re-emerge with members of their indigenous dynasties still in charge, their palace power structures intact and newly authorized by the Spaniards. López de Gómara's description of the repression of Huasteca 'revolt' of 1523 offers perhaps the most vividly immediate example: after a drumhead trial, 460 'caciques and principal men' were burned alive before the eyes of their sons as punishment for their 'rebellion'. When their fathers finally died, in a blend of brutality and legality the heirs were granted their rightful lordships in the name of the emperor Charles V.²⁴¹

Nevertheless, it was not always clear who the rightful lords should be because the Spanish expectations of rightful inheritance differed from the practices of many polities. Spaniards were unaware of the complexity and diversity of the indigenous titles and identities, while the chaos provoked by the fall of Tenochtitlan confused matters further. To the Spaniards what mattered was not whether Acazitli was descended from the followers of Red Tezcatlipoca but whether he was a *principal* or nobleman or even better if he was

²⁴⁰ *La nobleza indígena...*p.47f & my ch.6.

²⁴¹ J.L. Martínez, *Hernán Cortés...*p.368.

generally acceptable to his polity and a recognised *señor natural* or even more parochially to Spanish American thinking, a *cacique*.

Inherited nobility or the internal political processes of a polity remained important elements in establishing lordship; but to Spanish eyes true legitimacy came when these traditional attributes were complemented by services that an individual had provided for the Spaniards. The most important services that an Indian could present related to the memory of participation in the campaigns against Tenochtitlan. After the conquest, the Tlaxcalans confidently assumed a role akin to that played by Texcoco to Tenochtitlan as the second city of New Spain. They continued to support the Spaniards militarily in almost every campaign they waged and their elite was the most effective at presenting their case for privileges.

One reason why Tlaxcala did not become the dominant power in Mesoamerica was that as outsiders the Spaniards had a more detached relationship with the polities of Mesoamerica, unlike the 'Triple Alliance'. The Spaniards were more willing to make any noble elite a participant in their shared interests; anyone could have taken the place of Tlaxcala- including the defeated Tenochca and Tlatelolca; the envious Texcocans or Huexotzinca; a different faction within Tlaxcala impatient with the dominance of the Maxixcatzin; or even the suppressed Otomi and Pinome polities within the province. The result was that the various polities of New Spain competed not to be outdone in their shows of loyalty to the crown in order to protect their newly won status, rather as the various Spanish explorers and *conquistadores* vied for their king's attention in the distant reaches of the new world. On the other hand rebels were showily suppressed by combined armies, in the Tenochca tradition, *pour encourager les autres*.

The confidence trick worked beyond the conquest of Tenochtitlan. 'Conquest' beyond the limits of Motecuhzoma's domains often involved a continuation of the earlier practice of supporting the pro-Spanish factions that continued to emerge throughout Mesoamerica. This occurred most remarkably in the Cortesian settlement with the Purehepecha kingdom of Michoacán (1522-30) which was mediated by Cuinierángari (later don Pedro) in part as a political manoeuvre against his rival Timas at the court of Tzintzincha Tangaxoan II.²⁴² The political interests and aims of individual noblemen were often the determinant factor in the process of expansion of Spanish authority.

Warfare retained its pre-eminent position as the most obvious and most valuable service that an allied polity could provide. Spanish ambitions coincided neatly with normal martial traditions sublimated in the teachings of the *Huehuehlahtolli*. Furthermore, Spanish Mexico City's adoption of Tenochtitlan's mantle as a protective imperial power with a duty to its vassals encouraged this martial dynamic. These mixed intentions combined and echoed the Tenochca imperial logic, for instance, in Cortés's report to Charles V regarding the 'province of Tepeaca and other neighbouring counties, vassals of your majesty, [who] received much harm from the *naturales* of a province called [Oaxaca]. Because they were our friends and apart from the necessity of remedying this situation, it was a good idea to secure the province of [Oaxaca] because it was on the way to the Southern Sea...' His lieutenant had scouted the area and 'because the Tepeacans urged him to make war on [the people of Oaxaca]', Cortés agreed: the campaign was successful and the land taken from

²⁴² J. de Alcalá, *La Relación de Michoacán*, introduction and notes Francisco Miranda, (Mexico, 1988), pp.303-324.

their enemies opened up another area for settlement and colonisation for him and his Castilian allies.²⁴³

By 1535 the Spaniards of Mexico City and their indigenous allies had explored and 'pacified' far beyond the Tenochca empire: from Guatemala and Honduras to Pánuco and Compostela in their search for sources of wealth, moveable or not, and access to the Pacific. They had also settled about thirty colonies, often together with allied warriors from the heartlands of New Spain, almost as many as Tenochtitlan had planted by 1519. They achieved this partly because they counted on a more willingly mobile (Spanish) population than the Tenochca and on the man-power of more polities. Mesoamerican polities tolerated, rather than enjoyed, the increasing number of land confiscations and Spanish settlements in their territory as forming part of the compromises that were expected from association with an imperial polity as it had been at the time of Tenochtitlan's dominance.

The willingness of individual Indian lords, minor nobles and plebeians, to participate in wars and settlement was encouraged by the hardships and dislocation that epidemics and the legacy of the conquest in central New Spain had brought, combined with the Spanish willingness to include any allies in these ventures to support their meagre numbers. Military campaigns have long been associated with migration. In times of scarcity migration was common throughout Mesoamerican history. Tenochtitlan had been a teeming city of immigrants supported by tribute and trade; the famine of the 1450s for example, had provoked a mass emigration from the city to the more fertile lowlands of Totoncapan near

²⁴³ H. Cortés *Cartas de relación...* 'Tercera Carta de Relación', May 15th 1522 p.162. Tepeaca was the province of Tepexi de la Seda from where Don Gonzalo Matzatzin Moctezuma had earlier launched his reassertion of authority over several Mixtec towns, see above.

the Gulf.²⁴⁴ After the conquest, polities with preferential conditions like Tlaxcala, which enjoyed a low tribute assessment, or Xilotepec, with its border-town opportunities, attracted immigrants which benefited the lords of the polities and allowed them to lead military and colonising ventures with the Spaniards despite overall population decline in Mesoamerica.²⁴⁵

The appeal of military adventure began to encourage a phenomenon that combined the indigenous *pochteca* entrepreneurial tradition with ennobling martial values of the *cuauhpilli* and the *hidalgo* to form an ethos of service. Conin, later baptised as don Fernando de Tapia, an Otomi from Tlaxcala - and therefore one of the *altepetl's* excluded- organised the extension and defence of New Spain 'with his friends and dependants' and other allies from Xilotepec that led to the eventual foundation of Querétaro in 1533 and the consequent establishment of two of the most remarkable indigenous dynasties of the period.²⁴⁶

After warfare, the most obvious service that the Indigenous lords could provide was in governing their polities so as to maintain the peace and above all the continuation of the old tributary networks and the concomitant commercial activity that the imperial Mexico City had once enjoyed. Tribute was the most obvious nexus to the old imperial tradition. Under the auspices of Cortés and doña Marina, the lords of the central valleys travelled to Coyoacan (while Mexico was still uninhabitable in 1521) to re-establish the tributary

²⁴⁴ S. Schroeder. *Chimalpahin and the Kingdoms of Chalco*. (Arizona 1991). p.97.

²⁴⁵ *El cacicazgo...*p.30f.; María Justina Sarabia-Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco...*p.333f.

²⁴⁶ G.S. Fernández de Recas *Cacicazgos y Nobiliario Indígena...*Doc. 28, p.244 is emphatic that Fernando de Tapia was originally from Tlaxcala, & p.306; my ch.6; P.W. Powell *La Guerra Chichimeca (1550-1600)*, (Mexico 1996) pp.167-9; *El Cacicazgo...*Menegus Borneman and Aguirre Salvador. pp.37-8.

relationship between the Spaniards of Mexico City and the provinces. After proclaiming Charles V and the Spaniards, as his representatives, to be the heirs to Motecuhzoma's empire, 'each [Spanish encomendero] went off with the *cacique* and principal lord of the town he had been granted in encomienda to agree on the rate of tribute to be paid every eighty days'²⁴⁷. While the Spaniards could expect sustenance and wealth (albeit in kind not coin) the Indian lords had taken a useful step towards securing recognition of their status in uncertain times by virtue of the interdependent agreements they had established with the Spaniards. Tribute also linked the polity-princes notionally with Charles V, earning them his protection.

The difficulty for the polity elites came in presenting their services to the Spaniards so as to gain the greatest possible advantage. They had to overcome Spanish ignorance and their different expectations of what constituted authority and justice. The *letrados* of the Second Audiencia (1530-35) who were convinced exponents of their legal training and political heritage, and therefore much less flexible than the *conquistadores*, informed their fellow *letrados* in Spain with some exasperation that 'up to now we have no information on their government or system of justice or the true status of their señores and it all seems to have been tyranny'.²⁴⁸ Worse, the indigenous nobility could not easily adapt to Spanish expectations because of the changeability and divisions of the Spanish administration, which did not operate like a coherent Nahuatl *altepetl* in the early years of their government in Mexico City, to the frustration of the native elites. For Motolinia these Spanish divisions

²⁴⁷ J.Miranda *El tributo Indígena...* p. 74.

²⁴⁸ C. Gibson 'The Aztec Aristocracy in Colonial Mexico' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 2, No.2. (January 1960) pp. 169-196., p. 175.

were the 10th plague to afflict the indigenous population and brought them closer to a generalised rebellion than anything else.²⁴⁹

This disorder, combined with interrelated interests, soldierly solidarity from the conquest or even dynastic links, meant that indigenous cliques and their polities sometimes aligned themselves to Spanish factions rather than the officially recognised authorities in Mexico City. The *contador* Rodrigo de Albornoz described the Indians as ‘many, free and tough and very enamoured of military matters... and quick to learn’: Hardly the fatalistic, demoralised and servile tools of Spanish interests of popular imagination. He believed that Charles V’s appointed officials were dangerously undermined in their authority by these alliances.²⁵⁰ They grew because they could be useful conduits to recognition and power.

On the whole the lords of the principal polities played it safe and tended to side with whoever seemed in charge in Mexico City. Cortés had been the guarantor of the post-conquest status quo and many individuals had benefited from his friendship, but it soon became evident for his close allies like Acxotecatl Cocomitzi lord of Atlihuetzia in Tlaxcala or Don Pedro of Michoacán, who were executed or brought low soon after Cortés’s departure to Spain in 1526, that reliance on even the most powerful individual Spaniards without the approval of Mexico City could be risky.²⁵¹ So for example, no amount of conquistador camaraderie convinced the lords of the basin heartlands to defy the dictates of the First Audiencia in 1530 and feed Cortés and his retinue of 400 who became isolated in

²⁴⁹ Motolinia... *Historia de los Indios*, p.17.

²⁵⁰ *Colección de documentos para la historia de México* Joaquín García Icazbalceta, vol 1, p. 484f.

²⁵¹ My ch.5.

Cuernavaca where half of them perished including Cortés' mother.²⁵² This was partly pragmatic and partly because prominent Spaniards like Cortés never fully identified themselves with their indigenous allies if it could be construed as rebellion against Charles V's authorised agents. Unrest swept through New Spain in 1531, only to be suppressed by Cortés but it rumbled on throughout the early 1530s. By 1535, tensions were rising again, aggravated by rumours of the death of Cortés and the obtuse introduction of reforms by the Second Audiencia that fostered instability. The introduction of *corregidores* was particularly resented because their yearly tenure meant a new agreement had to be reached with each new abusive 'inspector general'-like official that arrived.²⁵³

The two constants that the Indian lords could look to were the reverence that Charles V elicited, which for most was a distant abstraction, and the association of the mendicants with Christianity that seemed the highest justification of all for Indians and Spaniards alike.²⁵⁴ As with dynastic weddings, the presence and support of mendicant friars secured political legitimacy.

Success in the competition between individual lords to attract some of the few available friars to settle in their district,²⁵⁵ and then act as patrons to their monastic communities could produce some remarkable political benefits for them and their districts

²⁵² J.L. Martínez *Hernán Cortés...* p.624.

²⁵³ As in the connotations from Gogol's eponymous play.

²⁵⁴ J.E. Traslosheros. *Iglesia Justicia y Sociedad en la Nueva España: La audiencia del Arzobispado de Mexico 1528-1668*. p.10f.

²⁵⁵ There were only 800 friars in New Spain in 1559 G.Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the 16th century*, (Yale, 1948). p.2.

or the polity as a whole.²⁵⁶ The construction of a monastery elevated the status of that district, sometimes to a predominant level within the polity. The convent of San Miguel, one of the first four to be established in New Spain, was built below the principal *calpolli* of Amillpan within the fractious *altepetl* of Huexotzinco. Its prestige and the Spanish emphasis on the 'congregation' of a community's population into a more Mediterranean-style municipality, meant that Amillpan, became the centre of the new 'City of Huexotzonco', recognised as such officially by the further legitimising device of a coat arms granted by Charles V in 1553 and attracting wealth and immigrant population to it which benefitted its elite.²⁵⁷ On the other hand the smaller polities like Guaquechula, located in the fertile and desirable valley of Atrixco, which had long feared the dominion of its more powerful neighbours, Huexotzinco to the north and Izúcar to the south,²⁵⁸ affirmed its autonomy through its own displays of piety and Christianity. Leading noblemen like don Juan and the prince don Martín began building a monastery to his namesake, St. Martin, out of their own funds in 1533. The polity retained its recognition and independence becoming an important centre for Christian ritual in Atrixco. Their activity helped gain them the notice of viceroy Mendoza who rewarded Don Martín and Don Juan, with a licence to carry Spanish weapons for being 'good christians' and for fighting in Guatemala.²⁵⁹

The use of mendicants to ensure political legitimacy and authority was commonplace and took many forms that echoed complex pre-conquest political

²⁵⁶ Motolinia *Historia de los indios...* p. 92-3 and generally reliance on nobility p.19.

²⁵⁷ P. Gerhard, *Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*, (Cambridge, 1972). Index.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid* and Motolinia *Historia de los Indios...* p. 192

²⁵⁹ see Appendix A and Motolinia *Historia de los indios...* p. 92-3.

preoccupations. In Tlaxcala the palace of Maxixcatzin at Ocotelulco became the first Franciscan monastery and Cathedral, for a time, while the revered image of the virgin - probably the image represented at the start of the Lienzo de Tlaxcala in the centre of the four polities - that Cortés gave to lord Acxotecatl Cocomitzi – his personal friend and son in law of Maxixcatzin-, lay at Atlihuetzia nearby.²⁶⁰ The Maxixcatzin clan, associated with the Franciscans and Cortés became the dominant force in Tlaxcalan politics since the conquest.²⁶¹ Their resentful neighbours in Quiauhixtlan demonstrated their discontent by encouraging rival Dominicans to their *altepetl* in an attempt to stamp their independence and equality of status.²⁶² Similar wrangles over precedence arose in Amecameca between the dynasties of the five leading clans that also hoped to express their dominance through association with the friars; while Tlalmanalco the hegemon of the whole province of Chalco in the first half of the sixteenth century also emphasised its predominant status over the other polities of the enlarged Chalca confederacy by hosting the earliest convent, dedicated to St. Louis, and eventually housing there the talismanic remains of the revered fr. Martin de Valencia from 1534 until their disappearance in 1567.²⁶³ This phenomenon linking pious patronage to political advantage occurred throughout New Spain. It helps to explain the number and speed with which so many new monasteries were built throughout the land.

The Franciscan bishop Juan de Zumárraga had direct authority from the king to deal with the Indigenous population in his title of ‘Protector of the Indians’ and genuinely seems

²⁶⁰ C. Gibson *Tlaxcala...* p.55.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.* p.105-110.

²⁶² J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas ...* p.296-7.

²⁶³ Motolinia, *Historia de los indios...* p.128, note 29.

to have supported the claims to lordship of the ruling elites authorised in the Cortesian settlement over some of the more extravagant demands and redistributions of power attempted by the First Audiencia. Consequently the prestige of the mendicants grew during the early 1530s, as noted by Motolinia.²⁶⁴ Many Indians did convert sincerely to the new faith from these early days but almost regardless of genuine conversion, Christian display became the most obvious decoration with which to feather their crowns. Without it they could not achieve power with the grace of God demanded by the Spaniards and without which, no matter the amount of services or good birth, they were open to charges of illegitimacy or rebellion. The ceremony of baptism became essential as did displays of Christian piety and proselytising by Indigenous lords that included the smashing of the images of their old Gods.

Christianity had practical benefits as did friendship with the friars who became the most accessible, useful and visible intermediaries between the polity nobility and the Spanish authorities, not least because they lived within the Indigenous communities and could help them translate Spanish language and codes of legitimacy. An indication of the prestige the mendicants were held in is that indigenous noblemen would dress in the normally unglamorous garb of friars, when they returned from visits to Spain.²⁶⁵

Charles V became a tangible symbol of legitimacy to a few of the most important lords who were able to visit him and receive his *mercedes* much to the advantage of their positions back in New Spain, as we have seen the in the case of the Maxixcatzin at the start of this chapter. Motecuhzoma's recognised heirs would mix their blood with the highest

²⁶⁴ Motolinia, *Historia de los indios...* esp. pp.82-5.

²⁶⁵ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista...* p545.

Spanish nobility. But individuals with no formal *tlatocayotl* also benefited from this new conduit of prestige: don Hernando de Tapia (Motelchiuhtzin) the son of Motecuhzoma's old *cihuacoatl*, was never appointed governor of Indian Mexico City like his (possibly non-noble) father. Instead he fought as a soldier, served in the vital role of principal *nahuatlato* (translator) for the various authorities of Mexico City and insisted on the services of his father during the conquest and subsequently. His role was so important to the success of the Second Audiencia in re-establishing the trust of the polities that Tapia was awarded a coat of arms by Charles V and made a Knight of the Golden Spur of St. Peter by Pope Paul III – greater honours than those granted to most Spanish *conquistadores*. In the kingdom of New Spain, part of Charles V's composite monarchy, individuals began to find avenues of advancement that transcended the arena of the *altepetl* and the traditional elements of *tlatocayotl*.²⁶⁶

Nothing was satisfactorily settled in New Spain by 1535 for either Indigenous lords or prominent Spanish settlers. However the terms in which the struggles for legitimacy would be conducted were becoming increasingly well defined as don Antonio de Mendoza, the three Maxixcatzin and (possibly) don Hernando de Tapia made their way to Mexico City.

²⁶⁶ G.S. Fernández de Recas, *Cacicazgo y Nobiliario...* pp.229-232.

Part III: The viceregal regime in practice

Chapter 4: 'Republic of Spaniards'

New Spain's Spanish population was composed of networks of patronage that entailed bonds of loyalty and economic dependence. The mix of Iberians, other Europeans and Africans, who defined themselves against the indigenous population as 'Spaniards', created in turn an exaggerated new notion of common identity that, when combined with the idiosyncratic legitimising factors of New Spain, complicated questions of status.²⁶⁷ Old Spanish identities of nobility, locality and kinship dissolved or acquired renewed impetus as they adapted themselves to the internal logic of New Spain's networks of dependence - in the early 1530s don Luis de Castilla, direct descendant of Peter I, was under the command of *new man* Hernán Cortés from provincial Medellín.²⁶⁸

The embodiments of these networks were the ubiquitous *casas pobladas* that constituted the few Spanish settlements scattered amongst ancient Mesoamerican centres of population on which they subsisted; or in the few new mining towns in the untamed semi-nomadic north. In these houses an established patron with a reliable income housed and fed relatives and useful newcomers in search of sustenance. Motolinia noticed the effect of this phenomenon on Mexico City which hosted by far the greatest concentration of

²⁶⁷ AGI, Justicia, 274 and 273 for 'African scribes' Juan de Guinea and Juan de Zaragoza, and other various nameless black *criados* (not slaves). They merit further study.

²⁶⁸ T. de Benavente o Motolinia, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, E. O'Gorman ed. (Mexico 1973), p.17; *Colección de documentos para la historia de México* Joaquín García Icazbalceta, vol.1 p. 484f.

Spaniards: ‘...it is clear that more is consumed in Mexico City alone than in two or three cities in Spain of the same size. The reason for this is that all the houses are very full of people and also that since they are all very comfortable and without necessity so they spend copiously’.²⁶⁹ These networks sustained the bulk of the sedentary Spanish population, which never exceeded, and hardly ever reached the 16,180 (including Guatemala) mentioned in the first census of 1560.²⁷⁰

As with much else in America these networks were a distorted reflection (that aimed to represent an attribute) of the Spanish nobility’s ethos of service. Spanish settlement was equated with royal service and not the occupation of the land for private profit.²⁷¹ Comparatively few Spaniards chose to settle as farmers or craftsmen, and the crown’s early efforts in this respect were remarkable for their failure, while contemporary literature confirms the feeling of entitlement of most recent Spanish immigrants.²⁷²

Like the penniless young *hidalgo* in *Lazarillo de Tormes*, wandering Spaniards in search of their fortune were seeking a patron to serve with their person. On the other hand it was prestigious and useful for such a patron to preside over a well-armed *casa poblada*. The wealthy neighbours of Mexico City boasted of them as yet another vindication of their

²⁶⁹ Motolinia *Historia de los Indios...* p.142f.

²⁷⁰ A.S. Aiton, *Antonio de Mendoza: First Viceroy of New Spain* (Duke 1927), p.100 n.46 quoting the census of 1560, c. 3,000 more were of no fixed habitation.

²⁷¹ See ch.8.

²⁷² Motolinia, *Historia de los Indios...*,p.56 and Ch. 2. *Mil y un sonetos mexicanos*, (Mexico, 1971), p. 189 quoted originally by Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza in *Sumaria relación de la Nueva España*.

status as 'principal men' and a symbol of their service to the commonwealth in 'populating the land' and providing a pool of armed men in case of an emergency.²⁷³

When Mendoza arrived the *encomenderos* had been at the head of these networks since the conquest. The tribute dues of about 767 towns went to 506 different *encomenderos* in the period between 1521-1555 but to only about 300 individuals at any one time.²⁷⁴ With their regular tributary income, the *encomendero* families were at the pinnacle of most networks of patronage. The instability of the 1520s and the bluntness of the Second Audiencia in dealing with *encomienda*, combined with the allure of easy wealth in Peru, had reduced the Spanish population by half in the years preceding Mendoza's arrival:²⁷⁵ the 300 or so *encomenderos* may have had to sustain no more than twenty Spaniards each to account for the vast majority of the Spanish population.²⁷⁶

The justification for the *encomenderos'* right to enjoy the tribute of the king's indigenous subjects was that their settlement in New Spain was a service to the crown: their presence nominally sustained royal authority, defended it and fostered evangelisation. The need to guarantee the viability of these networks explains the urgency with which settlers clamoured for the king to 'settle the land' by defining a hereditary elite with the imagined stability of European nobility. Despite the *encomenderos'* diminishing power over time they remained the backbone of Spanish society in economic and social terms throughout the period.

²⁷³ See ch.7 and F. Benítez *The century after Cortés* (Chicago, 1965), p.35.

²⁷⁴ R. Himmerich y Valencia, *The Encomenderos of New Spain New Spain 1521-1555* (Austin, 1996), p.13.

²⁷⁵ J.L Martínez, *Hernán Cortés*, (Mexico, 1990), p.701.

²⁷⁶ ENE, doc 186; CDI, Vol. 2, Doc. 226, p.541.

In 1542, hope of a perpetual grant of *encomiendas* seemed to evaporate when representatives from the crown arrived in New Spain and Peru to proclaim the 'New Laws'. In New Spain there was great discontent: reportedly 600 settlers decided to emigrate at once, many with their families in tow.²⁷⁷ However New Spain's settlers did not follow their Peruvian counterparts into rebellion. Rather, as many men as emigrated would enlist enthusiastically for an expedition to be led by their viceroy's son to rescue royal authority in Peru.²⁷⁸

Mendoza's authority after many years as viceroy, rather than his titles –Blasco Núñez de Vela was also a viceroy - accounted for the discrepancy between New Spain and Peru.²⁷⁹ Mendoza had consolidated the trust and loyalties of a critical mass of settlers behind him. Even after Velasco finally implemented the extent of the 'New Laws', the Spaniards remained loyal; once again the difference with Peru, where Francisco Hernández Girón raised another rebellion in 1554, is telling. In New Spain, the settlers trusted in the established norms of viceregal government. They allowed for negotiation and redress: as Suárez de Peralta noted Velasco was enough of a 'father to them'.²⁸⁰

In order to establish their authority, the viceroys sought to use their position to become the greatest patrons in New Spain and the most trusted intermediaries between the settlers and the crown.

²⁷⁷J. Miranda, *El tributo indígena en la Nueva España durante el siglo XVI* (Mexico 2005), p.197.

²⁷⁸ A.S. Aiton *Antonio de Mendoza...* p.p.175-6.

²⁷⁹ A.S. Aiton *Antonio de Mendoza...*p.98, L.B. Simpson *The Encomienda in New Spain* (Berkeley, 1982), p.133; ENE Vol.V. doc. 256; AGI Gobierno Mexico 68, R.12, N.34, Tello de Sandoval letter to Prince Philip, 19 september 1545.

²⁸⁰ J. Suárez de Peralta, *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias*, ed. Silva Tena, T. (Mexico, 1990), p.161-162.

Administrative reform

Mendoza adapted pre-existing administrative offices to increase his ability to dispense patronage. The clearest example comes from the changes he instituted to the office of *corregidor*. The Second Audiencia had introduced 53 *corregidores* to administer the principal towns under control of the crown. Their term of office lasted one year and like *encomenderos* they were paid from the tribute they collected from the towns under their supervision, but they possessed even greater legal powers. This made them often even more exploitative than the *encomenderos* they replaced; or were local *encomenderos* themselves given extra responsibilities because the *audiencia* had been unable to find suitable alternative candidates²⁸¹.

Mendoza was aware of the complaints against the *corregidores* and was in favour of greater autonomy in indigenous self-government. His original suggestion for reform reveals his intentions: Mendoza originally wanted to eliminate the *corregidores* altogether and to replace them with far fewer (about 12) *alcaldes mayores* that would serve on a more permanent basis.²⁸² Mendoza's plan would have allowed him to appoint his household adherents to the powerful *alcaldías mayores* – each with authority over huge districts - making them more powerful than most *encomenderos*, and to gain access to part of the income generated by these towns for distribution at his own discretion to those he considered worthy. Unsurprisingly Mendoza protested pre-emptively that his intention was not intended to give him 'too much hand' in the running of the administration by these

²⁸¹ C. Gibson *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley Of Mexico 1519-1810*. (Stanford 1964), p.82-83; CDI, Vol.2, p179ff.

²⁸² CDI, Vol.2, p.183f.

reforms,²⁸³ but the crown rejected his plan nonetheless. The intention behind this failed reform is instructive because it illustrates the logic of Mendoza's subsequent reform of the office of *corregidor* to achieve similar ends.

Mendoza instead created a system of 'quitas y vacaciones', which he explained in some detail to his successor and was often commented on by officials, but has been largely ignored by historians despite its widespread use.²⁸⁴ Mendoza standardised the salary of *corregidores* to around 240*d* or less, rather than granting them the total tribute assessment of the individual towns they were administering. This reduction was justified by enforced shorter terms ('vacating'). This allowed the viceroy to both increase the number of *corregidores* he could appoint from 53 to 159 a year by 1546 and to use the balance that was left over from the total tribute collected to reward various other individuals for specific services or merely to subsidise them at his pleasure. Because this system did not affect the level of previous tributary income that went into the treasury, the distribution of these remaining funds was effectively at the discretion of the viceroys, albeit with the approval of the royal officials or in specific cases where the crown directly ordered specific payments to particular individuals.²⁸⁵ The number of *corregimientos* kept rising as a result of the further escheat of *encomiendas* after the 'New Laws' and later the confiscation of the *marquesado*: in 1569 there were 155 *corregimientos* available a year, with more than one person occupying each position in that period.²⁸⁶ Furthermore other minor offices in the gift of the

²⁸³ *Ibid.* p.181ff.

²⁸⁴ VEA, Mendoza, Doc. 5; AGI Gobierno Mexico 323, 2 April 1562 (c.6th bound collection of letters).

²⁸⁵ E. Ruiz-Medrano, *Reshaping New Spain: Government and private interest in the colonial bureaucracy 1531-1550*, J., Constantino & P. Marmasse trans., (Colorado, 2006), p.97 and Ch.8.

viceroy like *alguacilazgos* and *alcaldías mayores* may have become subject to similar forced 'vacations'.

The funds available in the *quitas y vacaciones* fund varied yearly but were considerable. When Velasco died on 31 July 1564, over 45,000*d* – more than the total salaries paid to all *corregidores* which was about 38,750*d* per annum- had already been assigned from this fund for the following year and more remained to be distributed.²⁸⁷ This source of viceregal patronage became even more important when price inflation took hold: while salaries in royal administration remained constant, tributary income decreased and Spanish immigration increased.²⁸⁸

The viceroys already had the right to decide on the appointment of *corregidores*. These reforms, combined with their alliance with the treasury officials, gave the viceroys a king-like access and control over most of the resourced in the royal coffers. It amounted to an enormous potential for direct viceregal patronage. Gonzalo de Salazar, who had gone to Spain during a period of Spanish discontent and emigrations, returned to Mexico in 1538, and hardly recognised it because 'this city [Mexico] is turned into a great court, because the voice of the viceroy has carried and sustained many people.'²⁸⁹ Mendoza turned the instruments of administration into a system of welfare and patronage under his control.

²⁸⁶ J. Miranda, *El Tributo Indígena en la Nueva España durante el Siglo XVI*, (Mexico 2005) p.157. There were 13 *corregimientos* in the *marquesado* see C. Pérez de Bustamante *Los Origenes Del Gobierno Virreinal En Las Indias Españolas: Don Antonia De Mendoza Primer Virrey De La Nueva Espana. (1535-1550)*, (Santiago, 1928), Doc. XXXI.

²⁸⁷ AGI Gobierno México, 323, 8th March 1565.

²⁸⁸ AGI Gobierno Mexico 323, 2 April 1562 (c.6th bound collection of letters).

²⁸⁹ ENE, Vol.III doc. 186 pp.238ff.

Mendoza claimed that there were not enough people to fill all the offices when he first arrived, but that soon there were too many legitimate claimants.²⁹⁰ As with much else in New Spain scarcity led to competition over both the offices and disbursements in the viceroy's gift. The viceroys were able to determine who deserved these rewards and what criteria should be applied in establishing merit.²⁹¹ During the *visitas* conducted on the viceroys' administrations, a vocal minority accused each viceroy of bestowing offices and largesse on undeserving individuals. Clearly the viceroys could not accommodate for the wishes of all Spaniards. Those individuals that the viceroys selected for preferment, and in particular those appointments that caused the greatest controversy, reveal most clearly the internal logic of the viceroys' political objectives in New Spain because their selection was potentially most at odds with the legitimising characteristics expected from the more abstracted perspective of Spain.

There were points of divergence between the viceroys' role of representing the king, their own ambitions and the practical necessities of establishing viceregal authority using personal courtly and patrimonial strategies.²⁹² The bitterest complaints were levied against patronage that went to members of the viceregal households and to other recent Spanish arrivals that did not have the traditional legitimising claim of being a *conquistador*, an old settler, or descended from either. There were also complaints that too much of the patronage that did go to 'worthy' claimants went to those that were most closely allied and involved with the viceroys or their dependents. In short, the complaints from the two *visitas*

²⁹⁰ VEA, Mendoza, Doc.5.

²⁹¹ See also ch.7.

²⁹² See ch.8.

followed the same formula of earlier accusations made against previous governors and the crown for not rewarding the 'right' people. It was a symptom of perpetually scarce and diminishing resources on the one hand and the high expectations of many Spanish settlers on the other, combined with an uncertainty and instability of status produced by New Spain's original sin. It led to intense competition for available sources of income and prestige. It is possible to identify a guiding logic to viceregal patronage that related to their governmental aims.

Household government

Both viceroys arrived from Spain with 'very principal households, of many *criados-caballeros*'²⁹³ of about thirty to fifty individuals drawn mainly from their seats in Spain: Granada and Guadalajara for Mendoza; Palencia, Navarre and the Basque country for Velasco.²⁹⁴ These would form the core of the viceregal court, which reproduced the royal and lordly households they knew from Spain, but also fit into a pattern that was fundamental to Spanish migration and settlement in New Spain.

Like the viceroys other great patrons had travelled to New Spain with large retinues to help them establish their authority and carry out their commands. Hernán Cortés returned in 1530 with a retinue of close to four hundred people (nearly as many as those that crossed with him in 1519 from Cuba) 'to discharge the offices' in the marquessate and to man expeditions he had in mind as Captain General of New Spain. Similarly, Alvarado on his return in 1538 was accompanied by 250 men, many arms and munitions for further exploration and several nubile young *doncellas* for his battle scarred veterans in Guatemala,

²⁹³ J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias*, ed. Silva Tena, T. (Mexico, 1990), p.159.

²⁹⁴ Appendix A.

all at a cost of 30,000d.²⁹⁵ Lesser *encomenderos* sought to maintain friends and relatives from Spain in greater dignity than they had been used to or useful new acquaintances to help them as tribute collectors or merely to display their own importance.²⁹⁶

It was understood, therefore, that the viceroys would rely on and give preference to these dependants. They were known generically by a variety of names, like *vassallo* or *criado* that displayed the bonds of loyalty between them and the viceroys.²⁹⁷ None of these definitions implied formal servitude, and there was nothing institutional about their position. Indeed in all letters addressed to the king the signatories rather optimistically referred to themselves as ‘his majesty’s most loyal *criados*’ to suggest an idealised household proximity.

Apart from the silver-miners, most patrons in New Spain were competing for diminishing resources, as the indigenous population declined while inflation increased the price of prized European goods erratically.²⁹⁸ This made reliance on a stable and adaptable source of income or at least food and shelter particularly pressing.

²⁹⁵ J.L. Martínez, *Cortés...*p.619. As Martínez pointed out this included minstrels and artisans, a specialist in silk and friars and nuns that he was sponsoring, along with candidates for 13 *corregimientos* that he needed to fill; C. Pérez de Bustamante *Don Antonio de Mendoza...*Doc. XXXI; J.M. Vallejo García-Hevia, *Juicio a un conquistador: Pedro de Alvarado* (2 vols), (Madrid 2008) Vol.1. p.164.

²⁹⁶ Motolinia, *Historia de los Indios*, ...p.16.

²⁹⁷ N.R. Porro Girardi ‘Los criados en las indias del Quinientos: del Servicio privado a la función pública’, en *XI Congreso del Instituto Internacional de Historia del Derecho Indiano*, Instituto de Investigaciones de Historia del Derecho, (Buenos Aires,1997), IV, 91-12; J. Martínez Millán (ed), *Instituciones y élites de poder en la monarquía hispana durante el siglo XVI*, (Madrid 1992), p.17-21.

²⁹⁸ E. Ruiz Medrano *Reshaping New Spain...* p.20; Gaspar Mejía as late as 1587 who still relied on being ‘arrimado a un factor del rey’ and la Romera who ‘desea hacerme una merced’ if his wife ever wants to come over and needs a place to stay *Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias*, E. Otte et al. ed., p. 212 -234.

For the viceroys, deciding who to appoint to offices like *corregidor* or who deserved largesse from the treasury was not a choice between nepotism and highly qualified bureaucrats but rather between the viceroy's trusted favourites that formed part of the viceregal 'party' and other settlers whom the viceroy did not know or trust and who had no particular allegiance to him. The viceroys assigned offices or granted benefices to relatives and other members of their household in imitation of the 'intimate' style of courtly government they knew from Spain. The crown itself recognised the patrimonial aspect of viceregal government in the immunity the viceroys received from paying the *almojarifazgo* on the household property they transported to New Spain.²⁹⁹ Furthermore, royal instructions to the viceroys and their defence of the appointments they made, are full of references to choosing 'men of confidence' to carry out the most delicate tasks of the administration. The viceroys defended their choices along the same lines: 'and in this I did what I had to and what I considered to be most convenient for the service of your majesty and the good government of the land.'³⁰⁰ The duality of the viceroy's identity as a mere representation and as a patron in his own right who was not sovereign but had appropriated king-like powers explains the discrepancy and justification for complaint from the excluded.

The difference between household duties and more official services was blurred: Amongst the most mentioned individuals in Mendoza's *visita* was Agustín Guerrero: ostensibly *mayordomo mayor* of Mendoza's court and captain of the guard. He also acted as the viceroy's most important 'intimate representative' carrying out a remarkable array of

²⁹⁹ C. Pérez de Bustamante, *Mendoza...* p.197 for the detailed catalogue contained in the *cedula* reproduction in full. (As Guillermo Tovar de Teresa has pointed out the 200 books of Mendoza would count as one of only three large library collections known in New Spain at the time); M.J. Sarabia Viejo, *Don Luis de Velasco: Virrey De La Nueva España 1550-1564* (Seville 1978) p.4-5; Appendix A.

³⁰⁰ AGI, Justicia 259, 'Descargos del Visorrey', 19.

missions: from overseeing the review of the treasury books from 1536 to 1544 to running the viceroy's wool-making enterprise with Gonzalo Gómez, a task that was beneath the dignity of the viceroy but was essential for the private wealth that allowed him to run the viceregal household and maintain its dependents. Guerrero was also involved in other delicate missions such as brokering the deal over Pacific exploration with Alvarado and as the viceroy's primary lieutenant in the Mixtón War; he even acted as bursar to the college of Tlatelolco. Guerrero also organised the court and controlled access to the viceroy.³⁰¹ When Guerrero finally left New Spain it was to represent the viceroy at court in Spain following the accusations of Tello de Sandoval's *visita*. Guerrero was rewarded with *corregimientos* from 1540 to his return to Spain after 1545; not surprisingly, he was continually rewarded from the 'vacaciones' fund for specific missions as well. It seems highly probable that he had his own patronage network, delegating some responsibilities and sharing rewards with his trusted associates within the viceroy's court like his nephew Juan Martínez Guerrero (Agustín himself did not have children in New Spain). Mendoza allowed Juan to enjoy the *encomienda* that came to him as his wife's dowry even though she was an illegitimate *mestiza* making the transfer of dubious legality. Juan was left a very wealthy man by his uncle, eventually living in one of the grandest houses in Mexico City.³⁰² His descendants were encomenderos into the 17th century and thereafter established a *mayorazgo*.³⁰³

Household dependants, like Guerrero, were not supplanting professional bureaucrats in these offices, but rather what their accusers in the *visitas* considered more

³⁰¹ See Appendix A.

³⁰² G. Kubler *Mexican Architecture of the 16th Century* (2 Volumes), (1948), Vol.1 p.193f.

³⁰³ See Appendix A.

'deserving' settlers and *conquistadores*. The members of viceregal entourages were at least as able in discharging these administrative offices as the *conquistadores* and needy settlers that their accusers suggested should have occupied these positions instead.³⁰⁴ For the viceroys, selecting household dependants and other trusted individuals served a dual function: firstly they could be more certain that these trusted individuals would carry out their instructions; secondly by promoting these favourites in society they were inserting them into the elite of New Spain, in positions where they could extend patronage and influence in their own right. This not only fulfilled the viceroy's obligations as patrons but also proved expedient for the exercise of their power.

Velasco famously promoted his brother Francisco and other relatives like the Viveros and the Ibarra as parallel sources of patronage to bypass the restrictions of the new royal decrees limiting the ties to the land that salaried officials like himself could possess. Francisco for instance, was able to maintain his own large and identifiable client network: Valderrama's investigations often turned up individuals identified as '*criados* of don Francisco...'³⁰⁵ He supported them from the salaries he enjoyed from various offices granted to him by his brother; the disbursements he could arrange for his followers from the 'vacaciones' fund; his *encomienda*; and eventually as one of the largest land-owners in New Spain as well. Francisco's patrimonial wealth became crucial, after Velasco's death in 1564, for the triumph of the 'viceregal party' over the ambitions of Martín Cortés and his partisans.

³⁰⁴ See ch.7.

³⁰⁵ CJV, 206-245

A faithful outsider like the Roman knight Luis de León Romano, who crossed to New Spain with Mendoza under recommendation from Charles V and continued to serve under Velasco, was a useful agent for viceregal authority as well. His commitment to the viceroys was such that he left much of his fortune to Velasco as well as to educational and religious institutions for Indians in his will after he died childless.³⁰⁶ Both viceroys gave Leon Romano, who was a committed partisan who depended entirely on viceregal largesse, various offices including *corregimientos* and sent him as their 'intimate representative' on specific missions like limiting the damage caused by cattle on indigenous lands in Oaxaca or to investigate sites to plant wheat; or entrusted him with delicate responsibilities like overseeing the supply of essential food-stuffs into Mexico City, where speculation amongst the members of the *cabildo*, who had controlled the supply in the past, had driven prices up even higher than in the rest of the kingdom.³⁰⁷ He was also versatile and able enough to be employed in less administrative positions as well like arranging the courtly feasts and pageantries for Mendoza in 1538 or designing the town-plan for new Spanish settlements in Michoacán and Oaxaca for which he was rewarded from the 'vacaciones' fund by both viceroys.³⁰⁸

There were also more discreet but practical issues where trusted dependents within the administration could be helpful in strengthening the viceroy's hand. Mendoza made use of Martín de Peralta as *corregidor* from 1536 to his death in 1543 and with these powers he became an agent, at times, for the distribution of the viceroy's patronage, most significantly

³⁰⁶ M.J. Sarabia Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco...*p.204-5.

³⁰⁷ AGI Mexico, 168 'Velasco to Philip of 20 April 1553'; VEA, Mendoza, Doc.5 'Oaxaca'.

³⁰⁸ AGI Justicia 258 *Relación sacada de los libros de la contaduría...*and Appendix A.

in arranging land swaps, grants and purchases of *oidor* Tejada in the area of Chalco.³⁰⁹ Peralta, a 'very honourable' *hidalgo* from Santa Fe near Granada, was the sort of desirable settler for New Spain and he had committed to settling in the land by bringing his entire family. Mendoza considered Peralta a trusted dependent and a 'good republican',³¹⁰ whose help in carrying out the viceroy's wishes had benefited the land and consequently the viceroy felt justified in rewarding him with an *encomienda* as well as offices.³¹¹

The most glamorous opportunities for royal service also went to the viceroys' 'men of confidence'. Mendoza sent 'some men from my household' to deal with the 'king and his lieutenants' of a community of rebellious runaway slaves. His dependents then warned the mine owners across New Spain after the slaves confessed to the existence of a wider conspiracy. Francisco Vázquez de Coronado first made his name in royal service by being entrusted with this responsibility, personally carrying out the arrests and securing the mines.³¹² This led to an advantageous marriage and justification for his appointment to various offices. The viceroy was determined to build him up as his own magnate in the increasingly important north-west frontier, granting him *encomiendas* in New Galicia to support his appointment to the governorship. From his stronghold, Coronado represented the viceroy and supported the great projects of exploration of the Pacific North-West. Velasco built up a similar dependant-magnate in the shape of his page and the nephew of

³⁰⁹ R. Himmerich y Valencia, *The Encomenderos...* summarised in p. 214 AGI, Justicia 261 *passim*; E. Ruiz Medrano, *Reshaping New Spain: ...* p. 180-181, p. 93 and her Ch.3 on a detailed reconstruction of Tejada's economic activities.

³¹⁰ VEA 'Mendoza', Doc. 8.19 and 7.1.

³¹¹ AGI, Justicia, 259, 'descargos del Visorey', Justicia 258- evidence of Alonso Ortiz de Zuñiga 'Item 57'.

³¹² AGI, 259 'Descargos del Visorrey' 19.

his son in law, Francisco de Ibarra. Ibarra commanded his first expedition at the age of fifteen to the territory he later conquered and governed as the kingdom of Nueva Vizcaya.³¹³

The noblemen don Luis de Castilla and don Tristán de Luna y Arellano had originally come as part of the *marquesa* Juana de Zúñiga's entourage in 1530, but had returned to Spain, disillusioned with their patron Cortés. They had returned with Mendoza who valued settlers of recognised nobility over self-made adventurers and consequently supported both of them with *corregimientos* and other offices.³¹⁴ Mendoza also granted them opportunities for service through special commissions: Castilla was sent to represent the viceroy in the arrangements with Alvarado along with Guerrero and in the launching of Alarcón's expedition; he also helped in the delicate matter of negotiating, supplying and paying Michoacán *conquistadores* who accompanied Coronado during the decisive period from 1539 to 1541 (like *oidor* Tejada who dealt with the Mexica contingent).³¹⁵ Castilla, who had elevated to the *cabildo* of Mexico City by the king and become an *encomendero* by marrying the daughter of Alonso de Estrada was using his authority and judicial powers as *corregidor* to develop important mining interests.

Luna y Arellano became a strong-man of the Míxe frontier in Oaxaca, especially after marrying the widow of Francisco de Maldonado, another individual favoured by Mendoza

³¹³ J.I. Rubio-Mañe *El virreinato I...* p.37.

³¹⁴ J. López-Portillo y Weber, *La rebelión de la Nueva Galicia*, (Saltillo, 1981) p.433; A.S. Aiton *Antonio de Mendoza...*pp. 47-8, 86, 166 & 175; Appendix A.

³¹⁵ AGI Justicia, 258 testimony of 'don Ramiro principal de Michoacán' and 'don Alonso principal de Pátzcuaro'.

who had occupied a similar role before Luna y Arellano³¹⁶, and inheriting his rich *encomiendas* of Tecomastlanguaca which he added to his nearby holdings at Justlanguaca. In 1548 and 1550 Luna y Arellano successfully defeated two uprisings in the area amongst the Tequipans and the Zapotecs.³¹⁷ In 1551, Luna y Arellano strengthened his position in the area further when he became governor of the *marquesado*, which had many holdings in Oaxaca. Velasco continued to rely on Luna y Arellano and rewarded him by appointing him to the command of the most ambitious project yet to conquer and settle a new governorship in Florida, which, had it succeeded, would have turned him into another powerful territorial magnate associated with the viceregal court.

Noblemen from illustrious dynasties like Castilla and Luna y Arellano were also valuable to the viceroys for the prestige of their names and their dynastic contacts on both sides of the Atlantic. Both were also related to the *marquesa* which explained why Luna y Arellano was appointed governor of the *marquesado* in 1551.³¹⁸ Castilla's royal descent brought added charisma to his person. Mendoza justified giving him offices in part because of this legitimising attribute: 'he is very honourable and a *caballero* and he is worthy of this [status] because he has given a good account of himself in the offices he has been charged with...'³¹⁹ Castilla's influential brother Diego de Castilla was lord of various towns in Spain and master of the horse to Charles V, which gave Luis a powerful ally at the heart of the Spanish court. Through Diego's daughter with doña Beatriz de Mendoza, Ana de Castilla

³¹⁶ VEA, 'Mendoza', Doc.5, 'Oaxaca'.

³¹⁷ A.S. Aiton, *Antonio de Mendoza...*p,174-5.

³¹⁸ R. Himmerich y Valencia *The Encomenderos of New Spain...*p.186.

³¹⁹ AGI Justicia 259 'descargos del visorrey',19.

who was married to viceroy Velasco, don Luis de Castilla, Mendoza and Velasco all shared ties of kinship. Castilla and Luna y Arellano were instrumental in bringing continuity to the power-structures of New Spain despite the change of viceroy.

There were other useful individuals in New Spain whom the viceroys favoured for strategic reasons. Like Luna y Arellano in Oaxaca, Mendoza and Velasco relied on another noble adventurer, don Hernán Pérez de Bocanegra y Córdoba as a strong-man in northern Michoacán on the Chichimeca frontier. Bocanegra had established a fruitful alliance with Fernando de Tapia, the Otomí godfather of New Spain's conquest and colonisation of the frontier north of Xilotepec. Mendoza empowered Bocanegra by granting him an *encomienda* at Acámbaro in the region (Fernando de Tapia's wife came from this *encomienda*) and elevating him to *regidor ordinario* of Mexico City and perhaps more relevantly given the developing pastoral economy of the area under his influence, *alcalde de mesta*. In a further affirmation of their alliance Bocanegra represented the viceroy in an important purchase of cattle-breeding ranches in northern Michoacán. Both viceroys also used him as a military commander: Mendoza in the Mixtón war and Velasco in an attempt to pacify the increasingly violent Chichimeca raiders that were disrupting the access to the new silver-mining centre of Zacatecas.³²⁰

As silver-mining became increasingly important in the later 1540s and throughout the government of Velasco, both viceroys sought to form important ties with the new silver-mining entrepreneurs who were fast becoming the wealthiest settlers of New Spain.

³²⁰ R. Himmerich y Valencia *The encomenderos of New Spain: 1521-1555*, (Austin 1996), p. 215; E. Ruiz Medrano *Reshaping New Spain: Government and private interest in the colonial bureaucracy 1531-1550*. Julia Constantino and Pauline Marmasse trans.,(Colorado, 2006), p. 121-2; P.W. Powell *La guerra chichimeca...*, pp.76, 84.

Mendoza had already established a relationship with Cristóbal de Oñate and Miguel de Ibarra when he was securing his authority over New Galicia in the 1530s, first through Vázquez de Coronado and after during his own tour of the area. Mendoza maintained the links with the Ibarras thereafter, for instance through Hortuño de Ibarra who became Juan Alonso de Sosa's lieutenant treasurer in the late 1540s, and by promoting other relatives like Pedro de Ibarra who was recommended for a canonry by the viceroy.³²¹ Oñate married Catalina de Salazar, the widow of Mendoza's household retainer don Ruy Díaz de Mendoza and daughter of Mendoza's ally Gonzalo de Salazar. The relationship became closer after the Mixtón war when both men emerged with great credit. Ibarra was given *corregimientos* both before the war in 1541 and after in 1543, while the viceroy heaped praise and honours on Oñate who became the effective governor of New Galicia and was trusted enough to be appointed as Francisco de Mendoza's *maestro de campo* for the proposed expedition to Peru in 1547.³²² These families became important beyond New Galicia after their discovery of the silver-deposits in Zacatecas. Their ties and loyalty bound them closer to Mexico City than to the new *audiencia* of New Galicia in remote Compostela.

Velasco had very close ties to the Ibarras from allegiances that traced their origin to Spain: the viceroy and Diego de Ibarra had served Velasco's kinsman the Constable of Castile early in their careers. Velasco seems to have travelled to New Spain with Diego's nephew Francisco de Ibarra as a page in his retinue, but the alliance became dynastic after the viceroy married his daughter to Diego. Later, Velasco with the financial backing of Diego de Ibarra would support the expeditions of Francisco de Ibarra and convert him into the

³²¹ ENE, Vol.5. docs. 270 and 274.

³²² A.S. Aiton *Antonio de Mendoza ...* p. 176.

governor of Nueva Vizcaya. Elevating powerful allies into the elite of New Spain helped the viceroy to extend his influence over other potential rivals for authority in New Spain.

These grand figures owed their success and newly-won status in New Spain to viceregal patronage. They were not generally drawn from the *conquistadores* or the most successful early *encomenderos*. They were accompanied in the viceregal party by less well known but important individuals of lesser social prestige who subsisted more directly from viceregal patronage. These other dependants fulfilled important administrative needs and advanced the viceroys' agenda of establishing their authority over the Spanish settlers.

Pedro Varela, for instance, became Mendoza's agent at Veracruz where he looked after the viceroy's personal commercial interests and ensured amongst other things, that the viceroy was supplied with the rare provisions he needed. Of particular importance were the supplies from Spain for his expeditions of exploration and to deal with the emergency of the Mixtón War and the relief of Peru.³²³ Mendoza provided him with the necessary offices, like *factor* of Veracruz and several *corregimientos* to carry out this preferential trade for the viceroy.

Many of these associates lived at the palace or were fed by the viceroys. I have been unable to find any accounts for either viceregal household, but it seems clear from their own testimonies and the evidence collected by the *visitadores* that the viceroys used their administrative windfalls as well as their private wealth, from salaries, and their economic activities, to sustain large numbers of dependants at the viceregal palace.³²⁴ Velasco's

³²³ AGI Justicia 259, L. Hanke, *Los virreyes... 'Mendoza'* Doc.7.

³²⁴ AGI Justicia, 259 'Descargos del Visorrey', 19.

salaries became relatively large compared to the incomes of many other patrons and the balance tilted increasingly in the viceroy's favour as the 'magnates' were overcome and the number and wealth of *encomenderos* declined while the private enterprises the viceroys engaged in became more profitable. For a very rough comparison, it should be noted that in 1560 Velasco enjoyed a salary of 20,000*d* while by then the average *encomendero* (taking into account that there were enormous variations and many had other sources of income as well) enjoyed tributary rents of 1,619*d* a year.³²⁵

Mendoza supported around thirty of the permanent members of his household with the help of the 2,000*d* that the crown had granted him for the upkeep of a viceregal guard in addition to his salary of 6,000*d*. This use of funds for general household expenditure became part of the accusation against his tenure during Sandoval's *visita*. As one witness pointed out, despite the viceroy's official lists of guards, the only halberdiers he saw at the palace were those painted on the wall-paper on either side of the door leading to the viceroy's quarters.³²⁶ Mendoza was using these funds to reward his favourites or to increase the dependants he could maintain at the palace without employing them exclusively as his guard. The list of the members of Mendoza's bodyguard offers the closest information we have regarding the identity of Mendoza's household dependants.³²⁷ Many seem to have been relatives of the more successful dependents that Mendoza promoted like the Peraltas.

³²⁵ Hortuño de Ibarra calculated that the towns in encomienda produced about 485,658*d* excluding the *diezmo* (mostly still in kind) and there were around 300 *encomenderos* in New Spain; J. Miranda, *El Tributo Indígena en la Nueva España durante el Siglo XVI*. 2nd ed. (Mexico 2005), p.143.

³²⁶ AGI Justicia 258, testimony of Alonso Ortíz de Zúñiga, q.108.

³²⁷ See Appendix A.

Both viceroys were known for, and advertised, their generosity to impoverished conquistadors or other recent arrivals that were fed and even housed in the viceregal palace. This direct patronage over newly acquired dependants was an expected element of lordly behaviour, which displayed the viceroy's power and virtue and was aped by other Spaniards,³²⁸ as when they joined the viceroy in the effort to house and feed the 300 survivors of de Soto's expedition. The viceroys' emphasis on their magnanimity can be understood because it transcended the private sphere and helped to establish their authority in symbolic terms, as well as the more prosaic fact that they could count on large numbers of dependant men as their partisans. Many of the Spaniards in Coronado's expedition had been new-comers that the viceroy had been feeding in Mexico City.³²⁹ By the end of Mendoza's tenure, Andrés de Tapia calculated the viceroy fed 250 Spaniards at the palace and Velasco seems to have supported slightly fewer but more regularly, even indebting himself heavily to achieve this.³³⁰ Alonso Vázquez described the sort of individual sponsored by Mendoza: '[Mendoza] has and has had in his house and at his table many poor *caballeros* and other people who he has fed...sometimes they are a hundred sometimes less and this witness does not know if they are paid a salary but know that he has given silk and material to clothe them and shoes... he has seen no other guards except for these people he keeps in his house and who follow him around'.³³¹ Amongst these could be the relatives of useful individuals that helped the viceroys establish strategic links across New Spain as was the case with Bernal Díaz del Castillo's son who lived at Velasco's court and helped

³²⁸ A.S. Aiton, p.50.

³²⁹ A.S. Aiton, *Antonio de Mendoza...*p.124n.16.

³³⁰ C. Pérez de Bustamante, *Don Antonio de Mendoza...* Doc. XXVII.

³³¹ AGI Justicia 258 Alonso Vázquez, regidor de Veracruz, q.108.

established at least an epistolary link between Velasco and an influential citizen in distant Guatemala.³³²

The named beneficiaries from the 'quitas y vacaciones' fund also reveal the identity of some of the less official individuals that were maintained at court from treasury funds, like Velasco's noble courtesan doña Margarita Pacheco³³³ or his hunters like the peerless Pedro Romero or Alonso de Nava (whom Suárez de Peralta believed to have received a salary of 2,000d), along with doctors, barbers, musicians and others who made courtly life more pleasant and charismatic.³³⁴

More intriguingly Valderrama mentioned several individuals, like Gerónimo del Mercado, who had been nicknamed *alumbrados* in Mexico.³³⁵ They benefited from direct viceregal patronage, but were also often associated with the friars as in the case of Agustín de Las Casas, a *deudo* of Bartolomé de las Casas and whose daughter married *visitador* Diego Ramírez. According to Valderrama, they were 'one of those' charged with finding ways to reduce the levels of tribute paid by indigenous polities.³³⁶ Such agents were instrumental in the viceroys' policy for dealing with the indigenous polities discussed in ch.5. They seem to have been part of the identifiable viceregal 'party' who hoped to uphold on ideological, as well as practical grounds, the supremacy of the viceroys over the other

³³² Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista de la Nueva España*, J. Ramírez Cabañas intro. (Mexico 1974), p.604-5.

³³³ CJV, p.249.

³³⁴ CJV, various entries pp.205-257. For the hunters in particular see p.223 for the land grants they received from Velasco along with J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado...*p.160.

³³⁵ See ch.7.

³³⁶ CJV, 206ff for these esp. 206-7 and p.211.

Spanish authorities, like the magnates and *encomenderos*, or the royal officials, *oidores* and especially the *cabildos*.³³⁷

Influence over the *encomenderos*

Most of the individuals discussed so far were not from among the ranks of the more successful conquistadores or early settlers. They were ‘new men’, in terms of New Spain and were not only emotionally more important to the viceroys but also more dependent on them and consequently more reliable as allies for their patrimonial and administrative strategies of government. In a pattern that had repeated itself since the arrival of the Royal officials, they were considered to have displaced members of the existing elite or taken the resources that should have gone to more hard-pressed and deserving settlers.

Like the great majority of the settlers in New Spain, both viceroys were in favour of perpetual grants of *encomienda*. They lobbied for it because it would have made them decisive one-time patrons and would have allowed them great powers to define a more permanent social hierarchy for New Spain. Mendoza certainly expected this responsibility.³³⁸ Instead both viceroys had to rely on an indirect influence over the *encomenderos*. The viceroy’s use of the administration as a patronage system softened the rancour at the elevation of their own allies to the rank of *encomenderos*, while attracting a decisive number of the more traditionally deserving and successful settlers with the benefits of alternative forms of patronage at the viceroy’s disposal.

³³⁷ See ch.8.

³³⁸ VEA, Mendoza, Doc.2.

Mendoza avoided giving offence to most *encomenderos* by not confiscating grants whose holders were still alive as had occurred with the Second Audiencia. Had he done so, he would have faced much more dogged opposition from the established elite as the wrangles over the *encomienda* of Alonso Lucas, which Mendoza reassigned to Alonso de Mérida rather than Lucas' successors, suggest. Such trespasses were exceptional enough to be unimportant to most *encomenderos* who did not see Mendoza as an enemy. Rather Suárez de Peralta's most salient memory of the relative powers that Mendoza enjoyed when compared to his successors was that he was free to distribute these *encomiendas* according to his will.³³⁹

Mendoza was able to rely on the flexibility of the system of *quitas y vacaciones*, which allowed him to raise the numbers of *corregidores* and still assign 11 crown towns to private *encomenderos* without confiscating them from existing holders first.³⁴⁰ These were allocated to his closest associates without alienating the existing *encomenderos* by making them fearful that their own holdings might be confiscated or forced to escheat. The viceroys also encouraged marital alliances between his adherents and members of the *encomendero* elite which cemented the link between the viceroys' interests and the notion of *encomienda* as the reward and symbol of the Spanish elite. By the end of Mendoza's first year in office three members of the viceroy's household had become *encomenderos*: Martín de Peralta was granted a new *encomienda* and Alonso de Mérida was re-assigned one after the death of its holder; while Francisco Vázquez de Coronado was allowed to acquire one as part of his

³³⁹ J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado...*p.150.

³⁴⁰ E. Ruiz-Medrano *Reshaping New Spain....* p.97.

wife's dowry.³⁴¹ All three were the type of trusted noble *principal* men that Mendoza envisaged at the head of his kingdom and who the settlers hoped to consider their peers.

The association between viceroy and *encomenderos* that the Mendozan system allowed for grew strong enough for him to sponsor and represent the causes of the *encomenderos* generally and the dispossessed but deserving settlers in particular before the royal authorities. Mendoza was fortunate in that it was assumed, and his instructions suggested, that the task of determining which individuals deserved a perpetual grant of *encomienda*, in accordance with a *cédula* of 5 April 1528, was to be finally decided by himself. Mendoza supported the idea of perpetual and hereditary grants, with the legal proviso that these rights were ultimately dependent on the crown and not held autonomously by the *encomenderos*.³⁴² This chimed well with his aim of creating a stable and ordered kingdom for him to govern where the *encomenderos* should be at the pinnacle of a Spanish 'republic' presided by himself and his successors. While the settlers believed that the final *repartimiento* was imminent, the stakes in bidding for viceregal favour were high because it could entail membership of the recognised perpetual elite of New Spain.

In accordance with these expectations Mendoza presided over an assembly of aggrieved *encomenderos* and dispossessed conquerors who elected Miguel Díaz de Aux and Francisco de Vargas (two of their number) to go to petition the king in Spain for just

³⁴¹ R. Himmerich y Valencia, *The Encomenderos...* and relevant entries. Coronado may have married as early as 1535.

³⁴² Ch.7 for a justification of my statement that royal officials and clergymen were in favour of perpetual *encomienda*. This was notionally similar to the Norman distribution of lordly rights over England after 1066, although with important practical differences. *Encomiendas* were not lordships but a function of tribute that had theoretically been owed to Moctezuhma by his empire. Imperial tribute was redirected from the crown to the *encomenderos* for their maintenance and as a reward for past present and potential services. (see *infra*, ch.8).

rewards. They hoped to do so with the viceroy's blessing. Both men were consistently compensated by the viceroy for the loss of their *encomienda* with *corregimientos* and other forms of viceregal grace in recognition of the worth of their claims. In 1537 the assembly was eventually hijacked by existing *encomenderos* with their own interests and the original representatives never managed to leave New Spain; but in a letter Díaz de Aux emphasised his trust in the viceroy's qualifications to resolve the matter of *encomienda* grants in perpetuity 'better than anyone else'.³⁴³ This assembly was a precursor to the delegation which reached the royal court in 1550 and was joined there by another delegation from Peru to argue for perpetual grants.³⁴⁴

The assembly of 1537 described by Díaz de Aux also points to the viceroy's willingness and ability to summon assemblies of leading citizens to gain their consensus and consent for certain ventures. Another good example comes from the discussions that led to the abortive expedition to Peru in 1547 which Jerónimo López described as a 'parlamento' aimed at garnering support for the proposed expedition.³⁴⁵ Participation in such assemblies hosted by the viceroy reinforced the sense a Spanish 'republic' with the viceroy at its head and conversely recognition of the principal status of those that were invited to participate.

Mendoza also represented the *encomenderos* throughout the crisis caused by the attempted implementation of the New Laws. His intervention helped to suppress some of the most grievous clauses, avoided an armed uprising and firmly established the viceroy as the champion of *encomienda* in the minds of most settlers.

³⁴³ ENE, p.230f Doc. 182. See ch.7 for more details.

³⁴⁴ Bernal Díaz del Castillo *Conquista ...*pp.587-9.

³⁴⁵ ENE, Vol.V Doc. 263.

Mendoza's greatest critics during Sandoval's *visita* were *encomenderos* who complained about the grants, transfers and confirmations of *encomienda* ordered by the viceroy. They represented a small though often powerful minority of settlers, like the Vázquez de Tapia clan and their allies the Albornoz who in the past had lost out in viceregal preferment. Most of the commentators in New Spain, like the traditionally Cortesian *encomendero* Andrés de Tapia, argued that the viceroy had only become more identified and familiar with New Spain as time had passed and argued vigorously for him to stay in charge and bequeath his duties to his son.³⁴⁶ Those with interests in *encomienda* generally felt supported and represented by the viceroy while it was the viceroy's accuser, Tello de Sandoval, who had been tasked with implementing the hated anti-*encomendero* 'New Laws'. Despite their minority, the accusations that arose from the *visita* damaged Mendoza's reputation at court in Spain because they questioned his intentions in government and his *virtue*.

By then Mendoza was fighting for his own perpetuity in office as much as for the elite that he had shaped during his fifteen years in power. Far from his image as the modern administrator keen to undermine the proto-feudal aspirations of the *encomenderos*, Mendoza was in a sense no more than a partisan arbiter in the tangled disputes over rightful *encomienda* ownership that had always plagued New Spain. The complaints against him during the *visita* were not that he had opposed the *encomenderos* but that he had only supported those he favoured with unwarranted offices, lands and rewards. The association between Mendoza and the *encomenderos* can be seen most clearly in the crown's reaction against both viceregal and *encomendero* patrimonial aspirations in 1550: Mendoza's

³⁴⁶ C. Pérez de Bustamante, *Don Antonio de Mendoza...* Doc. XXVII 'Carta de Andrés de Tapia al lic. Chaves en la Corte. (sin fecha pero en 1550)'.

support for *encomienda* both in New Spain and at court alienated him from the council of the Indies because it confirmed many councillor's suspicions about his own lordly aspirations in New Spain.

Velasco's instructions and his expectations on first arriving in New Spain were at first different to those of the outgoing viceroy. Even before Velasco arrived settlers like Andrés de Tapia and Jerónimo López were worried that the new viceroy would be too 'severe' with regards to the *sui-generis* even 'secret' arrangements of the Mendozan period.³⁴⁷ Velasco was constrained by the decisiveness with which royal legislation insisted in the matter of *encomienda* after 1550. Velasco himself repeatedly argued in support of the notion of perpetual *encomienda* along the lines of the negotiations of 1546 and failing that the extension of tenure for three generations rather than two, both of which the crown eventually denied as well. Instead he was charged with carrying out the extent of the clauses of the New Laws that undermined the profitability of *encomienda* tenure. Royal legislation did help Velasco's authority, however: the new prohibitions on the *encomenderos* meant that their tributary incomes were decreasing and they were losing the potential for the lordly and jurisdictional attribute they craved, becoming instead little more than crown pensioners and consequently increasingly dependent on viceregal favour.³⁴⁸ At the same time silver-mining and activities associated with its development, like owning extensive agricultural lands whose produce would to feed the burgeoning new mining settlements, increasingly substituted tributary income as the most lucrative economic activity in New Spain.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ M. J. Sarabia Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco...*pp.231-259.

The difference between the *encomenderos* and salaried *corregidores* or recipients of royal subsidies diminished in practice, as both were increasingly paid in money or equivalent produce from the royal treasury rather than directly by personal services and tribute drawn specifically from their towns. The viceroy, with the support of an amenable *audiencia*, could also determine when an *encomienda* escheated after considering the ambiguous legal manipulations involved in defining how many 'lives' the *encomienda* had been in one family: the acceptance of deathbed weddings to very young brides, inheritance between siblings and other manipulations were in the gift of the viceroy. For example many considered Velasco's concession of an *encomienda* to Pedro de Castilla rather than its escheatment to the crown as an obvious case of favouritism.³⁴⁹ The good will of the viceroy became even more important for an increasing segment of the old *encomendero* class in securing the financial subsidies, supplementary offices and land grants at Velasco's disposal if they wanted to sustain the level of wealth and status they had become accustomed to. Seen in this light, Velasco's hold over the *encomenderos* became even stronger than Mendoza's as the nature of *encomienda* became less patrimonial and more dependent on viceregal approval.

Velasco's economic assistance to needy *conquistadors* and their heirs softened the severity of the implementation of the New Laws. This not only came from the usual sources of patronage like *corregimientos* or the *quitas y vacaciones* funds, but Velasco also adopted and justified to the crown another kind of 'vacaciones' fund drawn from the tributary income of recently escheated *encomiendas* or from the dues of excessively large *encomiendas*, part of which was assigned instead to assist the impoverished, dispossessed

³⁴⁹ CJV,p.144

heirs to *encomiendas* or other deserving *conquistadors*. This manipulation recalls the changes made originally by Mendoza to the *corregimientos* and is an indication of the concentration of patronage that the viceroys were able to accumulate by appropriating access to the funds of the royal treasury. Velasco was able to run a selective welfare system where the viceroy determined who deserved to receive assistance, making an even greater proportion of the Spanish settlers dependent on his good will.³⁵⁰

Like Mendoza, Velasco developed intimate ties to the *encomendero* class through the marriage or elevation of his *allegados* to that status. The individuals selected to represent the *encomenderos* as a whole at a meeting to discuss the issue of perpetuity and petition the king at an assembly in 1564 included Francisco, the viceroy's brother and others like Bernardino Pacheco Bocanegra that were considered Velasco's men.³⁵¹ Velasco was able to identify himself as a patron of the *encomenderos*.

The *cabildo* of Mexico City

The natural forum in which the settler elite could come together and exert their common influence was the *cabildo* which formed the *ayuntamiento* of a municipal unit. As the basic unit of the Spanish municipal political tradition a *cabildo* was endowed with a relatively autonomous political legitimacy – a *cabildo* had legitimised Cortés' leadership and planned expedition inland at Veracruz - and its *regidores* and other officials served voluntarily and without a salary. The *cabildo* elected *alcaldes ordinarios* and other *regidores* although the crown could also appoint individuals to the *cabildo*.

³⁵⁰ M. J. Sarabia Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco...* pp.224-229.

³⁵¹ *Ibid...*p. 236-7, CJV p.230 and Appendix A.

Mexico City, the ancient imperial polity, was the preponderant *cabecera* of the kingdom with by far the greatest Spanish population and an especially powerful *cabildo* composed of some of the richest and best connected members of the Spanish elite. The inherent legitimacy of these municipal organisations, and in particular the eminence of the *cabildo* of Mexico City, could be a potential source of competition to viceregal authority.³⁵²

Bernaldino Vázquez de Tapia - a *conquistador* who had entrenched his influence through his judicious matrimonial alliances and his influence over the *cabildo* of Mexico City- complained vociferously against Mendoza, as he had done against Cortés, for attempting to control the *cabildo* and override or appropriate its powers.³⁵³ Vázquez de Tapia pointed out that the viceroy was trying to undermine some of the *cabildo's* most important rights, like deciding on the distribution of lands in the hinterland of Mexico City; or riding roughshod over some of the authorities they had acquired from the crown like their right to conduct an official *visita* of the royal mint (run by Mendoza's *allegado* Alonso de Mérida) for which the *cabildo* had a royal *cédula* but which the viceroy denied them: 'in this it became evident that the viceroy wanted the power to provide for [everything] high and low.'³⁵⁴

As with the *royal officials* and *oidores*, the viceroys were not able to affect the legal rights and privileges of the *cabildo*, so instead they influenced it through promoting the individuals of the 'viceregal party' within it. According to Vázquez de Tapia, the viceroy's men in the *cabildo* were don Luis de Castilla, Juan Alonso de Sosa, Gonzalo de Salazar,

³⁵² See ch.8.

³⁵³ R. Himmerch y Valencia, *The Encomenderos...*p.70-71.

³⁵⁴ AGI Justicia 258 Bernaldino Vázquez de Tapia, 17th May q.39-56 especially 53

Hernando de Salazar, Juan Velázquez de Salazar, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, Antonio de Carvajal and Hernán Pérez de Bocanegra.³⁵⁵ As Vázquez de Tapia explained the *cabildo* was soon cowed ‘because, as the lic. Loaysa came to the *ayuntamiento* and there were other *regidores* who were very good friends of the said viceroy and of his party, the others were very suspicious of saying anything in the *cabildo* relating to the viceroy because they would report it to him...’ In one particularly injurious instance Mendoza was accused of bursting into the *cabildo* chambers and insulting the *regidores*. According to Vázquez de Tapia Mendoza’s reply to the *cabildo*’s complaints rang particularly *hubristic* and tyrannical: Mendoza claimed he was not acting as president of the *audiencia* ‘but as viceroy and if you don’t hold your peace I will gag you, put you in prison, and send you to Castile in chains.’ The viceroys were even accused of tampering with the mail, which their enemies claimed first arrived at the viceregal palace before it was distributed in New Spain or sent to Spain. Agustín Guerrero for instance, was specifically accused of tampering with the correspondence to keep the king unaware of the *cabildo*’s concerns.³⁵⁶ The *regidores* lamented ‘...the grievances done to us by the removal of our pre-eminence and the denial of what we used to be able to do’. The viceroy’s power seemed so unassailable that ‘for this reason [the *regidores*] have no liberty to discuss things that it is necessary to discuss and to write to your majesty about’.

Public display

The sense of viceregal supremacy was reinforced by their expenditure in self-serving public display. Until the unexpected death of Velasco both viceroys had been effective at

³⁵⁵ AGI Justicia 258 Bernaldino Vázquez de Tapia, 17th May q.39-56 especially 53.

³⁵⁶ AGI Justicia 258 various but esp. answers to questions 39 and 52.

presenting themselves as the sole and most viable patrons of the Spanish 'republic' through these methods. Their household expenditure in theatrical public displays of authority had important ideological as well as practical advantages. They promoted the idea that Mendoza and Velasco were not just the representatives of the king, but also in their own right 'fathers' or patrons of the 'Spanish republic' as whole. For settlers like Suárez de Peralta, Velasco fulfilled the expectations of lordly behaviour by 'spending his income, very much as a lord should' which gave him 'the most principal house that a lord ever had and spent much in honouring the land': hunts, like the enormous hunting expedition to commemorate Mendoza's triumph over the Mixtón rebels involved 15,000 people and recalled European 'royal hunts'. More commonly races and bullfights on holy days were structured to reinforce the viceregal-sanctioned hierarchy: the viceroy presided and participation was limited to the accepted gentlemen of the elite so that status was exhibited very publicly in these events. This helped to establish an unwritten viceregal authority that ran beyond than the legal limits of the holder's bureaucratic titles, and associated his patronage with the defence of the fragile status quo.³⁵⁷ As Suárez de Peralta recalled: Velasco was a fine horseman and 'played *cañas* himself, which honoured the city so much that I knew gentlemen do everything possible to participate in the fun; and those who took part felt they had a knightly habit about their chests, so honoured were they. Merchants didn't even think of participating...'³⁵⁸

The importance of such patrimonial display was clearest when there was competition in monopolising its organisation and motifs. Díaz del Castillo's anecdote

³⁵⁷ J. Suárez de Peralta, *Tratado...* pp159-162; L. Weckman pp.116-125; A. Cañeque *The King's Living Image...* 'introduction'.

³⁵⁸ J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado...* p.160.

regarding the festivities in honour of the peace of Aigues Mortes in 1538 was purposefully illustrative. Mendoza and Cortés competed to display their lordly attributes in organising the pageantry and hosting grand banquets: the personal and patrimonial intentions behind their patronage of these events were evident, down to the appearance of the two patrons' individual insignias in the sweets that were distributed for the event. Mendoza, with the help of retainers used to regal entertainment, like Guerrero and León Romano, was shown to be much more able than Cortés. The viceroy astonished the Spaniards with his magnificence and ably represented the glamorous spectacle of kingship before the eyes of a Mexico City that yearned for its proximity and was deeply attracted by its displays.³⁵⁹

Suárez de Peralta had no doubt about the importance of such regalia and went so far as to recall the claim of a friend during Velasco's reign that '... "I swear to God that if the king sent orders to remove all the towns [in encomienda], that the viceroy would console them [the encomenderos like himself] and make them forget this damage, by sounding the music for a feast in the streets, so much do people love them". And he was right because the land was very good and quiet.'³⁶⁰

These patrimonial displays also evoked the ambiguity of the viceroy's status. There were complaints amongst Mendoza's enemies regarding the celebration to honour the military victory of the viceroy's brother Bernaldino: these celebrations were orchestrated by Alonso de Mérida, whose family had been *criados* of Mendoza's father, and he had come to

³⁵⁹ Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista...*Ch.CCI.

³⁶⁰ J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado...*p.162; *Felipe II y el oficio del rey: la fragua de un imperio* J. R. Gutiérrez, E. Martínez Ruiz, J. González Rodríguez, eds., p.484f.

New Spain with the viceroy.³⁶¹ Within a couple of years of Mendoza's arrival, his *allegado* Mérida had been elevated to treasurer of the mint and granted an *encomienda* turning him into a member of the elite of the Spanish republic.³⁶² There were also concerns that money from the royal treasury had been used for the celebrations. Far less openly patrimonial displays would be enough to discredit Martín Cortés and his followers.

The viceroys' interest in monopolising display as a means of representing royal glamour and associating it with their own power could lead to serious disagreements, not least because theatrical displays provided a public platform through which to express discontent with the viceroys. When some *regidores* of Mexico City refused to attend a celebration organised by Luis de Castilla and Juan Alonso de Sosa, which glorified Mendoza, the viceroy was allegedly so angry he threatened publicly that if the matter had been more serious he would have made them attend by dragging them through the gutter.³⁶³ More dangerously, Velasco's fury at the displays of lordship exhibited by Martín Cortés on various public occasions, like the reception of Valderrama, was an expression of the growing dissent that the presence of the second 'Marquess of the valley of Oaxaca' as an alternative source of authority had provoked. The lordly displays that Martín Cortés and his followers indulged in after Velasco's death, most spectacularly after the dynastically-meaningful birth of Martín's twins, were such a threat to the beleaguered viceregal faction, that they led directly to the pre-emptive attack on Cortés and his followers, which culminated in the destruction of their faction. The very same displays were amongst the main evidence, and

³⁶¹ See Appendix 'A'.

³⁶² For Mérida see AGI Justicia 258, testimony of Alonso Ortíz de Zuñiga q.2; for royal funds see Luis Weckman, *The medieval heritage of Mexico*, (New York, 1992), p.122.

³⁶³ AGI Justicia 258, Bernaldino de Albornoz 24 Noviembre, 39 and Bernaldino Vázquez de Tapia 17 May, 39.

the most memorable, in support of the flimsy allegations of their alleged conspiracy against the king.

Competition for access

The glamour of the viceregal court and the obvious benefits to be gained from proximity to the viceroy, combined with the difficulty in finding alternative channels to royal legitimacy or patronage, encouraged the established Spanish elite to compete for viceregal preferment. In this period the competition would increasingly be mediated through the viceroy's court, often in his palace where there was 'a very broad corridor, of twenty arches over a large and beautiful garden, where the viceroy likes to go and give audience to the petitioners (*negociantes* literally: negotiators)'³⁶⁴

Favour, rewards and advantages were mediated and distributed from the viceregal palace, to the exclusion of other foci of authority and other conduits that claimed to represent the ultimate authority from Spain. As Vázquez de Tapia explained regarding lic. Loaysa's partisanship towards Mendoza, viceregal supremacy and patronage affected the independence and consequently the behaviour of other settlers: 'if lic. Loaysa [did and said all this] it was to serve and please the said viceroy...because the said Loaysa and everyone in this land wish to please and keep happy the person that governs so that he may favour them and that their affairs might flourish.'

During the same *visita* Jerónimo López gave an illustrative account of his attempts to gain access to viceregal grace. He was complaining, like so many conquistadores, of not being given an adequate *encomienda* as a reward for his services:

³⁶⁴ A. de Zorita, *Historia de la Nueva España*, (Madrid, 1909) (an edition of *Relacion de la Nueva España* 20th October, 1585), ch. 12 , p. 176.

'[I] first thought of writing to the marqués del valle because he knew how this witness had served his majesty, or perhaps to appeal to certain friars, since, [I] had been unable to convince the viceroy, and was seeking to remedy the situation favourably in some other way. Eventually [I] thought of talking with Agustín Guerrero, *mayordomo* of the said viceroy to ask a price of him in exchange for being favoured, and so that the said enterprise could be settled as his majesty had intended in the first place.'³⁶⁵

With this anecdote Jerónimo López was keen to explain that royal grace and justice could only be achieved through the logic of viceregal patronage and to attack Guerrero for corruption.

The elite of the Spanish population became increasingly used to depending on viceregal patronage through administrative offices for their wealth and status. As long as there was no viable alternative avenue for securing royal grace, the viceroys' court and its logic of legitimacy became the medium for practical advancement within New Spain.

Marriages to members of the viceroy's family or even intimate courtiers could be another avenue to access and favour. Tello de Sandoval devoted two questions within his interrogation of witnesses to the issue of dynastic alliances. The viceroy's accusers claimed that the viceroy exerted pressure or interfered in creating these alliances.³⁶⁶ Dynastic alliances served the interests both of the viceroys and of the settlers who allied themselves with their retinues because they helped cement the viceregal party and perpetuate it. Martín de Ircio's marriage to María de Mendoza, the viceroy's sister, offers perhaps the clearest example. In arranging this marriage, Mendoza associated himself with a wealthy *conquistador* who in turn was linked to the powerful clan of Comendador Leonel de Cervantes, whose daughter María married Pedro de Ircio. The link to the viceregal court

³⁶⁵ AGI, Justicia, 258 'testimonio de Jerónimo López'.

³⁶⁶ AGI Justicia 258, questions 48 and 49 specifically.

continued in the following generation when Luis de Velasco the younger married Martín de Ircio's daughter and heir María. Their *encomienda* and estates eventually formed part of the Velasco family's trans-Atlantic *marquesado* de Salinas. Similar associations between settlers and members of both viceregal households formed and acted as bulwarks for viceregal authority.

Alternatives to viceregal patronage

When Jerónimo López had hoped to press his claims he first thought of turning to the influential Hernán Cortés. The two men knew each other personally from the conquest, and Cortés' wealth and trans-Atlantic contacts made him seem a viable alternative source of patronage and a conduit for access at court. After the eclipse of the magnates, a similar alternative to viceregal patronage would not recur as obviously until the arrival of the *visitadors* from Spain and the return of Martín Cortés. It was felt that these direct conduits to the Spanish court could bypass the arrangements of the viceroys and these alternative sources of patronage became lightning-rods for discontent within New Spain. The crisis that followed Velasco's death exposed the fragility of the patrimonial, courtly and sui-generis arrangements that underwrote viceregal authority: '[Velasco's] death was the cause for the perdition of the land and of the marquess.'³⁶⁷

By the end of Velasco's life, Martín Cortés and Jerónimo de Valderrama appeared to have enjoyed the greatest support from those *encomenderos* who sought perpetuity. After the assembly of 1564, which had included members of the viceroy's party, the telling choice of a representative to present the petition at court demanding perpetuity was Diego Ferrer,

³⁶⁷ J. Suárez de Salazar *Tratado...*p.179.

not associated with Velasco but with Martín Cortés instead. The charisma of Martín Cortés' name appealed to the more ancient legitimacy claimed by the true *conquistadores*: the half-forgotten sense that they and their descendants should be the feudal lords of New Spain: heirs as much to the imperial lords of Motecuhzoma as the 'counts and dukes of New Spain' that Hernán Cortés had promised they would be; not merely the 'principal men' of a 'Spanish republic' with an equal authority to that of Indian lords of a parallel 'Indian republic'; and all under the leadership of some new-comer viceroy and his cronies.

Martín Cortés' also had power both in New Spain, where he could harness the wealth of his *marquesado* and count on the support of *visitador* Valderrama, and in Spain where he had grown up a well-connected courtier and a personal friend of Philip II. Matters came to a head after the viceroy's death when the resultant power vacuum led to the formation of factions that coalesced around newly fractured sources of patronage: the viceregal 'party' on the one hand and the promises of the marquess and the *visitador*; the *oidores* and the resurgent *cabildo* on the other. This last, unshackled, proposed the suppression of the office of viceroy on 31 August 1564 only a month after Velasco's death.³⁶⁸

Conclusion

The absence of an established viceroy for the four years following Velasco's death (and without a new 'Peru' to absorb discontented emigrants) laid bare the underlying factionalism of Spanish settlement in the strife and repressive violence of the mid 1560s. Personal loyalty to the individual viceroy as a patron as much as a royal representative, and

³⁶⁸ See ch.8 for the resolution of the crisis.

to the accommodations that their presence permitted over the strict tenets of the law, came to override the polyarchic loyalties feared by Motolinia and realised in the mid-1560s.

Mendoza and Velasco grounded their rule on the practical benefits they could bestow on the Spanish settlers. The viceroys achieved this by concentrating in their person as much power to dispense patronage, in the form of offices and direct disbursements, as possible: approximating their powers to those of a king. The viceroys would extend the dispensation of crown and private resources to benefit and sustain as many Spaniards as possible. Simultaneously, the logic they applied to deciding which individuals deserved the greatest rewards responded to their own individual patrimonial interests, administrative strategies and ideology rather than to an abstract bureaucratic or legalistic logic or even the exclusive interests of the crown. *Conquistador* Andrés de Tapia commented with regard to Mendoza: 'He honours everyone... and harms no-one. If anything, he does more for some than for others. He is very poor because I understand that he feeds more than 250 [people] who are destitute.'³⁶⁹ The consequent competition for access to viceregal favour between members of the Spanish elite cemented the viceroy's authority in the familiar patterns of courtly government. The grateful and dependent new elite that the viceroys fostered through their arrangements then in turn propped up the authority of the viceroys, whose idiosyncratic arrangements guaranteed their status and rewards. After Velasco's death an orphaned viceregal party could only urge the king to appoint a new viceroy as soon as possible 'because it is important and necessary for this land that it should have a head who, in your majesty's name, everyone respects and complies with.'³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ C. Pérez de Bustamante, *Don Antonio de Mendoza...* Doc. XXVII.

³⁷⁰ AGI Gobierno México, 323, Royal Officials 8th March 1565, 2nd letter.

Chapter 5: 'Republic of Indians'

By the time Mendoza arrived in New Spain, the changeability of Spanish administrations in Mexico City was provoking discontent amongst indigenous polities. When rumours that Cortés had disappeared in the Pacific reached central New Spain 'it was believed and often repeated in Mexico that all the caciques of New Spain wanted to rebel, seeing that Cortés was not in the land' recalled Bernal Díaz del Castillo; only news of the marquess's safe return by April 1536 seemed to ease the tension.³⁷¹

Some authors have detected a strain of resistance at the heart of New Spain throughout the period, gleaned from the trials and executions of prominent men such as Ometochtli in Tlaxcala, don Martín Ocelotl in Mexico in 1537 and most dramatically of Don Carlos, prince of Texcoco, in 1539; or from the 'Mixtón War' and localised uprisings in parts of Oaxaca in the late 1540s.³⁷² But the lack of any serious uprising in the polities of central New Spain suggests instead that these were becoming increasingly isolated and anomalous events. Despite the predictions of the Spanish *cabildo* and some *encomenderos*,³⁷³ the lords of central New Spain did not take up the invitation of Nahuatl-speaking Caxcan and Zacateco

³⁷¹ Bernal Díaz del Castillo *Conquista de la Nueva España*, J. Ramírez Cabañas intro. (Mexico 1974) p. 651; S. Wood, *Transcending Conquest: Nahuatl Views of Spanish Colonial Mexico*. (Oklahoma, 2003) pp.33-36; and L.B. Simpson *The Encomienda in New Spain* (Berkeley, 1982), p.107.

³⁷² *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa (1530-1558)*, J. Martínez Millán coord., (Madrid, 2001), Vol.4, 'Nueva Roma: del señorío indígena novohispano y su asimilación política' *passim*. M. León-Portilla, *La Flecha en el Blanco: Francisco Tenamatztle y Bartolomé de las Casas en la lucha por los derechos de los indígenas 1541-1556*, (Mexico, 1996), p.4.; *Native resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain*, S. Schroeder, ed. (London, 1998) p.32-38.

³⁷³ *Actas del Cabildo de la Ciudad de Mexico*, Vol., IV, 'De 1o de Enero de 1536 a 30 de Agosto de 1543, Orozco y Berra eds., (1859) entry for 5th July 1541; Jerónimo López letter of the 20th October 1541 who claimed the *nahuales* or holy men of the Caxcans had been identified in Tlaxcala; quoted in J. López-Portillo y Weber, *La rebelión de la Nueva Galicia*, (Saltillo 1981), p.454; VEA, Mendoza, Cargo XXXV Item 132 f.; ENE, Vol.IV, Doc. 236, *passim*. For modern commentators who have emphasised this link see M. León-Portilla *La flecha en el blanco...* pp.5-12 and *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa (1530-1558)*, (Madrid, 2001) José Martínez Millán coord., Vol.4 'Nueva Roma...', pp15ff.

emissaries of the successful, avowedly anti-Spanish and anti-Christian insurrection in the Mixtón, to overthrow the Spaniards as so many polities had done when Cortés suggested the same against the Tenochca. Instead their response resembled everywhere that of Don Francisco de Sandoval Acaxitli, prince of Tlalmanalco and hegemon of the fertile province of Chalco:

I, Don Francisco de Sandoval, cacique and lord of this city of San Luis Tlalmanalco, having received the news that the lord viceroy don Antonio de Mendoza who resides in the great city of México and royal audiencia, needed to go to war in the land of the Chichimecas of Xuchipila, went to the said city and begged the lord viceroy to grant me the honour (merced) of going with those of my province of Chalco to serve in this war, and His Lordship thought it good that we should go to this war. When I returned to Tlalmanalco I readied all the people from this province of Chalco for the said war ... and all of them of their own good will accepted to go and serve in the said war.³⁷⁴

Without the help of Cortés-*Malinche*, which had seemed so important in 1536, the viceroy was able to raise a willing³⁷⁵ army of an estimated 60,000 Indians (and 1,000 Spaniards). It was probably the largest army in Mesoamerica between the Conquest and Independence of Mexico and was drawn from Nahua, Otomí and Purehepecha polities of New Spain. Mendoza was able to begin the march on 22 September 1541, only a month after being advised to do so by his agents following the traumatic defeat and unexpected death of the *adelantado* Pedro de Alvarado (who died from his wounds on the 4th of July;

³⁷⁴ G. Castañeda, 'Relación de la jornada que hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acaxitli, cacique y señor natural que fue del pueblo de Tlalmanalco, provincia de Chalco, con el señor visorey don Antonio de Mendoza cuando fue a la conquista y pacificación de los indios chichimecas de Xuchipila', P.Vázquez trans., in J. García Icazbalceta, *Colección de documentos para la historia de México*. Vol.2, (Mexico, 1980), p.307ff. (henceforth: 'Relación Acaxitli').

³⁷⁵ *Indian conquistadores: Indigenous allies in the conquest of Mesoamerica*, L.E. Matthew & R. Oudijk eds., (Oklahoma, 2007), ch.5 passim.

Mendoza's agents including *oidor* Maldonado wrote their reports urging the viceroy to raise an army in mid-august which probably reached Mexico by late august.)³⁷⁶

Acazitli's account and other descriptions suggest that during this period each lord raised his own contingent from vassals who owed fealty to the lord of the palace 'like *continós*' , and were fed but not paid or equipped directly by the lord.³⁷⁷ As a comparison for the cost this implied for individual polities it is worth noting that in the same campaign, some Spanish participants were said to have spent 1,286-2,572*d* while the viceroy spent about 25,714*d* of his personal fortune. Achieving this voluntary mobilisation was an enviable accomplishment by contemporary standards on either side of the Atlantic.³⁷⁸

New Spain would never face an indigenous rebellion comparable in scale to Manco Inca's insurrection in the heartlands of the old Inca Empire or the subsequent organised resistance to Habsburg-Spanish authority of the long lived kingdom of Vilcabamba in Peru (1539-1572). The viceroys of New Spain did not even face the recurrent violent disorders that characterised *morisco* uprisings in Eastern Andalucía and did not need the draconian punitive measures that Spanish governors took against their own native but culturally alien population. Uprisings and armed resistance in New Spain, like the Mixtón War, never spread further than the newly absorbed periphery of the kingdom: beyond the Nahuatl-speaking heartlands of the old Tenochca Empire and the 'foundational' polities of the Cortesian alliance that stood around the enduring imperial capital at Mexico City and West to

³⁷⁶ J. López-Portillo y Weber, *La rebelión...* pp. 450, 459 and 465.

³⁷⁷ 'Relación Acazitli'; P. Carrasco 'El rango de tecuhtli entre los Nahuas tramontanos', *Tlalocan Vol.V*, no.2, (1966), *Vol.2*. pp. 115-7.

³⁷⁸ ENE, Vol. IV., Doc. 236, p.177.

Michoacán. This was not due to the exceptionally effective repressive abilities of Spanish settlers in New Spain and the continuing bouts of epidemics had not been severe enough to tilt the balance of fighting manpower decisively in the Spaniards's favour: if anything, Spanish veteran settlers like Jerónimo López were afraid of Indian military superiority: 'they are not lambs like the friars say, but ferocious lions and they are many, so that for every Spaniard there are ten thousand...'; and as he and others pointed out the Indians were often by then armed with Spanish weapons and could ride horses.³⁷⁹ Nor did the landscape come to be dominated by garrisoned castles like Norman England - royal instructions that Mendoza brought for fortifying Mexico City and other Spanish towns were never carried out because they were considered unnecessary.

Viceregal authority was largely consensual, at least amongst the elites of central New Spain, and an increasing number of indigenous lords considered themselves as partners in the Kingdom of New Spain. The viceroys achieved this through a system of personal government that in many aspects was familiar to the native population. Jerónimo López, who openly disliked Mendoza, recognised that the viceroy was personally responsible for the salvation of New Spain when it seemed to him that everything had 'hung on a thread of wool' during the Mixtón War. 'I certify to your majesty that he once again won the land with only his own person,' he grudgingly admitted and hoped that 'it please our lord to give him health because it is convenient for the good of the land, even though I have been unlucky with him.'³⁸⁰ What some Spanish settlers like Jerónimo López had not initially taken into account was that while the Indian nobility may have despised Spanish

³⁷⁹ ENE, Vol.IV, Doc. 236; D.A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Michigan, 2003) pp.300-302.

³⁸⁰ ENE... Vol.IV, Doc. 236.

settlers like himself, with whom they felt in competition, they generally approved of the viceroys and the friars.

Friars

In their turn both Mendoza and Velasco had to convince their indigenous subjects that they were reliable conduits for patronage and legitimacy, and that they could guarantee stability within the polities and amongst them. Mendoza warned Velasco that to achieve this he needed the support of the friars: 'Without them one can only accomplish little and for this reason I have tried to favour them always and to honour them and love them as true servants of God and His Majesty and if Your Lordship follows this he will see the advantage that come from it. Not only in spiritual matters, but in temporal ones as well and I have found this very advantageous, even though it seemed wrong to some'.³⁸¹ From the start of Mendoza's government until the death of Velasco, the friars became the most important intermediaries between the viceroys and the indigenous polities.³⁸² This was not envisioned in royal legislation: Valderrama in particular was horrified at the authority that the friars commanded.³⁸³ Nor was it popular amongst the Spanish settler elite who argued that it was they who deserved that responsibility as heirs to a reimagined Tenochca elite with the attributes of Spanish feudal lords.³⁸⁴

³⁸¹ VEA, Mendoza, Doc.5, no.2.

³⁸² J.L Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (Los Angeles, 1956); *Felipe II y el oficio de Rey: La fragua de un imperio*, J.R. Gutiérrez, E. Martínez Ruiz, J. González Rodríguez coords., 'Poder e iglesia en la Nueva España: La disputa del diezmo' p.838,

³⁸³ CJV, p.12 and *passim*.

³⁸⁴ C. Pérez de Bustamante, *Los Orígenes Del Gobierno Virreinal En Las Indias Españolas: Don Antonio De Mendoza Primer Virrey De La Nueva España. (1535-1550)*, (Santiago, 1928) Doc. XIX.

Both viceroys protected the friars politically against the *encomenderos*, mediated between the orders and supported the mendicant mission against the encroachments of the secular clergy; an issue that became especially pressing for Velasco after the return of archbishop Montúfar in 1554 and the resolutions of the Council of Trent the following year that attempted to impose the tithe on the Indians in order to fund the secular clergy as part of an attempt to curtail the influence of the mendicant orders. The concerted campaign of 1559 and beyond where viceroy Velasco, the friars and the indigenous polities of central New Spain combined to protest against the encroachments of the secular clergy, are the clearest illustration of the informal but powerful bonds of conviction, interest and loyalty that had developed between them.³⁸⁵

There were many political advantages to the viceroys in this alliance as well, not least for the influence that mendicant opinion carried in Spain. During the difficult transitional period after Mendoza left office for Peru and Luis de Velasco's official administrative powers had been legally reduced, a chapter meeting of the leading Franciscans in Mexico City concluded by drafting an appeal to the king in support of viceregal authority over other magnates:

Because he [the viceroy], as governor wants to provide that which is considered of the best use for the good government of the land, and the Audiencia, by way of appeal, undoes what our viceroy orders and provides for; with the result that the business of government is not carried out expeditiously, and those matters that deal with the Indians lead to conflicts between them, and as they don't know how to defend themselves it ends up hurting them. The other result is that the person of the Viceroy, who represents your own, loses great part of his authority ('auctoridad'); to the great detriment of the Indians because they have such great loyalty and respect for the representative of the person of your majesty, and all this they

³⁸⁵ VEA Doc.5 point 4, *Felipe II y el oficio de Rey: La fragua de un imperio*, J.R. Gutiérrez et al. 'Poder e iglesia en la Nueva España. La deisputa del Diezmo' p.842ff.

lose, seeing that the Audiencia undoes what the Viceroy has instructed. For these reasons we beg of your majesty to order that it be decreed that the authority and power of your viceroy be extended, and if he provides for something as governor it should be carried out rather than the appeals of the Royal Audiencia; because otherwise here there exist those inconveniences already cited and others, and in any case we have never known or felt anything else from your viceroy apart from the great wish and will to favour and defend these poor natives, and to accomplish that which Your Majesty has charged and ordered him with.³⁸⁶

More important were the practical advantages in using the idealistic first generation of friars as agents of viceregal government in the indigenous polities. Many friars were amongst the few Spaniards that could speak native languages and this allowed them to gain the greatest working knowledge of the Indian polities. Throughout this period the friars collected information about the polities they lived in often under commission from the viceroys as in the case of the *Relación de Michoacán* (probably) compiled by fr. Jerónimo de Alcalá.³⁸⁷ Some had lived amongst their flock since the mid 1520s where they quickly became charismatic figures, not least because the memory persisted of how Cortés himself publicly knelt before the ‘twelve apostles’ in 1524.³⁸⁸ As fr. Toribio de Benavente’s Nahuatl sobriquet *Motolinia* ‘the poor’ suggests they also impressed by their disciplined lifestyle, an ancient magnetism that was effective across cultures, as the later successes of mendicant orders in Asia demonstrated. Their seeming lack of attachment to worldly matters produced the ultimate ‘stranger effect’ in both Europeans and Mesoamericans meaning that they could generally be trusted by both sides: thus when Tlaxcala needed to send an emissary to Spain in the fraught year of 1550 fr. Pedro de Torres was entrusted with representing her

³⁸⁶ *Cartas de Indias*. Ministerio de Fomento, (Madrid 1877), Doc. XXII, 20 de Octubre de 1552.

³⁸⁷ J. de Alcalá, *La relación de Michoacán*, F. Miranda ed., (Mexico, 1988), p.42.

³⁸⁸ G.Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the 16th century*, (Yale,1948) p.3 ff., M.J. Sarabia Viejo, *Don Luis de Velasco...*p.155ff; *Motolinia Historia de los Indios*, p. 88. J.L Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*, (Los Angeles, 1956).

interests.³⁸⁹ In New Spain the friars' wide-ranging and disciplined networks, combined with their captive audience from the pulpit - or in many cases the balconies to the courtyards of the monasteries where the Indians gathered - became perhaps the most effective means of transmitting viceregal commands to the indigenous polities. Even Valderrama came to the conclusion that the most convenient way to spread word of his arrival in New Spain would be through the friars and not the *corregidores* or other Spanish administrative mechanisms.³⁹⁰

Apart from the 'stranger effect' produced by the mendicant lifestyle, the polity elites felt confident that they could trust the friars because their sustenance and the success of their evangelical mission depended on the goodwill and economic support of the indigenous lords— a fact that did not escape critics like Valderrama.³⁹¹ The indigenous elite realised the importance of gaining access to the legitimising Spanish authorities, but visits to Spain were costly and time-consuming. Knowledge that the viceroys backed the friars made them a natural point of contact:³⁹² mendicant authority grew to such an extent that they were often called 'guardians' and occasionally 'governors' by their host polities.³⁹³ Simultaneously the aggrandisement of the viceroys in the rhetoric of the friars created viceregal authority in the polities.

³⁸⁹ C. Gibson, *Tlaxcala en el siglo XVI*, (Mexico, D.F 1991), pp.165-7.

³⁹⁰ CJV, p.30.

³⁹¹ CJV pp.68-9.

³⁹² J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas...*p.296-7; CJV, p.140-3. on their influence over the viceroy as being like that of 'señores absolutos'; J. Miranda *El Tributo Indígena...*p.154-5; M.J. Sarabia-Viejo *Don Luís de Velasco...*pp.334-342; Ch.3.

³⁹³ Eg. *Tlalocan Vol.V, 1966 Vol.2*, Pedro Carrasco 'Documentos sobre el Rango de Tecuhtli...' p.153 and p.157.

Within two months of Mendoza's arrival Zumárraga was granted an *encomienda* for his sustenance, and with viceregal patronage and financial backing - organised by Agustín Guerrero - the Imperial School of Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco was inaugurated soon after. These are strong indications of the close personal cooperation between Zumárraga and Mendoza that probably began as early as Zumárraga's return to Spain (1531-4), regarding a new notion of the status of the indigenous elites within the kingdom of New Spain.³⁹⁴ To them the polities (which they often called *repúblicas*) constituted a legitimate political entity akin to - but more autonomous than - a Spanish municipality. Legitimate polity authorities had a right to access to the viceroy as the representative of royal legitimacy in New Spain. These principles also implied the acceptance that the dynastic governing class of the polities should be considered as a nobility in the European sense, enjoying privileges and responsibilities that transcended their individual polity and applied to their status as principal men of the kingdom of New Spain as a whole. The idea survived through the practice of viceregal courtly government at least until the end of our period.³⁹⁵

Personal and courtly government

Both Mendoza and Velasco were careful to guarantee representatives of indigenous polities direct access to their person. When the viceroys were in residence at the palace in Mexico City they assigned specific times to deal exclusively with indigenous petitioners (Mendoza: all of Monday and Thursdays and Velasco: on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings) although both emphasised that they could be seen at any other time if the need

³⁹⁴ A.S. Aiton *Antonio de Mendoza: First Viceroy of New Spain* (Duke 1927), p.107. R. Himmerich y Valencia *The Encomenderos of New Spain 1521-1555* (Austin, 1996), p.266.

³⁹⁵ M.J. Sarabia-Viejo *don Luis de Velasco...* p.221; ch. 8, J.L. Phelan *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World...* p.50.

arose.³⁹⁶ Mendoza even claimed that he did not like to walk around with his halberdier guard in part because the Indians were naturally timid and 'so that they would have more recourse to seek me out by night or day in search for justice, and I always keep my doors open at all convenient hours and I have instructed my porters not to impede them so that they can come before me freely'.³⁹⁷ Equally, the purpose of viceregal progresses and visitations, encouraged by the crown, was to make the authority of the viceroys more widely accessible in the provinces. For example in August 1549 Mendoza, accompanied by the Tenochca interpreter don Hernando de Tapia, resolved a complicated dispute on tour in Ocuituco.³⁹⁸

Princely government from a palatial seat fitted well indigenous patterns of government. Many palaces within the indigenous polities, even one as relatively close as Tlatelolco, were equipped with chambers to host the viceroy or his representatives.³⁹⁹ Other old patterns of Mesoamerican authority also endured: court interpreters like Hernando de Tapia were Nahuatl and Spanish speakers and Tapia was also a member of the old Tenochca imperial elite. Nahuatl remained the most common language of Mesoamerican empire, as most indigenous petitioners used it when communicating to the authorities in Mexico City; which accounts for the Spanish adoption of Nahuatl nomenclature when describing other cultures like the 'Tarascans' or 'Chichimeca' for example. The importance of such continuity appears in the *Relación de Michoacán* where don Pedro claimed that the Purehepecha lords

³⁹⁶ VEA... Doc.5, section 15: 'oir los Indios', and Sarabia-Viejo, Don Luis de Velasco...p.25f.

³⁹⁷ AGI Justicia 259 'Descargos del Visorrey', no.17.

³⁹⁸ *Un Gobierno de un mundo. Virreinos y audiencias de la América hispánica*. F. Barrios, coord. (Castilla-La Mancha, 2004) p.307ff M.J. Sarabia Viejo, *Don Luis de Velasco*...p.383f.

³⁹⁹ G. Kubler, *Mexican architecture*...p.202f.,&.212f.

were persuaded to negotiate with the Spaniards because they recognised several Tenochca lords amongst the forces commanded by Olíd and seeing that they were treated honourably, agreed to parley.⁴⁰⁰

Mendoza's letter of advice to his successor contains a series of recommendations on how to approach negotiations with polity representatives when they visited the viceroy's court: Mendoza made clear that they were 'neither simple and innocent nor full of vice but just like any other race and should be treated as such'. On the allotted days the *nahuatlato*s of the *audiencia* brought in all the indigenous petitioners 'and I hear them all' before trying to rule on as many matters as possible himself while delegating other matters to judges, friars, crown officials, both Spanish and Indian and other lay Spaniards.⁴⁰¹ From other documents we can learn that some more experienced petitioners like the Huexotzinca lords arrived at the palace with a formal petition already written out in Spanish using the rhetorical linguistic codes and formulas of legitimacy that the Spaniards recognised, but felt the need to present themselves before the viceroy in person to strengthen their case as well: 'Don Cristobal de Guebara and Don Calisto Moscoso and Juan de Alamonte... in our name and voice and that of all the native inhabitants of the said town of Huexotzinco we appear before your illustrious lordship and supplicate and say to him...'; then at the end of the document all the recognised authorities of the town signed and dated it in Huexotzinco 20 April 1554. On the same day, in Mexico City, Antonio de Turcios wrote on behalf of the viceroy: '...seen by the most illustrious lord Don Luis de Velasco, viceroy,...the contents of

⁴⁰⁰ J. Alcalá, *Relación de Michoacán...* p.103.

⁴⁰¹ VEA, 'Mendoza', Doc.5, 'Tocante a Indios' & 'oir a los Indios'.

the petition from this part, presented by don Cristobal de Guebara, governor of the said town of Huexotzinco...'.⁴⁰²

The indigenous petitioners could be canny negotiators, often exploiting the relative ignorance of the viceroy by seeming to abandon a matter that had gone against them, only to present it again in a different light and as if it were a new petition: most cases relied heavily on witnesses and a polity's painted documents, which were open to interpretation. The potential for retrials and confusion had persuaded Mendoza to order a book to be made where he kept a note of all the judgements and proceedings he and the audiencia had ruled upon.⁴⁰³ Unfortunately this book has not been found.

Mendoza emphasised the importance of granting access to as many representatives of a polity as possible when a judgement was read out by the translator; otherwise the *principales* with privileged access to information could distort it when they represented it to their communities.⁴⁰⁴ The direct interaction between viceroys and indigenous petitioners allowed for negotiations and judgements which addressed the specific concerns of each individual polity on an *ad hoc* basis rather than through blanket rulings encompassing all 'Indians'. This was the approach that Mendoza insisted upon to his successor time and again: '...and this should be ruled upon with full knowledge of the quality of the people involved and the particular business at hand'.⁴⁰⁵ The viceroys encouraged this proximity as an essential aspect of their authority, as it reinforced their role as arbiters of justice and

⁴⁰² P. Carrasco, *Tlalocan...* 'Los Nahuas Tramontanos...', p.146 and p.149.

⁴⁰³ VEA, Mendoza, Doc.5, 'Diferencias de indios'.

⁴⁰⁴ VEA, Mendoza, Doc 5, 'En el negocio de Indios dejar entrar a todos'.

⁴⁰⁵ VEA, 5, '11. Tratamiento de Indios' y esto se ha de reglar teniendo conocimiento de la calidad de las personas y negocios en particular'.

legitimacy within New Spain. This held even when they felt that Indigenous petitioners were trying to exploit access for their factional or personal advantage. As Mendoza explained to his successor in a section of his memorial devoted to the importance of seeing the Indians: 'some believe that I turn them into liars by not punishing them: but it would be a worse fault to make them fear me so that they stopped coming to me with their concerns than wasting my time with their games.'⁴⁰⁶ According to Mendoza, what mattered for the creation and subsistence of viceregal authority was that negotiations were carried out under his auspices and that his final judgements were obeyed. It was a way of making the polity authorities clients of the viceroy rather than any other authority in New Spain.

Tribute

The two most important areas of negotiation centred on tribute and the arbitration of conflicts within and amongst *polities*. As the *visitadores* discovered to their dismay, tribute was not assessed per capita as they expected. The assessment of indigenous tribute, which was one of the prerogatives of the viceroys, was generally conducted as a process of negotiation between the indigenous polities, the friars, the *encomenderos* (though their role diminished with time) and the viceroys: the polities were assessed by what they could persuade the viceroys, or their representatives, to assess them.⁴⁰⁷ The polities sent 'argumentative' representatives to reside at the viceregal court in Mexico City for this purpose '[they] learn more than well-informed Spaniards about this in order to be sent to this *audiencia*...and they hang around here with a multitude of Indians to serve them and

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*, Document 5, '15, oir los Indios'.

⁴⁰⁷ CJV, 66-9 and 156-7

much money to spend.⁴⁰⁸ In one instance when a *corregidor* was due to arrive in a province one Indian lord climbed the pulpit to explain to his assembled polity and visitors from other neighbouring towns 'what they had to say in word and using their painted books... they say this to the letter though those witnesses in favour of one town one day can be against [their neighbours] on another'.⁴⁰⁹

Negotiation allowed for flexibility. It took into account the variable circumstances of individual polities like participation in onerous martial services or the local ravages of epidemics.⁴¹⁰ This arrangement created conventions within New Spain that were not officially recognised or even referred to the Council of the Indies. One example were the tributary exemptions enjoyed by Tlatelolco and Tenochtitlan in exchange for personal services to the viceroys and as compensation for the Spanish appropriation of lands and rights around the valley of Mexico that had previously formed the patrimony of their imperial elite. Most disturbing for external observers like Valderrama was the exemption enjoyed by all those whom the viceroys considered noblemen - and had ratified as such by personal decree - and the thousands of nominally tax-exempt *terrazgueros* who worked their lands.⁴¹¹ In any case this exemption was a notional means for justifying the reduction of the total tribute paid by a polity, because the lords contributed to tribute payment from the palace reserves. Lowering the tribute carried other advantages for the lords by

⁴⁰⁸ AGI Gobierno México 323/1525-1572: 'Cargos y expedientes de oficiales reales de México'. Second bound section. 1st letter 2nd March 1552. signed Alonso de Sosa, Antonio de la Cadena y Juan Velazquez de Salazar.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid* 2nd para, p.3.

⁴¹⁰ VEA, Doc.5, 'El provecho y renta principal es la que dan los Españoles'; and Doc. 7 p.268ff., Motolinia *Historia de los Indios...*p. 136.

⁴¹¹ J. Miranda *El Tributo Indígena...* for Valderrama p.67-8 p.151ff., for *de facto* arrangements in New Spain p.169f for the provinces that paid disproportionately little see p.143-4.

encouraging the good will of their people and immigration of workers from nearby polities more heavily afflicted by tributary dues.⁴¹²

The direct personal nature in which these negotiations were conducted bound the viceroys to the settlement they had reached with the polities. When Valderrama attempted to reform the tributary system and denounced what he perceived as the illegitimacy of the polity nobilities and their privileges, Velasco immediately sided with the latter, as did the friars. At one point the viceroy even set out in person to warn the authorities of Chalco to send people into the hills to reduce their numbers before Valderrama's agents arrived to conduct a census.⁴¹³ Valderrama soon realised that he was unable to collect tribute by coercion or using Spanish agents and was forced to revise his position.⁴¹⁴ In Mexico City it was commonplace to assume that without the co-operation of the polity elites the Spanish administration could not function: 'without [the *principales*] it is imposible [to collect tribute] well and without great difficulties'.⁴¹⁵ Courtly negotiation assured that a compromise could be reached, viceregal authority could be reaffirmed and the tribute collected.

The proportion of noblemen within individual polities could be as high as a third of the total population although the more usual proportion was of two to ten per cent, a figure

⁴¹² J. Lockhart p.157-8; C. Gibson, *Tlaxcala...* p.164-5; and AGI Gobierno Mexico 323 5th December 1565.

⁴¹³ CJV, p.86. The friars complained that they had not been sufficiently consulted by Valderrama in these negotiations either on p.126.

⁴¹⁴ CJV, p.136-7.

⁴¹⁵ AGI Gobierno Mexico 323...6th December 1565.

similar to Europe's.⁴¹⁶ Gibson has calculated that on average a polity paying 1000 pesos to the Spanish regime (the crown or the *encomenderos* etc.) might be paying 4,000 to 8,000 pesos to their noble elite. The nobility was in direct competition with the crown and *encomenderos* for the surplus wealth of their polity and consequently the nobility had a direct interest in limiting the amount of tribute that went to the Mexico City. The viceroys *de facto* appropriated the royal prerogative of establishing the rate of tribute by basing tribute assessments for individual polities on *ad hoc* negotiations at their court. This turned tribute into another instrument of their personal patronage: a reduction in tribute was a redistribution of wealth back to those indigenous elites whom the viceroy favoured.

Apart from the viceroys, the chief beneficiaries were the indigenous nobility that the viceroys acknowledged as legitimate. Observers believed that the tribute negotiators from the polities that came to Mexico City were acting principally 'at the cost of the *macehuales* but to their own benefit and that of the *principales*.'⁴¹⁷ Mendoza highlighted with some regret these subtleties to his successor,⁴¹⁸ but the *principales* had to be accommodated: 'it is impossible that these services [to the *principales*] cease entirely if there is to be Christianity and good government amongst them because the day that there ceases to be *principales* amongst them there would be great troubles.'⁴¹⁹ Viceregal authority relied on the viceroy's ability to uphold the political arrangements that they had sponsored within the

⁴¹⁶ *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.2, No.2, Jan., 1960, C. Gibson, 'The Aztec Aristocracy in Colonial Mexico', p.182-4.

⁴¹⁷ AGI Gobierno Mexico 323, Second bound section. 1st letter 2nd March 1552.

⁴¹⁸ VEA, 'Mendoza'. Doc. 5. 'En blanco' talking principally about methods for reducing the exploitation of *macehuales* by their lords.

⁴¹⁹ AGI Gobierno Mexico 323, 8th March 1565.

indigenous polities. These arrangements focused on guaranteeing the pre-eminence of those that the viceroys had accepted as the legitimate nobility of their polities.

Political patronage

An unusually well documented and illustrative example of how indigenous elites negotiated with the viceroys over legitimacy and status comes from Huexotzinco. In 1550 Mendoza admitted to his successor that in his eagerness to do good by the Huxotzinca, and with the support of fr. Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, he had made an error of judgement in earlier years by ratifying certain claims by Huexotzinca noblemen to allegedly unoccupied lands, which had since caused grave damage to that 'republica'.⁴²⁰ Mendoza's eagerness to please the Huexotzinca elite is understandable: the polity had been one of the first and most steadfast allies of the Spaniards and amongst the most Christianised, but had been mistreated by the First Audiencia, despite Zumárraga's intercession.⁴²¹ Since Mendoza arrived, the Huexotzinca had begun building a new town around their new convent of San Miguel, they had helped in the construction and sustenance of the fledgling Spanish settlement of Puebla and had served in Mendoza's army during the Mixtón war and Mendoza had considered that these services deserved to be rewarded.

In an attempt to ease the concerns Mendoza's warning had raised in Mexico City, Huexotzinca representatives visited Velasco. In Mexico City on 13 April 1554, the Huexotzincan representatives persuaded the viceroy to accept a change to the way in which their lords (*tecuhtli*) were chosen: from traditional election within a kinship group to the system of direct inheritance of Castilian *mayorazgos*, following a ceremonial reminiscent of

⁴²⁰ VEA, Doc.5 'Tierras de Guaxocingo'.

⁴²¹ M. León-Portilla, *Bernardino de Sahagún. Pionero de la antropología*. Mexico 1999 p.66f.

that devised by Mendoza for his 'Order of Knights Tecle'.⁴²² They then returned a week later, asking Velasco to support their plan to redistribute some of their own land back to dispossessed '*macehuales*' in exchange for their tribute of a quarter of the land's produce as recognition of their vassalage to the lords: 'as vassals of His Majesty and Your Lordship [Velasco] in his royal name, we come to Your Lordship and implore your authority and humbly beseech that you confirm this agreement and authorise it'.⁴²³ To assuage any further concerns, they also asked that Fr. Juan de Alameda, prior of the convent of San Miguel, should oversee the redistribution. The viceroy granted his support for all of these requests as this 'emphyteutic' solution was familiar from similar cases in other polities suffering from social tensions.⁴²⁴

Both viceregal judgements had acted to entrench the lordly status of the Huexotzinca petitioners because they retained lordly rights over the land they had distributed while their inheritance to their direct heirs was ensured by the redefinition of their inheritance rights rather than left to a risky election. By linking their lordship to the viceroy's judgement and authority, the Huexotzinca *principales* had hoped to make their lordship unassailable both within their polities and in the eyes of the Spanish administrators in Mexico City. It became apparent soon after that their concessions were actually an

⁴²² *Ibid.* p.150-153, the written confirmation for this came a day later than for the land re-distribution. For the 'Knights Tecle' see below.

⁴²³ P. Carrasco 'Documentos Sobre el Rango de Tecuhtli'... p.155.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid*, p.146-149.

attempt to obfuscate a more serious abuse within their polity rather than voluntary acts of generosity.⁴²⁵

By September of the following year the situation had deteriorated and the authorities of Huexotzinco were back in the viceregal palace urging the viceroy to confirm fr. Juan de Alameda's call from the pulpit for a general amnesty 'for the peace and tranquillity of our town and the salvation of everyone...of our own free will, we come and present ourselves before Your Lordship'.⁴²⁶ The lords finally explained that in the past Huexotzinco had succumbed to a bloody factional conflict in which the victorious faction -the ancestors of the present lords- had killed their enemies and dispossessed them of their lands and more importantly their lordship and palaces before becoming committed allies of the Spanish. Spanish administrations had protected these lords' newly won supremacy and they reminded Velasco that Mendoza had ratified the status quo. The old wounds had been re-opened because Velasco had sent *oidor* Quesada to supervise the enactment of the previous viceregal mandates and Quesada had discovered that there were unoccupied lordly palaces, which had presumably belonged to the defeated faction, that should be filled by election before the transition to Spanish style direct inheritance could apply to them. The latest delegation hoped to avoid civil war and the amnesty the lords sought would give time for an equitable restitution to be made, not only of property, but of lordship as well.⁴²⁷ Perhaps tellingly, Velasco commuted the level of tribute for Huexotzinco in November of the

⁴²⁵ ch.7 for a reference to the 'language of legitimacy' in this case and others.

⁴²⁶ Pedro Carrasco 'Documentos Sobre el Rango de Tecuhtli'...p.158.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.* p.153ff.

following year to its lowest level since he took offices and he then visited that polity along with several others in 1557.⁴²⁸

Viceregal mediations fulfilled one of the functions that justified Spanish authority: the external arbitration of disputes. Similar cases abound throughout the period, for example very large restitutions of 'usurped' lands, vassals and moveable treasure made by the Tlaxcalan elite to their dispossessed rivals during Lent 1539; or the civil strife in Tepeaca and Cholula in the 1570s.⁴²⁹

Representatives of weaker polities that wanted to liberate themselves from their stronger neighbours sought redress in appeals to the viceroys. Mendoza was generally willing to interfere on behalf of weak polities that had been annexed in pre-conquest times by members of the Triple Alliance, prompting Motolinia to comment that only these ex-imperial polities had lost something from the viceregal administration of New Spain.⁴³⁰ But Mendoza advised caution to his successor, warning him that altering established arrangements could lead to trouble not least because this related to *encomienda* grants as well.⁴³¹ Disputes over Tlatelolco's claims to sovereignty over Ayatitla, Tolpetlac, Acalvaca and Xoloc, for example, continued throughout Mendoza's tenure.⁴³² On the other hand, the most powerful and able polities like Tlaxcala even managed to expand their territory in this

⁴²⁸ M.J. Sarabia-Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco...*p.337 and p.385.

⁴²⁹ Motolinia *Historia de los Indios...*p.64 quoting from the letter of fr. Ciudad Rodrigo of 1539; *El Cacicazgo...* M. Menegus Borneman et.al. eds. p.28ff.

⁴³⁰ Motolinia, *Historia de los Indios...*p.213.

⁴³¹ VEA, 'Sobre eximir el sujeto de la cabecera' ENE, Doc.236, p.157 f.

⁴³² CDI, Vol.2 doc. 99, 1February 1537; *La nobleza indígena...*p.168f & pp.151-156.

period.⁴³³ The polities that suffered the most were those that refused to engage with the viceregal system altogether. The polity of Tamazulapa, for instance, decided to abandon its settlement rather than obey its *encomendero* Francisco Solís or appeal for protection from the viceroy. When its members tried to return they found that their lands had been appropriated by their more accommodating neighbours of Coixtlahuaca and Tequesistepec. Too late they sought legal redress but lost the case.⁴³⁴

Direct Viceregal patronage could help determine an individual's status within his polity and even within the Habsburg monarchy. During the *visita* conducted against Mendoza by Tello de Sandoval, the viceroy was forced to defend his approach to governing the indigenous polities by explaining:

Being, as I am, viceroy and governor by the grace of his majesty, I have the authority to provide for matters relating to the governance of this land as best suits God and his majesty... it seemed to me, as a result of personal experience I have of what my father and the marquess my brother did with the moriscos of the kingdom of Granada, that it was convenient to distinguish between some Indians and others, because, although it seems to some people that these native Indians are bestial and so assume that there is no distinction between one and another, this is only because they don't understand them. But I, who have dealt and conversed with them personally, find many of them of good judgement and with the characteristics of gentlemen (*hombres de bien*) eager to serve his majesty. Those that govern in his royal name do so with love and have demonstrated this in works and words and so it is right to gratify and honour them in order to keep them grateful and more obliged since it is in such ways that men are won over and virtue is fostered.⁴³⁵

Mendoza's argument highlights the most salient elements of his style of government. He was concerned to identify the Indians that deserved to be recognised as

⁴³³ P. Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*, (Cambridge, 1972), p.325.

⁴³⁴ *Native resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain*, S. Schroeder, ed., (Lincoln and London 1998), p.36-8.

⁴³⁵ A.G.I. Justicia 259 *Descargos del Visorrey*.

meriting authority. The second was to keep them 'grateful and more obliged' in order to foster their 'virtue' through viceregal patronage. The viceroy would judge these matters; but the negotiation implicit in this personal style of government gave the Indigenous petitioners the opportunity to influence these decisions as well.⁴³⁶ For individuals within the competitive polities, viceregal recognition allowed them to aspire to higher status which in turn could be translated into greater wealth and opportunity to serve the viceroy in exchange for even greater rewards.

Lordship remained the most pressing issue within the polities and viceregal patronage affected this vexed question. Spanish administrations in the past had relied on the cooperation of what they called indigenous *caciques* to govern. Spanish support for these princely allies had led to distortions in the balance of power within the polities as the Spaniards remained oblivious of regional idiosyncrasies. Mendoza by contrast claimed to have tried to ensure that the local traditions and 'ancient laws' dictated the succession of princes rather than letting encomenderos or even friars interfere and he always retained the right for himself to remove unworthy princes.⁴³⁷ These were difficult problems to resolve especially since most evidence of legitimate rights came from the testimony of witnesses or ambiguous 'painted books'. Mendoza accepted that interference in the election of indigenous princes would occasionally be required, but he reserved this right only for himself as well. In 1539 Mendoza designated don Diego de Alvarado Huantzin - Motecuhzoma's nephew - as the *tlatoani* of the Indian polity of Tenochtitlan, reinstating the

⁴³⁶ For the notion of the viceroy as 'judge' see A. Lira, 'La actividad jurisdiccional del virrey y el carácter judicial del gobierno Novohispano en su fase formativa' *passim*. in *Un Gobierno de un mundo. Virreinos y audiencias de la america hispanica*, F. Barrios, coord., (Castilla-La Mancha, 2004); and my Ch.8

⁴³⁷ VEA, Mendoza Doc.5 'Sobre las elecciones de los caciques y gobernadores'.

old royal line, but not that of Motecuhzoma II's direct descendants.⁴³⁸ This was not alien to Indigenous notions of inheritance, but Mendoza's influence was determinant in the final decision. A similar ambiguity occurred with regards to don Diego de Mendoza Austria y Moctezuma whose disputed claim to descent from Cuauhtémoc and therefore to the lordship of Tlatelolco was supported by Mendoza in appeals before the crown around 1545 for the recognition of his lands and lineage; by 1547 he was already mentioned as *cacique* and *señor natural* even though Mendoza had not heard back from the crown. It is possible that the viceroy was not only the young don Diego's godfather, but also that he felt an obligation towards him because of his services in the expedition to Cíbola and the Mixtón War and because the Spanish crown and *oidor* Tejada had appropriated many of the lands that had belonged to Tlatelolco before the conquest.⁴³⁹ Mendoza won over the firm loyalty of Michoacán, his favourite province, when he redeemed the royal family of the *cazonci* in 1537, raising the younger of the *cazonci's* sons don Antonio (another possible godson) at his side in the viceregal palace, and leaving don Pedro, architect of the original alliance with Cortés, and Don Francisco another son of the *cazonci*, to govern in the meantime.⁴⁴⁰ On the other hand, Mendoza could also act to depose legitimately appointed princes if they were shown to have acted against the interests of the regime for example when he supported the deposition and execution of don Carlos Ometochtzin the *chichimecatecuhtli* of Texoco in

⁴³⁸ *La nobleza Indígena del Centro de Mexico...* E. Pérez-Rocha et.al.,eds., p.41f.

⁴³⁹ *El Cacicazgo en Nueva España...* M. Menegon Borneman ed., p.203-221.

⁴⁴⁰ VEA, Mendoza, Doc 7; J. Benedict Warren *The Conquest of Michoacán* p.244-5.

1539 for idolatry. Interestingly in this case the crown rebuked Zumárraga and Mendoza for what it considered an excessive punishment.⁴⁴¹

The viceroys also appropriated the related power to create new hereditary princely dynasties from 'new men' that displayed virtues that most appealed to the viceroys and loyalty. The ennobled paladins Fernando de Tapia, Nicolas de San Luis Montañes and Pedro Martin de Toro who founded powerful and long-lived dynasties on the northern Chichimeca frontier offer the best example of the aggrandising potential that came with direct access to the viceroys for members of a previously excluded or subordinate group like the Otomi. In their *probanzas* and artistic endowments like the murals of the church at Ixmiquilpan they glorified their appealing attributes of Otomi-Christian crusading spirit: their role as soldiers, city builders and pacifiers of the expanding 'Chichimeca frontier' north of Mexico City. The viceroys bestowed upon them lordships, lands and honours which the crown duly ratified and increased.⁴⁴²

Mendoza's most influential administrative reform within the *politias* was his universal introduction of *gobernadores* into the official administration of the Indigenous polities. The office had no equivalent in Spanish or indigenous tradition and it illustrates Mendoza's recognition that the polities were more than just the equivalent of Spanish municipal units. The hereditary princes retained their patrimonial wealth and unofficial 'auctoritas' as heads of the noble clans they led: Acazitli boasted of being a 'cacique' not a

⁴⁴¹ F. Benítez, *The century after Cortés*, (Chicago 1965), p. 112.

⁴⁴² *El Cacicazgo en Nueva España...* M. Menegus Borneman ed., p.37f ; A.S. Aiton *Antonio de Mendoza...* p.177f; *Cacicazgos y nobiliario indígena de Nueva España*, G.S. Fernández de Recas ed., (Mexico 1961) Docs. 28, 34 & 35.

gobernador; and *gobernadores* were appointed in theory for only one or two years.⁴⁴³ Furthermore the princes were allowed a seat and a vote in the *cabildo* which often met in their palaces in any case. However the *gobernadores* were paid from part of the community's internal tribute that was then discounted from the tribute destined for Mexico, again creating the conceptual link between the office and the viceroy. The administrative responsibilities of a *gobernador* included many of the functions that until then had been carried out by the princes, most importantly judicial functions and the collection of tribute and a role in appointing lower administrative offices. The viceroys had to ratify the election of the *gobernadores* and increasingly they addressed instructions to them as the highest authorised power in the polity.⁴⁴⁴ The governorship was 'a further position of local authority, one created and endorsed by the viceroyalty...'⁴⁴⁵ The link between this new office and viceregal endorsement underpinned its authority within the polity. This link and the powers that the office entailed made it highly coveted.

Of particular interest within the polities was the *gobernador's* right to appoint lesser municipal officials, something that occurred in a 'courtly air'⁴⁴⁶ at the polity's principal palace and allowed for internal patronage similar to that enjoyed by the viceroys at a grander level. It amounted to the transmission of viceregal authority through patronage networks down to allies and clients by bestowing upon them equally Spanish sounding

⁴⁴³ J.Lockhart *Nahuas and Spaniards...*p.30.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pp.51-54.

⁴⁴⁵ C. Gibson 'The Aztec Aristocracy in Colonial Mexico' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.2, No.2. (Jan., 1960), p.178.

⁴⁴⁶ J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas despues de la conquista ...*p.67.

titles.⁴⁴⁷ Possessing a Spanish title became a legitimising element both within the polities and before the viceregal regime: the *Huehuetlahtolli* adapted to encompass these office holders in their didactic verses: in an ‘exhortation’ addressed to a polity’s ‘*alcaldes* and *regidores*’ they warned:

You have arrived at lordship, you have approached nobility; but take care not to inebriate yourselves with it, don’t become proud; answer with meekness... you will do your duty calmly and you will establish yourself peacefully. Answer the lord who has lineage, with meekness and cheerfulness; with the words of the common people. That is how you will take the land; the hills; it is how you will make your lordship, your nobility. Never create disputes amongst the lords, amongst those with lineage anywhere; don’t ruin the matting, the place of honour.⁴⁴⁸

These office holders could be considered ennobled or aspire to nobility in the uncertain hierarchies of the Indigenous polities. The increasingly common practice of appending ‘don’ to their Spanish names further suggests the link they felt between office-holding, services to the polity and ennoblement.⁴⁴⁹ This aggrandisement with all it entailed was in the hands of the *gobernadores*.⁴⁵⁰

In some cases holding the title of *gobernador* helped to consolidate the authority of princes like don Diego de Mendoza, mentioned above, who was able to hold both a princely title and the Spanish office in Tlatelolco from 1549 until his death in 1562. In other more ‘complex’ polities, like Tlaxcala, the introduction of the governorship helped to resolve inherent political tensions of their previous political arrangements: until 1545 viceregal

⁴⁴⁷ VEA, Mendoza, Doc.5 ‘Alcaldes Indios’ and ‘Alguaciles Indios’ and J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas...*p.57ff.

⁴⁴⁸ M. León-Portilla *Huehuetlahtolli: Testimonios de la antigua palabra* (Mexico, 1991), p. 181. Probably composed after 1547; M. León-Portilla *Bernardino de Sahagún...* p.96f.

⁴⁴⁹ J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas...*p.63.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid* p.67; VEA, Mendoza Doc.5, ‘Alcaldes Indios; and ‘Alguaciles Indios’.

favour had fallen disproportionately on the Maxixcatzin clan of the polity Ocotelulco, some of whose most able members Mendoza had first met in Seville on their way to Mexico in 1535. This clan monopolised the governorship, together with the Xicotencatl of Tizatlan who had strong links with the Alvarados, until 1545. There are hints of the growing resentment in Tlaxcala during that period: when Velasco intervened in 1556 to depose the *gobernador* don Martín de Valencia of the constituent polity of Quiahuiztlan, his angry kinsmen recalled that their polity had temporarily seceded from Tlaxcala in the past and might do so again.⁴⁵¹ After a presumed negotiation in 1545 that may have resembled the Huexotzinca case cited above, Mendoza sent *oidor* Gómez de Santillán to mediate a solution whereby four princes from the four dominant polities could sit in the *cabildo* and each polity would elect a *gobernador* that would serve for two years in a specified order of rotation amongst the polities.⁴⁵²

The link to viceregal authorisation implicit in holding the office of *gobernador* (and those of the other municipal offices), threatened the authority of those hereditary lords who did not also possess these offices. The quick turnover of officials allowed increasing numbers of able *macehuales* or individuals with an ambiguous social status or differing dynastic affiliations to hold these offices. It was an indication that the hereditary nobility was losing its exclusive hold on patronage and government a condition exacerbated by the general decline in population that increased the bargaining power of the *macehuales*, lowered the tributary income of the princes but not the allotted proportion to pay the salaries of the *gobernadores* and officials. Although many lords complained, this

⁴⁵¹ J. Lockhart *Los Nahuas...* p. 296f.

⁴⁵² J.Lockhart *Nahuas and Spaniards: Postconquest Central Mexican History and Philology*, (Stanford, 1991) pp.25-31; C. Gibson, *Tlaxcala...* p.105ff.

institutional access to status nonetheless helped to release some of the generational pressures to avoid derogation that had periodically affected political stability.⁴⁵³

The viceroys also fostered Indian officials whose authority was completely independent from their polity and relied entirely on a direct appointment and patronage from the viceroys in the name of the king: these included court translators and Indian *jueces gobernadores*. The court interpreters played a crucial part in the interactions between the viceroy and his indigenous petitioners. The most influential interpreter of this period remained the afore mentioned don Hernando de Tapia. Apart from the importance of his office Tapia carried his own authority, and helped create a sense of continuity, as the son of Andrés de Tapia, Motecuhzoma's *cihuacoatl* and later governor of Mexico City.⁴⁵⁴ He was also respected amongst the Spaniards because of the honorific titles and rewards he received from Charles V and Pope Paul III. Apart from having some influence in determining access to the viceroy for indigenous petitioners at the palace in Mexico City, translators like Tapia travelled with the viceroys on their tours outside the capital- as we have seen in the case of Ocuilco- and on military campaigns like the Mixtón War where amongst other responsibilities, which included combat and relaying battlefield commands, Tapia was placed in charge of the prisoners by Agustín Guerrero, with whom he was familiar from court.⁴⁵⁵ Tapia was especially favoured by Mendoza and was a very close friend and business associate of the enterprising *oidor* Tejada. His friendship and usefulness was

⁴⁵³ *El cacicazgo en Nueva España...* M. Menegus Borneman et al p.224 with notes, following the analysis of Zorita on the matter.

⁴⁵⁴ *La nobleza indígena...* pp.39-40.

⁴⁵⁵ AGI Justicia 258 testimony of Jerónimo López.

rewarded from the 'quitas y vacaciones' fund⁴⁵⁶ and he received land grants from Mendoza west of Mexico City.⁴⁵⁷ In 1538 he was granted a licence to ride a horse which was supplemented in 1541 with another allowing him to carry a sword and dagger in public.⁴⁵⁸ Tapia spanned Mendoza's 'two republics' more successfully than anyone else down to his marriage to a Spanish wife. His descendants who chose to identify with either the Indian or the Spanish 'republics' remained prominent for generations in both.⁴⁵⁹

Indian *jueces gobernadores* were appointed directly by the viceroys and prided themselves on being royal officials. Their primary task was to visit polities other than their own, carrying a staff of justice, that remarkably common symbol of authority across time and cultures, as representatives of royal authority. Often their role was that of external but culturally expert intermediaries in a dispute: Mendoza explained to Velasco that after an audience with petitioners he might delegate to 'Indian judges to go and explore their differences, named with the agreement of both parts'.⁴⁶⁰ By the 1550s these judges had become more common; they were selected from amongst well regarded noblemen and often took over as *gobernadores* of the polity they were visiting for the duration of their commission. They seem to have been particularly active in Xilotepec and Querétaro, the bases for the expanding 'Otomi-Chichimeca' frontier. The best known was don Esteban de Guzmán, lord of Xochimilco: a well-integrated participant of the viceregal system, who

⁴⁵⁶ AGI Justicia 258 'Relación sacada de los libros de la contaduría... 18 días del mes de Agosto 1546. Where Tapia can be seen to have been paid an additional annual stipend of 80 *pesos de tepuzque* from 1541 onwards.

⁴⁵⁷ E. Ruiz-Medrano, *Reshaping New Spain...*p.163.

⁴⁵⁸ AGI Justicia 258 'Relacion e memorial' copied by Antonio de Turcios

⁴⁵⁹ Appendix A.

⁴⁶⁰ VEA, Mendoza, Doc. 5 'Oir los Indios'.

defended the precedence of Indigenous officials over Spanish ones when it came to judicial authority within the polities.⁴⁶¹ He effectively governed Mexico City from 1554-7 and then Tlatelolco while he conducted the *residencia* of don Diego de Mendoza.⁴⁶²

Lordship and nobility remained the most important aim of the polity elites. A census carried out in Huexotzinco in 1560 showed that despite the redistributions of land only 42% of the population were considered *macehuales* - plebeian but free land-owners - of the sort that that had formed the overwhelming majority of the population of a polity and their essential component before the Spanish conquest of Tenochtitlan. Ten per cent of the population were considered noblemen. Their lands and those entailed to the palaces they dominated were worked by 48% of the population who were officially known as 'terrazgueros', a Spanish term sometimes associated with the Nahuatl term 'naboria' or 'mayeque' which described landless or tenant farmers tied to a lord's estate and sometimes known as their 'vassallos'. Within New Spain the practice arose under the viceroys of exempting the indigenous nobility from tribute and because their *terrazgueros* were considered part of their entailed inheritance these were not included in the Spanish calculation of a polity's tribute assessment either; to the horror of Valderrama who made it one of his key complaints against Velasco's administration.⁴⁶³ Polities that were able to negotiate the best tributary settlement with the Spaniards, through an effective presentation of their virtue and with the support of the friars, often attracted immigrants

⁴⁶¹ *La nobleza indígena...* p. 194-7.

⁴⁶² *La nobleza indígena...*, p.43; J. Lockhart *los Nahuas...* pp.55-6. *Un Gobierno de Un Mundo...* F. Barrios p.304ff.

⁴⁶³ CJV, p.13f; J. Lockhart p.157-8.

from other more hard-pressed areas. As in pre-conquest times, these settlers were accommodated as *terrazgueros* on noble lands, in turn enriching noble incomes further.⁴⁶⁴

Bastard feudalism

Mendoza realised the importance of displays of association with his viceregal authority for the competitive indigenous elites. As early as December 1537, he informed the king that he had created the 'Order of Knights Tecle' an honorific title derived from the Nahua term *tecuhtli*.⁴⁶⁵ In Mendoza's re-fashioning, the knights would be considered 'like *caballeros*' in Spain. Their display and association was with royal authority rather than their polity, symbolised through the display of imperial motifs like the two 'Plus Ultra' columns of Charles V. As *comendador* of the order of Santiago, Mendoza understood the importance of chivalric orders and 'bastard feudalism'. Its use had been revived as a tool for propagating allegiance to Charles V in allowing membership to the order of the Golden Fleece to anyone from within his multifarious European domains, keeping them 'obliged' to him by this honour and to his imperial mission, above regional loyalties. Mendoza devised for the *tecles* an overtly crusading Christian ritual followed by an oath of loyalty to the king and the defence of Christianity. These ideals were arguably more immediately resonant in New Spain than in Europe because the recently established frontier of Christianity lay within the loyalist polities as well as on their borders.⁴⁶⁶ Unlike the lordly *tecuhtli*, the *tecle* specifically 'carried no tribute or seigniorial rights' with their title. Like a European chivalric order, they

⁴⁶⁴ Eg. M. J. Sarabia Viejo, *Don Luis de Velasco...* p.339.

⁴⁶⁵ CDI, Vol. 2, doc. 162..pp201-202; *El Cacicazgo...* p.21-22; and P. Carrasco 'Documentos Sobre el Rango de Tecuhtli'... ; pp.133-139; *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa (1530-1558)*, J. Martínez Millán coord. (Madrid, 2001), Vol. 4, p.15ff.

⁴⁶⁶ *El Cacicazgo...* pp.20-24.

bound the knight to the lord that had knighted him - in this case Mendoza - with personal bonds of loyalty.⁴⁶⁷ Mendoza's defence of his personal government had been that it was more immediate and practical than the handful of royal grants of coats of arms to Indian lords before 1535. It was controversial because Mendoza was appropriating for himself the right of ennoblement with the potential creation of new rights without prior reference to the king and of creating a new knightly order under his control whereas the Spanish crown had been trying to bring the three Spanish knightly orders under its own control since the late 15th century.

Overt references to the 'Order of Tecles' disappeared from official Spanish sources and indigenous proofs of merit probably as a result of the discredit of Mendoza's political project in the eyes of the crown. It seems also that Indigenous lords understood it as just a Christianised *tecuhtli*, which is why the Huexotzinca lords in the case mentioned above adopted the ceremony of the *tecles* as the official ceremony for accession to polity lordship in 1554.

However the underlying intention survived in other titles like that of *conquistador* that Velasco bestowed upon don Nicolás de San Luis Montañés.⁴⁶⁸ The intention behind the knights Tecle survived in viceregal licences allowing individual noblemen to own and carry Spanish weapons or ride horses openly and display royal insignia on their cloaks and outside their houses; privileges that were granted to those Indians that the viceroys trusted the

⁴⁶⁷ Some like Pedro Carrasco have seen it as an attempt to create a *hidalguia* in New Spain but Mendoza specifically compares the Tecles to the more exalted *caballeros*: *Instituciones y elites de poder en al monarquía Hispana durante el siglo XVI* José Martínez Millán ed., (Madrid, 1992); Macfarlane K.B. "Bastard feudalism" in *England in the fifteenth century: collected essays of K.B. Macfarlane*; P.R.CROSS "Bastard feudalism revised" *Past and Present* no. 125 (1989).

⁴⁶⁸ G. S. Fernández de Recas, *Cacicazgos y nobiliario...* Doc. 35.

most. Mendoza first issued these licences in direct contravention of royal instructions and in the teeth of Spanish settler opposition, as early as the spring of 1536.⁴⁶⁹ It is yet another indication of his early conception of the 'Republic of the Indians' and it became one of the key accusations raised against him during the *visita* of Tello de Sandoval.⁴⁷⁰ After Mendoza's removal, the king seems to have conceded the viceroy's right to issue such licences,⁴⁷¹ but the condemnation of Mendoza's actions has left us an illustrative record of the grants that Mendoza made with the dates in which his licences were issued and sometimes even a brief description of why they were issued.⁴⁷² The justification behind the granting of these licences related to exceptional services performed by the beneficiary to the cause of New Spain and Christianity; for loyalty in war or government and for leading exemplary lives of virtue as determined by the viceroy. The recipients were described as *caciques*, lords and governors. The geographic spread of these licences indicate that direct viceregal authority over indigenous lords reached even remote areas like Soconusco and Guatemala but not yet the fledgling advances in Yucatán: it surpasses the extent of the Tenochca Empire, particularly with regards to the valley of Puebla and large areas to the West and North but, it traces its main strategic routs South remarkably closely, suggesting similar strategic

⁴⁶⁹ ENE, Vol.IV, Doc. 236, Jerónimo López to the king 25th feb 1545 esp. pp.159-166.

⁴⁷⁰ Mendoza's defence (quoted earlier) was in response to this specific accusation; AGI Justicia 258, question 71 to the witnesses Tello de Sandoval interviewed leading to the charge 18th charge against him. VEA, Mendoza, Doc.8.

⁴⁷¹ G.S. Fernández de Recas, *Cacicazgos y nobiliario...* Doc. 35 the vicereally appointed title of *conquistador* bestowed included the right to carry appropriate weapons; Juan Suárez de Peralta assumed without any indication of controversy that the viceroy issued these licences to the Indians: *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias*, ed. Silva Tena, T. (Mexico, 1990), p.64.

⁴⁷² AGI Justicia 258 Antonio de Turcios 'Relacion e memorial de los Indios que han recibido licencia de portar armas y montar a caballo' It was included after the last witness statement of Bernaldino Vazquez de Tapia dated 17th May as part of a series of 'cargos' 'cedulas' etc. that Antonio de Turcios was asked to copy for the *visitador*. This is an unpublished and much longer list than that transcribed in VEA, Mendoza Doc.7 which comes from Mendoza's defence against the accusations of Tello de Sandoval and downplays the extent of his grants. See 'Appendix A' for the list and its breakdown.

considerations. Strategic locations, like Tehuantepec or Soconusco or the valleys that connect central Mexico to Oaxaca, that the viceroys wished to secure are well represented. The recipient lords governed polities that were directly under the crown but also those held by *encomenderos* and even magnates like Cortés and Alvarado, again suggesting the reach of viceregal patronage over the local pretensions of rival Spanish authorities.

Even though the unofficial use of horses and Spanish weapons had spread quite generally amongst the indigenous polities, official recognition mattered a great deal because it allowed the indigenous lords to display openly these symbols of authority and viceregal trust, like the Spanish *hidalgos* they saw roaming the streets. On the other hand, unofficial use of Spanish weapons could have the opposite effect and lead to trouble and the disapproval of the viceregal authorities if it was brought to Spanish attention, as in the case of a nobleman from Chalco in early 1536 who had several swords confiscated from his house by a hostile Indian *alguacil* because he did not have a licence; or the indignity of having to hide their weapons whenever an alien official appeared in the area, as happened to Mixteco lords known to Suárez de Peralta who had otherwise become expert hunters with the harquebus.⁴⁷³ Viceregal licences did not determine whether Indians were armed or not, they symbolised that they were trusted and enfranchised. These displays of status were highly valued by the Indigenous lords: Acaztlí's 'Chronicle' begins with a detailed description of his indigenous and Spanish martial regalia, including his sword.⁴⁷⁴ Suárez de Peralta recalled the image of Indian lords who had received such viceregal licences in his

⁴⁷³ CDI, vol.2, doc. 35, 16 February 1535 (though from the context should be 1536); J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado...*p.64.

⁴⁷⁴ S. Wood, *Transcending Conquest...* pp.52-4; C. Gibson, 'The Aztec Aristocracy in Colonial Mexico' p.181-4 in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.2, No.2. Motolinia *Historia de los Indios...*p.62.

chronicle: wearing their cloaks embroidered with eagles, carrying Spanish weapons and riding in saddled horses.⁴⁷⁵

Competition for viceregal patronage became an important factor in establishing viceregal authority over New Spain. Tlaxcala had an early advantage for her role in the conquest: 'It is reasonable that they be favoured' explained Mendoza to the King 'for their part in winning this land, and for my confidence in finding in them all protection and assistance if by chance any uprisings in the land made it necessary.'⁴⁷⁶ However Tlaxcala 'found early and expert imitators. In the sixteenth century other Indian towns resented Tlaxcala not because, as the twentieth century has tended to feel, they were traitors for turning on the 'Aztecs' but because they seemed to be getting all the credit for doing the same thing everyone else was doing all over the country.'⁴⁷⁷ The search for viceregal favour motivated indigenous lords to act according to viceregal expectations in government and war.

By far the greatest concentration of licences, was amongst the populous 'heartland polities' of New Spain, the area traced by the highland valleys that follow the line of volcanoes from Tlaxcala west to Michoacán and south to the valley of Oaxaca: those areas with easiest access to the viceroy and the greatest sense of participation in viceregal New Spain. Díaz del Castillo described their lords in the 1560s: 'in Tlaxcala and Texcoco and in Cholula and in Huexotzingo and Tepeaca and other big cities, when the Indians form a

⁴⁷⁵ J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado...* p.64.

⁴⁷⁶ CDI, vol.2, doc. 162, Mendoza to the king 10 December 1537, p.181f.

⁴⁷⁷ J. Lockhart *Nahuas and Spaniards...* 'Complex Municipalities...' p.25; AGI 258 Antonio de Turcios 'Relacion e memorial...': 31 Dec 1537 (though from the context it should be 1536) 'se dio licencia a tres principales de Tlascalca que vinieron con su senoria de españa que se dicen Don Diego, don Martin e Sebastian' (espadas).

cabildo...they perform justice with as much skill and authority as amongst us...and apart from this most *caciques* are rich and own horses... they go around...with pages and followers and they play *cañas* and on feasts they bullfight'. Elsewhere he commented: '...most sons of *principales* tended to be *gramáticos* (knew Latin)...and many sons of *principales* know how to read and write and compose books of song...' ⁴⁷⁸

Conclusion

The first two viceroys achieved a 'natural authority' over the elites of the 'heartland polities' of New Spain. Stephanie Wood has pointed out the importance of the figure of both of the first two viceroys in a variety of indigenous representations and records of collective political memory, even decades after their death. Indigenous documents spanning our period often incorporated Mendoza and Velasco into an indigenous identity, along with their agents like the friars, while other Spaniards were described as alien parasites.⁴⁷⁹ The viceroys for instance were not just called 'visorrey' but also 'tlatoani' while members of the *audiencia* were often referred to as 'tecuhtli' (lords) and, like the viceroys, depicted with name glyphs, somewhat like the lords that were painted sitting in the pre-conquest palaces alongside the prince.⁴⁸⁰ At least by the time of the Mixtón war, the Indians had appropriated Mendoza's name probably pronouncing it 'Metuza' as suggested by the glyph they associated with his image in their pictograms which was that of a maguey plant *Metl* and a

⁴⁷⁸ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista de la Nueva España*, J. Ramírez Cabañas intro. (Mexico 1974), p.296 or Pp's 694-695.

⁴⁷⁹ S. Wood, *Transcending Conquest...* Cortés p.33, the friars p.37-8, and CV in 39 were also positively represented along with the Viceroys 40-43 and pp.132-3 unlike Spanish rivals and encomenderos p.45.Clothing p.52-3.

⁴⁸⁰ M. León Portilla *Antigua palabra y nueva* (Mexico, 2004), p.309 quoting the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca; Cómo te confundes? acaso no somos conquistados? : anales de Juan Bautista*, L. Reyes García, (2001) *passim* ; In the Codex Osuna the *audiencia* members are often shown attached to their indigenous name-glyph.

mountain dog or *Tuza*. They were so familiar with his ubiquitous *mayordomo mayor* and 'intimate representative' Agustín Guerrero that they referred to him as the viceroy's 'Ytachi' or *honoured father*.⁴⁸¹

Viceregal authority over the indigenous polities came from the implementation through courtly personal government of shared convictions regarding the political participation of the indigenous elite. Each polity, often called a 'republic', constituted a legitimate political entity, more autonomous than a Spanish municipality, and enjoying the right to access to the person of the viceroy, as the representation of royal legitimacy in New Spain. These principles implied the acceptance of a legitimate governing class within the polities endowed with noble status: privileges and responsibilities that could transcend their individual polity and applied to the kingdom of New Spain as a whole. These included exemptions from tribute and the expectation of their obligation to serve the king in governing their polities and fighting for the kingdom. These assumptions and the strategies that the viceroys employed to realise them constituted the 'republic of the Indians' of viceregal rhetoric.

The way in which the status of the provincial elites was considered since 1535 was self-consciously a new departure from Tenochca imperial practice and differed from the official position of the Spanish crown and previous administrations in Mexico City. Royal

⁴⁸¹ M. León Portilla, *La Flecha en el blanco...*p. 85, (Mexico 1995) making reference to the *Códice Telleriano Remense*. AGI Justicia 258, Jerónimo López, second 'descargo', regarding the Mixtón war. Other important Spaniards that commanded the loyalty of indigenous *altepetl* had their identity similarly appropriated like Cortés as Malinche and Alvarado as Tonatiuh. López translated the word as *father* which would have been *ta'tli* but *ytachi* sounds more like a transliteration of *ta'tzin*, the reverential form of address, suggesting the importance of Guerrero, the viceroy's chamberlain and therefore his courtly style of government, in indigenous eyes.

recognition of a tribute-exempt fully fledged indigenous nobility did not come until 1572.⁴⁸² The crown had only recognised a few exceptions that included the imperial nobility of the Tenochca empire or other individual cases who had been awarded arms by the king for performing renowned services to the crown. In New Spain this notion of an indigenous nobility, with all its implications, had existed since Mendoza's government. In the fraught year of 1555, Motolinia, who played a direct role in this endeavour, defended the legitimacy of the political project of New Spain from the accusations of tyranny levied against it by Las Casas, recalling the contractual origins of this new vision of the Indigenous elites: 'I remember well in years past, after Your Majesty sent don Antonio de Mendoza, the lords and principal [indigenous] men of this kingdom assembled and solemnly and of their own free will again gave their obedience to Your Majesty'. He continued by claiming that only the polities that had constituted Tenochtitlan's Imperial triple alliance had lost out as a result of the Spanish conquest because they had lost the tribute and power they had enjoyed in the past.⁴⁸³

The recognition of indigenous nobility's privileges shocked newly arrived outsiders like the *visitadores*. Francisco Tello de Sandoval complained to the king in 1545 that 'under no circumstances should (indigenous) governors or caciques or principales be involved in the governance of their towns';⁴⁸⁴ Jerónimo de Valderrama, almost twenty years later, complained that the royal treasury had suffered because 'in some towns by ordinance of the

⁴⁸² C. Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History Of The Indians Of The Valley Of Mexico 1519-1810*. (Stanford 1964), p.177.

⁴⁸³ Motolinia, *Historia de los indios...* p.211 and 213.

⁴⁸⁴ AGI, Gobierno, Mexico, 68, R.12, N.34, Francisco Tello de Sandoval letter to prince Philip 19 September 1545, AGI, Gobierno, Mexico, 68, R.12, N.34.

friars many individuals are exempted from tribute, singers musicians and others who serve the church... and these are many because the viceroy makes them *principales* by writ, and whoever a friar calls a don becomes one⁴⁸⁵; and also disgusted *conquistadores* like Jerónimo López who identified himself more with Tenochca imperialism: 'Moctezuma subjected the land giving it in *repartimiento* to the principal men of his court, and keeping the rest...In this way the kingdom was peaceful under Moctezuma, who your majesty has succeeded just as we [the *encomenderos*] have done with the lords of Mexico.'⁴⁸⁶.

In the midst of these debates, don Esteban de Guzmán, a lord of Xochimilco who held the viceregal appointment of Indian *juez visitador* in Mexico City composed, along with other indigenous lords, one of the most illustrative defences of the viceroys and the *sui generis* viceregal political project of New Spain:

What now keeps us much afflicted, then, o powerful prince, is that in this year of 1554 there has been an attempt to take from us the administration of justice of our republic and to give it to be administered by Spanish people, which would have occurred already had not the friars of San Francisco challenged those who attempted it, and had they not acted we would have become perpetual slaves and deprived of our ancient and natural jurisdiction ... seeing the authority [the Spanish officials] were receiving we appealed to the lord viceroy don Luis de Velasco together with the Franciscan fathers, and he ordered that they not act as anything more than our protectors, with no more authority than to defend us from damages caused by Spaniards mestizos and blacks...⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ CJV, p. 69.

⁴⁸⁶ C. Pérez de Bustamante, 1928 *Los Origenes del Gobierno Virreinal en las Indias Españolas – Don Antonio de Mendoza Primer Virrey de la Nueva Espana. (1535-1550)*, Doc. XIX.

⁴⁸⁷ *La nobleza indígena...*p.195-6.

This type of defence of New Spain's *sui generis* viceregal arrangements formed part of the language of legitimacy that developed in this period and the sense of identity it represented, as we should see.

Chapter 6: Magnates

Juan Suárez de Peralta reflected that Mendoza had suffered most from the attempt to conquer the illusory kingdom of Cíbola 'because the issue went so badly when he had been so certain of it and of becoming greater than the greatest lord in Spain'.⁴⁸⁸ Behind their personae as 'the king's living image' and the legal boundaries of their nominally administrative titles, Mendoza and Velasco were ambitious noblemen who had risen as courtiers and aspired to become magnates of the Habsburg monarchy. They shared this sense of potential most keenly with those other Spaniards who enjoyed the mutually reinforcing attributes of official recognition from the crown and practical power in New Spain. Royal Officials, *oidores*, the marquess, provincial governors and the authorised explorers of New Spain enjoyed these attributes in parallel with the viceroys.

With the notable exception of the Marquess of the Valley of Oaxaca, these magnates lacked the entrenched titles of their counterparts in Spain that assured them of stability and continuity of status. Instead they depended on the royal will for legitimacy in the possession of their offices.

The 1520s and early 30s had seen Cortés, various royal officials, the *oidores* of the two *audiencias* and other adventurers secure for themselves in turn the government of New Spain and despite the appointment of the viceroys these ambitions continued. The effective removal of Mendoza from New Spain; the instability caused by the *visita* of Velasco's administration; the calls to suppress the office of viceroy altogether; and later the recall of viceroy Peralta in 1567 after just over a year in power point to the fluid and evolving nature

⁴⁸⁸ J. Suárez de Peralta, *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias* ed. S. Tena, ed., (Mexico, 1990) p.150.

of authority in New Spain where viceregal government was not the absolute certainty it became later. In 1552 one royal official remarked of the competition for authority that 'the ambition of many to rule the land is extreme in both temporal and the spiritual matters. They do everything to achieve this for the great credit given to them if they provide for many matters [of government] as they please and, under the excuse of zealous service, they ask for many things...'⁴⁸⁹ Viceregal authority over the magnates of New Spain was in part a result of the personal ambitions of the viceroys and their ability to achieve many of them rather than a deliberately contrived system of government implanted from Spain.

Managing officialdom

Both viceroys occupied ambiguous positions. Their offices were not part of a well-defined hierarchical structure that avoided parallel or overlapping competencies between them and the other administrative and judicial authorities in New Spain.⁴⁹⁰ The royal officials and *oidores* of New Spain were appointed and paid by the crown: according to the standard formula in their letters to the crown, they did not answer to the viceroys but to the king as his direct *criados*: under their own authority they 'granted' such and such a 'request' from the viceroys. In theory they did not depend on the viceroys for their authority or in order to discharge their duties. These administrative magnates could and were even obliged to appeal directly to the Council of the Indies or their patrons at court even on matters that did not necessarily pertain to their offices if they believed that in so doing they were serving the crown most effectively. Their offices did not define them: they were a marker of the

⁴⁸⁹ AGI Gobierno, México, 323, 2nd bound section, 1st letter 2nd March 1552, Alonso de Sosa, Antonio de la Cadena and Juan Velázquez de Salazar.

⁴⁹⁰ L. Semboloni, *La Construcción de la autoridad virreinal en Nueva España, 1535-1595*. Vol.2, p.296ff (unpublished doctoral thesis, El Colegio de México, 6 November 2007.) Vol.1, 'introduction' passim.

trust in which they were held by the crown and an expression of their pre-eminence within the governing elite of New Spain.

The viceroys were not sovereign and they could not count on unfettered access to the financial resources of the royal treasury. They found it necessary to link the interests of the administrative magnates to their own as closely as possible in order to achieve their own objectives and authority: from implementing royal instructions like the New Laws to gaining access to resources for the distribution of patronage. Cortés had found the division of authorities equally damaging to coherent governance and believed that he knew 'that ... governing the land through a diversity of authorities, like the [Caribbean] islands, [New Spain] will end up in the state that they are in.'⁴⁹¹ The crown tried to encourage agreement, as in the *real acuerdo* expected between viceroy and *audiencia*, but the administrative structure of New Spain had developed through the aggregation of authorities rather than as a coherent hierarchical bureaucracy. There was no legislative, elective or bureaucratic mechanism to enforce a unitary decision if the different administrative magnates disagreed on the interpretation of the royal will.

The viceroys came to rely on unofficial but accepted courtly means to create the alliance of interests that would allow them to achieve coherent, enforceable and unchallenged policies in New Spain. Courtly strategies involving dynastic alliances and the distribution of patronage helped to create interdependent associations between the viceroys, the royal officials and *letrados*. This continued after Velasco was appointed despite

⁴⁹¹ H. Cortés, *Cartas de Relación*, Porrúa eds. (Mexico 1973), p.216.

the crown's legislative efforts to try to limit these associations and maintain autonomous officials unaffected by the viceroy's authority.

Mendoza, like Guzmán before him, was fortunate in that he knew many of the royal officials he encountered in Mexico from court in Spain. As we have seen their background and allegiances in Spain were similar: their associations with Francisco de los Cobos in particular helped in this respect until his eclipse in the mid 1540s. Salazar recalled during Sandoval's *visita* that he had known Mendoza 'for over thirty-five years' since their shared youth in the Alhambra where they had cut their administrative teeth together working alongside Cobos under Mendoza's father and older brother.⁴⁹² These Spanish associations remained important in New Spain: Ruy Díaz de Mendoza, a member of Mendoza's household and previously a principal citizen of Granada, married Catalina de Salazar, the *factor's* daughter and both came to Mexico in the viceroy's entourage.

These links continued into the second generation when Juan Velázquez de Salazar married a daughter of Alonso de Mérida, another member of Mendoza's original household.⁴⁹³ The crown allowed both Hernando de Salazar and his brother Juan Velázquez de Salazar to inherit in turn the office of *factor* from their father and that of *veedor* from Chirinos.⁴⁹⁴ On the other hand, *contador* Rodrigo de Albornoz, who remained hostile to the Salazars from their disagreements in the factional struggles of the 1520s, received few

⁴⁹² AGI, Justicia, 258 testimony of Gonzalo de Salazar. H. Keniston *Francisco de Los Cobos: Secretary of the Emperor Charles V* (Pittsburgh, 1960) p.18.

⁴⁹³ See Appendix A for a description of these relations.

⁴⁹⁴ AGI, Gobierno, Mexico 323, 1st booklet in pencil, 17 January 1551 *Oficiales Reales*.

rewards from the viceroy; which led to the enmity which became obvious during Sandoval's *visita*.⁴⁹⁵

Velasco could not count on a common patron like Cobos to help align officialdom. Nevertheless the viceroy exploited similar dynastic and courtly associations harking back to Spain as illustrated in his promotion of Hortuño de Ibarra to the offices of *factor* and *veedor*. Hortuño was a kinsman of the richest mining entrepreneur in New Spain, Diego de Ibarra, who, like Velasco, had been a dependent of the latter's kinsman the Constable of Castile.⁴⁹⁶ In New Spain, this relationship became even more entrenched after Diego's marriage to the viceroy's daughter. The association between the Velascos and the Ibarras became so close that Velasco lived his last months in Hortuño's house in Mexico City.⁴⁹⁷

The viceroys enjoyed greater confidence from the crown and court than the members of the administration they replaced because they were appointed more recently and consequently retained a greater intimacy with the politics of the Spanish court. This confidence was demonstrated in their charge to conduct *residencias* of the sitting administrators. Both viceroys used this as a means to enhance their authority or promote their own men of confidence to key positions within the administration. To achieve this, the viceroys kept as much personal control over this process as possible by using trusted members of their household or other allies: for example, Mendoza appointed his household *mayordomo* Agustín Guerrero to supervise the *residencia* of the previous officials and

⁴⁹⁵ AGI, Justicia, 258 testimony of contador Rodrigo de Albornoz & Bernaldino de Albornoz.

⁴⁹⁶ J. F. Scwaller 'The Life of Luis de Velasco' in *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 29. Jul-Dec 2003.

⁴⁹⁷ M.J. Sarabia Viejo, *Don Luis de Velasco Virrey de Nueva España 1550-1564* (Seville 1978), p.471.

oidores.⁴⁹⁸ Treasurer Juan Alonso de Sosa described the power that the viceroy's role as a judge of the previous administration could give them: he explained that Velasco was helping his investigators to extend their commission despite no royal instructions to this effect: 'in order for [the investigators] to become perpetual *contadores*, which is what they have always wanted... in order to enjoy always that pre-eminence that they have and have had from being *contadores*, and to have me in a state of discredit with Your Majesty by implying that there are grave charges against me... the viceroy helps them in this because he believes that by [helping them extend their commission] he has extended his own over them.'⁴⁹⁹

The crown's confidence also offered a window of opportunity for the viceroys to position their closest adherents in positions of influence and authority. Apart from his general supervisory role, Guerrero was commissioned alongside *oidor* Ceynos, to the delicate task of auditing the accounts of the royal tribute books;⁵⁰⁰ he was also made the chancellor of the *audiencia* and was placed in charge of the royal seal without which no document could be considered legally binding.⁵⁰¹ Guerrero was even made the bursar of the new College of Tlatelolco which Mendoza eagerly supported on behalf of the crown.

⁴⁹⁸ A.S. Aiton, *Antonio de Mendoza: First Viceroy of New Spain* (Duke 1927), p.55f.

⁴⁹⁹ AGI Gobierno México, 323/1525-1572 *Cargos y expedientes de oficiales reales de México*, Juan Alonso de Sosa to the King, July 1551.

⁵⁰⁰ The appointment came on the 25th of July 1536. Guerrero continued to engage in this activity along with his many other duties, until Gonzalo de Aranda's *visita* of the treasury in 1544. See Aiton, *Antonio de Mendoza: First Viceroy of New Spain* (Duke 1927), p.72-3 contrary to what Aiton believed, Guerrero was rewarded for his labours: see AGI 'Quitas y Vacaciones'. See also J.Miranda *El tribute indígena en la Nueva España durante el siglo XVI*.(Mexico, 2005), p.110f.

⁵⁰¹ A.S. Aiton *Antonio de Mendoza...* p. 62.

The creation of the first royal mint allowed Mendoza to make Alonso de Mérida its treasurer and to justify giving him useful living and an important role in the administration along with the other minor offices associated with the mint which duly went to other household dependents. Mendoza was then able to justify Mérida's purchase of conqueror Alonso Lucas's half of the Meztitlán *encomienda* in late 1535 as a means of supporting the new treasurer of the mint's administrative position socially and economically.⁵⁰² The viceroy was also able to grant treasurer Sosa, for example, valuable *encomiendas* that had belonged to the crown rather than other *encomenderos* - a right that neither Guzmán nor the Second Audiencia had enjoyed - and allowed him to extend his mining interests. Sosa's daughter then married don Luis de Castilla who was increasingly associated with the viceroy. Sosa, who had been originally allied with Cortés, never became a full partisan of Mendoza but he did not oppose him either except briefly for opportunistic reasons during Sandoval's *visita*.

Mendoza won over the *audiencia* using similar methods. He first appeased the remaining members of the Second Audiencia by concluding their *residencia* with uncharacteristic speed and without charging any of them, despite some insistent accusations from the *cabildo* in particular against Vasco de Quiroga.⁵⁰³ Instead the viceroy subsequently gave two of them special responsibilities: Quiroga, who also had Granadine connections, was to count the vassals of Cortés until he finally took up his post of bishop of Michoacán the following year and devoted himself to creating Utopia on the shores of Lake Pátzcuaro. The viceroy appointed Maldonado to hold a *residencia* of Pedro de Alvarado in

⁵⁰² An *hidalgo* who nevertheless proudly claimed that he and his father had always served the Dukes of Mondéjar: don Antonio's father and brother; CDI, p. 192. The purchase of the *encomienda* led to a dangerous feud with Lucas's widow and children as we shall see. (see Appendix A).

⁵⁰³ A.S. Aiton *Antonio de Mendoza...* p. 57.

Guatemala. The *oidor* arrived in Santiago de los Caballeros on the 16th of May 1536.⁵⁰⁴ At first this left only the young *oidor* Ceynos and the elderly but newly-arrived Loaysa in the royal palace with the viceroy. These two had the least experience in New Spain and in the palace they soon established a comradely relationship with the viceroy based on mutual solidarity, to the extent that Loaysa was tasked with representing Mendoza in meetings of the *cabildo*, in a move of contested legality.⁵⁰⁵

In 1538 Lorenzo de Tejada arrived to replace Quiroga as *oidor*, and the viceroy soon came to enjoy a personal and economically profitable alliance with him, underscored by shared private enterprises and land speculation which were facilitated by their control of the political and legal processes of the administration.⁵⁰⁶ Such cooperation was also helped by the generally accepted notion that the *oidores* would reside in Mexico for life and Mendoza's conception of New Spain as a stable kingdom where he was promoting an elite that they wished to belong to. After Ceynos returned to Spain in 1546, Mendoza, possibly with the help of his brother who had been made president of the council of the Indies, got their relative Rodrigo de Quesada, who already resided in Mexico, selected as the replacement *oidor*.⁵⁰⁷ This reinforced the viceroy's association with the *audiencia* at a time when Sandoval's *visita* had divided them.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁴ J.M. Vallejo García-Hevia, *Juicio a un conquistador: Pedro de Alvarado* (2 vols), (Madrid 2008), Vol. 1, p.29f.

⁵⁰⁵ See ch.4.

⁵⁰⁶ E. Ruiz Medrano, *Reshaping New Spain: Government and private interest in the colonial bureaucracy, 1531-1550*, J. Constantino and P. Marmasse trans., (Colorado, 2006), esp. p.93 though I disagree with some of her interpretation and analysis. (see ch.1).

⁵⁰⁷ F.J. Escudero Buendía, *Don Francisco de Mendoza protomonarca de Nueva España*, (Guadalajara, 2006), p.76.

⁵⁰⁸ VEA 'Mendoza' Doc. 6.

Until 1544 there were no other *audiencias* in any of the provinces of New Spain, and Mendoza's alliance with the *oidores* in Mexico City meant a high degree of co-ordination between viceroy and the highest authorised judicial institution in a vast territory extending from Honduras to the northern frontier of New Galicia and Pánuco. This co-ordination became crucial in the struggle for legitimacy over rights of exploration as the *audiencia* consistently ratified Mendoza's actions and recommended them to the crown, as we will see. In all these cases of collusion, the interests of the *oidores* were tied directly to New Spain through *encomienda* grants or direct land-ownership, as well as by royal policy which at the time favoured long or even perpetual terms of office in New Spain.

Mendoza's administration had been discredited, in the eyes of the crown, by the accusations levied against it during Sandoval's *visita*. The crown's reaction was to try to limit 'horizontal' allegiances within New Spain while emphasising the autonomy of individual salaried officials or *oidores* and their individual 'vertical' links to the crown. The crown prohibited its salaried officials from engaging in private entrepreneurial activities or accumulating private property in New Spain: 'because experience has shown the harm and inconvenience that follow when those that govern in the Indies are involved in land-ownership and discoveries',⁵⁰⁹ and it rotated *oidores* more frequently than in the past throughout Velasco's reign. These adjustments were designed to reinforce the crown's supremacy as the greatest patron in New Spain over viceregal political arrangements.

The crown still favoured sending an 'intimate representative' as viceroy. Furthermore, Mendoza's political arrangements were not discredited in New Spain where both the

⁵⁰⁹ VEA 'Velasco', Doc. I.

Spanish and indigenous elites had campaigned for Mendoza to remain as viceroy or for his son to succeed him. Their demands and expectations from the viceregal government remained the same. This left Velasco with an ambiguous legacy when he arrived in Mexico City.

As long as Velasco retained the confidence of the crown above that of any other official, however, he was able to take advantage of the stricter royal prohibitions on the acquisition of patrimonial wealth by salaried officials as a double-edged sword to assert his own authority over other members of the administration. Velasco was able to convince the crown to increase his salary to 20,000*d* over the years, arguing for the need to uphold the dignity of his office, while the salaries of other officials remained stagnant for 40 years despite the general inflation of prices in New Spain and they claimed that they could hardly maintain themselves without viceregal assistance.⁵¹⁰

Velasco could also appeal to the letter of the law to undermine anyone in the old administration who opposed him while elevating his own allies. For example Velasco persuaded the crown to replace Sosa in 1553 and Velázquez de Salazar in 1558. Both had remained in their posts from the previous administration. Their wealth and entrenched interests and dynastic contact in New Spain had given them too much influence Velasco's linking. They had become intractable enemies of Velasco's authority, but they were also relics of the old regime and suspect in the eyes of the crown.⁵¹¹ Velasco was able to justify replacing Sosa with the more malleable and grateful Fernando de Portugal, and Salazar with his ally Hortuño de Ibarra. The same held true for *oidores* Santillán and Tejada, both of

⁵¹⁰ AGI, Gobierno, México, 323, Hortuño de Ibarra et.al., 10th Sept. 1564, 2nd letter.

⁵¹¹ M. J. Sarabia Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco Virrey de Nueva España 1550-1564* (Seville 1978). p.105-8.

whom had accumulated a great deal of wealth and property from the long tenure of their offices and their association with Mendoza.⁵¹² The repayment of debts and the escheatment of property or tributary rights to the royal coffers that accompanied the prosecution and persecution of these administrative magnates also helped Velasco's political standing in Spain. Philip II repeatedly expressed his support for Velasco in these seemingly exemplary reforms to the administration and provided the necessary legislation to ratify his actions for most of Velasco's government.⁵¹³

Simultaneously Velasco used Mendoza's unofficial strategies to circumvent the legal restrictions imposed by the crown to co-opt newly arrived officials and to promote his own allies to offices as they became available. While Mendoza was able to enrich his favoured officials or *oidores* directly Velasco merely rewarded their close relatives or associates (and his own) instead. They both relied on the system of *quitas y vacaciones* or the appointment to *corregimiento*. Valderrama identified several rewards going to the viceroy's family as well as relatives and dependents of the Montealegre and Villanueva families whose members came to hold positions both as royal officials and *oidores* by 1560.⁵¹⁴ The same was true of even more dependents of the treasurer don Fernando de Portugal and Hortuño de Ibarra. Velasco also managed to enrich his family and household to such an extent that within a generation they became amongst the most preponderant citizens of New Spain: two branches of the Velascos were amongst the first *criollos* to gain titles of nobility. It was their wealth and the consequent networks of dependence they created that offered the greatest

⁵¹² *Ibid.* p.52-7.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, p.88f.

⁵¹⁴ CJV Docs 28-33; and ch.4.

bulwark to Velasco's authority and rallying the viceregal party at the time of the so-called Cortés-Ávila conspiracy.⁵¹⁵

Cash reserves were particularly valuable in this period because New Spain was not very well monetised but coin was essential for the acquisition of valued products from Spain. The royal treasury in Mexico City probably accounted for the largest concentration of coin in Mesoamerica because a good part of the tribute collected by the crown in kind was sold in the market for coin before it was transferred to the royal coffers.⁵¹⁶ Immediate access to capital often involved contracting debts against the royal treasury. The viceroy and officials allowed individual or collective indebtedness because it played an important part in creating a lasting collusion between them and of extending their collective authority over affairs in New Spain: Hortuño de Ibarra for instance was careful to keep a list of the many towns and people that had been allowed to owe money to the royal coffers.⁵¹⁷

Some of the prime beneficiaries of this access to royal funds through debt were the royal officials themselves and the viceroys. After Guerrero and Ceynos completed their audit of the royal officials in April 1537 it turned out that all the officials owed money to the royal coffers. Rather than punish them, Mendoza allowed them to refinance their debts with continued borrowing. In this way the royal officials became politically indebted to Mendoza and became more willing to cooperate.⁵¹⁸ Hernando de Salazar died in 1551 owing the

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁶ VEA, 'Mendoza' doc.2; J. Miranda *El tributo indígena en la Nueva España durante el siglo XVI*. 2nd ed. (Mexico 2005), p.99.

⁵¹⁷ AGI, Gobierno, Mexico 323, one of the last loose documents in the *legajo* after the bound sections list of towns and people that owed money to the royal coffers, dated 1556.

⁵¹⁸ ENE. doc.173. M.J. Sarabia-Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco...* p.104-109.

enormous sum of 250,000*d* to the treasury. Hernando had been ‘well-loved throughout the land’ and in order ‘to avoid dissent and scandals in the land’ Velasco and prosecutor Sedeño arranged for his brother to inherit the office of *factor* in exchange for guarantees that he and other named individuals would stand surety for the debt. These other individuals included ‘ten of the most prominent individuals’ in New Spain like Cristóbal de Oñate. The debt placed them all under obligation to the viceroy.⁵¹⁹

The collusion between the viceroy and the treasury officials was beneficial for both. The officials believed that they could not maintain themselves properly without the viceroy’s patronage and the viceroy needed their support to dispense his patronage freely and govern effectively.⁵²⁰ This community of interests allowed the viceroys almost unfettered access to the cash reserves of the royal treasury, legitimised by the seal of approval of the royal officials and without fear of disputes that might result in complaints made to Spain. It was this collusion that allowed them to exercise the distributions from the ‘*quitas y vacaciones*’ fund in a discretionary way or even to borrow money themselves. In February 1564, a newly arrived Martín Cortés observed to the king that he:

marvelled at [the Royal Officials] because they are always so much in agreement with the viceroy and they never exceed his will even when it is not convenient for the service of Your Majesty, nor do they know any other king than him because... he grants them *mercedes* and gives them lands and livings. And they have believed until now that there would be no-one to make a reckoning of their actions, and that if, in collusion, they and the viceroy wrote [to Spain] helping each other that Your Majesty would give them great credit.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid*, 2nd April 1562, (6th bound collection of letters) 1st bound section within the largest booklet, in pencil 17 January 1551, M.J. Sarabia-Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco*...P.105

⁵²⁰ AGI Gobierno, Mexico 323, Ortuño de Ibarra, 10th Sept. 1564, 2nd letter.

⁵²¹ CJV, p.331.

At the time of Velasco's death six months later in the middle of Valderrama's *visita* it was discovered that the viceroy had left an outstanding debt of c.23,142*d*. Fernando de Portugal and the other officials who had authorised this debt explained that the viceroy had borrowed it against his salary and had needed it 'for the furniture of his house... to pay for what is left over of the salaries owed to his dependants and for other little debts... in this we were serving your majesty because of how important it is to govern in liberty without depending on anybody.' They added that in any case the viceroy had been waiting for remuneration from the crown for all his voluntary services and suggested that these debts should be wiped clean altogether and not transferred to his son in recognition of these services.⁵²² The effectiveness of such arguments, on either side, in determining whether such collusion was considered corruption or a strategy for 'good government' did not depend on bureaucratic procedure but on the political judgement of the crown.

Velasco was never able to associate the *audiencia* of Mexico City with his aims to the extent that Mendoza achieved.⁵²³ Furthermore, Velasco had to contend with *audiencias* in Guatemala and New Galicia who enjoyed even greater autonomy. He was thwarted by the more frequent changeover of *oidores* which made any arrangements he could organise in New Spain less durable. Disputes over jurisdiction and the personal ambition of the *oidores* to serve the king in their own right led to disagreements over the viceroy's policies regarding the Spanish and Indian republics and most seriously over his elevation of his

⁵²² AGI Gobierno México 323, Hortuño de Ibarra and Fernando de Portugal to the Crown, 10th Sept. 1564, 2nd letter.

⁵²³ M. J. Sarabia Viejo, *Don Luis de Velasco...* p.93; and J. F. Scwaller "The Life of Luis de Velasco" in *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 29, Jul-Dec 2003.

relatives and household within New Spain's society.⁵²⁴ Even so until about 1560, the crown sided with Velasco almost invariably, while his arrangements within New Spain gave him enough support from within the administration and from *oidores* like Quesada, Zorita or Villanueva to allow him to govern: whether by aggrandising his retinue or implementing the unpopular New Laws.

In the increasing disputes between the *audiencia* and the royal officials over questions of precedence the viceroy generally sided with the royal officials: as in the right to let the latter arm their black servants ostensibly to assist in their tax-collecting duties, or the insistence of the royal officials on scrupulously charging the *oidores* for all sorts of dues to the crown.⁵²⁵ Subsequent complaints from the *audiencia* and discord between them and the viceroy prompted the *visita* of Valderrama who arrived in Mexico in the summer of 1563.

It was also worrying for Velasco that the king had shown such evident favour for Martín Cortés. With a single *cédula* the king had settled all the disputes over the tributary and seigniorial rights of the *marquesado*, which Hernán Cortés had never been able to resolve, in Martín's favour and against Velasco's explicit advice.⁵²⁶ Martín Cortés returned to New Spain shortly before Valderrama. Until then, Velasco's authority had not faced a magnate who could combine enough practical power in New Spain with support from Spain to challenge the viceroy in Mexico City. Ominously when the *visitador* arrived in Mexico City he chose to reside with the marquess rather than the viceroy.

⁵²⁴ See chapters 4&5.

⁵²⁵ AGI, Gobierno, México 323, Royal Officials to the crown, 2 April 1562 6th bound collection of letters.

⁵²⁶ J.L. Martínez *Hernán Cortés...* p.647.

Rivalling the *Conquistadores*

Exploration and the control of military expeditions in the name of the king became the most obvious arena for competition over authority, rewards and status. They remained the most prestigious and quantifiable services that could be rendered to the crown. Command of such expeditions was also important within New Spain because it meant patronage over many restless recent Spanish immigrants with few alternative means of sustenance. Authority over the administrative magnates went hand in hand with the viceroy's efforts to rival the glory of the *conquistadores* by appropriating their command of expeditions of conquest and exploration.

The conquest of Mexico and the aggrandisement of Cortés and his captains confirmed the wildest fantasies of Spanish explorers in America. By the time Mendoza arrived, Pizarro's exploits in Peru had revived the faith of many Spanish settlers in the potential of new conquests: the summer before Mendoza's arrival the *cabildo* of Mexico City calculated that over half of the Spanish population of Mexico City had left to join new expeditions since news had come of the conquest of Peru.⁵²⁷ Late in 1536 Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions were brought before the viceroy and citizens of Mexico: they came with tales of the distances and peoples of eight years-worth of wandering in the *terra incognita* to the north. A rich kingdom called Cíbola was soon commonly believed to lie within reach and for those Spaniards that had remained in New Spain or arrived recently in search of their fortunes 'a new glamour was thrown around the work of discovery'.⁵²⁸ This excitement heightened the pre-existing competition between

⁵²⁷ J.L. Martínez *Hernán Cortés...* p.701.

⁵²⁸ A.S. Aiton, *Don Antonio de Mendoza....* p.118.

Cortés, Alvarado and Guzmán for control of exploration especially along the Pacific coast and by extension the revival of the ambition of reaching Asia by sailing west.

At first Mendoza was at a severe disadvantage. The crown was so nebulous - or purposefully ambiguous - in its understanding of the territory of New Spain and the authorities within it that no mention was even included of Mendoza's jurisdictions or lack thereof over New Galicia, Pánuco or Guatemala in the viceroy's instructions.⁵²⁹ This meant that if he wanted to gain the initiative in the provinces with the greatest potential as bases for exploration, he would have to enforce his rights in a competition for authority with the territorial magnates of New Spain.

The viceroy's most serious disadvantage was with the amount of money that New Spain's magnates could devote to expeditions of exploration. Detailed accounts do not survive, but 'snapshots' provide an impression of the scale of these enterprises in this early period. Cortés spent an estimated 48,000*d* to launch Olíd's ultimately treacherous expedition to Hibueras in 1524;⁵³⁰ closer to our period Alvarado sold the remnants of his battered invasion force of Quito in 1534 for 120,000*d*. This expedition had included 12 ships, and 500 Spaniards along with 200 slaves and 'many Indian auxiliaries' from Guatemala. In 1536 Alvarado proposed to raise a slightly smaller expedition at a cost 48,000*d* to explore the ever beckoning Pacific to the east 'and islands'.⁵³¹ Finally according to López de Gómara Cortés spent an enormous 200,000*d* on his four Pacific voyages of exploration during the 1530s (The figure seems high and López de Gómara was trying to justify Cortés' position in

⁵²⁹ J.I. Rubio Mañe, *El Virreinato I: Orígenes y jurisdicciones, y dinámica social de los virreyes*. (Mexico 2005), p.41.

⁵³⁰ J. López-Portillo y Weber, *La rebelión de la Nueva Galicia*, (Saltillo, 1981) p. 90-91.

⁵³¹ J.M. Vallejo García-Hevia *Juicio a un conquistador, Pedro de Alvarado*, Part 1. Pp 150-159 esp, p. 156-157.

his struggle with the viceroy over the rights of exploration, as we shall see. However, judging by the other figures I have quoted it does not seem excessively high).⁵³² The proportion of Spanish settlers that participated in them speak to the importance of these activities and their role in establishing relations of patronage over the Spanish population of Mesoamerica.

Such figures also indicate that the practical means to conduct exploration or martial ventures were concentrated in a few individuals in New Spain, rather than with the royal administration: New Spain was far more decentralised than Spain in this regard. At the start of Mendoza's administration Agustín Guerrero and Antonio de Almaguer's inquiry into royal tribute (completed on 17 March 1536 from the 101 towns under the crown and administered by *corregidores*) valued the total income at 33,929*d* a year of which 16,514*d* were left over for the treasury after just the salaries and expenditures of the *corregidores* were deducted. A further 20,340*d* were sent to the king from the collection of the royal fifth paid on precious metals. Upon the crown's request, Mendoza converted all tributary value, most of which was paid in kind, and including the *royal fifth* of silver into its monetary value. It should be pointed out that the crown controlled many of the most populous towns around the central Mexican plateau, however a proportion of their tribute assessment was commuted in exchange for manual labour, at this time especially for the re-construction of Mexico City. This was obviously not disposable to the king or viceroy for any other use.⁵³³ In 1546 Cortés earned more than that amount (37,478*d*) just from the tributary revenues of the *marquesado* holdings within the modern state of Morelos, excluding his many other

⁵³² J.L. Martínez *Hernán Cortés...* p.720-1.

⁵³³ AGI Justicia 258 *Relacion sacada de los libros de la contaduría...* 18 de Agosto de 1546; and J.L. Miranda, *El tributo indígena en la Nueva España durante el siglo XVI*, 2nd ed. (Mexico 2005) p.123.

tributary holdings and his commercial enterprises.⁵³⁴ He could also count on large reserves of moveable wealth: the famous emerald necklace (the one he notoriously kept from the empress for his wife) that he lost in the debacle in Algiers in 1541 was valued at 100,000*d*; while his fame and the rumours of hidden treasures in New Spain meant that he was always able to borrow and at the time of his death he owed in total about 127,516*d* to various creditors.⁵³⁵ More completely comparable figures of royal *vis-a-vis* magnate income are found towards the end of our period. In 1569 Hortuño de Ibarra calculated that the crown received 275,661*d* in tribute from royal towns and the *marquesado* produced 144,000*d* (when the royal officials took over the running of the *marquesado* in 1569, they estimated that the estate generated 110,571*d* per year just from the tribute of 60.903 tributaries. The totals are calculated by subtracting the earnings of the *marquesado* from total royal revenues).⁵³⁶ These rough figures serve to illustrate the relative magnitude of the economic power of the *marquesado* even at a time of decline when it was not engaged in commercial and mining ventures on the same scale as before and the estate was being exploited by crown agents since 1565 'like an enemy's enterprise' for their own benefit.⁵³⁷ The crown was also relatively richer in the 1560s as many more *encomiendas* had escheated by 1569, and its income was more diversified. Mendoza's position in 1535 had been relatively much weaker.

⁵³⁴ M.G. Riley, *Fernando Cortés and the Marquesado in Morelos 1522-1547*, (New Mexico, 1973) pp.81-82; and Bernardo García Martínez *El Marquesado del Valle, tres siglos de régimen señorial en Nueva España* (Mexico 1969), p.144ff.

⁵³⁵ J.L. Miranda *El tributo...*p.157; J.L. Martínez, *Hernán Cortés...* pp 752-6.

⁵³⁶ J.L. Martínez, *El tributo....* p.705 note 72.

⁵³⁷ B. García Martínez. *El Marquesado del Valle, tres siglos de regimen señorial en Nueva España*. Mexico 1969, p.75 and note 156.

In Spain, by contrast, the crown's relative income was much higher than that of any individual magnate and it was all at the disposal of the king as sovereign. Charles V's annual revenue as King of Spain, which at the time may have had a similar population to New Spain, was on average about 1,000,000*d* a year, rising to 1,500,000*d* after 1542, and through the sale of *juros* and by borrowing he was able to raise an additional 39,000,000*d*.⁵³⁸ By comparison, the wealthiest magnates in Spain, such as the duke of Medina-Sidonia earned around 50,000*d* a year in 1558, while the lordly favourite Los Cobos enjoyed around 53,042*d* gross earnings by 1546. The total rents in 1525 of all the *grandes de España* have been estimated at 1,100,000*d*.⁵³⁹

Mendoza was also disadvantaged by the expectations of the time. The Spanish crown relied on the ethos of service of its magnates, particularly for military or exploratory ventures. In Europe the Duke of Alba died in 1582 after a lifetime of devoted service being owed 474,000*d* by the crown, a burden that descendants still bore generations later.⁵⁴⁰ In America, it had always been private enterprises and competition between explorers that had expanded the empire without any practical royal support. This voluntary ethos represented the pinnacle of virtuous services that had elevated men like Cortés.

There was therefore nothing inherently undesirable, from the crown's point of view, in the multiple authorities competing over exploration and martial matters that existed in

⁵³⁸ J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain: 1469-1716*, (London, 1990), p.206. It has been estimated that the population of New Spain was only slightly smaller than that of Spain in the 1530s: the census of Feb. 25 1560, after some severe epidemics estimated: 16,180 Spaniards, 15,609 Africans, 2,425 Mestizos, 1,465 Mulattoes, a further 3,000 Spaniards of unfixed habitation between New Spain, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Honduras. The number of Indians was unknown but estimated at c. 2-3,000,000.

⁵³⁹ J. Miralles Ostos, *Hernán Cortés...*p. 692, note 28.

⁵⁴⁰ H. Kamen, *The Duke of Alba*, (Yale, 2004), p.158 and 167f.

New Spain. The relative stability enjoyed by the Second Audiencia had much to do with its surrender of direct control over these martial activities or the provinces where magnates ruled. This was even the case with regards to their political accommodation with Cortés whom they needed as an occasional enforcer and consequently they surrendered any authority over him when it came to exploration, keeping only control over justice and appointments in Mexico City.⁵⁴¹

Cortés held the title of ‘Captain General of New Spain and the Southern Sea’ with the specific intention of serving the crown through defence and exploration. The viceroy’s claims were even weaker in the provinces and ‘kingdoms’ conquered separately by Alvarado, Guzmán and Montejo, (and to a far lesser extent Hernando de Soto’s claims to north America) which they had the right to govern autonomously as the accepted *adelantados*, governors and captains general of their domains.⁵⁴² Guzmán retained some influence at court which supported his conquests.⁵⁴³ Cortés and Alvarado had more recently forged alliances with influential members of the royal court. Mendoza’s first year suggested that the pattern established by the Second Audiencia might have continued viably for the crown along these polyarchic lines; it was only subsequent events that show that Mendoza actively sought to overturn this situation and to control such activities himself.

⁵⁴¹ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés the life of the conqueror by his secretary*. tr.&ed., Lesley Byrd Simpson, (California 1965)*Cortés...* p.396

⁵⁴² J.I.Rubio-Mañe *El virreinato I...* p. 199; and AGI Justicia 259, where the *cédula* granting the viceroyalty with the proviso ‘for as long as the king wills it’ came up and was copied as part of Sandoval’s *visita*; and F.J. Escudero Buendía *Don Antonio de Mendoza...* ‘Conclusión’, *passim*; VEA, Docs.1-4.

⁵⁴³ D.E. Chipman ‘New light on the career of Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán,’ *The Americas*. Vol.19, No.4 (Apr., 1963).

In 1536 Cortés was recalled by the viceroy to calm indigenous disquiet at rumours of his disappearance, much as the Second Audiencia had done in the past. Mendoza was then forced to ask the Captain General to fund and organise an expedition to rescue Pizarro in Lima who was under siege from the resurgent Manco Inca. The marquess responded immediately, ostensibly spending his resources in serving crown's interests in Peru, but also exploiting the opportunity to further his own because the potential glory Cortés would have accrued from saving Lima by his intervention would have enhanced his prestige in Spain at a time when judicial and jurisdictional concerns hung over him. A similar motivation can be seen when the opportunity to save Peru for the crown arose again in 1547 and Mendoza did not hesitate to fund and organise an expedition himself and to place his son Francisco in charge of it.

In both cases news from Peru forestalled the need for an expedition. In 1536, Cortés made the best of Pizarro's victory by using the resources he had assembled to lay claim to what he hoped would become a lucrative new maritime commercial route to Peru, where so many Spaniards were emigrating. Two ships subsequently sailed to Lima, via Panama, every year with passengers and goods from bases controlled by the *marquesado* and handled by kinsmen and local commercial agents of Cortés. The expedition also gave Cortés an opportunity to continue his explorations of the Pacific with a view to discovering the elusive western route to Asia that continued to fascinate Spanish adventurers (In Tehuantepec he had his *astillero* del Carbón and he controlled the excellent ports of Huatulco and Acapulco further to the north).⁵⁴⁴ When the viceroy and the marquess finally met around June of 1536, they did so in the most affectionate terms. In a festive atmosphere, they agreed on a

⁵⁴⁴ J.L. Martínez, *Hernán Cortés...* p.692-3 See *ibid* p.702-4.

code of conduct towards each other that placed them on a par: each would address the other as *señoría* and when they coincided in the street or in church or in banquets there would be no clear precedence of one over the other (indeed so indistinguishable was the difference that there was a small row once over which chair was a few inches in front of the other in church).⁵⁴⁵

Cortés cooperated, which might have redounded to Mendoza's favour as an administrator, and the polyarchic system could have endured without affecting the crown's interests. The situation, however, was not satisfactory with regards to the viceroy's personal interests and authority. Mendoza soon experienced the limits of his practical ability to command the over-mighty subjects of New Spain and its consequent cost to his authority and ambitions. Mendoza sent *oidor* Alonso de Maldonado to Guatemala to take over the governorship of the province and begin the *residencia* of Pedro de Alvarado. It could have been an early opportunity for the new viceregal administration to make its authority felt as the crown's supreme representative even in the distant periphery of its domain. After reaching Guatemala, Maldonado appointed his scribe Juan de Herrera to notify Alvarado of his impending trial; however, the scribe spent a month and a half trying to reach the *adelantado* without success; suffering beatings, threats and sequestrations from the latter's supporters in the process. Simultaneously, Mendoza was trying to make himself the arbiter in the disputes between Montejo, who was in Mexico City after a devastating Maya rebellion, and Alvarado over control of Chiapas and Honduras. However in another example of the varied forms of legitimacy that operated simultaneously in the Americas, Alvarado had by then already 'formally' assumed the governorship of Honduras, without having to

⁵⁴⁵ J. Suárez de Peralta, *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias* ed. Silva Tena, (Mex, 1990), Ch.XX, esp., p.139.

give up Chiapas, from Andrés de Carceda and the local authorities who were desperate for the resources of a strong-man like Alvarado to protect them from indigenous reprisals.⁵⁴⁶ By early August Alvarado set sail for Spain to present his case directly to the king and to settle the issue of his authority over Honduras, without having to answer to Maldonado or the viceroy. He rightly trusted in the support of Cobos with whom he already enjoyed dynastic and economic ties since their first meeting in 1527.⁵⁴⁷

Maldonado, meanwhile, faced such united resistance from the Guatemalan *encomenderos* and bishop Marroquín, who had relied on Alvarado's authority above any other, that the unfortunate *oidor* eventually backed down from his enquiries and promised to do only 'whatever was necessary for the pacification of the land and the service of the king'.⁵⁴⁸ Even Montejó ignored the viceroy's attempts at mediation and, taking advantage of Alvarado's absence in Spain, sailed to Puerto Caballos in March of 1537 without the viceroy's blessing from where he proceeded to snatch back the governorship of Honduras, cloaking his actions in the legitimacy of an out-dated royal instruction of 1535 to that effect. Mendoza was left in Mexico City holding a newly arrived royal instruction, with the relevant blanks left for him to appoint the governorships as he saw fit, but which was now obsolete or at best could only confirm events beyond his control. Such episodes serve to illustrate how the combination of entrenched local interests and the expectations of alternative forms of legitimacy in Mesoamerica could be recognised and ratified in Spain; and how these factors combined to undermine the ability of the administration in Mexico City to

⁵⁴⁶ J.M. Vallejo García-Hevia, *Juicio a un conquistador: Pedro de Alvarado* (2 vols), (Madrid, 2008), vol. 1, p. 32.

⁵⁴⁷ J.M. Vallejo García-Hevia *Juicio ...* vol. 1, p.146.

⁵⁴⁸ J.M. Vallejo García-Hevia, *Juicio...* Vol.1, p.35-7.

enforce its authority and sustain its claims to monopolise the enactment of royal will in New Spain by merely promulgating its own paper orders.

This arrangement suited the crown (which was spared a great deal of cost) and certain courtly interests in Spain. It did not sit well with the viceroy's ambitions and self-perception. At first Mendoza could hardly have been able to compete. The viceroy had no access to any patrimonial wealth in New Spain counting only on a yearly salary of 8,000*d* and the services of 60 Mexica every day to provide his household with food, fuel and water for the the palace. Nor could the viceroy automatically dispose of royal income as he wished in the way that the crown could in Spain, in theory having to justify any expenditure from the royal treasury to the officials in Mexico and Spain. In 1537, for instance, during the urgent early competition to stake a claim to Cíbola, Mendoza sought to launch a relatively small reconnaissance expedition costing only an estimated 4,200*d* – 4,800*d*. He could not finance it himself so he was forced to ask the crown to let him fund it from the royal treasury, arguing unconvincingly that the cost could be covered by chasing up tax-evaders. It was an admission that in 1537 Mendoza could not serve his king voluntarily with his person and resources like the magnate he imagined himself to be.⁵⁴⁹

In order to enforce his supremacy over the magnates, Mendoza had to become one himself in practice and to persuade the crown that concentrating powers in his person would serve its interests. Other governors of New Spain had reached the same conclusion in order to attempt to enforce their authority, and in every case their all-too-naked factionalism and heavy-handed redistribution of resources had worked only temporarily. By 1542, through opportunism and political acumen Mendoza managed to centralise power in

⁵⁴⁹ CDI, vol. 2 doc. 162 p.179ff.

his person and by extension the viceregal regime in Mexico City. As we have seen, his methods were 'courtly' and their intention was patrimonial. This intention was the result of personal ambition rather than a bureaucratic design. His instructions to Fr. Marcos de Niza in 1538 already bear out the viceroy's self-perception: 'And although all the land belongs to the emperor, our lord, you will take possession of it in my name for his majesty'.⁵⁵⁰

Mendoza's predicament was not unusual. The Spanish crown underpaid its officials both because the royal purse could not afford to pay them higher salaries (which also explains why it preferred to use wealthy noblemen for the more financially onerous but glorious occupations in the first place) and because there was an expectation that 'an official with a small salary would work all the harder in the hope of eventual *mercedes* and rewards'.⁵⁵¹ From the start Mendoza sought to enrich himself and his allies. Mendoza's household accounts have not been located but he seems to have increased his wealth very rapidly. The viceroy's most important source of wealth came from the various and well known entrepreneurial activities that he engaged in.⁵⁵² By 1542 he had privately funded an expedition led by Niza, had become the largest contributor to Coronado's expedition, lent Alvarado funds in 1541 and had still been able to spend between 20,000*d* and 30,000*d* of his own resources for the campaign against the rebellious Caxcanes and Zacatecos in New Galicia.⁵⁵³ His increasing strength in New Spain confirmed and enhanced his reputation at

⁵⁵⁰ J. López-Portillo y Weber, *La rebelión ...*p.332; and Motolinia *Historia de los Indios...* p.138-140 has a fascinating analysis of this power-struggle from a very Franciscan point of view. It suggests how and why the Franciscan allegiance had switched to Mendoza over the preceding years.

⁵⁵¹ J.H. Elliott *Imperial Spain...* p.180.

⁵⁵² E. Ruiz-Medrano *Reshaping New Spain...*p.116ff.

⁵⁵³ ENE, Doc.236 and VEA, Mendoza, Doc.7.

court as the most reliable and effective conduit for royal authority and matters of exploration or military activity.

The 'second theatre', in Spain, was decisive for the viceroy's ambitions but was more difficult to control or predict than that in New Spain. In early 1537 the crown sent the licenciado Pérez de la Torre to arrest Guzmán and conduct his *residencia*. This undermined the viceroy's first attempt at gaining influence over New Galicia, which he had been attempting to accomplish by allying himself with Guzmán who was in a precarious position and needed the viceroy's support. As an illustration of the viceroy's impotence in the face of royal intervention, Pérez de la Torre burst into the viceroy's palace, where Mendoza had been protecting and honouring Guzmán, his one-time fellow courtier, and threw the governor in jail despite Mendoza's complaints.⁵⁵⁴ Without even consulting the viceroy, moreover, the crown had granted Pérez de la Torre the governorship of New Galicia where he took his large household and retinue. New Galicia, the key province for the promising north-western exploration, had passed from the control of a weakened potential ally to a fully authorised new intimate representative of a faction at the Spanish court that was not Mendoza's own. As Guzmán noted bitterly from prison, it was no coincidence that Pérez de la Torre was from Extremadura, like his enemies Cortés and Fuenleal, whom Guzmán considered to be responsible for orchestrating every coup against him.⁵⁵⁵

In his letter of December 1537, Mendoza openly asked the king to grant him the right to explore Cíbola, in an attempt to pre-empt Pérez de la Torre in the eyes of the court. A

⁵⁵⁴ B. Díaz del Castillo *Conquista...*ch. CXCVIII p.537.

⁵⁵⁵ CDI vol. 2 doc. 107, 13 Feb 1537. Certainly Hernán Cortés had a Bernardo de la Torre as a trusted dependant in Tehuantepec who he put in charge there in December 1539 before sailing to Spain, but his relationship to the lic. De la Torre (who travelled with many family members) is unknown.

letter, however, was not enough to represent the viceroy given the urgency of the situation so it was accompanied by Mendoza's own intimate representative, Juan de Aguilar who would 'explain in person'.⁵⁵⁶ Effective representation at court was an essential element of the stability of the viceroy's authority. This practice continued to hold with Velasco who sent and paid his *criado* Salvago de Guzmán explicitly for the same purpose.⁵⁵⁷ These 'intimate representatives' can be considered as the ambassadors of the viceroys in Spain, those other settlers, Indians or magnates who could not afford them were at a severe disadvantage in presenting their case.

Aguilar in particular was crucial for the court's acceptance of Mendoza's bid for supremacy over exploration. Aguilar successfully negotiated for Coronado, the viceroy's close friend, to be appointed as *visitador* to New Galicia, with powers to suspend de la Torre's administration and conduct a *residencia* of the governor's tenure. The royal *cédula* was promulgated on the 18 April 1539 after de la Torre's death, by which point Mendoza had already managed to convert Coronado into a magnate by giving him the governorship of New Galicia with eleven *encomiendas* to support him, a decision that the crown would also ratify retrospectively.⁵⁵⁸ It is also highly likely that the negotiations that led to the contract between Alvarado and Mendoza in 1541 began at this time in Valladolid during the spring of 1538 between Aguilar and Alvarado, under the auspices of Cobos (with whom Alvarado had associated himself dynastically and economically like the viceroy) and the Council of the Indies. When Alvarado received his new *capitulación* of 16th April 1538 they already

⁵⁵⁶ CDI vol 2 doc. 162 letter of Mendoza 10 December, 1537, p179ff.

⁵⁵⁷ CJV, p.216.

⁵⁵⁸ J. Lopez-Portillo y Weber, *La rebelión...*p.306f.; and R. Himmerich y Valencia *The encomenderos...* p. 257.

included the provision that Mendoza might participate with one third of any expedition Alvarado wished to engage in. Hernán Cortés would be excluded from further exploration despite his titles and offices.

By late summer 1539 Mendoza felt secure enough in his power within New Spain and in the support of the crown to challenge Cortés directly. On the 24 August 1539, presumably very soon after hearing that fr. Marcos de Niza had returned with promising news,⁵⁵⁹ Mendoza ordered that all ships and crews leaving and entering any port along the Pacific Coast should be 'inspected' by his chosen representatives, which effectively gave the viceroy's men the right to sequester the marquess' vessels. Over the next year his agents sequestered the returning ships as they docked along the coastline of New Galicia he now controlled, much as Nuño de Guzmán had done in the early 1530s, and arrested their crews, according to Cortés even torturing some of them for information. Soon after, Mendoza also sent his men to seize Cortés' docks at Tehuantepec. On the 4th of September, the viceroy, supported by the *audiencia*, refused Cortés permission to send a ship with 30 men to rescue Francisco de Ulloa. Legally these actions were debatable to the extent that the crown would overturn them later. But by then it was too late for Cortés to dislodge Mendoza's position in order to regain the initiative in exploration.

Mendoza's confrontation with Cortés had been the most obvious result of the unclear boundaries of authority within the Spanish administration, perhaps because for once there could be no accommodation. López de Gómara commented on the dilemma: 'Cortés and Don Antonio de Mendoza quarrelled bitterly over the expedition to Cíbola, each claiming it

⁵⁵⁹ J.L. Martínez, *Hernán Cortés...* p.733.

as his own by the emperor's order: Don Antonio as viceroy, Cortés as Captain General. They exchanged such words that they were never reconciled, although they had been close friends.⁵⁶⁰ During the urgent struggle to enforce competing rights to exploration, Mendoza's immediate practical power in Mexico City was decisive. Cortés could only try to recreate his own and Alvarado's past success at court by presenting himself there directly.

Within months, Alvarado's fleet was due to sail up the Pacific to New Galicia. Mendoza decided to visit Michoacán and New Galicia ostensibly to see off the expeditions of his household companions Coronado and *maestresala* Hernando de Alarcón; but also, almost certainly, to wait on the shores of the Pacific to finalise the arrangements with Alvarado in person. In its combination of legalistic language and chivalric ceremony the contract between Mendoza and Alvarado exemplifies the complementary dual facets of the signatories as both servants of the crown and patrimonial magnates in their own right. Preliminary negotiations were established in New Spain for the viceroy through his most trusted 'intimate representative' *mayordomo mayor* Guerrero and one of the viceroy's closest allies, Don Luis de Castilla, both of whom went to meet Alvarado at the coast. In late November 1540, the viceroy and the governor met in the town of Tiripitío, Michoacán, the *encomienda* of Pedro de Alvarado's nephew Juan de Alvarado, to finalise and sign the compact. They would cooperate in all future exploration, including the much desired navigation to the 'Spice Isles' and of course in the conquest of Cíbola, sharing the costs and the benefits by halves and excluding all others from participating without their mutual consent. To that end Acapulco would have the monopoly as the point of entry and departure of any ship; the official dry-docks would be in Alvarado's province of Guatemala.

⁵⁶⁰ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés*, p.407 ch. 251.

The captains of the present expeditions would be Alvarado on the one hand, while the viceroy's grandest and most trusted household appointees like Coronado, Alarcón and Tristán de Luna y Arellano would be given their chance of glory by leading the search for Cíbola on the other. Indigenous noblemen that had become beneficiaries and associates of Mendoza and were presumably keen to display their services further, were given the opportunity to participate voluntarily in the expedition as explained by don Juan Tlecanen, the commander of the self-proclaimed Mexica *conquistadores* of Cíbola; they provided most of the manpower.⁵⁶¹ The rest was made up of the many new arrivals that depended on viceregal largess in Mexico City. In a reproduction of the courtly system of confidences that had promoted men like Mendoza himself, these associations provided the best possible hope of controlling the expedition and ensuring its loyalty at a distance; something that had proved difficult for patrons of exploration throughout the early expansion of the Spanish empire.

The compact was in the name of the king and was finalised before his appointed secretaries Juan de León and Diego de Robledo, but the wording of the treaty hardly mentions Charles V and is remarkably patrimonial with regard to the two signatories: the provisions were binding on their heirs for a period of twenty years and as in the instructions of Niza the new lands would be claimed by the signatories personally, in the name of the king. In practice the arrangement was remarkably ambitious. It established that all future Spanish exploration of the Pacific would have to be mediated through Alvarado and Mendoza. The final act in the compact reveals most clearly the spirit in which it was made: before their brother knight of Santiago, don Luis de Castilla, who administered the oath,

⁵⁶¹ See ch.5&6. For Cíbola in particular see J. López-Portillo y Weber, *Rebelión...* p. 365f; AGI Justicia 258 testimony of don Juan Tlacanen.

Mendoza and Alvarado swore to uphold the coalition using the ceremonial of their knightly order. Even the leading ship of the expedition was named the *Santiago*. The witnesses included familiar faces of the viceroy's entourage like Hernán Pérez de Bocanegra as well as Alonso de Maldonado, Peralmíndez Chirinos and Francisco de Marroquín, bishop of Guatemala.⁵⁶² In a royal *cédula* dated 26th of July 1541 the crown ratified the compact retrospectively, with only minor alterations: the Spanish court considered these two men the most trustworthy partners for the crown in the expansion of Habsburg dominion in northern America, the Pacific and Asia, and were willing to grant them and their heirs the concomitant rewards for the risks they were undertaking in the service of the crown.⁵⁶³

By the time the *cédula* was ratified in Spain, however, Don Pedro de Alvarado had become the most famous casualty of the Mixtón war.⁵⁶⁴ With Cortés and other claimants to rights of exploration stuck in Spain and the Montejos bogged down in Yucatán, Mendoza became more dominant than ever before. In Spain, Cortés, Nuño de Guzmán, and even Hernando de Soto, along with representatives from Alvarado, tried to stake their own legal claim to Cíbola. The official reply in May and July invented the legal fiction that Mendoza had commissioned all the voyages of exploration and that anyway it all belonged to the king. Furthermore Cíbola was not in any of their jurisdictions: effectively the crown backed Mendoza.⁵⁶⁵ Alvarado died without leaving an undisputed male heir and Mendoza, who

⁵⁶² J. López-Portillo y Weber *La rebellion...* p.375-381.

⁵⁶³ J.M. Vallejo García-Hevia, *Juicio a un conquistador: Pedro de Alvarado* (2 vols), (Madrid 2008), Vol. 1, pp.500-501, n., 508.

⁵⁶⁴ M. León-Portilla, *La Flecha en el Blanco: Francisco Tenamatztle y Bartolomé de las Casas en la lucha por los derechos de los indígenas 1541-1556*, p.72. The *cabildo* of Mexico City certainly believed that the rebellion could easily spread to the rest of New Spain. See *Actas del Cabildo de la Ciudad de Mexico*, Vol., IV, 'De 1o de Enero de 1536 a 30 de Agosto de 1543, Orozco y Berra eds., (1859) entry for 5th July 1541.

⁵⁶⁵ J.L., Martínez, *Hernán Cortés...* p.732f for a summary.

already controlled New Galicia, immediately tried to make his authority felt in Guatemala, appointing as governor Francisco de La Cueva and then the *oidor* Alonso Maldonado in March 1542, after the citizens of Guatemala had only half obeyed his instruction and appointed as co-governors Alvarado's widow Beatriz de la Cueva herself and then bishop Marroquín to try to defend their autonomy. However, even when in May 1544 the *Audiencia de los Confines* was created by royal order, Maldonado remained its president. Meanwhile Maldonado had married the ageing Montejo's only legitimate daughter, closing another circle of dynastic alliances that bound Yucatán into the viceroy's web of dynastic alliances. No other viceroy would be able to concentrate so much unchallenged power to determine appointments, conduct exploration and political matters over the whole territory claimed under New Spain as Mendoza did between 1541 and 1544. There was no other magnate to compete with the viceroy's authority or resources in New Spain. The legacy of Mendoza's victory would be that all subsequent viceroys added the title of *Captain General of New Spain* to their other honours.

At this juncture Francisco, the viceroy's son, came from Spain to share his father's responsibilities in preparation for his planned succession to the viceroyalty. However, Francisco, later known in Spain as *el indio*, would never inherit the title of viceroy or be given any formal responsibilities in the Americas after his return to Spain in 1552. It is important to note that this developed out of patrimonial interests and the accident of political competition rather than any bureaucratic design. The viceroy's political triumph in New Spain coincided with changes at court in Spain that, combined with the disappointment of the actual expeditions to Cíbola, led to concerns about the benefits of Mendoza's unchallenged power to the interests of the crown.

Changes at court in Spain beyond the viceroy's control had a determinant impact on how his activities were perceived. Queen Isabella, often Charles V's regent, who had expressed such personal confidence in Mendoza and animosity towards Cortés, died in 1540.⁵⁶⁶ That same year, Cortés returned to Spain seeking revenge against Mendoza. He followed the itinerant court, dispensed largesse to members of the council and gained some access to prince Philip's circle, which, thanks to Hernán's efforts came to include his young son and heir Martín.⁵⁶⁷ Most importantly, the hegemony of Cobos began to decline after 1543 when prince Philip was made regent of Spain with Gonzalo Pérez as his favourite, bringing new preferences to the court and new subjective criteria for judging the actions of the crown's representatives.⁵⁶⁸ Even the appointment of Mendoza's brother to preside over the Council of the Indies may have been a qualified advantage as the two had quarrelled in the past over their father's affections and then his inheritance, with don Luis de Mendoza even gossiping that his brother's great height must have been the result of illegitimate birth.⁵⁶⁹

Unfortunately for Mendoza this change at court coincided with devastating news regarding of his ventures of exploration. Cíbola turned out to be an illusion which discredited Coronado, and the viceroy by association. Many of the resources originally

⁵⁶⁶ A.S. Aiton *Antonio de Mendoza: First Viceroy of New Spain* (Duke 1927), For her personal endorsement of Mendoza as viceroy VEA, 'Mendoza', Doc. 4; B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista de la Nueva España*, J. Ramírez Cabañas intro. (Mexico 1974), p.526.

⁵⁶⁷ J.L. Martínez, *Hernán Cortés...ch.XXII passim*. Martín Cortés would grow up at court and become close enough to Philip II to attend his wedding to Mary Tudor in England; Juan Suárez de Peralta *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias*, Silva Tena ed., (Mexico, 1990), p.143.

⁵⁶⁸ M.J. Sarabia-Viejo, 'El príncipe Felipe y la nueva sociedad novohispana (1548-1558)' in *Felipe II y el oficio de Rey: la fragua de un imperio*, J.R. Gutiérrez, E. Martínez Ruíz, J. González Rodríguez, coord.. (Madrid, 2002), p.355f.

⁵⁶⁹ G. Vázquez, *Antonio de Mendoza* (Madrid, 1987), pp.19-20.

allocated to exploration had to be diverted to fighting the Mixtón rebels, delaying the search for access to Asia and the Philippines. The maritime expeditions that took place along the coast of California and to the Philippines were remarkable nautical feats that produced few tangible results, especially as the latter failed to find a means of returning to New Spain across the Pacific and led to embarrassing conflicts with the Portuguese. All of these were viewed by the less sympathetic court as the ills and 'inconveniences' of Mendoza's uncontested power. The viceroy and his regime began to lose credibility.

At the same time the moral self-questioning of the Spanish imperial mission that Las Casas had reignited made the ambitions of freelance conquerors and explorers increasingly suspect to the new sensibilities of the crown. Mendoza's successful repression of the Mixtón rebels and the association of the rebellion with Coronado's expedition were not seen in the favourable light in which past conquests had been regarded. In this context the New Laws were to be promulgated by specially commissioned judges: under Cortés' recommendation and promotion, the crown sent *visitador* Francisco Tello de Sandoval with full powers to investigate Mendoza's administration.

In Spain '...When one wanted to overthrow a *valido* or a patron, he was accused of corruption, and the monarch was incited into organising a *visita* of the body controlled by said person... The true purpose of *visitas* was not to cure the administration, as we might say nowadays, but to change the group holding government power.'⁵⁷⁰ In New Spain, visiting judges like Tello de Sandoval or Valderrama in the case of Velasco, were particularly effective because they acted like lightning rods for discontent and offered a chance for the

⁵⁷⁰ J. Martínez Millán, *Instituciones y élites de poder en la monarquía hispana durante el siglo XVI*, (Madrid, 1992), p. 20.

opportunistic advancement of individuals. They represented direct and accessible royal justice, unimpeded by any established power-structures *in situ*. Tello de Sandoval occasioned a political crisis in Mendoza's administration because the mere action of investigating Mendoza showed royal displeasure and dishonoured the viceroy, undermining his authority.⁵⁷¹ Royal officials like Sosa and Albornoz and most seriously the *audiencia* no longer uniformly cooperated with Mendoza: 'because that black ambition to command meant that each *oidor* wished to be the most powerful and they devoted themselves to gaining friends rather than dispensing justice. Then there began discords amongst them that survive to this day.'⁵⁷²

Mendoza's network of representatives at court still included Aguilar and Rodrigo Arias Mansilla who had gone from Mexico years previously. They were now joined by Agustín Guerrero as the viceroy's most recent attorney, sent specifically in the wake of this crisis.⁵⁷³ There they were supported by the viceroy's brothers, in particular Luis and a nephew, who now rallied around their dynastic honour. They managed to have Tello de Sandoval recalled and discredited and his accusations were thrown out before they came to trial. Mendoza re-established his authority in Mexico City, whose friars, residents and officials supported his campaign to have Francisco succeed him as viceroy. However, Mendoza never again convinced the crown that his personal style of government and the power he had accumulated suited its interests. Coronado was deposed from his governorship and the title suppressed. An *audiencia* was appointed instead by the crown in 1548 and the precedent,

⁵⁷¹ A.S.Aiton, *Antonio de Mendoza: First Viceroy of New Spain* (Duke 1927), p.166 n.62.

⁵⁷² VEA, Mendoza, Doc. 6.

⁵⁷³ AGI Justicia 277 'recusación', no.7.

whereby the viceroy in Mexico City appointed the highest authorities of New Galicia, was undone. The same held true for Alvarado's governorship in Guatemala.

In a strange parallel to Cortés a last opportunity of glory arose when news of Gonzalo Pizarro's initially successful rebellion in Peru gave the viceroy the prospect of organising a large and well equipped expedition under the command of his son. Even before it set sail, however, news came of Pizarro's defeat and the Mendozas of New Spain were denied their chance of being hailed as the saviours of royal authority in Peru. Finally Mendoza was appointed to govern Peru instead. Despite effectively governing New Spain for most of 1549 his son Francisco would not inherit the viceroyalty or ever again be granted authority in the Americas. Mendoza's older brother Luis was forced to warn the viceroy to stop promoting the idea of a hereditary viceroyalty because it was believed in Spain that he wanted to rise up with the land against the crown. He urged him to make the journey to Peru 'even if only your bones get there' for the sake of the Mendoza family honour.⁵⁷⁴ The notion of the viceroy as only a servant of the crown rather than an autonomous dynastic junior partner in the manner of a titled lord reasserted itself in 1550: political accident, not bureaucratic intention that provoked it. Ironically the crown would not have found it so easy to impose its new doctrine if Mendoza had not tamed the magnates in the first place.

The failure of the Mendozan patrimonial project contributed to the decline of traditional, royally-sanctioned lordship as the aim that the Spanish settlers of New Spain sought. The crown's reaction to Mendoza's concentration of power and the perceived causes of Spanish abuses towards the native population, was to try to emphasise the

⁵⁷⁴ J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado...*p.154-5 with F, Escudero Buendía *Don Francisco de Mendoza...*ch.VI *passim*.

absolute supremacy of the crown by limiting the agency and practice of government through magnates as patrons in their own right, in favour of authorising salaried officials and judges with no other patron than the crown.⁵⁷⁵ Concomitant changes were taking place at court in Spain where individual patrons no longer aspired to exert control over and benefit from the Spanish expansion in the Americas through their courtly networks of patronage like Fonseca and Cobos had done. After 1550 the rents that the Cobos family had enjoyed from the royal hacienda in Mexico were taken away by royal decree.⁵⁷⁶

Nevertheless the viceregal title, with all its ambiguities, was not supplanted. Velasco was chosen like Mendoza because he was a trusted and successful nobleman-courtier rather than a bureaucrat or expert; and he travelled to New Spain with a large household in the manner of the great magnate he also considered himself to be. Although the expression of power in New Spain became less lordly, it remained patrimonial: Velasco's ambitions and the logic he had to follow to exercise his power within New Spain meant that in practice his regime continued to combine his patrimonial and patronal interests with the discharge of his duties.

Velasco did not have to compete with magnates who combined both the degree of power in New Spain and the networks of support in Spain that Mendoza faced, until the end of his tenure. Only the *marquesado* remained an enormous centre of alternative patronage beyond Velasco's immediate control. The marquess was in Spain but the viceroy was

⁵⁷⁵ VEA, 'Velasco', Doc. I

⁵⁷⁶ M.J. Sarabia Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco...*p.79.

concerned enough to recommend to Philip II that the estate be deprived of the strategically sensitive possessions in Tehuantepec, Oaxaca and Cuilapa in 1554 and again in 1560.⁵⁷⁷

Mendoza's qualified success in monopolising exploration by 1542 established a norm and an ambition for subsequent viceroys, embodied in the addition of the title of Captain-General for Velasco to the other titles that Mendoza had also possessed. As importantly Velasco found it easier to access the funds of the royal treasury to finance his expeditions. In early 1564 Valderrama complained, for instance, that the planned expedition to the Philippines had taken seven years to plan with a cost of over 350,000*d* even before setting sail 'It seems that money is spent with no purpose'.⁵⁷⁸ All of this would still redound to Velasco's favour in New Spain as the organiser of the expedition and the patron responsible for the monetary distribution implicit in its funding, as well as the appointments of its leaders.

On the other hand Mendoza's centralisation of power and patrimonial attitude to his office had also frightened the crown and prompted it to separate New Galicia and Guatemala from viceregal control through the appointment of autonomous governors and other officials there. New *audiencias* were established in those provinces to replace the governors that Mendoza had appointed. Authority over the outlying provinces of greater New Spain, which were the natural bases for exploration or military campaigns, was once again fractured and disputed.

⁵⁷⁷ B. García Martínez, *El Marquesado del Valle, tres siglos de régimen señorial en Nueva España*, (Mexico 1969), p.74.

⁵⁷⁸ CJV, p.143.

Velasco inherited the notion of launching expeditions to Florida and the Philippines from Mendoza as well as the drive to exploit and pacify the untamed north-west frontier. This last became particularly pressing after the discovery of silver deposits at Zacatecas in 1548 which required safe passage for settlers and provisions there and the cargoes of silver back. A more entrepreneurial than lordly illusion of Cíbola remained in the search for the rich silver mines of the etymologically related Copala. Velasco had to compete for control of this on-going military and colonising venture with the enthusiasm of Spanish entrepreneurs eager to explore and exploit new deposits further north in the 'Chichimeca frontier' and with the authorities of New Galicia.

Silver remittances to Spain and the royal fifth were increasingly appreciated by the bankrupt Spanish crown and the most successful miners were rapidly becoming the wealthiest men in New Spain. The most profitable mines had been discovered to the north of New Galicia and the mountains there promised even more silver, giving the frontier a renewed importance. The various semi-nomadic indigenous peoples in this 'chichimeca' frontier resisted the encroachments of the Spaniards and profited by raiding their convoys as they marched to and from the isolated mining settlements. Both the viceroy and the *audiencia* of New Galicia vied to pacify the land in order to exert some control over it. Despite the viceroy's capacity as *Captain-General*, both the *audiencia* of Mexico City and that of New Galicia had organised their own expeditions to the area, in the case of New Galicia at one point in alliance with Juan de Sámano, steward of the *marquesado*, and with

the visiting judge Pedro de Morones.⁵⁷⁹ This exacerbated previous tensions between the viceroy and the *audiencia* over conflicting rights to appoint offices in New Galicia.⁵⁸⁰

Ibarra capital funded the expeditions of Francisco de Ibarra, a page at the viceregal court since 1550, to search for Copala while the viceroy provided the necessary political legitimacy and support to establish his governorship over what the viceroy designated as a separate kingdom of New Vizcaya, to the fury of the authorities in New Galicia who claimed the territory as their own.⁵⁸¹ The success of this venture allowed the viceroy to reclaim authority over expeditions to the *chchimeca frontier*. It also provided an opportunity for Velasco to recreate the political control that Mendoza had been able to assert over New Galicia with the elevation of Coronado by creating a governorship for Francisco de Ibarra. All of this enhanced Velasco's authority in the eyes of the settlers of New Galicia who were not all convinced partisans of their *audiencia*.

Velasco's control of the legitimising organs in Mexico City, where many of the silver-miners chose to live, was essential for authority over northern exploration. It allowed Velasco for example to dispatch *visitas*, such as that conducted by Lebrón de Quiñones, to try to intimidate the authorities of New Galicia in 1554. Control of New Galicia and the North-West remained important. Part of the political reorganisation of New Spain that Martín Cortés proposed to the king involved the recommendation that the expensive and

⁵⁷⁹ M.J. Sarabia-Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco...*p.458. P.W. Powell *La guerra Chichimeca (1550-1600)*, (Mexico 1996), p.100f.

⁵⁸⁰ J.H. Parry *The Audiencia of New Galicia...*p.53f and p.70ff and Ma. Justina Sarabia-Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco...*pp. 32-35.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid* 458-460. and J.H. Parry *The Audiencia of New Galicia: A Study In Spanish Colonial Government* (Cambridge 1948), p.88ff.

querulous *audiencia* of New Galicia should be eliminated in favour of appointing Martín Cortés '*el mestizo*' as governor 'for being an old *criado* of your majesty's and his father's son and my brother'.⁵⁸² The struggles for territorial control of the area nominally claimed as New Spain continued under different guises through the wars of independence at least into independent Mexico's disputes between centralisers and federalists. In our period they resulted in hardening relations of power between the many officials that shared parallel authority from the crown.

Conclusion

Viceroyalties under the Habsburgs would never become hereditary as Mendoza hoped. The more important legacy for the continuity of viceregal authority was not patrimonial or institutional aggrandisement of their offices, but came instead from the direct relationship that both viceroys established towards key elements of the indigenous elite as well as the preponderance of both viceroys' family and closest allies who fused and were promoted to the top of New Spain's Spanish society over this period. The interrelations between these elites and viceregal power sustained the viceroys' legacy and entrenched the principle of viceregal supremacy, particularly in the turbulent years after Velasco's death. Velasco's more subtle methods of self-presentation, more in tune with the ethos of his times, brought him closer to achieving the aim of perpetuating his dynasty's success than Mendoza: Velasco died in Mexico City and his son returned to govern New Spain on two separate occasions before he was finally rewarded for his services with a coveted marquessate in Spain at the end of his life in 1617. Less than a year earlier, however, Philip III granted the first title to a *criollo* in Mexico: the Count of Santiago de

⁵⁸² CJV, p.338.

Calimaya who carried both Mendoza and Velasco blood, as well as descending from don Luis de Castilla and even from a cousin of Hernán Cortés.⁵⁸³

⁵⁸³ J.I. Rubio-Mañé *El Virreinato...*p.229.

Chapter 7: 'Another Jerusalem'

New Spain's inhabitants, natives and newcomers alike, were addicted to political debate throughout our period. 'This is true of people in every station,' Mendoza wrote to his successor in 1550, 'that they have an opinion about issues that are not their own rather than their own business. But above all they concern themselves with the government of the land. They especially love to change and judge everything that is done in it... Everyone is from somewhere different and they want to have this land governed according to the tradition of their own land and nation'. He went on to explain, that this concern with politics was a reflection of practical competition for advantage within New Spain: 'their only criteria are their own aims and their own interests and ideas'. Nor could his successor expect to be able to dictate matters to them easily: 'But if ever those in charge try to contradict them or explain otherwise, they immediately complain, call him arrogant etc. and say his plans will end in doom.'⁵⁸⁴

Contrary to the accepted view of New Spain, the indigenous and Spanish elites including the viceroy, the *visitadores* and other administrators, felt that they were free participants in shaping political arrangements, not unreflective bureaucrats or impassive servile subjects. The crown formalised the norms encouraging the participation of its principal subjects in America with a *cédula* in 1558: 'those who are from the Indies and live there... [are to] give account to our viceroys and *audiencias* of events and on what they

⁵⁸⁴ VEA Mendoza, Doc. 5 'todo estado de gente'.

think should best be implemented for the good government of those lands and of the grievances they might know about that are committed against the Indians...'⁵⁸⁵

The opinions expressed in this participatory debate mattered to the formulation of royal policy. 'In 15 years of service', complained Mendoza after he had been forced to leave New Spain for Peru in 1551, 'the manner of government has been altered three times, each so different from the other that one has been opposite to the other.'⁵⁸⁶ Bernal Díaz del Castillo agreed: 'in this way we go on like a lame mule from bad to worse; from one viceroy to another and from governor to governor.'⁵⁸⁷ In 1564 even the future of viceregal government was in doubt for the second time in thirty years and from then until 1568 the new viceroy was deposed and two *audiencias* governed New Spain. Royal legislation developed in an ad hoc manner, often in response to these debates and was consequently often overlapping or contradictory.⁵⁸⁸ The many changes in administrators and royal policy are evidence of the vitality of the political discourse and the receptivity of the royal audience to the participation of its American subjects. Confusion about who properly embodied royal authority and the consequent uncertainty as to what constituted political legitimacy meant that the language of debate reverted to matters of principle.

⁵⁸⁵ *Provisiones Cédulas Instrucciones para el gobierno de la Nueva España por el doctor Vasco de Puga* Colección de incunables Americanos vol. III (Madrid 1945) Fo.204.

⁵⁸⁶ VEA 'Mendoza', Doc.6

⁵⁸⁷ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista de la Nueva España*, J. Ramírez Cabañas intro. (Mexico 1974), p.589

⁵⁸⁸ See ch.8.

Language of legitimacy: Influencing policy

Oidor Tejada wrote to the Duke of Mondéjar explaining that Tello de Sandoval's true motivation was that he 'had ill-will towards the viceroy and wanted him thrown out of his offices and government, and what is worse to take away his reputation by making him out to be a tyrant', in the hope of taking over the government of New Spain himself.⁵⁸⁹ Linguistic codes were adopted as rhetorical devices designed to affect royal policy in favour of a particular agenda. Themes of liberty, tyranny, suffering and civic service became the most common rhetorical ideals used to underscore particular arguments. The way in which they were used illustrates the benchmarks of the common 'language of legitimacy' of New Spain.

Liberty and Tyranny

Liberty was expressed, at first glance paradoxically, in conjunction with the insistence by Indians and Spaniards that they were the king's *criados* and loyal *vasallos*. These were reassuring statements to both the petitioner and the king. They suggested fidelity and the intention of acting for the good of the king. They also signified the ideal of direct unfettered access to the sovereign fount of legitimacy with a household familiarity unimpeded by intermediaries. It was a presumption that most Spanish settlers would not have entertained if they had stayed in Spain.⁵⁹⁰

This liberty through proximity implied an enfranchisement that came as a result of royal recognition of an individual's status as a member of the 'small political nation' who

⁵⁸⁹ ENE, Vol.5, Doc 260.

⁵⁹⁰ N.R. Porro Girardi 'Los criados en las indias del Quinientos: del Servicio privado a la funcion publica', in *XI congreso del instituto Internacional de Historia del Derecho Indiano*, Buenos Aires, instituto de investigaciones de historia del derecho, 1997, IV, 91-123.

had the king's ear and his confidence in council.⁵⁹¹ Jerónimo López was proud that the king had asked for his advice: 'continuing the command your majesty gave me, to always write to your majesty from these parts and to inform your majesty of whatever I deemed convenient for the royal service of your majesty that you should be informed.'⁵⁹² In 1562, royal officials hoped that the king would read their letters and answer them because: 'as faithful *criados* of your majesty we wish to accomplish correctly your royal will in everything.'⁵⁹³ Díaz del Castillo hoped that his insistence on recounting the voluntary years of suffering in service to the crown in conquest and administration⁵⁹⁴ demonstrated his virtuous liberty and lent credence to his bluff assertions of speaking 'muy verdaderisimamente' (very extremely truthfully). In his view this virtue should also have allowed him his 'ardent ambition to serve the king in your own household as a true and humble *criado*.'⁵⁹⁵ It is clear he did not necessarily expect to move to Spain and to live in the royal household, but to be considered as having a direct personal and vassalic connection to the king like a trusted friend and advisor.

This vocabulary of liberty as enfranchisement was taken up by the indigenous lords to assert their autonomy and seek the king's protection for their status. The Indian *cabildo* of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, for example, also appealed to the king as 'the fount of our

⁵⁹¹ A useful term from Fernández-Armesto used in the context of the nobility and town councils of Castile, in, *Spain a history* R. Carr, ed., (Oxford 2000) p.122.

⁵⁹² ENE Doc.220 Vol.IV, p.64 Jerónimo Lopez to Charles V, 25th October 1543.

⁵⁹³ AGI, Gobierno, Mexico,323 Royal Officials April 1562 (c.6th bound collection of letters).

⁵⁹⁴ E.g. B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista* p.594f., claimed to have fought in no less than 119 battles. In terms of the emphasis on administrative merit, Bernal had been made amongst other things *visitador* of Guazacualco and Tabasco and had served as *regidor* in the *cabildo* of Santiago de los Caballeros amongst other services, p.615ff.

⁵⁹⁵ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista...* p.640.

protection' and they begged him to obviate a plan to 'take away our right to administer justice in our republic and give it to Spaniards... so that we would remain perpetual slaves deprived of our ancient and natural jurisdiction'. After the intercession of the Franciscans, the viceroy had intervened in their favour but they explicitly wanted to reaffirm their link with the king's grace and legitimacy: 'that the attempt to take away our administration of our republic should have no effect whatsoever. If there is concern over our ability [as administrators] then give us just laws that are necessary for the good of our republic and if we don't match up to implementing them, then punish us but don't deprive our successors of their lordship. And if our loyalty is in question then here and now we render homage in our name and that of our descendants.'⁵⁹⁶

The various political settlements after the conquest had left many unresolved tensions amongst the indigenous polities and competition raged between indigenous rivals. In a letter composed in such fluent Latin and with such classical concepts that it could have been understood by Cicero as well as Charles V, don Antonio Cortés Totoquiuhaztli reserved the most rancorous phrases to attack doña Isabel Motecuhzoma over her insistence on tributary rights of a region claimed by Tacuba 'who although was of our blood and fatherland, nevertheless proved so alien to common humanity that instead of the natural piety and love with which people of a common land are to be held, she exerted her tyranny (tyrannidem exercuerit) and us, who were born of famous and noble fathers, she held back in a place of slaves (servorum tenuerit).'⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁶ *La nobleza indígena del centro de México después de la conquista*. E. Pérez Rocha & R. Tena eds. (Mexico, 2000).doc. 17, p.195.

⁵⁹⁷ *La Nobleza Indígena...* p.169.

Jerónimo López, does not seem to have understood Latin and he felt threatened by the greater enfranchisement that indigenous education afforded them; he felt it bred in them a new self-confidence and even arrogance towards the Spaniards that was dangerous⁵⁹⁸. López noted that since the promulgation of the New Laws 'which they have translated in their own tongue' the indigenous lords had felt vindicated in their attacks on the *encomenderos* because it seemed that even the king did not recognise their claims: '[the friars] tell them that they are so free that even if they rebel the king will not enslave them. All the towns now come and complain about their *encomenderos* and bring suits against those who they used to see as fathers and now see as enemies.'⁵⁹⁹ López believed that the natural order in New Spain would have been to follow the precedent of Mexica lordship over Mesoamerica with the *conquistadores* as the heirs to Motecuhzoma's lords. Instead their legitimacy was undermined by the friars who exposed them: 'they used to acknowledge [that the Spaniards were lords] and they did so because that had been their custom but they were told by the friars that we were not lords but macehuales, which means common people and that the lords remained in Spain.'⁶⁰⁰ Worse still, by teaching them Latin some Indians had learnt about the Spaniards' own pagan past and their submission to the Romans but 'that we were converted to Christianity and rose in arms and rebelled' against the unrighteous Romans. Indigenous knowledge of Spanish alerted them to the wars in Europe the petty squabbles and unrighteousness of the Spaniards.⁶⁰¹ This

⁵⁹⁸ ENE, Tomo IV, doc.233.

⁵⁹⁹ C C. Pérez de Bustamante, *Los orígenes del gobierno virreinal en las Indias Españolas – Don Antonio de Mendoza primer virrey de la Nueva España. (1535-1550)* (Santiago, 1928), doc. XIX..

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰¹ ENE, Vol.IV, doc.236

subversion of natural order in New Spain, caused by undermining of the Spanish elite, López argued, made the land difficult to govern and posed a threat of rebellion.

Many debates in this period related in practice to competition for local authority between indigenous lords and Spanish settlers. The former, often in conjunction with their mendicant allies, became adept at presenting the illegitimate power of their Spanish rivals, especially the *encomenderos* who were ‘competitors of the provincial [indigenous] authorities and clergy in the pursuit of local influence’ and tribute. Indigenous depictions of *encomenderos* showed them as violent tyrants, oppressing indigenous communities violently or cheating them of their land: Gonzalo de Salazar for instance was named and depicted memorably holding the decapitated head of an Indian along with horrors performed by other *encomenderos* or their slavish, occasionally African, dependents who administered the collection of tribute more directly.⁶⁰² The *principales* of Xilotepec were equally keen to list the names of all the Spaniards whose cattle invaded their community’s agricultural plots.⁶⁰³

After his surrender and deportation to Spain, don Francisco Tenamaztle, a prominent Caxcan rebel leader of the Mixtón uprising became a *cause célèbre* in Spain after arriving during an intensification of the debate surrounding perpetual *encomienda* that occurred during the mid-1550s. In a remarkable letter co-written in Spain in 1555 by Las Casas and Tenamaztle, the latter presented himself as a truer vassal of the king than the tyrannical Spanish *encomenderos* of New Galicia like the much lionised Cristóbal de Oñate and Miguel

⁶⁰² S. Wood *Transcending Conquest: Nahua Views Of Spanish Colonial Mexico*. (Oklahoma, 2003), p.45

⁶⁰³ AGI Audiencia de Mexico 96 ‘Cartas y expedientes de personas seculares 1545-1559’ letter of the ‘principales de Jilotepec’ 1551.

de Ibarra. Tenamastle admitted he had risen in arms against bullies and tyrants but: 'This natural act of fleeing and defending oneself... the Spaniards call and have always called, abusing such language throughout the Indies, 'rising against the king''.⁶⁰⁴ The implication was that while Tenamastle's actions were natural, those of the *encomenderos* were a tyrannical offence against royal justice even when they used force to suppress the rebellion.

The assertions of liberty that led to the enfranchisement of the Indians were dangerous to the interests of *encomenderos* like López because many of the justifications for subjecting them had to do with their unrighteousness and, specifically, the supposed offences against natural law that deprived them of its protection. To try to undermine their claims, the Indians were constantly accused of sensual slavishness; the lack of rational self-discipline had long formed part of the accepted flaws of the barbarian or the tyrant and consequently excluded both from the protection of the law.

It is in this context of competition for legitimacy that the many accusations of drunkenness, listlessness, laziness, heterosexual and homosexual lasciviousness levelled against the Indians should be interpreted.⁶⁰⁵ These moral flaws also lent credence to Spanish accusations that the indigenous lords tyrannised and abused their vassals and that it was only because their mendicant allies profited from this that they defended them. This became the main theme that Valderrama developed during his three years as *visitador*: for example 'most of the lands that the *principales* hold are usurped... and because the

⁶⁰⁴ M. León-Portilla, *La Flecha en el Blanco : Francisco Tenamaztle y Bartolomé de las Casas en la lucha por los derechos de los indígenas 1541-1556*. (Mexico, 1996), p.33.

⁶⁰⁵ D. Luper, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Michigan, 2003), p.304.

principals were stronger and were favoured by the friars they usurped many [more] lands'.⁶⁰⁶

Status-linked liberty was nervously defended and invoked in the political debates of New Spain. Mendoza warned his successor that 'the Spaniards [in Mexico] are docile and eager to please their governors so long as they are treated respectfully.'⁶⁰⁷ Fifteen years later, Suárez de Peralta believed that one reason why Martín Cortés lost the support of the inhabitants of New Spain was that he did not treat them as equals.⁶⁰⁸

The prominence of concepts of liberty meant that they were often appealed to for political motives. Vázquez de Tapia had been instrumental in discrediting Cortés as a tyrant during a judicial proceeding in the early 1520s.⁶⁰⁹ In 1544, he felt aggrieved because Mendoza had not granted him the rewards that he considered that he merited, in particular a licence to donate his *encomienda* to a *mestiza* daughter as her dowry, whereas the viceroy had allowed this in the case of Juan Guerrero's wife. He also objected to the viceroy's degradation of the autonomous authority of the *cabildo* of Mexico City, the political arena that Vázquez de Tapia had devoted himself to and dominated for over a decade, and which provided him with his social prestige and political influence.⁶¹⁰ In short, Vázquez de Tapia felt excluded and harassed by the viceregal regime despite his wealth, nobility and prominence in Mexico City. Neither he nor his closest allies had gained the viceroy's favour

⁶⁰⁶ CJV, p.68-9f

⁶⁰⁷ VEA 'Mendoza', Doc.5 '16'.

⁶⁰⁸ J. Suárez de Peralta, *Tratado...*p.174.

⁶⁰⁹ J.L. Martínez *Hernán Cortés* (Mexico 1990), p.543f.

⁶¹⁰ R. Himmerich y Valencia *The Encomenderos of New Spain,1521-1555* (Austin, 1996), p.71.

and relative to those others, who were mostly not even conquistadores like himself, he had not benefitted from the administration or seemed to have many prospects of prospering in the future if Mendoza remained in charge. Unlike other men of similar wealth and standing, Vázquez de Tapia had an interest in denigrating the viceroy's authority even if it only meant forcing Mendoza to redress his grievances. His best opportunity came during Tello de Sandoval's *visita* of Mendoza's administration.

Visitas of the viceregal regime became the most obvious crucibles of legitimacy because they brought a cheaper and more direct representation of Spain's royal judgement face to face with the internal logic of the internal political arrangements of New Spain. The *visitas* were launched from Spain and acted as agencies of political reform and a means of judicial supervision by the distant monarchy.⁶¹¹ Simultaneously they provided a forum for the inhabitants of New Spain to present their political projects, criticise the viceregal regime or support it, and undermine rivals or support allies within New Spain. As such the *visitas* combined a discussion between the viceregal regime and the crown with internal debates about political arrangements that had developed within New Spain and competition for status. They provide the most accessible evidence of the beliefs, rhetorical norms and political divisions of the period.

Criticism of the viceroys during the *visitas* aimed at disqualifying them from the right to hold their office by demonstrating their unworthiness for such responsibilities, or merely to exert pressure on the viceroys to recognise the particular claims or their accusers. As Mendoza warned his successor, accusations of 'arrogance' were used to undermine the

⁶¹¹ J. Martínez Millán (ed). *Instituciones y elites de poder en la monarquía Hispánica durante el siglo XVI*, (Madrid 1992) p.20.

viceroys' political arrangements. 'Arrogance', was the fundamental attribute of the 'tyrannical man' from classical notions of *hubris* to the biblical unrighteousness of self-regarding rebels from Lucifer to Absalom. Tyranny was the hallowed expression for the antithesis to legitimate power and consequently a form of rebellion against the king and his justice. The first consequence of tyranny was the destruction of the liberty and therefore the virtue and consequently the worth as royal servants of those subjected to the tyrant's whim. Tyranny acquired particular resonance in political discourse because it played on the crown's fear of losing control of New Spain and secondly because it was a means of invalidating not only the legitimacy of the accused but also, by association, all of his political arrangements. These last could include, by association, the royal legislation that the viceroys had promoted or implemented. Attacking the viceroys became a useful foil for political objectives within New Spain and as a means of criticising royal legislation without seeming disloyal to the crown: presenting themselves instead as truly worthy free men willing to stand up to the threats of tyrants in service of the king. By pointing out the faults in viceregal government, aggrieved parties that had been excluded from viceregal favour could hope to stake a claim to the rewards that had been denied them or even to reverse or modify structures of power or royal commands.

In a prologue to his testimony to Tello de Sandoval, Vázquez de Tapia summarised the link between what he wished to portray as Mendoza's tyrannous excesses and how they suffocated the liberties of the inhabitants of New Spain to the detriment of the king's ability to govern.⁶¹² He began with the notion that New Spain's remoteness from Spain was a negative attribute 'because your majesty is in lands that are so different and distant from

⁶¹² AGI Justicia 258, testimony of Bernaldino Vázquez de Tapia, 17 May.

this one, the people who govern are absolute lords'. Distance kept her inhabitants from recourse to the safety of true royal grace and absolved her masters from the need to worry about upholding royal justice: Power, absolved from grace and justice, led, according to humanist aetiology, to tyrannous abuses, particularly if the individual was morally corrupt. '[A]nd they cause grievances to the citizens (*vecinos*) and because the remedy is so distant, the citizens suffer it and don't dare to complain, if they did, having already received a grievance or bad deed they would then [by complaining] receive many others'. I have translated the term 'vecino' as 'citizen' because it signified the participation of 'free men' in the vocabulary of the municipal entities that composed the basic blocks of Iberian political organisation:⁶¹³ free men who should have been protected from tyrannous abuses by royal justice and allowed to participate freely in the political nation. Instead these citizens were reduced to the condition of dependence on the whim and caprice of the passions of the viceroy and *oidores*: '...And because they have so much power, if one of those that govern has a particular hatred or indignation against a citizen, he can destroy him under the pretence of doing justice and this is a great charge on the conscience of your majesty...' Terms like 'hatred (*odio*)' and 'indignation (*indignación*)' aimed to imply that the viceroy was morally corrupt because he was himself a slave to his passions and self-love where a governor should be 'serene' and rational to be truly free and trustworthy. A viceroy should represent the will of the king rather than his own wilfulness.

Fear of such inherently unjust irrationality in those that held 'absolute' power drove the citizens down the well-known progression from dependence to fearful slavishness: 'There is no-one who doesn't fear speaking out against [the governors] to avoid making

⁶¹³ See ch.2 and H. Nader 'The Spain that encountered Mexico' in M.C. Meyer and W. Beazley eds., *Oxford History of Mexico*, (Oxford 2000).

them angry, so your majesty can guess who will dare testify or tell the truth in something that will prejudice them.’ Self-censorship, caused by fear of retribution was yet another recognised template that indicated the loss of liberty: an un-free individual’s words and actions were no longer trustworthy because they were conditioned by his emotion of fear at the retribution of his master and he consequently lost the virtue that justified his participation as a citizen. Vázquez de Tapia and others were careful to point out that they had only testified after much fearful soul-searching and guarantees from the *visitador*. The implication was that the king’s attempts at finding the truth or guaranteeing justice through his *visitas* or any other means would not prosper unless the ‘tyrants’ were removed from office first.

By extension, the king could not govern New Spain justly if he relied on ‘tyrants’ to administer it. However, ‘they have many tools with which to [oppress the citizens] as a result of the ordinances regarding those that have Indians in *encomienda* or who have mines and other enterprises.’ Vázquez de Tapia could not place all the blame on the viceroy because he was not the author of the hated royal legislation against *encomienda*. These had been promulgated along with Tello de Sandoval’s *visita* and were another target of settler opposition. By associating the viceroy with tyrannical use of bad laws he hoped to discredit both in the eyes of the king and thus influence royal policy.

Corruption was the final confirmation of the viceroy’s unreliability as a royal representative because it demonstrated once again the supremacy of his personal ambition over royal justice and true service to the king: ‘Furthermore those that are his friends he favours and makes rich as is public and well known.’ The enrichment of officials was generally accepted in Spain, but the implication of corruption in these allegations made

obvious the allegation that the viceroy served personal interests rather than those of the commonwealth or the crown. In other words his promotion of trusted associates was not beneficial to the king and commonwealth, in the way that royal appointments of trusted courtiers could be, but only to Mendoza.

The vast majority of the 117 questions Tello de Sandoval posed to each one of his witnesses attempt to establish tyrannous or corrupt attributes that could be pegged to the the viceroy and the *oidores*. These included unjustified favouritism towards certain individuals, their self-interest and their unwillingness to implement royal instructions and legislation.⁶¹⁴ Apart from discrediting the viceroy the hostile witnesses could use the opportunity to name and disqualify those individuals on whom the viceroy had bestowed the greatest favour.⁶¹⁵ They were portrayed as unworthy in different respects: in relation to the requirements for office and rewards stipulated in royal legislation, (such as not being married or being too young or too recently arrived); for cruelty to their charges; for violence towards other Spaniards or abuse of their women; for slavish subservience to the viceroy rather than the true service of the king.

Spaniards in New Spain were particularly vulnerable to accusations of unworthy dependence on the viceroy because so many of the offices depended on his gift; many of the more favoured individuals formed part of the viceroy's family or household; and as time passed an increasing number of Spaniards subsisted direct disbursements arranged by the

⁶¹⁴ AGI Justicia 258: Especially questions 1-6,9,21,23,32,35,39,48-9,52,56-60, 108-117 establishing dependence on the viceroy and partiality in the distribution of offices or application of justice 80-91 on atrocities and injustices committed against Indians in pursuit of selfish ambitions of conquest and colonisation.

⁶¹⁵ Appendix A.

viceroy.⁶¹⁶ Terms such as *criado*, *allegado*, *paniaguado*, *vassallo*, *deudo* or even *privado* and *amigo* were avoided by the inhabitants of New Spain when they described themselves - except in relation to the king - but they were ubiquitous as terms of discredit in attacks on the integrity and legitimacy of rivals.⁶¹⁷

The most impressively successful construction of an image of rebellious tyranny in this period, however, was drawn from the flimsy evidence that served to condemn Martín Cortés of conspiracy to overthrow the king and make himself lord of Mexico. The inevitable link between tyrants and their of dependents led to a frenzied persecution that encompassed increasing numbers of Spaniards once the investigation fell into the hands of newly arrived judges from Spain. The new and inexperienced *oidores* believed more in the image that had been projected of rebellion than they understood of more immediate factional goals of the original accusers.⁶¹⁸ Soon Velasco's faction needed to defend themselves from associations to the 'rebels' that new judges unfamiliar with the coded rhetoric and factional rivalry of New Spain thought they had unearthed.⁶¹⁹ Even viceroy Gastón de Peralta was accused of corruption and loyalty to the French king and deposed within months of taking office because he was from the marches of Navarre and had been lenient towards Martín Cortés⁶²⁰. The oppressive atmosphere prompted from Suárez de Peralta a description of Mexico City that echoed that of Rome after the murder of Caesar:

⁶¹⁶ Ch.4.

⁶¹⁷ N. R. Porro Girardi 'Los criados en las indias del Quinientos: del Servicio privado a la funcion publica', in *XI congreso del instituto Internacional de Historia del Derecho Indiano*, (Buenos Aires, 1997), IV, 91-12.

⁶¹⁸ AGI Patronato 203. See with S. Cushing Flint, 'Treason or Travesty: The Martín Cortés Conspiracy Reexamined' in *Sixteenth Century Journal* Vol.39, No.1 pp.23-44.

⁶¹⁹ J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias* Silva Tena ed., (Mexico, 1990) p.215-6.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.* p.204-5

the shopkeeper Villarbeche replacing the poet Cinna as the archetype of the innocent victim unjustly caught up in the unmeasured repression.⁶²¹

Suffering and civil service

Rhetorical norms dictated that suffering and victimisation were caused by unworthy individuals holding power or enjoying royal *mercedes* in the place of more worthy individuals. Their moral flaws led them to act in ways that perverted true royal intentions, which were always just, and consequently threatened the survival, prosperity or existence of justice in New Spain. Their unworthiness manifested itself in their behaviour and in their disregard for royal laws or, paradoxically, in their support of 'misguided' royal legislation that actually harmed the commonwealth and king but which they advocated because it benefited their own interests. This unworthiness corrupted the virtue of those subjected to it or provoked suffering in the virtuous or innocent. Suffering, with its connotations of martyrdom, heightened an individual's merit when it was endured in the service of virtue and the king.

Since Montesinos' electrifying sermon on Hispaniola in 1511 much of the blame for the suffering of the Indians and the depopulation of the Americas had fallen on the brutality of the Spanish settlers. With time this had become an accepted commonplace and competition for attention at court had exaggerated the tone of the vocabulary used to describe indigenous suffering. In their self-representation to Spain, the indigenous lords found it expedient to identify with their vassals and other indigenous groups generally as the 'Indians' of Spanish rhetoric to highlight a common identity as innocent victims. They

⁶²¹ *Ibid.* p.190-191.

apportioned the blame for their 'destruction' on the generic 'Spaniards' as well: '...we suffer everyday so many needs and we are aggrieved so much every day that soon we will be finished, as every day we are consumed and finished...'⁶²²

At the height of the debate over the perpetuity of *encomienda* in the mid 1550s the indigenous lords of the polities that had constituted the old Mexica imperial alliance, who had lost the most from the conquest, made an urgent plea to the king. 'we and those under our care need protection and succour from your majesty for the many grievances and molestations that we receive from the Spaniards because they live amongst us and us amongst them'.⁶²³ Spain's imperial dialogue had grown accustomed to descriptions of extreme deprivation as a result of the tragic depopulation that had accompanied the arrival of Europeans and Africans in America. The assumption of Spanish vices and indigenous innocence influenced many people's understanding of New Spain and convinced Mendoza's regime of the need to create two parallel 'republics' to protect the latter: the mention by these valley lords that the two populations lived intermingled was a reproach that this Mendozan-Zumárragan principle was being violated under Velasco's new administration. Their interests lay in restricting the Spanish *encomendero's* or other administrator's rights and authority over their communities.

It is indicative of the lords' familiarity with the terms of the imperial discourse regarding Spanish conquests of indigenous populations generally in the Americas that they went on to beg the king to send Las Casas to New Spain 'so that he can take up the role

⁶²² *La nobleza indígena del centro de México después de la conquista*, E. Pérez-Rocha and R. Tena eds. (Mexico 2000), p.199.

⁶²³ *Ibid.*

being our protector' because 'for the remedy of our needs we have great necessity of someone who would be our protector and reside continually in this court'. Las Casas had become a pioneer and the greatest advocate of the indigenous language of victimisation. After Las Casas' debates with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in 1551 he had become synonymous with opposition to secular Spanish authority in the Americas: Valderrama for instance attributed opposition to his planned increase in the level of tribute to 'the doctrine they suckled from the bishop of Chiapas'⁶²⁴.

The call for Las Casas from such prominent lords implied that the viceroy was not up to the task of protecting the Indians. The reproach was made at a difficult time when Velasco seemed to be wavering in his implementation of the New Laws or attempting to appease the *encomenderos* in other ways. There was also a clear mendicant agenda behind it. The last holder of the title of 'protector of the Indians' had been fr. Juan de Zumárraga from 1528 to 1530. Despite the suppression of this formal title, Zumárraga's influence survived as archbishop of Mexico and as Mendoza's close collaborator, which had obviated the need for the title itself. His successor, archbishop Montúfar was more ambiguous towards the indigenous lords and far less supportive of the mendicant orders. The conciliar meeting of 1555 called by Montúfar attempted to assert Episcopal authority over the mendicant orders following the resolutions of the Council of Trent.⁶²⁵ The reproach against Velasco could undermine his authority not least in the eyes of the crown. The pressure exerted by such political campaigns conducted by the indigenous lords on a range of issues, ranging from perpetuity of *encomienda* to the role of the mendicant orders and their own

⁶²⁴ CJV, p.45.

⁶²⁵ *Felipe II y el oficio de Rey: La fragua de un imperio*, 'Poder e iglesia en la Nueva España. La disputa del Diezmo' J.R. Gutiérrez, E. Martínez Ruiz, J. González Rodríguez coord. *passim*.

authority, proved to be effective. Their success can be seen in that as time passed *encomienda* became more akin to a royal pension than a fief and as Valderrama noted repeatedly Velasco continued Mendoza's reliance on the mendicants and the indigenous lords increased their power.⁶²⁶

The success of indigenous presentations of their victimhood encouraged secular Spanish settlers to adopt a similar turn of phrase for their own purposes: Gonzalo de Salazar argued in favour of perpetual *encomienda*, by claiming that without it there would be 'such discontent and so little possibility of remedying it [that it would lead to] their destruction and the destruction of the land...'⁶²⁷. Like many Spaniards he worried for the survival of the Spanish settlers, and the ideal-type of the starving and impoverished *encomendero* unable to sustain himself or his household became commonplace.

The language of aggrieved victimhood was even used by royal officials from the viceroy down: Velasco for instance repeatedly asked to be allowed to return home to die because he was so poor and miserable as early as 1553. He subsequently received the higher salary he had been asking for and stayed in Mexico City.⁶²⁸ Similarly, Zorita asked to be relieved of his office for his alleged blindness, but this was before the opportunity arose to lead an expedition to the Chichimeca for which he lobbied vigorously, despite his apparent ailments.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁶ L.B. Simpson *The Encomienda in New Spain* (Berkeley, 1982), p.134ff.

⁶²⁷ ENE, Vol.III, doc. 186.

⁶²⁸ J.I. Rubio Mañe *El Virreinato I: Orígenes y jurisdicciones, y dinámica social de los virreyes*. (Mexico 2005), p.210.

⁶²⁹ A. de Zorita *Relación de los señores de la Nueva España* G. Vazquez ed., (Texas, 1992), p.14.

The tradition of displaying worth through suffering for the royal cause existed in Spain; but the stakes in the rhetorical tradition of New Spain became much greater as hardship became related to the argument that the Spaniards might be forced to abandon New Spain altogether if they were unable to sustain themselves. News of the promulgation of the New Laws prompted claims that the Spaniards would be forced to emigrate from New Spain or 'kill their wives and daughters lest they go to a life of shame' and the king 'would lose New Spain to the great loss of the faith and the Crown.'⁶³⁰ The end of Spanish control in the Americas raised the stakes of suffering with all that that implied for Christianity, the royal conscience and the royal purse.

Just as the indigenous lords could identify with their communities naturally in their self-presentation to Spain, the Spanish settlers could associate more clearly with the cause of royal authority in America. The assumption remained that without a Spanish population the Americas would not retain their loyalty to the Habsburgs. Spanish settlement and procreation in the Indies was a service in itself. The lack of financial support for their sustenance could be construed as a betrayal of the mission they were undertaking in America.

The disqualification of rivals using the rhetorical devices described above was deployed with increasing ferocity as partisan conflicts intensified, first during the two *visitas* and then during the turmoil caused by Velasco's death. Part of Mendoza's defence consisted in painting many of his accusers as either 'impassioned' against him or as dependents and allies of Cortés who had personal interests in destroying his reputation.⁶³¹ The same

⁶³⁰ A.S. Aiton *Antonio de Mendoza: First Viceroy of New Spain* (Duke 1927), p.98, n.43.

⁶³¹ AGI 259 'descargos del visorrey'; LEA 'Mendoza', doc.7.

techniques repeated themselves during Valderrama's *visita* where much of the concrete information collected by the *vistador* had to do with identifying the relatives, dependents and allies of the viceroy who he felt had benefitted unduly, proving the corrupt arbitrariness of the regime.⁶³² Velasco died before he could answer the charges, but his allies, most notably Hortuño de Ibarra and Fernando de Portugal did their best to discredit Valderrama, Martín Cortés and the governing *audiencias* that held power until the return of viceregal rule with Martín Enriquez, in the same terms⁶³³.

Viceregal legitimacy

The debate surrounding the nature of New Spain's government continued unabated to the end of our period. Both Tello de Sandoval and Valderrama would propose the suppression of the viceroyalty, because the interests of the viceroys were too prone to distort the royal will. Sandoval advocated greater control from Spain: 'under no circumstances should [indigenous] governors or caciques or principales be involved in the governance of their towns'; instead, they proposed that indigenous *alcaldes* and *regidores* would inform the local Spanish *alcalde mayor de letras* of every decision for his ratification. Furthermore these *alcaldes mayores de letras* would each run a 'province' which would form the basic administrative unit of New Spain and would each contain a Spanish *cabecera*. These *alcaldes de letras* would be 'chosen from Castile for the said purpose and in no way should they come from over here'⁶³⁴.

⁶³² CJV, Docs.28-33.

⁶³³ AGI Gobierno, Mexico, 323 'Hortuño de Ibarra, Fernando de Portugal et al. 10 September 1564', 2nd letter of that date.

⁶³⁴ AGI, Gobierno, Mexico, 68, R.12, N.34, Francisco Tello de Sandoval letter to prince Philip 19 September 1545.

Almost twenty years later, Valderrama would make a similar proposal and justify it with reference to the apparently inherent corruption surrounding the viceroy who 'throws down many more roots than are good if others are to live in freedom'. The viceroys' power was also to blame for 'many inconveniences... since he is free to distribute everything there is to give in this kingdom. He distributes [these benefices] amongst his relatives and the *allegados* of the *oidores*. They depend on the viceroy every day, and depending on him, a man needs to be especially upright to contradict the viceroy in his presence'.⁶³⁵ Valderrama, made a point of demanding the suppression of the office of viceroy, which he saw as unnecessary and harmful, more openly than his predecessor. An archbishop and a *letrado* could replace the viceroy as president of the *audiencia* like in Granada or Valladolid, so that one could keep an eye on the other.⁶³⁶

These accusations reflect a widening gap between Spanish and New Spanish perceptions of legitimacy and an ensuing mutual distrust. The defence of viceregal legitimacy as the guarantor of New Spain's particular arrangements reveals the development of a particular self-perception and internal linguistic codes of legitimacy.

The viceroys became associated with the political arrangements of New Spain and consequently their reputation and their decisions became bound up with the nature of government in New Spain as a whole. The viceroys could not legislate; but they could present their actions as representing the true royal intention: 'The viceroy and the *audiencia* who reside in Mexico represent the person of the emperor and great monarch Charles V,

⁶³⁵ CJV, pp.75-77

⁶³⁶ AGI, 68, R.12, N.34 Tello de Sandoval to prince Philip, 19 sept 1545; CJV, pp. 75-77.

guiding and governing the land and administering justice.⁶³⁷ Both viceroys transgressed certain inconvenient royal laws or directives while in office, they favoured certain individuals more than others and did not always adhere to the letter of the law in the practice of government or the distribution of rewards.⁶³⁸ There was nothing inherently illegitimate in this as long as the intention was seen to be in service of the crown: this attitude was extolled for example in Castiglione's *Courtier*⁶³⁹ and forms part of the well-known Spanish formula of 'obeying but not implementing' royal legislation because royal servants did not see themselves as rule-bound bureaucrats but participants in the political nation.⁶⁴⁰ The royal officials of New Spain, for instance, explained to the king that: 'after having obeyed with all due reverence and acceptance, they said that there were certain difficulties and great inconveniences that meant that if everything in the said decrees were to be kept and implemented in full that the said decrees would actually redound in notable damage and prejudice for the royal treasury...'⁶⁴¹

In the opinion of many contemporaries the viceroys' arrangements and the justifications behind them represented New Spain's internal legitimising criteria and the viceroys themselves became associated with the *sui generis*, autonomist reclamation of New Spain. Even opponents of the viceroy like Jerónimo López defended the practice of this

⁶³⁷ Fr. Toribio de Benavente o Motolinia *Historia de los Indios de Nueva España*, Edmundo O'Gorman ed. (Mexico, 1973), .p.142.

⁶³⁸ E. Ruíz Medrano, *Reshaping New Spain: Government and private interest in the colonial bureaucracy 1531-1550*, (J. Constantino and P. Marmasse trans.) (Colorado, 2006), passim.

⁶³⁹ B. Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, (London 2003), p.131.

⁶⁴⁰ A.B. Gonzales, 'La formula 'Obedezcase pero no se cumpla' en el derecho Castellano de la baja edad media' in AHDE 50 (1980) 469-88.

⁶⁴¹ AGI Gobierno Mexico, 323, 3 march 1556 king to the royal officers and then they to the king- first letter in first booklet.

form of autonomy: 'there was found [during Tello de Sandoval's *visita*] little memory and obedience of his majesty in this land or of the fulfilling of his commands; and even though I have come out the worst from [the implications] of this charge, I think it was wrong to make [the accusation] because I have always known the viceroy to be of such great rectitude and firmness and loyalty in the service of your majesty and with such wishes for [this land] to increase with all his will and his life, I have known nothing else from him.'⁶⁴²

Defending the viceroy's autonomy as the figurehead of New Spain's political arrangements was often a response to unpopular royal legislation such as the denial of perpetual inheritable *encomienda*. To reconcile any ostensible discrepancy between this and royal service these expressions of autonomy harked back to abstract moral principles of 'good government' because these transcended the letter of the law by emphasising the fundamental intention behind them. These appeals were designed to express the greater legitimacy of New Spain's political arrangements when compared to the crown's Spanish minister's unknowing impositions. For this it relied on a vocabulary that exalted both the civic and moral virtues of New Spain when compared with Spain: a combination of the particularist seigniorial conceptions of the '*caballero* renaissance' that Mendoza favoured⁶⁴³ with mendicant idealism and indigenous assertions of participation.

Perhaps the most complete representation of the righteous self-perception of New Spain comes from the Tlaxcalan celebrations of the peace of Aigues Mortes on Corpus

⁶⁴² ENE Vol.IV doc. 233.

⁶⁴³ H. Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance 1350-1550*, (New Jersey, 1979), esp.pp.166-7.

Christi, 1539.⁶⁴⁴ Tlaxcala's leaders possessed an acute ability for representing their merits. In concordance with the city's mendicant community, they created an allegorical display that affirmed Tlaxcala's self-perceived role in the Habsburg Empire and in cosmic history. In their newly-built square, the 'conquest of Jerusalem' was performed as a theatrical representation of the Spanish empire as seen through the eyes of fully fledged indigenous participants in the notion of New Spain as 'another Jerusalem': a crusading kingdom of virtue in which the Tlaxcalans played a leading role. Virtue was the ultimate benchmark of its legitimacy in an ideological framework set up primarily by the alliance of viceroys, friars and newly converted indigenous lords and whose rhetoric was then adopted by the Spanish settlers.

Ostensibly, Tlaxcala was commemorating Charles V's peace treaty at Aigues Mortes, the standard rhetorical nod to royal authority. Tlaxcala, however, was also reacting to Mexico City's celebration of the same event held the previous year with such magnificence that several official chronicles of the pageantry had been sent to Spain to impress on the monarch the city's efforts and loyalty. Tlaxcalan competitive patriotism demanded a riposte intended to please its audience – friars in particular - who would relay it to the viceroy and the crown.

The organisation of the Christian forces seeking to liberate 'Jerusalem' reflected Christendom's hierarchy as they understood it: The American forces were led by Mendoza and fought under a standard that bore the Mendoza family coat of arms. They were divided

⁶⁴⁴ Motolinia, *Historia de los Indios...*p. 67ff; M. Harris, *Aztecs, Moors and Christians: festivals of reconquest in Mexico and Spain* 2000, ch.14; M.Restall *Seven Myths of the Spanish conquest* (Oxford 2003), pp.120-121. Though I disagree with the last two's interpretation of the celebration as a convoluted code for representing resistance to the Spanish conquest or merely an assertion of their patriotic pride, or a dig at Cortés and Alvarado.

into national units with the *nahua* Tlaxcalans and the Mexica taking prominent roles with various other lesser Mesoamerican contingents and particularly weak Caribbeans and Peruvians. The European forces were similarly divided into national units with those from the various Spanish kingdoms being equated with the Nahua contingents and acting at the head of the European army led by Antonio Pimentel, Count of Benavente, and patron of many Franciscans like Motolinia. Mendoza and Pimentel's equal status was emphasised, mirroring the parallel republics of Indians and Spaniards that was so fundamental to Mendoza's conception of New Spain, but placed on an imperial scale. Both 'republics' were under the command of Charles V whose headquarters were in the 'camp of Santa Fe' -the ideal grid-iron *castrum* that the Christian forces had built in the last great Iberian crusade against the infidels of Granada - a name of such resonance that it was given by Vasco de Quiroga to his experiments in American *Utopia* - and who brought with him newly acquired French and Hungarian allies. The emperor in turn was subordinate to the Pope in Rome who sent Bishops and friars to place the Christian armies in a state of grace.

The layers of authority exhibited in the spectacle were familiar from the Tlaxcalan self-perception within New Spain rather than the European view of the Spanish empire: Tlaxcalan identity survived in the display and was elevated to the pinnacle of leadership of a shared indigenous-American identity, to which Mendoza was incorporated. The Tlaxcalans had, after all, fought and often defeated all of the other American peoples that were represented as their new allies, including the Peruvians under Alvarado, and always in the name of Tlaxcala for the emperor and Christ- in the same way that the Spaniards had fought and beaten the French who now joined them as part of Charles V's army. The Tlaxcalans' brilliant attire betrayed their greater glory when compared to the drab Europeans who were

nominally their equals in the hierarchy. Charles V, whom several Tlaxcalan lords had met in person, was given his place as the point of contact between the two parallel worlds in the symbolic space of Santa Fe that in New Spain was occupied by Mendoza. Almost embarrassingly self-evidently, however, an ecclesiastical hierarchy dominated by the mendicant orders and divine Christian authority superseded all other temporal powers.

The idiosyncrasies of the siege displayed the virtues and vices of the participants and were reported up and down the Christian hierarchy – and so to the audience - to explain the action. These included recommendations of rewards that mirrored the real letters, memorials and *probanzas* that Neo-Spanish elites were becoming accustomed to mediating through Mendoza to the crown: ‘Emperor, *semper augusto*. Your Majesty will know how I came with the army to Jerusalem’ wrote ‘Mendoza’ to ‘Charles V’ in a ‘letter’ that was presumably read out to the spectators, ‘your vassals of New Spain did things very well defeating many moors...’ whereas ‘the squadron from the islands’ was defeated ‘in great shame’ as were several European contingents allied to the Spanish. In turn Charles V called Mendoza his beloved kinsman and great captain, while the American armies were addressed as ‘knights and soldiers’.

It was only as the action of the siege progressed that true virtues beyond military service, the ultimate civic justification, were revealed. Every time a new favourite contingent appeared or a superior secular commander took control the Christians morale was boosted but their bravery and martial skill was always matched by those of the Turks. The balance began to shift in the Christians’ favour only when the Pope united all the forces in prayer and placed them in a state of grace: ‘even though you are new to the faith, God wanted to test you and wanted you to be defeated that you may know that without his help

you are worth little, but now that you have been made humble, God has heard your prayers and in your favour will come your advocate and patron Saint Hippolytus on whose day the Spaniards, with you the Tlaxcalans won Mexico.’ Even so the battle seemed undecided until the appearance of the archangel Michael who made a powerful speech on the highest tower of the city walls which convinced ‘Cortés’ the *‘tlatoni* of Jerusalem’ and his *vizir*, ‘Pedro de Alvarado’ (for the significance of their roles see below) to convert to Christianity and become a vassal of the ‘Roman emperor, beloved of God’. ‘Cortés’ explained his change of heart: ‘we have seen clearly how God has sent you favour and help from heaven; before I saw this I thought I would hold my city and my kingdom and to defend my vassals and I was determined to die for it; but since God in heaven has illuminated me and I know that you alone are captain of his army; I recognise that the whole world must obey God and you who are his captain on earth. Therefore we place our lives in your hands and we beg you to settle near this city that you may give us your royal word and you grant us our lives, receiving us with your continual clemency as your *natural* vassals. Your servant the great Sultan of Babylon and tlatoni of Jerusalem.’ The enemy had been convinced by divine grace rather than military force.

Motolinia, who spent much of his life in Tlaxcala, would write of Mexico City ‘you were then [before the conquest] a Babylon full of confusions and evil. You came and you went as you pleased, guided by the will of a gentile tyrant [‘idiota’ literally someone who is self-involved and therefore arbitrary] who executed barbarous laws in you; now you are another Jerusalem mother of provinces and kingdoms...more does your subjection to the invincible Caesar Charles ennoble and aggrandise you than the tyrannous lordship with

which in the past you wished to subject everyone else.’⁶⁴⁵ The allegorical significance of the conclusion of the spectacle is obvious. In the play the Tlaxcalteca had acted out the implications of the New Jerusalem’s virtuous expansionism that mirrored the idealised expansion of Christian authority in New Spain and anticipated Mendoza’s well-known plans for the forthcoming conquest of Cíbola. Cortés the tyrant of ‘Babylon’ and ‘*tlatoni* of Jerusalem’, two names Motolinia associated with Mexico City, had become, of his own voluntary submission a ‘natural’ vassal, a term applied by the Spaniards to refer to indigenous lords, of the ‘Roman emperor, beloved of God’. The Tlaxcalteca were recreating an image of their own and their fellow Nahuas’ voluntary and virtuous transition to participants in the Indian Republic of New Spain: which was not the result of Spanish military superiority but of the undeniable transcendental truths of Christianity. To be convinced by God was not a defeat and it implied obedience to him and his legitimate representatives like the viceroy, the emperor and the church, but not the Spanish conquistadores. Cortés was popular with the Maxixcatzin clan, Alvarado with the Xicotencatl: the Tlaxcalans were not ridiculing them but rather identifying them with their own polity’s story and with the parallel reconciliation between France and Charles V and simultaneously making a plea for them to submit to Mendoza’s authority (who in 1539 was engaged in intense competition with both of them over exploration in the Pacific) as the true representative of Christian virtue, just as all indigenous peoples were encouraged to do by the friars. The native and mendicant agendas here are difficult to distinguish and probably influenced one another.

⁶⁴⁵ The dating of various parts of Motolinia’s history are disputed but this section probably comes from the early 1540s or earlier, certainly before the terrible plagues that began in 1545. Motolinia *Historia de los Indios...* p.142.

The festivities represented the two most important conceptions of New Spain that developed in this period. It was a defence of the policy that established New Spain as a kingdom composed of two 'republics', a principle that was not enshrined in law until decades later but became incorporated into the political discourse of the time; and secondly that these republics were guided by universal Christian virtue not secular Spanish power.

The alliance between the mendicants and the viceroy in the government of New Spain meant that the dialogue of legitimacy acquired even more abstract justifications for legitimacy that were tied with the mendicant and particularly the Franciscan morality. The lords of Huexotzinco, where the murals of the convent of San Miguel attest pictorially to the importance of the idea of New Jerusalem, expressed their own post-conquest legitimacy in a way that echoed the allegorical Tlaxcalan play of 1539. In their appeals to viceroy Velasco for recognition of their land re-distribution in 1555 they explained that: '...we were baptised and made Christians and received the faith and Christian customs with the most complete free will, which, when compared with our previous style of life, we found that our former life was all lies and trickery...knowing this great equality, truth, honesty and goodness of Christianity we are determined to subject ourselves to it and keep it and work for it...'⁶⁴⁶ Unlike their tyrannical ancestors 'who wanted everything for themselves' they believed in 'charity to help the poor' and 'helped by divine grace' they convened to grant the poor and dispossessed their lands. As we have seen the Huexotzinca would have faced social unrest⁶⁴⁷ if they did not, but the language of their legitimisation is still revealing.

⁶⁴⁶ P. Carrasco, in 'El Rango de Tecuhtli entre los Nahuas tramontanos' ,p.146, *Tlalocan: Vol. V* (1966), no.2.

⁶⁴⁷ Ch.5.

Noblemen like don Antonio Cortés Totoquihuaztli echoed the crusading idealism of the Tlaxcalan play in expressing his view of the greatest attributes of Charles V:

Greatest defender of the Christian faith, indefatigable fighter against the assaults of infidels and heretics...always engaged in fighting barbarous nations, infidels and idolaters of demons... In pacifying the defeated, illuminating them and finally winning them for Christ, which Your Majesty has done amongst us...This very thing gives us the greatest consolation encourages us to be in good spirits and convinces us that there is no reason to fear addressing Your Majesty by letter⁶⁴⁸.

Like many other lords don Jerónimo del Aguila from Tacuba at the heart of the old Mexica empire soon adopted the posture of crusader; he claimed in 1564 to have spent forty years destroying idolatry wherever he found it, often endangering his life, in particular when he served with viceroy Mendoza in the Mixtón war. This was reminiscent of part of the oath of the Tecles, by then superseded but clearly still resonant in the language of legitimacy: 'And as regards my person I will pursue and destroy the sacrifices and idolatries. In the same way I swore to be a loyal vassal to the emperor Don Carlos, king of Spain...' to which don Jerónimo was possibly referring when he mentioned that this lifelong quest was the result of 'a certain selection that was made of my person to accomplish this.'⁶⁴⁹ Similar ideas were represented in the Otomi crusading murals at Ixmiquilpan which glorified the dynasty of the San Luis Montañés; or Sandoval Acaxitli's emphasis on his role in fighting the heathen Chichimeca but also in forging alliances with their chiefs and cementing them with song and dance to inaugurate Christmas. Despite their traditionally regionalist perspective of identity, the most active indigenous lords also expressed the concept of New Spain as the kingdom within Charles V's universalist Christian empire that they belonged to and fought to

⁶⁴⁸ *La nobleza indígena...* E. Pérez-Rocha & R. Tena, eds., Doc.14, p.167-8.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Doc. 33, p. 287. And Pedro Carrasco *Tlalocan Vol.V, 1966 Vol.2.* p.133-4.

preserve and increase.⁶⁵⁰ The expressions of self-justification that survive speak to the emergence of a new identity as the most adaptable indigenous lords identified themselves with their newly expanding horizons.⁶⁵¹

Indigenous lords generally advocated the authority of the viceroys more openly than the Spaniards in this period.⁶⁵² The alliance between the viceroys and the mendicants legitimised the viceroys in indigenous eyes. Petitioners from Huexotzinco addressed the viceroy as 'Your lordship, in His royal name, is our peace and tranquillity and the salvation of our souls.'⁶⁵³ The Indian lords from the central valleys who gathered in Mexico to accompany Velasco's coffin to burial in 1564 bestowed the titles of 'father of the fatherland' and 'protector of the Indians' to the dead viceroy.⁶⁵⁴ These titles were at once a display of affection and a pointed criticism of the reforms proposed by Valderrama who was dubbed instead the 'afflictor of the Indians'.

Spaniards exalted viceregal authority over that of unwarranted royal interference: López sought to convey to the king why Mendoza and his son were indispensable to the government of New Spain. He explained how well the viceroy knew the land and its 'secrets' and the importance of such internal knowledge: 'others... would not know [these secrets] or the land or the people here because the language here is another and it is essential to

⁶⁵⁰ *La nobleza indígena...* E. Pérez-Rocha & R.Tena eds., Doc. 27.

⁶⁵¹ F. Perujo 'La nueva identidad de Don Francisco de Sandoval Acaztlí'; E. Ruhnau, '*Titlaca in nican Nueva España* (Somos la gente aquí en Nueva España): la historia novohispana según los historiadores indígenas (siglo XVI y principios del XVII), in. *La formación de la cultura virreinal 1. La etapa inicial*, K. Kohut and S.V. Rose eds.

⁶⁵² See ch.5 and S. Wood *Transcending Conquest...*p.39-43 and pp.119f.

⁶⁵³ P. Carrasco *Tlalocan Vol.V, 1966 Vol.2.* p.146

⁶⁵⁴ M.J. Sarabia Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco...*p.473

understand it and know it.’⁶⁵⁵ Similar reasoning justified the many appeals for Mendoza to remain in New Spain and for his son to succeed him after 1548 - both statements in themselves of the lordly autonomy envisioned by many in New Spain. Such appeals were often made even by those who had previously attacked the viceroy like Andrés de Tapia or even Vázquez de Tapia.⁶⁵⁶ They were echoed in the defence of record of Velasco’s tenure after his sudden death and in support for the appointment of a new viceroy.⁶⁵⁷

These justifications appealed to the sense that the viceroys had a superior authority to that of new arrivals from Spain who came with a more recent royal licence but little understanding of the arrangements in New Spain. The greater experience of the sitting viceroys implied that they were able to act in good faith for the service of God, the king and the common good. By virtue of their experience, the argument ran, the viceroys were the most adept of the king’s vassals at governing the land in ways that fulfilled the most basic principles of the royal will: guaranteeing justice and ‘good governance’. These arguments verged on a more ancient lordly autonomy that both viceroys attempted to practise, and which sought to establish their indispensability as arbiters of New Spain’s political arrangements. In the most daring defence of viceregal proto-autonomy, Mendoza complained bitterly to the king against meddling in the affairs of New Spain from Spain: ‘what does your majesty expect that will happen [with this continual interference] at two thousand leagues distance if not that everything will end in ruin?’ All that was needed according to the viceroy were well meaning and just people to be left alone to administer

⁶⁵⁵ ENE, Vol.V, doc.256

⁶⁵⁶ C. Pérez de Bustamante *Don Antonio de Mendoza...* Docs.XXVII and XXIII.

⁶⁵⁷ AGI Gobierno, Mexico, 323, Hortuño de Ibarra, Fernando de Portugal et al. 10 September 1564, second letter.

the land.⁶⁵⁸ For this plea of autonomy to work its supporters had to convince the crown that the inherent virtue and intentions of its agents in New Spain were good and aimed at serving the crown. Once this was established their greater experience could be trusted more than the dictats of *letrados* or courtly opportunists in Spain.

When the viceroy himself was in favour, a mere assertion that the viceroy trusted an individual's ability to carry out the duties of his post was legitimisation enough. When Velasco appointed Hortuño de Ibarra, his friend and relative through marriage, to the office of *contador* in 1555, a post previously filled by a crown appointee, he justified his decision by explaining that 'and as there is knowledge of the quality and sufficiency of Hortuño de Ibarra, and that he is a person in which I have full confidence and for the experience that he possesses in the matters of the royal hacienda and his good discharge of his offices so far.'⁶⁵⁹

Claims of civic service for the common good of New Spain served as counter-arguments to the allegations of tyrannical corruption. Mendoza justified appointing his rich ally don Luis de Castilla to so many offices instead of distributing them to some other impoverished conquistador 'because [Castilla] is very honourable and a *caballero* and he is worthy of the post because in discharging the offices he has been granted he has comported himself very well and I have known him to have particular love for the Indians, favouring them and treating them well.'⁶⁶⁰ In the ambiguity of what defined inherent worth and merited rewards it was best to include all possible advantages: birth, services and civic

⁶⁵⁸ VEA, 'Mendoza', Doc. 6; F.J. Escudero Buendía *Don Francisco de Mendoza...*ch.VII passim.

⁶⁵⁹ AGI Gobierno México, 323Luis de Velasco 26 August 1555.

⁶⁶⁰ AGI 259 Justicia Dscargos del Visorrey *item* 19.

virtues, combined with pious attributes such as the protection of the Indians, in particular the *macehuales* who were held to be the most victimised group of all.

Both viceroys justified ignoring specific royal legislation appealing to their experience to discern the best course of action for the good of New Spain. Mendoza explained his controversial approval of Juan Guerrero's marriage to the illegitimate daughter of conquistador Rodrigo Gómez, and his inheritance of the latter's *encomienda*, in terms of pleasing a worthy conquistador and to ensure the 'population and settlement of the land'; added to which Guerrero had in him the usual attributes: 'the qualities, especially good intention towards the Indians' that the king looked for in an *encomendero*.⁶⁶¹ These qualities could legitimise the contested legality of the marriage because they served the greater good.

He went as far as to ignore the unquestionable illegality of distributing licences to select members of the indigenous population to carry Spanish weapons and ride horses. In Mendoza's view the Indians 'are neither simple and innocent nor full of vice but are just like any other race and should be treated as such.' What counted in deciding whom to reward, as in so many of his justifications, was experience: 'this can only be sorted out with knowledge of the people and business involved'⁶⁶². He distributed swords because 'as I am viceroy and governor for your majesty I have the faculty to provide for matters of governance as best fits service to God and your majesty' even if it meant acting against a specific, but misguided, law. He only gave weapons to the individuals he trusted and who had shown themselves, in his view, to be morally worthy: 'Some people might think that

⁶⁶¹ AGI Justicia 259 '25'.

⁶⁶² VEA, 'Mendoza' Doc.5.

these Indians are bestial and they assume there is no difference between them because they don't understand them, but I who have dealt with them and spoken to them find many to be of good judgement and with the attributes of gentlemen and a willingness to serve your majesty and he who governs in his royal name (i.e. Mendoza) with love and they have shown it in words and actions and it is right to gratify them... for in this way are men won over to virtue'⁶⁶³.

Mendoza defended his private entrepreneurial activity in New Spain with similar appeals to the good of the commonwealth: the hostile witnesses who claimed this was corruption or abuse of power were confused 'because they were referring to governors and judges appointed for specific time' and not as he saw himself 'perpetual governors and judges'. Any settler in New Spain should be encouraged to engage in economic activity in order that they 'become rooted to this land'; and it was particularly important for the viceroy to do so because it was 'useful for the republic in the provisioning of armies and expeditions'⁶⁶⁴. Mendoza felt he was fashioning a kingdom with its own internal logic of legitimacy attributes that were to be judged by him.

Both Indians and Spaniards complained during Sandoval's *visita* that Mendoza's collaboration with Tejada had fostered the latter's entrepreneurial activity to the detriment of Indian communities and the impartiality of his legal judgements. Mendoza defended his support for Tejada's entrepreneurial activity by claiming that not only were the lands Tejada owned previously the patrimony of Motecuhzoma - and therefore eligible for viceregal distribution or sale rather than a violation of the rights of communities or individuals - but

⁶⁶³ AGI Justicia 259 '18'.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.* '16'.

also 'because it was good for the governance of the land. Because he is a good republican and entrepreneur who has persuaded and encouraged many others to do the same and thanks to them this republic is now well provided for and supplied of all it needs for its sustenance'. Mendoza went on to explain that Tejada's appointment was notionally perpetual and he had committed to settling in New Spain. This meant that he had no interest in acting to his new homeland's detriment because by damaging it he would have damaged himself: 'especially since he is a judge in perpetuity and therefore enjoys and will enjoy that which the other neighbours of this city and of New Spain enjoy.'⁶⁶⁵

Tejada echoed Mendoza in defending his enterprises: 'not only do I not offend anyone but I serve God and his majesty [with his entrepreneurial activities] even more than with my office because so many have followed my example and have made for themselves very rich estates, the land has been populated and grown and this city has been ennobled and supplied...' Those that best served the crown and commonwealth were entitled to the greatest rewards: 'the judge that is appointed by the will of the prince without a limit to his tenure should consider it in perpetuity and should be allowed to own property and businesses like in other *audiencias*... otherwise it is to be understood that those that govern... would live in need and poverty with their salaries alone and our children would remain unprotected and would emigrate... and that they and their fathers would be in worse condition for having served your majesty.'⁶⁶⁶

A similar emphasis on civic justifications governed Mendoza's attitude towards the enfranchising of the indigenous elite. Already by 1538, the crown had warned Mendoza not

⁶⁶⁵ AGI Justicia 259, '43'.

⁶⁶⁶ ENE vol.V, doc.27.

to allow Indians to call themselves 'lords (*señores*)' of their towns but 'principal men (*principales*)' only. Yet Mendoza actively sought to recognise the authority of the 'legitimate' nobility of New Spain and to encourage them to govern themselves through the adoption of recognisable offices.⁶⁶⁷

The viceroys encouraged the particularist notion that their power and authority guaranteed moral righteousness, freedom and justice in New Spain. The prohibition on public gambling, the constant attempts to limit drunkenness⁶⁶⁸ and the insistence on hiding the misdemeanours of friars⁶⁶⁹ are all examples of attempts at enforcing a high level of public morality for both Spaniards and Indians.

Mendoza claimed that 'the *regidores* never had so much freedom in their *cabildo* as when I came to this city', not least because he only interfered 'when there is discord between them and they appeal to me',⁶⁷⁰ a claim which other favourable commentators also expressed.⁶⁷¹ Cristóbal de Benavente thought that thanks to the viceroy 'in temporal matters these natives are placed in good order and political organisation ... they have their *alcaldes*, *regidores*, *alguaciles* and ministers of justice and they understand it and practise it

⁶⁶⁷ *El cacicazgo en Nueva España y Filipinas*, M. Menegus Borneman & S. Aguirre eds., (Mexico, 2005) ...p.23f.

⁶⁶⁸ M.J. Sarabia-Viejo *Don Luis de Velasco*...p.66; VEA 'Mendoza', Doc.7 'Cargo,XLIV' or J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado*... ch.2.

⁶⁶⁹ VEA, *Mendoza* doc.6.

⁶⁷⁰ AGI 259 'decargos del visorrey', 4.

⁶⁷¹ ENE, Vol.5 doc.260.

so well that we have little advantage over them because they understand the liberty and grace that every day your majesty and his royal intention make for them'.⁶⁷²

The royal officials agreed that 'were it not for the favour and help that the viceroy gives us for the collection and ordering of the royal funds, it would only be collected with difficulty' because their many enemies in the *audiencia* 'intend for us not to have the liberty we have and must have'.⁶⁷³

The discourse of liberty became well known to the indigenous lords. Ultimately this harked back to mendicant arguments about the illegitimacy of any forceful conquest in the Americas and claims about the excessive and unnecessary violence of the conquistadors. It was also a reflection of the enfranchisement of the indigenous nobility that Mendoza had promoted. Indigenous testimony from Tello de Sandoval's *visita* emphasises their voluntary participation in the expeditions to Cíbola: '[Tejada] informed them that [the viceroy] was sending people [to Cíbola] that if some Indians wanted to go of their own free will they should seek him out because he did not want to force them or take them against their will like Nuño de Guzmán had done... and they said that they did want to go and that and they went there of their own free will...'. When they found the viceroy in Jalisco '[he] asked them if they were going on their own free will or whether they were forced to go and they answered that they went of their own free will and not through force.' Similarly, the Codex Osuna portrays Indian lords sitting on their *icapilli* (reed-thrones) in open conversation with the viceroy, sitting on his curule chair, on the terms of their voluntary participation in the

⁶⁷² *Ibid.* Vol.4. doc.226.

⁶⁷³ AGI Gobierno, México, Hortuño de Ibarra et.al. 2 April 1562 6th bound collection of letters.

expedition to Florida. Their subsequent disputed over the compensation they received in return was a result of the contractual nature of the negotiation that led to their participation.⁶⁷⁴

Underlying these justifications were certain concepts that had become commonly accepted in New Spain as a result of their rhetorical importance. The most obvious was to justify almost every decision as intended for the good of the indigenous population, particularly the 'poor macehuales'. As the royal officials wrote in 1552, 'in this land some have planted the idea that to serve the king one must do good to the Indians and harm the Spaniards.'⁶⁷⁵ Even Valderrama the 'scourge of the Indians' claimed continually that his attempts at reducing the power of the friars and indigenous lords, his support for the *encomenderos* and the increase he proposed in the level of tribute, were all designed to help the 'poor macehuales': 'in the macehuales there is no resistance [to abuse by the friars and their nobility]...they are lost and destroyed... it is a matter of great shame'.⁶⁷⁶ The 'poor macehuales' became the fundamental symbols of victimhood in this strand of the dialogue of legitimacy, to which all had to pay at least lip-service. The consensus about the need to protect the indigenous population would play an important part in the development of New Spain's internal framework of legitimacy through righteousness.

Spanish participants in the military expansion of New Spain began to add moral justifications for actions to supplement the traditional virtues of war: Julius Caesar proudly

⁶⁷⁴ S. Wood *Transcending Conquest...* p.54-55.

⁶⁷⁵ AGI Mexico ,323, Second bound section. 1st letter 2nd March 1552 by Alonso de Sosa, Antonio de la Cadena y Juan Velázquez de Salazar.

⁶⁷⁶ CJV, p.58.

boasted in his account of the Gallic Wars that he killed one million Gauls; Bernal Díaz del Castillo defensively devoted three chapters to attempting to detail the benefits that the indigenous population accrued from the conquest in terms of their evangelisation, new political systems and trade and technical skills that they learnt from Europe.⁶⁷⁷ Similarly Alonso de Zorita presented his project to pacify and settle the Chichimeca in ideal terms worthy of the expectations of the empire of New Jerusalem.⁶⁷⁸ Hernando de Alarcón, Francisco de Ibarra and Miguel López de Legazpi did their best to present their expeditions in the most favourable light with regards to the conquered population.

Conclusion

The danger of appealing to the superiority of viceregal arrangements or to abstract moral principles was that it implicitly undermined the authority of the crown and its latest and most trusted envoys. By the time of Valderrama's *visita* the term *alumbrado* began to appear in Mexico as a description for individuals like Gerónimo de Mercado: 'He was sought out to lower tributes, and is one of those who in Mexico are called *alumbrados*'.⁶⁷⁹ Valderrama believed that the term had peculiar Mexican connotations - one of the many adaptations of the term throughout the Hispanic world⁶⁸⁰ that probably had no formal links to traditional *alumbradismo* in Spain. Its use probably referred to the irreverent aspect of the Spanish mystics who had an ambiguous relationship with the established church

⁶⁷⁷ Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista de la Nueva España*, J. Ramírez Cabañas intro. (Mexico 1974) ... ch.CCVIII-CCX.

⁶⁷⁸ Alonso de Zorita *Relación de los señores de Nueva España*, Germán Vázquez ed. (Texas, 1992), 'Introduction'

⁶⁷⁹ CJD, p.211.

⁶⁸⁰ A. Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in sixteenth century Spain. The Alumbrados*, (Cambridge 1992), pp.115-6.

hierarchy and acknowledged only the authority and legitimacy of their direct links to God. Moreover this denial of intermediaries had formed part of Zumárraga's plans for New Spain.⁶⁸¹ Oidor Zorita was similarly resented by the secular clergy for what they considered his peculiar almost mystical religiosity⁶⁸² and amongst viceroy Gastón de Peralta's instructions was insistence on the expulsion of friars that had 'apostatized' and on how to punish 'ungovernable friars' more loyal to their local arrangements than the instructions of European hierarchies.⁶⁸³

The fear of disobedience or rebellion against royal authority born of the crown's general distrust of its American agents and subjects encouraged the promulgation of royal legislation to oppose any particularist autonomy. Within New Spain, on the other hand it was the inexperience, intentions and ambitions of new arrivals from Spain that were distrusted except by those with a grievance against the status quo.

The reigns of Mendoza and Velasco created the self-perception that New Spain was special and more virtuous than Spain or other parts of her American empire. This was expressed in many ways, from the insistence by New Spain's Franciscans that Cortés rather than Columbus was the central figure in New World History as the 'Moses of the New World' or that Mendoza (not Las Casas) was the 'true father of the Indians', to more prosaic observations that manners in New Spain were more refined than those of Spain.⁶⁸⁴ This

⁶⁸¹ Guillermo Tovar y de Teresa, Miguel León-Portilla, Silvio Zavala, *La Utopía Mexicana del Siglo XVI: Lo bello, lo verdadero y lo bueno* (Mexico, 1992), p.54

⁶⁸² A. de Zorita *Relación de los señores de la Nueva España*, G. Vázquez ed. (Madrid, 1992), p.18f.

⁶⁸³ VEA, *Peralta*, Doc.1, 36&43.

⁶⁸⁴ J. L. Phelan *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*, (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1956), p.28 and p.50; C. Pérez de Bustamante *Don Antonio de Mendoza...*p.121.

attitude was generalised: Díaz del Castillo blamed the brutality of Peruvian *encomenderos* for the bad reputation of the institution in Spain;⁶⁸⁵ Mendoza sighed to the emperor in 1551 that there was more potential in New Spain than in Spain, but that too much interference was ruining everything.⁶⁸⁶ Juan Suárez de Peralta similarly claimed that 'She [New Spain] was unique and unrepeatable, before we find another Mexico and her land we will all meet... in the final judgement.'⁶⁸⁷ Motolinia aggressively defended the righteousness of New Spain's arrangements, including her support for perpetual *encomienda* in his letter of 1555 against the generalisations of Las Casas who was then writing from Spain. The successful presentation of New Spain's sense of exceptional righteousness made Las Casas concede that 'the only place where cruelties have diminished is in Mexico: there we find justice and public inhumanities are not tolerated, though tributary exactions are still immense and unbearable, but the homicides are not frequent';⁶⁸⁸ while Valderrama fretted that 'more is given to [the Indians] here than Las Casas asks for there'.⁶⁸⁹

This sense of New Spain's righteousness developed from the competition that surrounded the failed attempts at establishing a viceregal lordly autonomy in this period. Subsequent displays of patriotic righteousness attest to its effect on the internal political arrangements and self-justification of the land. Examples abound of this self-image from the idealisation in the 17th century 'enconchado series'— the first art of globalisation and

⁶⁸⁵ B. Díaz del Castillo, *Conquista...*pp.588-9

⁶⁸⁶ VEA, Mendoza, Doc.6.

⁶⁸⁷ J. Suárez de Peralta, *Tratado...* ch.XXII.

⁶⁸⁸ G. Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the 16th century*, Yale, 1948,pp.20-23.

⁶⁸⁹ CJV, p.68

themselves a symbol of New Spain's reach across the Pacific – of the *conquest* as a prefiguration of the parallel Mendocan 'republics' in Motecuhzoma's voluntary invitation for Cortés to rule beside him from an audience chamber with two parallel thrones;⁶⁹⁰ the criticisms of royal policy in ephemeral display;⁶⁹¹ Mexico City's identification with the allegory of 'the Pegasus';⁶⁹² or to the mixture of demands for both independence and social and racial justice in the struggle for Mexican independence, which one historian has described as '[t]he expression of Neo-Hispanic patriotism, whose roots were in the pro-indigenist struggles of bishop Palafox and the utopian Franciscan projects of the time of Hernán Cortés..⁶⁹³

⁶⁹⁰ 'Enconchado series', Prado Museum, inv. 00111.

⁶⁹¹ A. Cañeque, *The King's Living Image. The culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico*, New York, 2004, p.26f .

⁶⁹² G. Tovar de Teresa *El Pegaso*, (Spain 2006), *passim*.

⁶⁹³ M. Lucena Giraldo *Naciones de Rebeldes*, (Madrid 2010) , p. 122-3.

Part IV: Conclusions

Chapter 8: New Spain's Parasitic Civic Nobility

'Hunc librum legi Mexico año 1539' announces a final scribble in an annotated volume of a 1512 edition of Leon Battista Alberti's *de re aedificatoria*. A note in the lower margin of the front cover reveals the reader and proclaims his title: 'Es de Antonio de Mendoza, Visorrey'.⁶⁹⁴ For Alberti architecture dealt with more than aesthetics; it was a function of town planning, and towns expressed the politics and constitution of society.⁶⁹⁵ An orderly society was necessarily stable, hierarchical and specialised with each individual playing a teleological role within it. A town's buildings should echo this division and reinforce it in permanent structures. 'A certain type of building is convenient for the whole community, another for the principal citizens and another for the people... these division are drawn from the first rudiments of the philosophers',⁶⁹⁶ Alberti assured his readers. Since the revolution that led to the conquest of Tenochtitlan, establishing who deserved to be recognised as 'principal citizens' of New Spain had been the most pressing political issue for both the indigenous and Spanish populations. The success with which the viceroys mediated the competition for elite status led to the acceptance of viceregal authority over New Spain.

⁶⁹⁴ G. Tovar y de Teresa *La ciudad de México y la Utopía en el siglo XVI*, (Mexico 1987), p.71ff and his 'Antonio de Mendoza y el urbanismo en México' in *Cuadernos de arquitectura virreinal* 2:2-19, (Mexico 1984). The suggestion from the inclusion of the title is that he probably acquired this copy of Alberti's work at some point after arriving in Mexico to discharge his office in 1535.

⁶⁹⁵ F. Borsi *Leon Battista Alberti*, (Oxford 1977). p.14.

⁶⁹⁶ L. Battista Alberti *L'Architettura [de re aedificatoria]* (tr. Into Italian by Giovanni Orlandi). (Milan 1966), Bk. IV ch.1 p. 270.

Mendoza, who grew up in a lonely bastion of Spain's 'caballero renaissance' and near the ideal crusading *castrum* of Santa Fe, was already directing much of the physical and theoretical construction of New Spain in the year he finished reading Alberti's book. Mexico City was being rebuilt in earnest under the viceroy's auspices after a royal *cédula* dated 23rd August 1538 confirmed the episcopal and viceregal request to dismantle the old Mexica pyramids that Cortés had intended to leave standing 'for memory' amidst Alonso García Bravo's simple grid-iron plan retracing the ruined Tenochca scheme. In their place would rise the impressive new Spanish quarter, designed with straight wide avenues and buildings of uniform height, re-orientated to the rationale of cosmographers, like Alonso de Santa Cruz, the viceroy's friend and correspondent, for which '[Mendoza] brought with him many master craftsmen to ennoble his provinces, especially Mexico.'⁶⁹⁷ The 'Spanish' district of the island-city would stand separated from the 'Indian' quarters of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco giving physical expression to the viceroy's policy of recognising two parallel republics within the kingdom of New Spain.⁶⁹⁸

Almost uniquely amongst Spain's American territories the capital of New Spain did not stand on the sea-shore looking back to Spain or even on a navigable river. Instead it remained on the highland 'mountain-crowned' valley lake at the centre of the Nahuatl heartlands of Mesoamerica. Mexico City, the old indigenous seat of imperial power, endured as the capital of the 'kingdom of New Spain', facilitating a recognisable transition of imperial power in Mesoamerica. Construction became the most visible sign of the Spanish

⁶⁹⁷ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés the life of the conqueror by his secretary*. tr.&ed., Lesley Byrd Simpson, (California 1965), *Cortés*: p.405.

⁶⁹⁸ G. Tovar y de Teresa, 19 'Antonio de Mendoza y el urbanismo en México', *Cuadernos de arquitectura virreinal* 2:2-, Mexico 1984, passim.

presence throughout Mesoamerica and one of the most important activities in New Spain after the conquest. Similar architectural transformations as that undergone by Mexico City occurred first in the indigenous polities in the valleys of Mexico and Puebla-Tlaxcala, south to Oaxaca west to Michoacán, North to the plateaus from Xilotepec to Querétaro and then beyond as Spanish, indigenous and mixed settlements regrouped around large squares with civic buildings and new Christian centres of worship, often with fortress-like monasteries acting like outposts of an expanding, crusading, American Christendom. López de Gómara believed that like Santa Fe they were intended to resemble ancient Roman colonies.⁶⁹⁹ These urban centres became the physical expressions of the developing political culture of the 'kingdom of New Spain' whose viceregal style of government was increasingly particular to its circumstances.

The indigenous polities of New Spain did not rebuild their civic centres in their own ancestral style nor did the new Spanish urban centres look like the towns which the settlers had left behind in Europe;⁷⁰⁰ all followed the template of the new Mexico City. Inside their palaces and new civic buildings noble indigenous families re-affirmed their old power, while 'new men' from Spain expressed their newly-asserted status in similar ways to each other: both did so with expressions of loyalty to and legitimacy from the Habsburg dynasty that they quickly adapted from the developing look and language of the old imperial capital and its new viceregal court. The 'traditional' and 'charismatic' influence of Mexico City over Mesoamerica both helped to create viceregal authority and was renewed by it as the

⁶⁹⁹ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés the life of the conqueror by his secretary*. tr.& ed., Lesley Byrd Simpson, (California 1965) p.405.

⁷⁰⁰ F. Cervantes de Sálazar, *México en 1554 y tùmulo imperial* (Edmundo O'Gorman ed.) Mexico 1972, '2nd dialogue', *passim*.

viceroys established, from their court, a stable system for safeguarding political settlements in New Spain.

New arrivals certainly remarked on the peculiarity of New Spain. Viceroy Gastón de Peralta expressed his surprise at the workings of the government he had been sent to head. It involved not just an excessively large number of salaried officials but also *encomenderos* asking for offices in the 'servicio ordinario' that were a drain on the treasury. There were also powerful indigenous lords and pretentious friars whom he considered 'díscolos' even 'apóstatas'; with a seemingly unusual religiosity, and who expected to act as agents of the viceroy in governmental matters. The viceroy's personal authority seemed well entrenched even beyond his role as the crown's representative and his court and person much solicited by the inhabitants.⁷⁰¹ Other newly arrived commentators like the *visitadores* also expressed their surprise at how unusual, uncontrolled and unofficial the administration of New Spain appeared to be compared to what they had expected from the reports they received in the council of the Indies. Tello de Sandoval thought '20 leagues outside Mexico there is little justice or none at all...I am told that there are parts where the Indians consider as kings the *señores* (local Indian lords) and *encomenderos* of their towns and know no other king'⁷⁰². Valderrama meanwhile seemed shocked that the Indians in New Spain had been given 'much more than [Las Casas] asks for [in Spain]' particularly with regard to the recognition and attributes of their lordship.⁷⁰³

⁷⁰¹ VEA, 'Peralta', Doc. 2, *Memorial del marqués de Falces sobre las condiciones en México*. 23rd March 1567.

⁷⁰² AGI, Gobierno, Mexico, 68, R.12, N.34 Tello de Sandoval letter to prince Philip 19 September 1545.

⁷⁰³ CJV, 1563-1565 p.68.

New Spain was never a blank slate where the crown 'starting from scratch' was 'better placed than in the Iberian Peninsula, with its accretion of historic municipal privileges and corporate rights, to create a system of government directly dependent on imperial control'.⁷⁰⁴ Spanish *conquistadores*, settlers and officials brought with them traditional European expectations that the crown did not ignore; consequently they enjoyed many rights and privileges that the vast majority of their fellow countrymen in Spain, particularly those of comparable backgrounds, did not possess, like exemption from tribute which likened them to *hidalgos* and emphasised their autonomy from formal bonds of vassalage to any lord but the king. More importantly most of the population of New Spain, for most of the time, lived and operated under the legal norms and political traditions of their own indigenous polities. As we have seen in preceding chapters their autonomy was far greater than that of Iberian municipal units as was their variety of customs. The polity authorities were not directly dependent on imperial control nor did the viceregal administration in Mexico City have the means of exerting much control over them without their consent.⁷⁰⁵ Indigenous polities trusted primarily in the unofficial authority of mendicant friars and in personal negotiation with the viceroy to arrange those matters like the propagation of Christianity, the collection of tribute, maintenance of peace and participation in war that could be considered of imperial concern. Their autonomy was respected so long as it did not overtly conflict with loyalty to the crown or Christian doctrine; this practice was recognised by the crown in the New Laws.⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰⁴ J.H Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (Yale 2006) p. 127.

⁷⁰⁵ Ch.5.

⁷⁰⁶ M.J. Sarabia Viejo. *Don Luis de Velasco*, p.27.

A political settlement between the viceroy and the elites of New Spain was the only way of ensuring their indispensable cooperation in governing New Spain. Such a settlement involved an interaction between the interests of crown, viceroys and elites of New Spain. From these interests arose not a modern bureaucracy or a 'feudal' regime but what I define as a 'parasitic civic nobility' that governed New Spain for the Habsburg monarchy and for themselves: New Spain's elites, including the viceroys, were maintained by tribute and formed part of socially circumscribed groups who served the commonwealth with their person. But their status was justified by criteria that related to civic virtues above other justificatory elements like blood, law or tradition. These civic virtues were determined by a combination of Spanish and Mesoamerican 'ideals of life' and traditions that were interpreted by the preferences of the viceroys within the limits of legitimacy set by the crown.

Law

Royal legislation has been credited with shaping New Spain and explaining how and why it could be governed from Spain. However the assumptions behind this thesis do not accord with how viceregal government operated.

One 'structuralist' historian, in a meticulous recent study of New Spain's legislation and its role in the formation of authority and 'the state', has classified the period up to 1564 as only 'formative'. She considers much of the legislation and most of the royal commands devised in Spain as vague, overlapping or contradictory and she categorises the following thirty years as merely a 'consolidation' of what came before.⁷⁰⁷ Nor does the classification

⁷⁰⁷ L. Semboloni, *La construcción de la autoridad virreinal en Nueva España, 1535-1595*. Vol.2, p.296ff 'Conclusions' (unpublished doctoral thesis, El Colegio de México 6th November 2007).

of New Spain as merely an appendage of Castile, governed by the same laws unlike Habsburg brother-kingdoms such as Naples that were governed by *aeque principaliter*, stand up to scrutiny.⁷⁰⁸ She has argued that the development of the corpus of legislation that 'defined the state' in New Spain and even the territorial extent that viceregal authority encompassed were not the result of a rational effort by Spanish *letrados* to create the rules for an imperial administration but rather a process that developed from the daily issue of viceregal commands, judgements and appointments.⁷⁰⁹

These conclusions are important in highlighting the self-contained nature of New Spain's legislative and political practice and the importance of the viceroy's commands as valid internal legal precedent for New Spain. They also suggest that there were no clear-cut rules or boundaries of authority in place from Spain to define the operation of administrators in New Spain and consequently that the administration of New Spain was not a 'modern' bureaucracy of the sort described by Weber.⁷¹⁰

However, the more general conclusions drawn from this investigation, and others like it, miss the larger point by subjecting their arguments to narratives that lead to the development of the 'state'.⁷¹¹ The legal ambiguities discovered by Semboloni were not, as another structuralist historian has put it, the 'blemishes' and '*ad hoc* parts' of the 'machine',

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid* p.4; together with 'El cursus de la jurisdicción letrada en las Indias (s. XVI-XVII) in *Un gobierno de un mundo: virreinos y audiencias en la América hispana*, F. Barrios coord., (Castilla-La Mancha, 2004) *passim*.

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid*.

⁷¹⁰ M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, Gunther Roth and Claus Wittich eds. (London, 1978), p.212ff.

⁷¹¹ Eg. H. Pietschmann *El estado y su evolución al principio de la colonización española de América* (Mexico, 1989); and Ethelia Ruiz Medrano *Reshaping New Spain: government and private interests in the colonial bureaucracy, 1531-1550*. (Colorado 2006); Susan Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture*. (Oklahoma, 1995).

its 'frictions making it creak and groan' despite its modern intention which kept it nonetheless 'undeniably running'.⁷¹² The intention of royal legislation was not the creation of the 'state' or the formulation of abstract rules for a bureaucracy. Investigating the operations of the law and judicial systems in practice suggests that the laws did not exist in the realm of 'the state' independently of the sovereign or authorised individuals in Mexico City: there was no neat division between the 'Spanish state, the colonial bureaucracy and society'.⁷¹³ Rather as Timothy Anna has noted with regards to the end of the viceregal period:

The king was the creator of the law and could ignore the law in the name of equity if he chose. In his ultimate role of moderator, the king could, and did hear petitions from any level of his subjects and address his subjects directly. As moderator he could hear petitions against the actions he himself had taken as administrator and law-giver. This was made possible by the fact that the kingdoms were considered to be the patrimonial property of the Crown, of the *Señor*.⁷¹⁴

In preceding chapters we have seen how the sense of a direct link between the king and his enfranchised Mesoamerican subjects encouraged the participatory ethos of the Spanish monarchy, prompting the elite of New Spain, for example, define themselves optimistically in letters as the king's '*criados*': idealised household dependents serving the king's interests with their person. This entailed the responsibility to advise him if they felt his actions were not in his own best interests. Royal legislation and the rules that defined its

⁷¹² P. Bakewell in *Spain Europe and the Atlantic World Essays in Honour of J.H. Elliott*, Richard L. Kagan and Geoffrey Parker eds. (Cambridge, 1995) p.314.

⁷¹³ Eg. H. Pietschmann, *El estado y su evolución al principio de la colonización española de América*, (Mexico, 1989), p.182.

⁷¹⁴ T.E. Anna, *The fall of the Royal Government in Mexico City*, (Nebraska 1978), p.xvi.

administration had little authority in their own right while trusted individuals like the viceroys had increasing authority as representatives and advisors to the king.

As we have seen the number and purpose of offices in New Spain like *corregimientos*, *alcaldías* and *tenientazgos* and the accompanying creation of the *quitas y vacaciones* fund⁷¹⁵ was the result of the viceroys' strategy of becoming the most important patrons in New Spain rather than any bureaucratic logic. A similar motivation can be seen behind the viceroy's *de facto* enactment of the notion of two parallel republics with themselves as the lynchpin. Viceregal interests in the practice of government influenced even the legal development of the administration of New Spain.

Visitas and *residencias* have been interpreted as the judicial-administrative mechanisms that enforced the rules of a modern bureaucracy and the laws of the state. In their proper context they should be seen as a political vehicle used to try to effect a change of individuals in power; of undesirable policies; or merely as a means of political control. *Visitas* or *residencias* launched by the crown and by the authorities in New Spain had similar objectives. Consequently Nuño de Guzmán explained to the distant crown that the language used to condemn him served political motives in New Spain more than the exposition of truthful facts: 'I beg that you do not look at the surface of what appears in these charges' he pleaded with the king from prison in 1537 'but to the manner which has been followed in taking them, and the animus that existed in taking them... and the nature of this land where

⁷¹⁵ See ch.6.

if a hundred witnesses are needed to condemn one, they can find them, and the same again to save him.⁷¹⁶

Reference to the law was only one element in establishing the legitimacy and merit of an individual's actions: the overriding benchmark was the benefit their actions and intentions accrued to the crown. Judicial proceedings were above all an investigation into the virtue and trustworthiness of the accused where his adherence to or interpretation of the law was only one factor in the judgement of his worth. A royal servant's discharge of his duties may have included favouritism, nepotism or personal enrichment but these were not objectionable in themselves unless they were shown to have been committed to the detriment of the crown, in which case they were classified as corruption.

Mendoza was particularly offended by the public nature of the *visitas* because it highlighted its political intention of discrediting him.⁷¹⁷ For those that the *visitador* involved in the process, participation became a political act in itself. All sorts of individuals acquired a public forum with a direct channel to the crown through which they were encouraged to express their grievances against the viceroy or any rival or enemy within New Spain and also to address fundamental matters relating to the nature of government. Hortuño de Ibarra for example explained to the crown that the attacks he suffered for his friendship with Velasco

⁷¹⁶ CDI, Vol. 2.107, 13 February 1537.

⁷¹⁷ AGI Gobierno, Mexico, 92. Antonio de Mendoza to his brother Bernaldino de Mendoza president of the Council of the Indies. No date. Folded between other letters.

and his recent appointment as *veedor* and *factor* over García de Albornoz were part of an internal competition for power that had merely been exacerbated by the *visita*.⁷¹⁸

Judicial proceedings served as a weather-vane for the favour in which the individuals being investigated were held by the crown.

...When one wanted to overthrow a *valido* or a patron, he was accused of corruption, and the monarch was incited into organising a *visita* of the body controlled by said person... The true purpose of *visitas* was not to cure the administration, as we might say nowadays, but to change the group holding government power.⁷¹⁹

As we have seen political considerations at court motivated the launch of the *visitas* after the crown had come to lose full confidence in its viceroys. The loss of confidence in Mendoza's intentions coincided with the death or eclipse of his friends, patrons and allies at court, most notably the death of Queen Isabella, and the eclipse of Los Cobos. These combined with the presence of a resentful Cortés at court and the rise of a new clique around Prince Philip, to whom, tellingly, Tello de Sandoval's dispatches were normally addressed.⁷²⁰ Tejada noted a clear political motivation behind Tello de Sandoval's method of conducting his investigation of Mendoza's administration. The personal animosity between Cortés and Mendoza was well known as was the former's resentment against the royal officials and *oidores* who had supported the viceroy in their struggles. The *visita* combined the crown's interest in justifying Mendoza's removal from office with its desire to suppress the more patrimonial elements of the administration of New Spain. Mendoza, the *oidores*

⁷¹⁸ AGI, Gobierno, México, 323, 1st May 1562 Hortuño de Ibarra : AGI Gobierno MEx, 323/1525-1572 Cargos y expedientes de oficiales reales de México.

⁷¹⁹ J.Martínez Millán, *Instituciones y elites de poder en la monarquía hispana Durante el Siglo XVI*, (Madrid, 1992) p. 20.

⁷²⁰ See ch.6.

and highest royal officials of his administration had served at the pleasure of the king on the assumption of perpetuity and even of passing on their offices to their descendants as had happened with officials like Salazar and Albornoz. Tejada argued that salaried officials and *oidores* could consider their 'benefice as if it were perpetual with the rights of a citizen (*vecino*) and can therefore own property and businesses like in other *audiencias* and *councils*.'⁷²¹ Mendoza was also associated with the creation of perpetual and hereditary *encomienda* and the *visita* was also intended to attack that aspect of New Spain.

As a titled nobleman Cortés lost nothing from an end to perpetual *encomienda* or the prohibitions against the viceroy, *oidores* and officials. Instead the *marquesado* would have become relatively richer, more stable and consequently more preponderant in New Spain increasing its relative importance as a centre for the distribution of patronage when compared to the viceregal regime. Similarly Tello de Sandoval gained the most credit with the Council of the Indies from accomplishing his original commission of implementing the New Laws or whatever seemed most favourable to the crown without the need for considering local interests. Tello de Sandoval's case was thrown out before it was judged, but his career did not seem to suffer and by the time Jerónimo de Valderrama's *visita* was organised Tello de Sandoval had risen to the presidency of the Council of the Indies. This suggests that he achieved the objective of discrediting Mendoza and giving the crown the justification it sought for removing him from New Spain.

Mendoza's discredit affected the nature of the administration of New Spain by allowing the crown to justify changes to the operation and rights of its salaried officials,

⁷²¹ ENE, vol. V, Doc 260 lic. Tejada to the marqués de Mondejar president of the council of the Indies. 24 April 1547. p.27ff.

oidores and other patrimonial elements in New Spain that had become associated with Mendoza's regime. The instructions given to Velasco forbade the viceroy, royal officials or *oidores* to own property or engage in business in New Spain. The *oidores* continued to serve without official time limits but after Velasco's appointment they were rotated more often than before. The royal officials and viceroys still seemed to enjoy longer tenure and to be able to expect that their appointment would be for life. This may reflect their generally higher social status than the *oidores*.

The intentions of the crown might not always accord with the popular perception of the merit of the accused, but rather with courtly or metropolitan political interests. In Spain the politically motivated trial of Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba 'el gran capitán' had led to the popular expression, 'las cuentas del capitán' (the captain's reckoning), to denote the unfair suspicion of a faithful vassal.⁷²² In New Spain there was a similar regret by many over the effects of Tello de Sandoval's *visita* on Mendoza's authority. Some of Mendoza's fiercest critics during the *visita* - *encomenderos* like Bernaldino Vázquez de Tapia or Andrés de Tapia, who had not benefited from Mendoza as much as they believed they deserved - realised this only too late before they began eschewing Tello de Sandoval. It also helped that the political pressure that the *visita* placed on Mendoza's authority meant that he became more willing to engage with and distribute patronage to the most discontented individuals. Their regret became evident when they all participated in the last epistolary lobbying campaign by New Spain's elite to revindicate Mendoza and name his son Francisco as his successor.⁷²³

⁷²² G. Valdecasas. *Fernando el Católico y el Gran Capitán*, (Granada, 1988), p.23f.

⁷²³ C. Pérez de Bustamante: *Los Origenes del Gobierno Virreinal en las Indias Españolas – Don Antonio De Mendoza Primer Virrey De La Nueva Espana. (1535-1550)* (Santiago, 1928), Docs XXIII and XXVII.

Valderrama's *visita* had similar origins and intention. The crown only reacted to complaints about Velasco after Martín Cortés had risen in favour with Philip II and declared his desire to return to Mexico. Personal and courtly considerations also prompted Philip II to settle with one stroke the disputes surrounding the number of vassals of the *marquesado* that had haunted Hernán Cortés' authority. Martín was guaranteed autonomous wealth and status in New Spain with a security that his father had never enjoyed. This not only went against Velasco's advice but also challenges the notion that Philip II favoured centralising bureaucratic government. It suggests instead that, at least before the personal and political tragedies of the mid 1560s, Philip was not averse to employing powerful 'intimate representatives' from court (the Duke of Alba in the Netherlands is another example) to achieve his objectives. Valderrama succeeded in discrediting the mendicant orders whose influence, along with the whole Mendocan system, declined after the *visita*.⁷²⁴

Political considerations at the Spanish court affected the authority of the viceroys more profoundly than the formal rules describing their offices. In New Spain the internal arrangements were generally satisfactory as the testimony of most witnesses from the *visitas* demonstrates and the defenders of the viceregal regime insisted.

Visitas also served to announce a change or redefinition of royal policy by discrediting the ministers that had abided by the previous expectations and thus absolving the crown of accusations of inconsistency, misjudgement in its choice of appointments or injustice. The crown used Tello de Sandoval's *visita* to justify denying Mendoza his rational expectation of retaining the viceroyalty in his line despite rewarding the viceroy's brother's line with the governorship of Granada. Valderrama's *visita* would have had similar

⁷²⁴ J.L. Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*, (Los Angeles, 1956), p.39.

consequences for Velasco but for his premature death. These *visitas* aimed to discredit the viceroys individually as well as justifying changes to the operation of government in New Spain generally.

Both the viceroys and the *audiencias* could launch or oversee similar judicial investigations within New Spain with similar intentions. Mendoza and Velasco oversaw the trials of the administrators that had preceded them and used the opportunity to stamp their authority over them. Equally proceedings like the one Mendoza attempted against Alvarado and Pérez de la Torre or more dramatically the manoeuvrings and conflicts occasioned by Lebrón de Quiñones' *visita* of New Galicia were viceregal attempts at asserting their dominance over the distant reaches of their kingdom or affecting royal policy.⁷²⁵

Judicial proceedings conducted within New Spain acquired particular attributes. The regular trials of *residencia*, conducted of officials like *corregidores* after they finished their term in office, were the most common form of judicial enquiry in New Spain. Their regularity combined with the general political attributes of such judicial proceedings helped to foster the *sui generis* legitimising ethos of the viceregal regime in Mexico City. Alonso de Sosa and other royal officials explained, for example, that the *corregidores* tended to act in the interests of the indigenous towns they were sent to administer, rather than the royal treasury, because 'they aimed to keep the Indians happy for anything that they might need from them and because they might ask for their support in their *residencias* and for this reason they are always their partisans and favour their affairs.'⁷²⁶ The *residencias* of the

⁷²⁵ J.H. Parry, *The audiencia of New Galicia*, p.72-87; Ch.6.

⁷²⁶ AGI, Gobierno, México, 323, 2nd March 1552. Alonso de Sosa, Antonio de la Cadena y Juan Velázquez de Salazar.

corregidores did not prompt an enforcement of the bureaucratic rules that these salaried officials should follow but rather fostered the political culture of New Spain by creating political legitimacy from the civic virtues of the discharge of their duties, expressed through the goodwill of their charges, and in accordance with the perceived attitudes of the viceroy and *audiencia*. Indeed Sosa, like others, argued that the administration could do without *corregidores* and with far fewer 'three or four' officials to oversee greater districts.⁷²⁷ These and other similar calls were never heeded or implemented because the logic of New Spain's viceregal regime did not strive for bureaucratic efficiency but for viable political arrangements that satisfied the needs of New Spain's parasitic civic nobility and the viceroy which headed it. Offices like *corregimiento* became an essential component for the survival of the parasitic civic nobility.

Some studies of this period have concluded that this was purely a form of corruption, inevitable companion to any imperfect human institution, however modern the intention, with the added sting that: '...corruption in America took on the character of a system and it will be necessary to explain it in terms of a more or less permanent tension between the Spanish state, the colonial bureaucracy and colonial society.'⁷²⁸ One recent study has concluded that this corruption was accentuated in particular by the fact that viceroys rather than legal experts like *oidores* ruled over New Spain.⁷²⁹ Acknowledging the role of legislation - not as the framework for state-building or the rules for the establishment of a modern bureaucracy - but as an element in establishing the legitimacy of

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁸ H. Pietschman, *El estado y su evolución al principio de la colonización española de América*, p.182.

⁷²⁹ E. Ruiz Medrano *Reshaping New Spain: government and private interests in the colonial bureaucracy, 1531-1550*. (Colorado 2006) Conclusion, *passim*.

competing political interests and ideas about justice and good government of the time, allows us to avoid the false dichotomy between state bureaucracy and society. It helps to avoid the perception that there were firm rules that the viceroys and others were purposefully breaking for mere self-enrichment. The promulgation of royal legislation cannot explain on its own the creation of either royal or viceregal authority over New Spain without understanding how its implementation affected the practice of government. Laws did not shape the kingdom or create the state; nor did they create a modern rule-bound bureaucracy.

Tribute

New Spain's elite should be considered 'parasitic' because they maintained themselves principally from the tribute collected from New Spain's labourers. The elite became increasingly defined by its role in government but those involved were not paid a salary that was drawn from, or generally determined by, the treasury of Castile as might be expected from a modern bureaucracy unattached to the land they were sent to govern. On the other hand the members of this elite did not serve on a purely voluntary basis by relying on their private wealth (except in a very few cases) as recommended by the classical precepts of public service and the example of contemporary Spanish titled noblemen with an ethos of service and the wealth to practise it.

The centrality of tribute (in kind, money or labour) remained a practical necessity for the sustenance of New Spain's elites as it had been in pre-Columbian times. The crown had no means of substituting tribute as the way to remunerate its administrators and sustain experiments like Puebla, where Spanish settlers were encouraged to become self-sufficient on their own labour and enterprise, but failed in their original intention and only the

support of neighbouring indigenous polities and indigenous immigration to the city allowed the town to survive. A reliance on tribute was also an ideological choice with regards to its distribution as a means of rewarding the crown's servants. Distance from Spain, the 'original sin' of the conquest and the uncertain social origins of most Spanish settlers discouraged the crown from creating a hereditary Spanish nobility based on entailed patrimonial and tributary titles in New Spain. It nonetheless recognised its responsibility to reward them for their ongoing services with the tribute that specific towns had theoretically paid to Motecuhzoma and now paid the king. The crown's use of tributary grants as a reward was a means of reaffirming the *encomendero's* lack of lordly autonomy. Its indigenous subjects, whose traditional and dynastic claims were stronger than those of the Spaniards though not unblemished from the confusion of the conquest, were also distrusted for their alien cultural and religious differences and the novelty of their loyalty and vassalage to the Habsburgs.

For the king's Spanish vassals, public remuneration and tribute exemption implied a reward for civic or administrative merits. Cervantes observed that in Spain administrative service was easier to reward than military service '...because the former are recompensed at the expense of the public, by giving them employments, which of necessity must be allowed on those of their profession, but the latter cannot be gratified otherwise than at the cost of the master that employs them...'⁷³⁰ The distinction did not exist in New Spain where the tribute payers bore the whole cost of sustaining the Spanish elite, suggesting that any such

⁷³⁰ M. Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, P.A. Motteux trans., (Hertfordshire, 1993), p.278.

distinction had become blurred. All tribute collected in New Spain nominally belonged to the crown. In assigning it to Spanish settlers it was rewarding a civic service.

It also equated all Spaniards in Mesoamerica because the mere act of settlement in New Spain was considered a virtue in itself. The Spanish population was exempt from paying tribute but it was expected to fulfil certain duties: poverty, marriage and procreation was justification enough for the crown to grant deserving settlers *mercedes* in the shape of offices with salaries that represented a proportion of the tribute for their sustenance. Wealth on the other hand could disqualify others from receiving these rewards: regarding Velasco's arrangements, for example, Valderrama complained that 'Of those mentioned [in the list of office holders he drew up] most could be excused from office, some because they have very good Indians [in *encomienda*] and others because they are incapable...'⁷³¹ restating the parasitic and civic justifications for Spanish settlement and office-holding.

The indigenous elites sustained themselves from their private estates and the remainder of the tribute generated by their community after whatever proportion was due for the Spanish population was subtracted and taken to Mexico City or the relevant *encomendero*. This corresponded to some extent to pre-colombian imperial traditions. It also meant that the tributary incomes of the Spanish and indigenous elites were inversely proportional to each other. The parasitic dependence of the Spanish and indigenous elites on tribute encouraged a sense of competition between and amongst them to secure the tribute available.

⁷³¹ CJV, p. 20.

Inevitably this competition for tributary rights should be seen as part of the more general definition of boundaries between the indigenous and Spanish 'republics'. In 1563 for example when the issue of perpetuity of *encomienda* and indigenous tributary dues seemed to be returning to political debate (with Vasco de Puga's new assessments; criticism of the viceroy by the *oidores*; Montúfar's attacks on mendicant authority; the arrival of Martín Cortés and news of Valderrama's visit) several indigenous lords of New Spain proposed to Philip II that in exchange for a *servicio* of 2,400,000d to be paid over 5 years all Indian lands would to be placed under direct royal-viceregal administration and not *encomienda*. A friar and Zorita would oversee and guarantee the implementation of the various points of the contract.⁷³² It echoed similar attempts by the *encomenderos* of Peru for instance to offer a bankrupt Philip II a similar subsidy in exchange for perpetuity of *encomienda*. The appeal is emblematic of the self-perception of the indigenous nobility and of the continued jostling for power between the elites of the two competing 'republics'.

Court and patronage

The crown accepted the principle that its share of tributary income should be distributed by the administration of Mexico City almost in its entirety to deserving Spanish settlers. In any case apart from the stamped silver *quinto real* the tributary wealth of New Spain was not easily moveable. The equation between royal *mercedes* and personal services and the theoretical link between serving the crown in person and noble status meant that the granting of rewards was a sign of recognition of an individual's status and his enfranchisement into the political nation of New Spain. All the attributes of this kind of

⁷³² *Felipe II y el oficio de Rey: La fragua de un imperio*, J.R. Gutiérrez, E. Martínez Ruiz, J. González Rodríguez coords., 'Poder e iglesia en la Nueva España: La deisputa del Diezmo', p.838f.

recognition could last only as long as the term of office, the length of commission, or the recognition of subsidy-worthy merit granted to them by viceregal command.

New Spain's 'original sin' meant that there was no established hierarchy supported by entailed wealth, autonomous rights or the full recognition of its status by the crown. Instead recognition of elite status became inextricably related to viceregal patronage. I have shown in preceding chapters how the viceroys attempted to concentrate in their persons the ability to dispense enfranchising patronage throughout New Spain. The forms their patronage took included: temporary offices (such as the development and extension of *corregimiento*, *alcaldías*, *tenientazgos* and other Spanish offices and the creation and ratification of indigenous offices, most importantly the *gobernador*); monetary disbursements (through the *quitas y vacaciones* fund, loans from the treasury); tribute assessments for indigenous polities (which affected the income of *encomenderos* and more importantly the income of the indigenous lords of those polities and indirectly the friars as well); land distribution (by encroaching on Indigenous and Spanish municipal rights of land distribution); and various other forms of official recognition to individuals (like knighthoods, swords and other displays of 'bastard feudalism' to both Spaniards and Indians). The parasitic dependence on tribute meant that the viceroys were able to extend their authority in accordance with their ability to appropriate royal prerogatives such as appointing offices and controlling the treasury in Mexico City.

All officials, including the viceroys, as well as unofficial agents of government, like *encomenderos* or indigenous lords or friars, ultimately held their status by selection or ratification from the crown. The viceroys (*pro-rex* when rendered in latin) acquired many of the attributes of the king on the ground in the same way that the proconsuls of Rome had

many of the attributes of the sovereign Roman citizenry over the provinces. In both cases they were ultimately dependent on the sovereign authority in the metropolis and in both cases they were its most important but not its only agents and representatives. Other authorised individuals could still expect to have access to the crown directly over the head of the viceroy.⁷³³ Naturally the monarch reserved the right to override the viceroy or to make his own appointments; but as the crown's most important representative in New Spain, the viceroy was also the king's most trusted advisor on matters pertaining to New Spain. His advice, his selections and appointments played an important part in the royal decision-making and legislative process so long as he was able to keep the king's trust, rather than merely relying on his viceregal title.

The offices of New Spain were granted according to courtly-political not bureaucratic, traditional or legal considerations, but there were problems with this system that troubled many observers. Andrés de Tapia, who had not been close to Mendoza but rallied to his defence after Tello de Sandoval's *visita*, said of the viceroy that 'he honoured everyone, was slow to anger and never harmed anyone, but if he could be accused of anything it would be of doing more for some than for others.'⁷³⁴ By describing the viceroy in this way to the crown, he was defending him from the principal charges that Tello de Sandoval had laid against him: in admitting that Mendoza had honoured everyone he was implying that the viceroy had fulfilled his fundamental role as the guarantor of status to the deserving; in claiming that he had not lost his temper or actively sought to harm anyone he

⁷³³ F. Jay Moreno, 'The Spanish Colonial System: A Functional Approach.' *Western Political Quarterly* 20 (June, 1967): 308-20

⁷³⁴ C. Pérez de Bustamante, *Don Antonio de Mendoza...* (Santiago 1928), p.10.

was exonerating him of the charge of possessing a tyrannous personality ruled by angry emotions. Only Tapia's exclusion from the full extent of the viceroy's favour still rankled.

Viceregal favouritism was an inescapable aspect of the courtly style of 'government by confidence' that the concentration of power in the person of the viceroy created. It was also in part a consequence of the elites' own political struggles. The viceroys were not sovereign and they needed to justify their preferences to the elites of New Spain and to the crown. This was particularly pressing given the uncertainty of legitimacy in New Spain and the competition for rewards. The viceroys had to show that their favour served the interests of the crown and not just their own, which was difficult to do since there were identifiable links of kinship or friendship between the viceroys and his favourites - something the *visitadores* charted meticulously, - and also because the power of patronage that the viceroys had accumulated meant that almost anyone they rewarded could be considered a *de facto* client. The worse than zero-sum mentality of New Spain made such favouritism particularly resented (see note 737 below).

The viceroys' main justification for the logic behind their preferences in the distribution of their patronage emphasised civic virtue and their right to determine how best to foster it as a result of their experience of New Spain. This harked back to theoretical 'first rudiments of the philosophers' as laid out in an ethos of noble service found in European and pre-hispanic Mesoamerican cultures. Crusading Catholic ideals and aspirations to ancient uncluttered Christian piety that the friars added to this discourse also played a part.⁷³⁵ The viceroys' most effective and trusted agents deserved greater rewards

⁷³⁵ Ch.7.

because their contributions to the 'republic' were greater than those of others. This was legitimate so long as it did not impinge on the basic rights of the more excluded. Those closest to the viceroys were given the greatest responsibilities and opportunities for service. Their subsequent wealth, demonstrable experience and consequently merit allowed them even greater opportunities of noteworthy service in the future. For example, the young Francisco de Ibarra was allowed enormous scope to carve out an autonomous governorship in New Vizcaya because the Ibarra were close to the viceroys, much to the chagrin of old *conquistadores* who had carved out the North-West frontier in New Galicia like Diego de Colio.⁷³⁶

The importance of the viceregal court meant that its ethos was adopted by the elites that were vying for its favour. The mendicants contributed much of the idealistic and crusading element to New Spain's ethos and they were instrumental in transmitting it and its benchmarks of legitimacy to indigenous lords across New Spain. The governing elite's ethos became increasingly civic and its motivation in complying with its ideals was competition for viceregal favour and the limited rewards it could provide.

Montaigne restated in one of his essays a commonplace that had shaped people's imagination since classical times, when he wrote that 'no profit is ever made except at somebody else's loss.'⁷³⁷ It is a mind-set that has more recently been described as a zero-sum game. The parasitic political nation of New Spain was aware that it was living through a

⁷³⁶ J.H. Parry, *La audiencia de la Nueva Galicia*, (Cambridge, 1948), p.89f.

⁷³⁷ M. Montaigne, *The Complete Essays* 22. 'One man's profit is another man's loss' M.A Screech tr., (London 1991), p.121. Montaigne seems to have used Seneca's *De Beneficiis* as the principal source for this essay and quoted Lucretius as well. These references illustrate how ancient and deeply engrained was the notion of living in a 'zero-sum game' world throughout the western conceptual tradition arguably until the intellectualization of the industrial revolution.

situation that was even more desperate as periods of severe demographic decline recurred throughout the sixteenth century. Tributary contributions from indigenous polities dropped continually as the periodic return of devastating epidemics to different regions caused terrible dislocations. The viceregal administration responded by lowering the tribute assessments of the share demanded by Mexico City to keep the good will and assure the status of the indigenous lords.⁷³⁸ The monetary value of tributary income received by the Spaniards increased in this period in response to rapid price inflation.⁷³⁹ Tribute was still paid primarily in kind but it was given an estimated monetary value by the officials in Mexico City. The produce was either consumed in Mexico City or sold at market to convert it into coin.⁷⁴⁰ This explains the apparently large increase in tributary income throughout the period: less produce was arriving in Mexico City but its monetary value was greater. By the end of our period the royal officials claimed that the prices of some products had risen four-fold in the 42 years in which their official salaries had remained unchanged.⁷⁴¹ Officials, indigenous lords, and encomenderos all complained of decreasing incomes that were inadequate to their expectations.

On the other hand more of the imperial tribute was taken directly to the royal treasury in Mexico City rather than paid to individual *encomenderos* or officials. The viceroys re-distributed the tribute to *encomenderos*, officials and worthy claimants from Mexico City. Political competition for status and a share of the tribute became an essential condition of

⁷³⁸ VEA 'Mendoza' Doc. 5, *El provecho y renta principal es la que dan los Españoles.*

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁰ VEA, 'Mendoza' doc.2.

⁷⁴¹ AGI Gobierno México, 323, Hortuño de Ibarra 8th March 1565.

New Spain's civic nobility. Mendoza claimed that not too long after he took up the viceroyalty there were more worthy claimants with similar justifications for rewards than available offices.⁷⁴² In 1552 the royal officials explained that 'the ambition that many people have to command in the land is very great both in temporal and religious matters...'⁷⁴³ Similarly the post-conquest *Huehuehtlahtolli* urged office-holders to 'Only tell the truth, that which is straight with regards to whether you can accomplish a mission or if it is impossible; but don't proclaim it half-heartedly, or someone else might get the command... position yourself well, take charge of things well, fix them well, throw down roots...'⁷⁴⁴

As the royal officials also noted, '*corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores* especially... could not support themselves for more than half the year on their salaries and given their necessity the viceroy supplements their income from the *quitas y vacaciones* fund, as he also grants *mercedes* and subsidies to the sons and wives of worthy but impoverished *conquistadores* and settlers...'⁷⁴⁵ By the time viceroy Peralta arrived in Mexico City, the nexus between office-holding, sustenance and viceregal grace was obvious enough and different enough from the situation in Spain for him to comment upon it to the crown: 'and as the people of this land are in much need they do not wait for a man to come looking for them for this office [in this case a position in the viceregal bodyguard] and that they be given a salary but rather they come to one's presence and beg every day to be received.'⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴² VEA, Mendoza, Doc.5.

⁷⁴³ AGI Gobierno MEx, 323, Second bound section. 1st letter 2nd March 1552. Alonso de Sosa, Antonio de la Cadena y Juan Velázquez de Salazar.

⁷⁴⁴ M. León-Portilla *Huehuehtlahtolli: Testimonios de la antigua palabra* (Mexico, 1991) p. 181; M. León-Portilla *Bernardino de Sahagún: Pionero de la antropología*, (Mexico, 1999), p.131.

⁷⁴⁵ AGI Gobierno México, 323, 2nd April 1562.

⁷⁴⁶ VEA, 'Peralta' Doc.2, Memorial 23 March 1567.

The combination of scarcer income and its greater concentration in the treasury of Mexico City increased the viceroy's authority and the zeal of the competition amongst members of the aspiring elite to ingratiate themselves with the viceroys by conforming to viceregal expectations of virtue or by incorporating themselves into dynastic networks or webs of patronage and interdependence. We have seen in preceding chapters the form that this took and how the viceroy's household and court were at the centre of this process.

As previously noted distance from Spain, the 'original sin' of the conquest and the uncertain social origins of most of the Spanish settlers discouraged the crown from allowing the formation of a hereditary Spanish nobility based on entailed patrimonial and tributary titles in New Spain.⁷⁴⁷ Equally the indigenous nobility, whose traditional and dynastic claims were stronger than those of the Spaniards, were nevertheless distrusted for their alien cultural and religious differences and the novelty of their loyalty and vassalage to the Habsburgs. However the crown's distrust of traditional and hereditary status does not mean that its only alternative was to create a modern bureaucracy or even that it intended to. Contemporaries did not see themselves as part of a 'formative' period that progressed teleologically towards the creation of the state in the future; instead they beheld the past before them. Their ideals were shaped by the experience of the practice of viceregal government and authority in Mesoamerica and traditional notions of service to the commonwealth that translated across boundaries of *hidalguía* and *tlatocayotl*. It represents a sui-generis political arrangement that established a viable regime to govern New Spain: references to particular cities and polities as 'republics'; or to the parallel indigenous and Spanish 'republics' composing the 'Kingdom of New Spain' speak to their own idealised

⁷⁴⁷ R.Konetzke, 'La Formacion De La Nobleza Indias' *Estudios Americanos*, 3 (1951), 329-57.

definitions of New Spain. Dynastic or traditional elements of government were not suppressed out of a desire to create a modern state; nor was the role of royal officials and *oidores* enhanced to encompass governmental duties as a sign of a 'second conquest' by bureaucrats. Traditional European patterns of government were transformed, like everything else from Catholicism to food that came from Europe to New Spain, by dynamic and particular local circumstances.

It was understood that ideally any civic competition for office and honours would have taken place before the king in his court. As the sovereign authority and 'fount of all grace', it is possible to equate the crown with historical precedents and principles whereby, for instance, Roman patricians competed for office or proposed policies before the sovereign citizenry directly in the forum. For the principal inhabitants of New Spain distance from the royal court compelled them to replace personal appearances before the sovereign, first with what I describe as 'paper representation': the voluminous reports, letters, and 'proofs of merit' that they addressed to king and which form the bulk of the imperial archives. This form of presentation was not very effective on its own: 'every time a fleet sets sail from New Spain we write to your majesty informing him of those things we deem necessary and convenient to the royal service and others relating to our offices and duties...' explained the royal officials, but, as these correspondents admitted, the letters often remained unread and unanswered.⁷⁴⁸

In partial consequence, the most common and effective presentation of merit occurred at the viceregal court in Mexico City where the king's authority was represented

⁷⁴⁸ AGI Gobierno México, 323, 2 April 1562 c.6th bound collection of letters.

before them in a familiar courtly setting and where decisions and appointments could be made immediately. Zorita recalled in the palace 'A very broad corridor, of twenty arches over a large and beautiful garden, where the viceroy likes to go and give audience to the petitioners (*negociantes* literally: negotiators)'.⁷⁴⁹ The viceroy's efforts which I have charted in preceding chapters mean that the court of Mexico City substituted the royal court as the 'fount from which flowed all grace'.⁷⁵⁰ Its attributes within New Spain were to some extent even more important than those enjoyed by the royal court in Spain. Viceregal grace redeemed and guaranteed legitimate status for New Spain's elite. The offices and rewards in the gift of the viceroys became the surest way to enfranchisement and status; whereas the more clearly stratified Spanish society did not need such confirmation.

The viceroys were not senior civil servants sent merely to oversee the implementation of the law or the running of an alien, rule-bound and professional bureaucracy dispatched from Spain to govern its Mesoamerican empire; nor did they see themselves as such. They saw themselves as the king's alter-ego charged with governing the 'republics' of New Spain. Their attributes were primarily political, not bureaucratic. Studies have shown that viceregal commands originating within New Spain were far more numerous and important than those issued by the crown,⁷⁵¹ but their effectiveness depended on the mutual acceptance of authority between the viceroy and the recipient of the command, a condition that was established at court or through mutually trusted

⁷⁴⁹ A. Zorita, *Historia de la Nueva España*, Madrid 1909, an edition of *Relación de la Nueva España* 20th October, 1585, ch. 12, p. 176.

⁷⁵⁰ Paraphrasing *Instituciones y elites de poder en la monarquía hispana durante el siglo XVI*. J. Martínez Millán ed., (Madrid 1992), p. 17.

⁷⁵¹ L. Semboloni, *La construcción de la autoridad virreinal ...* Vol.2, p.296ff Conclusions.

viceregal representatives. The viceregal court's fundamental importance for the government of New Spain consolidated and enhanced the authority of the viceroys in their own right rather than merely as a representation of the king, so long as their practical pre-eminence was not challenged by a rival authority with equal credibility at court in Spain.

Even individuals with non-tributary sources of wealth, accrued from private property or entrepreneurial activities like silver mining, often relied on the supply of labour and security of tenure that was determined or at least influenced by political factors in Mexico City. Often those most able to invest in private enterprises and to safeguard their investment were those who held positions in the administration of New Spain or enjoyed the confidence of the viceroy. Access to loans from the treasury or accumulation of wealth from gaining access to a share of the tribute of New Spain were the only ways to raise the capital necessary to invest in private enterprises. Recognition in Mexico City of legitimate ownership of land and benefices was essential to secure tenure from rival claimants.⁷⁵² The silver miners in particular became closely associated with the viceroys because their activity provided the bulk of remunerations to the crown in Spain. The viceroys fostered their activity through allocations of labour and by guaranteeing security along the access routes that led to the burgeoning mining settlements in the Chichimeca frontier.⁷⁵³

Beyond these more recognisable governmental agents, mendicant friars had an unofficial role which is often overlooked perhaps because fewer official *cédulas* and instructions were addressed to them. They too competed for viceregal approval. Although

⁷⁵² E. Ruiz-Medrano *Reshaping New Spain: government and private interests in the colonial bureaucracy, 1531-1550*. (Colorado 2006) 'Conclusion'.

⁷⁵³ VEA, 'Mendoza' doc. 5; AGI Gobierno Mexico, 323, three consecutive letters from Mendoza to the King in defence of miners.

they did not seek formal office in the administration they contended for influence over indigenous polities and the sustenance they derived from them. This influence affected their importance to the viceroys, who had the power to grant licences for the construction of monasteries, and who could help define areas of influence amongst the mendicant orders and defend them against the encroachments of the secular clergy. The viceroys also supported some of the mendicants' allies or relatives through direct patronage of offices or subsidies for their services in their interactions with the indigenous polities: as Vázquez de Tapia observed 'little was denied them',⁷⁵⁴ by Mendoza, and Valderrama highlighted the most obvious cases in the lists he drew up of Velasco's suspect viceregal patronage.⁷⁵⁵ The way in which friars presented their worth to the viceroys, and in turn to the king and the Catholic hierarchy in Spain, was in terms of their civic achievements in reordering and pacifying the indigenous polities under their charge. The emphasis they placed on their governmental role was enough to become the cause of the most severe criticisms levied by the mendicants' detractors. The clear deviation from the usual roles of the mendicant clergy in Europe again suggests the particular nature of political culture in New Spain.

Debates regarding political legitimacy in New Spain were carried on both in Mexico City and between the enfranchised elites of New Spain and the crown in Spain. The resulting language of legitimacy and the legislation that followed it conditioned the behaviour and aspirations of recognised members of the elite and the nature of rewards that they hoped for.

⁷⁵⁴ AGI, Justicia, 258, testimony of Bernaldino Vázquez de Tapia, 17 May, q.9.

⁷⁵⁵ CJV, pp.206-254.

Valderrama argued that the accumulation of power in the hands of the person of the viceroy led to 'many inconveniences... since he is free to distribute everything there is to give in this kingdom. He distributes [these benefices] amongst his relatives and the *allegados* (dependants) of the oidores. They depend on the viceroy every day, and depending on him, a man needs to be especially upright to contradict the viceroy in his presence.'⁷⁵⁶ However, without rivals to their authority, the viceroys were able to keep New Spain remarkably peaceful both against Spanish factionalism and indigenous insurrection when compared to Peru, which shared similar characteristics, at a time when it had not established a viceregal regime able to assert its authority to the extent that the viceroys had achieved in New Spain.

Alternatives to the Viceroys

After Velasco's unexpected death on the 30th of July 1564, other crown agents, principally *letrados*, were authorised to rule over New Spain. Despite their earlier criticism of the viceregal regime, they were forced by the demands of the parasitic civic nobility to adopt similar methods to establish their authority and enforce their commands. Even then they never enjoyed the success, authority or stability that the viceroys were able to achieve. Their failures highlight some of the salient administrative techniques that explain viceregal success.

After Velasco's death official authority in New Spain splintered between the *oidores*, the *visitador* and the Royal Officials; less officially it was also contested between networks of patronage that coalesced around Martín Cortés, his kinsmen and adherents on the one

⁷⁵⁶ CJV, pp.75-77.

hand and Velasco's brother, son and adherents on the other. Unrestrained by the concentration of power enjoyed by Velasco the competition to attain the attributes of political authority and patronage that the viceroy had enjoyed intensified and led to the development of increasingly well-defined and antagonistic factions. A similar disharmony had occurred when Tello de Sandoval began to undermine Mendoza's authority except that Hernán Cortés had not been allowed to return to New Spain and Mendoza was still alive and in office. This created fewer challenges to viceregal support and avoided some of the worst potential instability as that which might have occurred by crass attempts at implementing the New Laws like those that led to Peru's rebellion.⁷⁵⁷

In 1564, it did not take long for the royal officials to begin complaining of the abuses and incompetence of the more recently arrived *oidores* like Vasco de Puga and of the alliance between Valderrama and Cortés.⁷⁵⁸ Hortuño de Ibarra and Fernando de Portugal had been close allies of Velasco and felt particularly aggrieved. They claimed that since 1560 the new *oidores* led by Puga had damaged Velasco's administration by their opposition and had offended the royal officials through various arbitrary judicial attacks on them. The accusations mirrored those levied against Velasco's alleged tyrannous preponderance.

Puga's first action was to seek to control all the viceroy's attributes of patronage over the distribution of funds that sustained so many agents of government, claiming that 'since the day when the viceroy died it fell on [the *audiencia*] to dispense these funds'. Much to the disgust of Velasco's allies the *audiencia* refused to allow distributions to

⁷⁵⁷ ENE, Vol. V, Doc 260 lic. Tejada to the marqués de Modéjar president of the council of the Indies. 24 April 1547 & my Ch.4.

⁷⁵⁸ AGI Gobierno México, 323, 10th Sept. 1564 Hortuño de Ibarra to the King.

individuals already selected by Velasco before he died, 'people that were convenient for the fulfilment of the viceroy's commands', from the *quitas y vacaciones* fund. Puga preferred to channel these funds to his own agents of government: 'he now wants to compel us to pay and reward the people that the *audiencia* commands and wants to make *mercedes* too and because we do not wish to carry this out they show us hatred.'⁷⁵⁹ Echoing the attacks made on the viceroy, Ibarra described Puga's allies as 'without merits and not of greater quality than those chosen by the viceroy nor chosen from among those that could have been provided for more justly.'⁷⁶⁰

Calls by the *audiencia* to end viceregal discretion for the distribution of funds were soon forgotten when they came to power. The *quitas y vacaciones* fund had become a fundamental instrument of government because it allowed for flexible distribution of patronage and compensation for services which had turned it into an essential attribute of authority in New Spain. Access to treasury funds in general had also become increasingly important because it allowed further disbursements in the shape of loans, not least to the viceroy himself⁷⁶¹ but such access could not be achieved without the the compliance of the treasury officials. This strained relations between the officials and the *audiencia* even more.

Complaints levied against the use of treasury funds prompted the crown to promulgate, along with viceroy Peralta's other instructions, a royal command forbidding the distribution of funds from the treasury without prior royal approval. The royal officials who had remained of the 'viceregal party', amongst others, insisted that 'it should be noted that

⁷⁵⁹ AGI Gobierno México, 323, Hortuño de Ibarra and the royal officials to the King, 24 May 1565.

⁷⁶⁰ AGI Gobierno México, 323 Hortuño de Ibarra et.al., 8th March 1565.

⁷⁶¹ AGI Gobierno México, 323 Hortuño de Ibarra et.al., second letter of two dated 10th Sept. 1564.

it matters to his majesty's royal service that the viceroy be allowed to liberate funds from these *quitas* because without them the viceroy will not have the funds to maintain and make *mercedes* to many who have served and serve because as there are not enough offices for all those who are deserving, they are subsidised with this fund...⁷⁶² The amounts available in the *quitas y vacaciones* fund represented a considerable proportion of the royal income.⁷⁶³ Even such legalistically minded experts as president Vasco de Puga and his *audiencia* had to rely on the instruments of patronage developed by the viceroys in order to govern New Spain.

Ibarra fretted that Valderrama was busy concerning himself with 'matters of government' while continuing to reside in the marquess's house. Valderrama interpreted his governmental activity as a service to the crown, potentially of more importance than finishing his *visita*, and he wanted to retain his power in New Spain: A proposal for the *visitador* and the *marqués* to share power in New Spain was mooted by several of Cortés' adherents. Valderrama's most important bid for recognition was attempting to raise the level of tribute paid by indigenous communities to the treasury. He attempted to implement his ideas in collaboration with Puga, who had already suggested similar higher assessments in previous *visitas* he conducted round New Spain in opposition to the policy of Velasco and his allies. All those individuals whom Valderrama had identified as Velasco's agents in the conclusions to his *visita* favoured lowering the Indian tribute: they included 'what they called in Mexico *alumbrados*' and others associated with the friars as well as several

⁷⁶² AGI Gobierno México, 323, 20th November 1566.

⁷⁶³ AGI Gobierno México, 323, 8th March 1565.

dependants of viceregal patronage.⁷⁶⁴ He deprived these of their commissions and their subsidies. The new agents appointed by Puga and Valderrama applied a different interpretation of the law in their assessments, counting indigenous lords and therefore their *terrazgueros* as tribute payers and refusing to consider other mitigating factors that the previous political negotiations at the viceregal court had allowed for.⁷⁶⁵

Meanwhile Martín Cortés was increasingly establishing himself as an unofficial patron of Spanish society in Mexico City. He displayed his dynastic insignia as he walked the streets with armed dependants to display his power, and he forced people he came across in the streets to follow him in attendance as a mark of deference on whatever business he was conducting.⁷⁶⁶ Objections were met with threats and even violence.⁷⁶⁷ He also used his influence in matters like arranging marriages for his allies, such as forcing the elderly Pedro Paz to marry a lady in waiting to the marchioness two days before the former's death in order to claim his inheritance for a dependant. He was also trying to enlarge his holdings over crown lands in Matalcingo. Ibarra concluded he was generally 'looming large' over the politics of New Spain.⁷⁶⁸ His declared aim was to be made a Duke by the king for his services in New Spain but he needed to extend his influence in order to achieve a degree of

⁷⁶⁴ CJV, 211f.

⁷⁶⁵ AGI Gobierno México, Hortuño de Ibarra 8th March 1565 Valderrama papers.

⁷⁶⁶ F. Benítez, *The Century after Cortés* (Chicago, 1965), p.187f.

⁷⁶⁷ AGI Gobierno México, 323 6th December 1565.

⁷⁶⁸ AGI Gobierno México, 323 6th December 1565.

authority that would allow him to perform services for the crown that his adherents in New Spain could vouch for.⁷⁶⁹

All the attributes of government that the viceroys had been able to concentrate in their persons were dispersed between these various foci of authority. The division of authority and patronage in New Spain dissolved the assumptions that supported viceregal authority and invalidated the courtly negotiation with both the Spanish and the indigenous 'republics' that had formed the basis of the regime's operation. This was accentuated by the inexperience and more legalistic-mindedness of the newly arrived *letrados* who distrusted both the viceregal style of government they had condemned but had been forced to engage in, and the more European ideas of noble patrimonial authority that Martín Cortés was trying to revive. The Spaniards divided into increasingly radicalised factions seeking security of access to patronage and offices. Outbursts of violence between different factions began erupting in Mexico City.⁷⁷⁰

Far more worrying for the Spanish presence in New Spain, the indigenous elite began to distrust the authority of Mexico City. Political negotiation at court was replaced by Puga and Valderrama's interpretation of some of the laws that theoretically guided the relationship between the Spanish authorities and the indigenous polities. This was not even a universal interpretation of the law as other *letrados* like Alonso de Zorita profoundly disagreed with it, but the former were in power and hoped that the crown would recognise their services if they could limit the rights and privileges of the indigenous nobility and their mendicant allies and as a result to increase the crown's tributary income. Soon the

⁷⁶⁹ CJV, p. 340.

⁷⁷⁰ J. Suárez de Peralta *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias* ed. Silvia Tena, (Mexico, 1990) pp. 181-3.

principales, claiming that they had been ‘made to feel like *macehuales*’, refused to collect any more tribute. Important lords began taking to the hills to avoid the punishment and imprisonment that befell many of their fellow lords and *macehuales* in an act of resistance familiar to Mesoamerican polities at least since Nezahualcoyotl’s rebellion that had led, according to pre-conquest traditions, to the overthrow of Azcapotzalco’s hegemony. The polities of the central valleys, who were indispensable in upholding the authority of Spanish Mexico City in Mesoamerica, were the most agitated at this apparent betrayal of their political arrangements. Intimidation by the Spanish authorities did not take long to fail as tributary income dropped and fears of rebellion increased. Valderrama and others were soon forced to admit that there was no way of collecting tribute⁷⁷¹ or maintaining the ‘good government and Christianity’ of the polities without the cooperation of the indigenous nobility.⁷⁷²

As complaints flooded into court, those most obviously in charge were discredited and the ‘viceregal party’ enjoyed a renewed legitimacy after the discredit of the *visita*: Valderrama was recalled and Martín Cortés began to seem suspect for his championship of perpetual *encomienda*. In this context the viceregal party, led by the viceroy’s relatives, took the opportunity presented by particularly extravagant celebrations arranged by adherents to Martín Cortés to celebrate the birth of his twins to launch a preemptive attack: arbitrarily they arrested the most prominent Cortesians justifying their actions under the cover of the state of emergency they proclaimed and supported by unsubstantiated accusations of treasonous plots they levied against their rivals. The so-called Ávila-Cortés conspiracy was

⁷⁷¹ CJV, p.136-7.

⁷⁷² AGI Gobierno México, 323, 6th December 1565.

not a first outburst of *creole* patriotism but the tragically violent *dénouement* of political competition in New Spain unrestrained by viceregal moderation: a return to instability not seen since the 1520s.

By the time Peralta arrived and tried to moderate the obvious injustice of the imputations against Martín Cortés, the situation had become so radicalised that any restraint or compromise was inadmissible. Rather Velasco's men used the old tricks of New Spain's political conflict: they controlled communications to the crown. The new viceroy was discredited and accused of collusion in the rebellion of New Spain. All the evidence was circumstantial; Peralta's French ancestry was the main accusation against him, but it fed on royal fears of a rebellion they would have been helpless to repress and which coincided with increasing royal concern over the challenge that the Netherlands was posing to royal authority at the time.

Velasco's party overplayed their hand. The crown replaced Peralta with a violent and repressive *audiencia* with no knowledge of or interest in the factional alliances in New Spain. Velasco's party, including some members of the Bocanegra clan and even don Luis de Castilla and his son Pedro were tortured or imprisoned along with adherents of Cortés and other neutral actors as the crown tried to reassert its threatened authority. Repression eventually failed to work on the Spanish population just as it had not worked with the indigenous elite when Valderrama and Puga had tried imposing their higher rates of tribute. The new *oidores* were recalled in disgrace as complaints against them mounted from within New Spain.⁷⁷³

⁷⁷³ J. Suárez de Salazar, *Tratado...*214-220.

Conclusion

Jerónimo López never got the *encomienda* he wanted from Mendoza, but he had changed his mind about the viceroy's vices after Tello de Sandoval's *visita*. López admitted that no-one knew the land and its 'secrets' as well as Mendoza and that other governors from Europe

would not understand them or the land or the people, because here the language is another and it is necessary to understand it and know it: all this is well known and understood by the viceroy... better than anyone else here or there [in Spain] because no-one equals him in this because in public matters he achieves more than anyone else here with his good judgement and his great experience and no-one knows the secrets like he does, and he procures them by every means because it is a matter of such importance to the service of Your Majesty.⁷⁷⁴

Empires are notoriously difficult to define because they are so varied as to have little in common except that in every case it is possible to identify a dominant group that benefits from the status quo and acts to try to perpetuate it. Asking *cui bono?* reveals the nature of an empire by identifying its principal agents and beneficiaries. The Habsburg dynasty and some of its courtiers clearly benefited from their Mesoamerican Empire; but the main beneficiaries of the first fifty years of Habsburg rule over Mesoamerica were those Spanish and indigenous inhabitants of New Spain who became enfranchised into the political nation by virtue of belonging to what I have defined as New Spain's parasitic civic-nobility. Its members became the elite of what should be considered, as it was by its inhabitants, a largely self-contained Mesoamerican sub-kingdom, run mainly from Mexico City with the viceroys as its 'head'. Habsburg authority rested by necessity on the result of a political compromise with and among local participants. For the enfranchised, both Spaniards and

⁷⁷⁴ ENE, Vol.V., Doc, 256, p.13.

Indians, Habsburg authority was not imposed from Spain by force or coercion, nor were they governed by an alien bureaucracy. As the accepted local elites they were themselves the direct agents and beneficiaries of royal authority. Royal authority would not have survived in Mesoamerica without the willing consent of the local elites because the crown had no external force to impose its will otherwise.⁷⁷⁵ A voluntary acceptance of royal authority in Mesoamerica was not the inevitable result of the fall of Tenochtitlan. It involved political, rather than bureaucratic, arrangements that were developed and then safeguarded at the viceregal court. In return the authorised elites were expected to perform civic duties of government and administration. The viceregal court became the point where New Spain existed as a unitary political entity. In this period, the success with which the viceroys established personal authority in Mesoamerica determined the success with which Habsburg rule became accepted in New Spain.

Viceregal government, as it developed from political competition in New Spain, became desirable and indispensable both for the elite of New Spain and for the Spanish Habsburg Crown. In 1547 Alonso de Montemayor had argued from New Spain that 'were it not for ... [Mendoza's] good government and prudence and great guile that he has shown in everything I think that the land would be lost and worse in New Spain than in Peru.' He suggested that all the Indies should be ruled by viceroys with good salaries and many *mercedes* to keep their dignity so that 'no inhabitant believes he is more powerful than the *oidores* and the viceroys', but most importantly 'may it please God that the viceroys and the *oidores* and the royal officials and your majesty's *criados* were settled here and deeply rooted here and their sons and descendents too...' because otherwise 'the head and

⁷⁷⁵ See T. E. Anna *The fall of royal the government in Mexico City...* p.XV, note 15.

government of the *república*' would be in the hands of 'defective and self-interested men' who would only want to make money and return to Spain.⁷⁷⁶ Voluntary adherence to Habsburg authority developed in this period because the elites of Mesoamerica's two 'republics', and the viceroys that headed them, identified with the idea that New Spain was their kingdom within the Habsburg monarchy. As López de Gómara observed 'Mendoza would have preferred to remain in Mexico, with which he was now familiar; nor did he wish to leave the Indians, with whom he got on very well (they had cured him of the gout by means of baths and herbs) nor did he wish to give up his estates, cattle and other interests....'⁷⁷⁷ Not only was the government not a modern imperial rule-bound bureaucracy, but the Habsburgs would have failed to govern New Spain if it had been.

Epilogue

The crisis occasioned by Velasco's death eventually reasserted the importance of viceregal power, as the inhabitants of New Spain called for the appointment of a new viceroy. However, the appointment of Martín Enríquez did not bring about the sort of viceregal restoration that its supporters in New Spain had hoped for. New Spain's elite had hoped to appropriate the viceroyalty as their own in the way that the first two viceroys had identified themselves with New Spain. The benefits for both were obvious: hereditary security for the dynasty of the viceroys, stability of internal political arrangements for the elite of New Spain.

⁷⁷⁶ AGI México, 96 *Cartas y expedientes de personas seculares 1545-1559*. Don Alonso de Montemayor 21st January 1547.

⁷⁷⁷ F. López de Gómara, *Cortés: the life of the conqueror by his secretary*. tr.&ed., Lesley Byrd Simpson, (California 1965), p.406.

The Spanish empire over America developed from the accumulation of experience and the conclusions of debate between Europeans and Americans; there was no past tradition that European administrators could draw to guide them in administering a territorial empire overseas. The first concerted effort was made in the package of legislation that accompanied Enríquez in 1568, described as 'a complete revision of the imperial administration of New Spain'.⁷⁷⁸ As we have seen the effort had its origins in similar attempts made already in Naples and Castile in 1559, but the outcome was different. In Naples the authority of the viceroy was weakened by the 'Collateral Council' which united the royal chancery, the royal *audiencia* and the 'council for the affairs of state': 'its functions would evolve until they reached a degree of pre-eminence relative to the viceroy by 1559.'⁷⁷⁹ In New Spain the calls of the *visitadores* and other *letrados* to limit the local authorities in making appointments or taking political decisions, even to suppress the office of viceroy were, not adopted. The divisive and oppressive government of the *audiencias* that had followed Velasco's death had finally discredited the notion of rule by *letrados* in New Spain. The result was an assertion of the supremacy of viceregal authority. Care was taken to limit more formally their patrimonial or dynastic ambitions by limiting the length of tenure of their office. On the other hand while they were in office, their power was better legally defined and consequently less easily challenged which meant that they became more supreme than Mendoza and Velasco ever were. The internal negotiation that had underpinned earlier regimes was limited though not eliminated; as was the identification of

⁷⁷⁸ A.F. Garcia-Abasolo, *Martín Enríquez y la reforma de 1568 en Nueva España*, (Sevilla 1983).

⁷⁷⁹ C.J. Hernando Sánchez, *Castilla y Nápoles en el siglo XVI. El Virrey Pedro de Toledo: Linaje Estado y Cultura (1532-1553)*, (Castilla y Leon, 1994), pp.197-8.

the viceroys with the land. To those born in New Spain the outlook was that 'in this land there is no more King than the viceroy... the counts and marquesses are his *criados*.'⁷⁸⁰

Compared to European vicerealties, the supremacy of the viceroys in New Spain and consequently the scope for local decision-making were increasingly affirmed in the legislation the crown enacted; but the personal association of the individual viceroys, *oidores* and officials with New Spain was limited by their terms in office. This was not an exceptionally modern bureaucratic reform either. In New Spain as everywhere else in the Spanish Habsburg 'composite monarchy' the patrimonial aspirations of its crown administrators outside of Spain became distrusted by the crown and were rejected.

In New Spain the nature of political competition had undermined individual viceregal administrations but it had also made clear the indispensability of viceroys as 'the head' of the kingdom. The same became true of the *oidores* but most of the administrative offices were still appointed within New Spain, at least until the Bourbon reforms. The future careers of the subsequent viceroys of New Spain tended to become more associated with the court at Madrid than in Mexico City, and less engaged with the inhabitants of New Spain. Instead, the parasitic civic nobility turned to secure their status through the acquisition of private wealth, like *haciendas*, rather than engaging in political competition and relying on civic success and official rewards for their status. Nevertheless, at least until the Bourbon reforms began to undermine the relative political autonomy of New Spain, the essence of royal authority over the inhabitants of New Spain remained linked to political enfranchisement mediated at the court of the viceroys in Mexico City. Local participation

⁷⁸⁰ Quoted in P. Latasa 'La Corte Virreinal Peruana' in Feliciano Barrios coordinator *Un Gobierno de un mundo-virreinos y audiencias de la America hispanica*. 2004, p. 346.

and identity was symbolised by increasing worship of autochthonous cults and rituals like the virgin of Guadalupe or the continued exaltation of Mexico City. Amongst other outcomes, New Spain developed its own sub-empire in North America and more impressively in the Pacific through the settlement and garrisoning of Guam, the Marianas and the Philippines, largely by *criollos*, Indians and mestizos from New Spain. It was an expansion driven by a conjunction of interests created by the elite of New Spain and mostly shared by the Spanish crown: don Rodrigo de Vivero y Velasco, a kinsman of the Velasco viceroys who was born near Mexico City, established the first treaty between New Spain and Japan in 1609, after his shipwreck off the coast of Onjuku, and returned to Mexico City via Acapulco with the first Japanese delegation to cross the Pacific before it continued on to Europe. It was done in the interests of New Spain and in the teeth of commercial opposition from Spain and the Philippines. The contact proved short-lived but is illustrative of the confidence and ambition of New Spain's enfranchised elite. The Habsburg Empire over Mesoamerica was predicated on local participation, consent and shared mutual interests. When these disappeared in 1821 so too did Spanish authority over Mesoamerica.

Glossary

<i>Acolhua:</i>	A name often used to describe Texcoco's domain.
<i>Adelantado:</i>	Spanish commander of an expedition or the highest authority of a peripheral territory which was not under a formal governor or an <i>audiencia</i> .
<i>Afán nobiliario:</i>	Fascination with nobility identified as a Spanish phenomenon of the early modern period.
<i>Ahuehete:</i>	Literally the 'Old man of the water', <i>Taxodium Mucronatum</i> known in English as the 'Montezuma Cypress' is a characteristic tree of central Mexico that can grow to an enormous size.
<i>Alcalde mayor:</i>	Spanish official typically with authority over of larger area than a <i>corregidor</i> .
<i>Alcalde:</i>	Municipal magistrate who formed part of the <i>cabildo</i> and could preside it.
<i>Alguacil:</i>	An oficial associated with the implementation of certain judicial duties like surveying weights and measures or conducting arrests and other police-like duties.
<i>Allegados:</i>	A term that denoted intimacy or proximity. Used of family or dependants.
<i>Almojarifazgo:</i>	Customs taxes.
<i>Altepetl:</i>	Nahua polity.
<i>Alumbrado:</i>	Spanish term with evolving meanings normally associated with certain types of Catholic mysticism. As I discuss in the text, in New Spain it also seems to have acquired connotations of disregard for immediate authorities and the appeal for legitimacy directly from moral principles or from the highest authorities like the viceroy, by the 1560s.
<i>Astillero:</i>	Dry-dock
<i>Audiencia:</i>	Court which normally heard appeals and in the Americas took on administrative functions.
<i>Ayuntamiento:</i>	Municipal governing council.

<i>Caballero:</i>	Knight.
<i>Cabecera:</i>	Capital city of a district, a kingdom or any other defined territorial unit.
<i>Cabildo:</i>	Gathering in council of a municipal unit or a polity's representatives (elected and/or appointed).
<i>Cacique:</i>	General Spanish term, taken from a Taíno word, for the dynastic head of an indigenous polity.
<i>Calmecac:</i>	School for the Tenochca elite.
<i>Calpixcalli:</i>	Administrative offices in a Nahua palace
<i>Calpolli:</i>	Nahuatl term meaning the district of a polity, but literally a 'large house'.
<i>Cañas:</i>	A type of game that simulated combat on horseback.
<i>Capitulación:</i>	A form of contract between the crown and the leader of an expedition which involved the 'capitulation' or transfer of rights from the crown to the latter.
<i>Casa poblada;</i>	A household with dependents.
<i>Cazonci:</i>	Dynastic head of the Purehpecha polities of Michoacán.
<i>Cédulas:</i>	Writ or decree issued by an authority dealing with a broad range of issues from appointments to office to judging a dispute. They could constitute a legal precedent.
<i>Chichimeca:</i>	Generic Nahua term for the nomadic and semi-nomadic populations of their northern frontier.
<i>Cihuacoatl:</i>	Chief adviser to the Tenochca 'emperor' (<i>Huey Tlatoani</i>).
<i>Coacalli:</i>	Nahua term for the chamber within a palace used to host, house and entertain visitors under the protection of safe-passage and included storage-rooms from where they could be provisioned and granted presents or supplies for their onward journey.
<i>Compadres:</i>	Denoted intimacy and friendship; from the close relationship between a child's parents and god-parents.

<i>Comuneros:</i>	Rebels of Castile against the authority of king Charles I and his regime with a variety of grievances and aims..
<i>Contador:</i>	Treasury official.
<i>Contino:</i>	Member of the king's bodyguard.
<i>Corregimiento :</i>	A office granted by the viceroy or the King as a reward for merit. It implied changing administrative and judicial powers over a defined territory usually corresponding to an indigenous polity.
<i>Criados:</i>	Denoted the relationship and bonds of loyalty between a patron and a dependent. It referred to individuals 'created' ie., supported, and promoted by a patron.
<i>Cuauhpilli:</i>	A term applied to nobleman by merit (literally son of an eagle or noble eagle).
<i>Cuauhtlatoani:</i>	Interim governors for the period between the death of a prince or lord and the election or selection of his or her successor. They were normally chosen from without the governing nobility which theoretically encouraged his autonomy.
<i>Cuicacalli:</i>	Nahua term for the chamber within a palace used for organising the construction of public works
<i>Encomendero:</i>	Holder of an <i>encomienda</i> .
<i>Encomienda:</i>	A changing and developing term in this period that at its most basic meant a right to a proportion of a polity's tribute in exchange for certain responsibilities like readiness for war or support for evangelisation.
<i>Factor:</i>	Treasury official.
<i>Hidalgo:</i>	Generic Spanish term for nobleman meaning literally 'son of someone' or 'son of virtue' according to the Siete Partidas.
<i>Huehuehtlahtolli:</i>	'Ancient words' referred to a series of didactic lessons in conversation form.
<i>huey tlatoani:</i>	High prince: the Nahua term normally applied to the Mexica 'emperor'.
<i>Icapilli:</i>	Nahua term for the reed-thrones used by figures authority.

<i>Legajo:</i>	Bundle of papers.
<i>Letrado:</i>	A university educated lawyer.
<i>Lienzos:</i>	Literally a canvas, the term is used to describe the ‘painted books’ and other documents produced by or on behalf of indigenous communities or individuals.
<i>Macehual:</i>	Nahua term for a plebeian member of a polity.
<i>Maestresala:</i>	Household position.
<i>Malcalli:</i>	Nahua term for a prison within the palace complex.
<i>Malinche:</i>	Name given to Hernán Cortés by the Nahua during the conquest campaigns.
<i>Mandamiento:</i>	Command or instruction given by an authority.
<i>Mayeque:</i>	Landless serfs tied to a their lord’s land. Also called <i>naborias</i> or <i>terrazgueros</i> .
<i>Mayordomo Mayor:</i>	Highest household position.
<i>Mercedes:</i>	Rewards granted by a lord to his vassal.
<i>Mestizo/a:</i>	An individual classed by society or those in authority as being legally neither an Indian nor a Spaniard but a mixture of both and consequently not harmoniously integrated into either ‘republic’.
<i>Mixcoacalli:</i>	Nahua term for the chamber within a palace to house entertainers, musicians and hangers-on.
<i>Naborias:</i>	See <i>Mayeque</i> .
<i>Nahuatlato:</i>	Nahuatl speaker. Used to describe translators.
<i>Oidor:</i>	A judge that forms part of an <i>audiencia</i> .
<i>Papahuaque:</i>	Provincial governor, translated by some authors like Sahagún as ‘Satrap’.
<i>Pastel:</i>	Refers to <i>Isatis Tinctoria</i> , also known as woad in English. A valuable plant used to create indigo coloured dyes for fabric.

<i>Pechero:</i>	An individual liable to contribute to the commonwealth through direct taxation or tribute (unlike a nobleman who contributed with his personal service).
<i>Petlacalco:</i>	Nahuatl term for a palace's store-house.
<i>Pilli:</i>	Nahuatl term for nobleman. Like <i>hidalgo</i> it was taken to mean literally 'son of someone'.
<i>Pochteca:</i>	Nahua term used to describe a commercial entrepreneur.
<i>Quinto real:</i>	The 'royal fifth' or the 20% owed to the crown from any precious metal extracted. In this period it was more normally a tenth than a fifth.
<i>Regidor:</i>	Member of a municipal <i>cabildo</i> .
<i>Repartimiento:</i>	A 'distribution'. It was another way of saying <i>encomienda</i> .
<i>Residencia:</i>	A judicial review of an individual's term in office.
<i>Teccalli or Teccalco:</i>	Nahua term for the chamber within a palace where civil cases were heard.
<i>Tecpan/ teccalli:</i>	Nahua term meaning palace, literally 'lord-house'.
<i>Tecpantlalli:</i>	The lands and rents endowed to a palace.
<i>Tecpilcalli:</i>	Nahua term for the chamber within a palace used to pass judgement exclusively on noblemen-warriors.
<i>Teixhuiuh:</i>	Nahua term, used in Tlaxcala and the Puebla valley, literally 'the grandsons of someone'
<i>Teohua Teuctli:</i>	Lordly title with authority over the Chalca confederacy.
<i>Tequihuacacalli:</i>	Nahua term for the chamber within a palace that housed the council of war where military commanders were named and appointed.
<i>Terrazguero:</i>	See <i>Mayeque</i> .
<i>Tlaxitlan:</i>	Nahua term for the chamber where criminal cases were heard.
<i>Tlatic Teuhtli:</i>	Lordly title with authority over the Chalca confederacy.

<i>Tlatoani:</i>	Prince, dynastic leaders, (meaning literally ‘he who speaks’).
<i>Tlatocamecayotl:</i>	Nahua term for genealogies of lordship.
<i>Tlatocatlacamecayotl:</i>	Nahua term for ruling dynasty.
<i>Tlenamacaque:</i>	Provincial governor, translated by some authors like Sahagún as ‘Satrap’.
<i>Tlatocayotl:</i>	Nahua term for lordship. However it could also mean, state, kingdom, crown, patrimony, dignity, greatness, genealogy, eloquence, majesty. There are many related and derivative verbs, adverbs and adjectives in Nahuatl.
<i>Válido:</i>	An acknowledged favourite.
<i>Veedor:</i>	An official charged with overseeing the activities of certain enterprises or guilds.
<i>Visita:</i>	A general inspection the conduct of an administration.
<i>Visitador:</i>	Individual charged with conducting a <i>visita</i> .

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Appendix A: Favoured Indians and Spaniards

This appendix is intended to support many of the assertions made in the main text of the thesis. It includes selected and organised prosopographical information from unprinted documents in the *Archivo de Indias*. Its intention is to serve as a point of reference for the reader and to further our general knowledge of various individuals that were politically active in this period; their role in promoting viceregal authority and their position in viceregal webs of patronage. This appendix is not an extant work of reference to all the individuals mentioned in the text and it should be used in conjunction with the printed sources of prosopographical information I have cited there. Much further research and organisational work need to be done to integrate the increasing number of printed prosopographical studies. I hope this may be a useful addition to this important effort.

I. Favoured Indians

Indigenous recipients of viceregal licences to bear European arms or ride horses.

The names are taken from the *memorial* produced by Antonio de Turcios for *visitador* Francisco Tello de Sandoval in AGI Justicia 258. I have listed the names in alphabetical order within nine broad geographical regions plus one section where it is impossible to determine the exact origins of the recipient given the information available in the memorial.

All the individuals in the *memorial* received the honorific style 'don'. The list provides very little information in itself about the individual, usually: a Christian first name, the polity they belonged to (with all the idiosyncrasies of Spanish spelling of indigenous names) the date the licence was issued and occasionally their rank within these polities (*principal*, *señor*, *gobernador*, *cacique*) and occasionally a reason for the grant. For the sake of clarity I give the standard names of the towns rather than as they appear in the manuscript unless the discrepancies in spelling are so great that I cannot be sure of the identity of the area, in which case I cite the spelling in the manuscript in quotation marks before hazarding a guess as to where it refers to. I assume that in the *memorial* the names are placed in chronological order by year so when only the day and month were provided I have assumed that they correspond to the last year cited.

I have tried to cross-reference some of this information to add some biographical detail only in the cases of greatest possible certainty of an individual's identity. This list is a much longer version of that found in Mendoza's defence published by Lewis Hanke (VEA, Mendoza, doc.7 'cargos xviii') which was ostensibly the same list. The names that appear in both are marked with an asterisk (*). I have also added some relevant geo-political information regarding the area, which is all taken from P. Gerhard's *A Guide to Historical Geography of New Spain* (CUP 1972) and R. Himmerich y Valencia. Any other references are noted in the text. I have otherwise followed the conventions of the thesis as a whole.

Jalisco

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|-----------|---|
| Cristobal | 'Prince of Jalisco'. Sword- 7 Jan 1544. |
| Hernando | <i>Gobernador</i> of Amula (Amunla?). Horse - 20 May 1542. Amula in southern Jalisco-Colima- towards Navidad- its <i>corregidor</i> would be in charge of inspecting the ships. |

Mexico Basin and Chalco

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Antonio | Of Cuitlahuac Horse - 23 May 1542. Polity considered as part of greater Chalco on the shores of the lake. They probably owned the adjacent island of Xico. |
| Carlos | Of Chimalhuacán. Sword - explicitly for 'going to the war in Jalisco' - 12 September 1541. In Chalco's border with Texcoco's domains; <i>encomienda</i> of Juan de Cuéllar Verdugo (el Gitano) in 1547 sold to Blas de Bustamante. The polity had a long-standing border dispute with Ocuituco involving the village of Acacingo or Ecacingo, By 1535 Chimalhuacán had 'usurped it'. |
| Diego | <i>Gobernador</i> of 'Tepeta' Horse - 30 December 1536. Possibly Tepetaosto/Tepetaostoque/Tepetlaostoc? Near Texcoco in 1536 under Juan Velázquez de Salazar who had it from his father. |
| Diego | <i>Gobernador</i> of Mexico City. Horse - 30 October 1538. Full name don Diego de Alvarado Huanitzin, died 1542. Nephew of Motecuhzoma I (son of Tezozomoc Acolnahuacatl Motecuhzoma's brother and therefore grandson of Axayacatl). At the time of the conquest, Diego was <i>tlatoani</i> of Ecatepec |

(later his cousin doña Leonor Moctezuma's *encomienda*) and seems to have continued in this position. He asked for the *estancias* of Tizayuca, Acayuca and Tulcuayuca but did not get them as the first two were awarded to Tlatelolco in 1539 after a lawsuit with doña Leonor. The Second Audiencia had been willing to grant him only enough for his maintenance until Mendoza decided to reinstitute the 'royal line' as governors of Mexico City and he was elevated to the governorship. Don Diego formed a matrimonial alliance with his cousin Francisca de Moctezuma (Motecuhzoma's daughter) and his daughter would marry don Antonio Cortés Totoquihuaztli, Tlatoani of Tlacopan, maintaining pre-conquest dynastic links. His son became *gobernador* of Mexico City under Velasco from 1557-62 and his other daughter Isabel married the indigenous humanist and future *gobernador* Antonio Valeriano and later the chronicler don Fernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc. Diego and his dynasty were at the heart of the indigenous establishment of the early colonial period. (see *La Nobleza Indígena del centro de México*. Pérez-Rocha & R. Tena eds. (Mexico, 2000) p.79.

- Francisco *Gobernador* 'of part of Xochimilco'. Horse - explicitly 'for going to the war in Jalisco' - 12 September 1541.
- Francisco* Prince of Tlalmanalco Sword and horse 20th March 1542. Don Francisco Sandoval Acaztlitli: 'an honoured person, friend of the Spaniards who served in person and with the people of his province in Mixtón war'(H).
- Francisco Prince of 'Olaque' (Olac)Horse- 7th October 1542. Xochimilco area; one of the three rulers of Xochimilca kingdom along with Tecpan, Tepetenchi.
- Hugo Nobleman of Xochimilco. Sword - explicitly 'for going to the war in Jalisco'. 12 September 1541.
- Juan* Of Coyoacan. Sword - 12 July 1542. Probably don Juan de Guzmán Itztlolinqui 'el Viejo'. Prince and *gobernador* of Coyoacan, 'always treated like a Spaniard, he converses with them.' (H). One of the most distinguished participants in the Mixtón war. Son of noble Mexica lady and Cuauhpopocatzin *tlatoani* of Coyoacan at contact who was allegedly killed by Mexica forces for helping the Spaniards escape the massacre

of the 'Noche Triste'. His brother went to Hibueras in command of 400 men while Juan was educated by Franciscans. In 1536 Juan wrote to the King asking for his polity to be placed under the crown rather than as part of Cortés' domain. His request was turned down but his personal patrimony and lands were recognised and ratified very early on. Mendoza made him *gobernador* in 1540 after he had already been recognised as hereditary prince of Coyoacan. He became extremely wealthy and was granted coat of arms in 1551 dying in 1569 after ratification of his holdings and status from Martín Enríquez. His son, however, died indebted. Purépecha and Spanish lines took over to form a *mestizo* dynasty that remained powerful into the 19th century (*La Nobleza Indígena ...* p.84).

- Juan Nobleman of Mexico. Sword - 28 November 1544.
- Luis de Leon* Nobleman of Santiago (Tlatelolco). Horse and sword - 14 June 1543. An interpreter for audiencia who 'served in the journey to the new lands' (Cíbola?). Due to 'his drunkenness', however, the viceroy later denied him his sword and the position of interpreter. (H)
- Pedro Of Xochimilco. Horse - 27 August 1541. Possibly don Pedro de Santiago who claimed he had participated in all major wars of New Spain. In 1563 he compared the assistance he and Xochimilco had given to the crown with that of Tlaxcala. He also claimed that of 30,000 inhabitants of Xochimilco in 1521 there were 6-7,000 left after plagues and services in wars. This and the new offices introduced by the viceroys resulted, he argued, in the loss of authority of the dynastic lords over the *macehuals*.
- Tapia* Nobleman of Mexico. Horse - 6 March 1538. Hernando de Tapia, son of Andrés de Tapia Motelchiuhtzin (*cihacoatl* to Motechuzoma- despite alleged *macehual* origins- and denouncer of Cuauhtemoc in Honduras, according to Bernal Díaz del Castillo, and ruler of Mexico City 1525-1530, dying during Nuño de Guzmán's expedition to New Galicia). Hernando's military service included the Mixtón war but his main occupation was as interpreter for the viceregal regime for 17 years. In the process he became a close friend of Mendoza and *oidor* Tejada, probably lived in the palace and

was rewarded several times from the *quitas y vacaciones* fund. Hernando went to Spain with Cortés in 1527. At some point he visited Rome where he was knighted by Pope Paul III as a member of the order of the *golden spur* and returned with Mendoza to New Spain with a further coat of arms from Charles V. This was supplemented by a royal pension of unknown amount but which was increased by 5,000 maravedís after an appeal to Charles V, though he was never granted the *encomiendas* he repeatedly requested. In Europe he married doña Isabel de Caceres and then seemingly the daughter of a Spanish settler in New Spain: ‘always treated like a Spaniard and married a Spanish woman and is currently married with the daughter of a Spaniard’ (H). (*La Nobleza Indígena...* p.39).

Michoacán

- Antonio* *Gobernador* of the province of Michoacán. Sword - 10 february 1546. Son of the last *Cazonci* Tangáxoan II; became *gobernador* of province of Michoacán after his brother Francisco Tariacuri who became governor after the death of don Pedro Ponce in 1543, dying himself in 1545. Antonio governed till 1562 (*The Conquest of Michoacán* Benedict Warren, J. Oklahoma 1985, pp.244-5). Considered a ‘good Christian, since he was a boy’, he grew up in the viceregal palace, and then studied in the College of Michoacán where he learnt Latin. He ‘has always been treated like a Spaniard and is their friend’ (H).
- Bartolomé Son of the *gobernador* of Michoacán (presumably Pedro Ponce). Carriage- 6th December 1542 ‘to allow him to travel in a carriage, as requested by the Bishop of Michoacán’.
- Francisco Lord of Tinhuindín (?) in Michoacán. Sword- 26 July 1537. Possibly the last *Cazonci*’s older son don Francisco Tariácuri. Tinhuindín was part of the *cabecera* of the larger pre-conquest polity of Tepehuacán which had proved intractable at contact in 1522. 1528 Antón Caicedo held the *encomienda* of Tarecuato and Tepeguacan which included this polity. He died in 1535 or 6 and it passed to the crown. Widow kept towns of Periban and Tarecuato but the rest became a crown *corregimiento* by July 1540. The *encomendero*’s widow Marina Montesda remarried Francisco de Chavez (one of

Mendoza's closest allies) There was also a Franciscan monastery there.

- Francisco Prince of Guaniqueo(?) Carriage- 6th December 1542. Another son of the *gobernador* of Michoacán Pedro Ponce. The bishop requested a carriage for him as well. Situated 10 leagues north of Pátzcuaro.
- Juan Nobleman of Cuiceo. Horse - 25 Feb 1542. Northern Michoacán by the lake of same name: Tarascan outpost on the Chichimeca frontier. The area and subject settlements had been ruled by a military governor in pre-contact times. Gonzalo López (el camarero) held the *encomienda*. A *Corregidor* was appointed in the 1550s.
- Juan Of Taximaroa. Horse – 21 March 1545. Maravatío district of Michoacán c. 10 miles N.W. of Zitacuaro. Had been run by military governors appointed by the Cazonci as marcher lords against the Mexica. *Factor* Gonzalo de Salazar and *veedor* Peralmíndez Chirino appropriated it; Salazar kept it and gave it to son Juan Velázquez de Salazar.
- Juan Nobleman of Michoacán. Sword - 10th february 1546.
- Luis Prince of Cuzamala Carriage- 6th December 1542. Also called Apazingan, possibly another son of the governor of Michoacán. Situated on Purehpecha – Mexica frontier the *encomienda* was granted to Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and inherited by his daughter who married Bernardino Pacheco de Bocanegra.
- Pedro (Cuinierángari) *Gobernador* of Michoacán. Sword and Horse - 13 January 1537. Governed until 1543 (See *The Conquest of Michoacán* Benedict Warren, J. Oklahoma 1985, pp.244-5). The son of a high priest he claimed that the Tangaxoan II had considered him like a brother. He became the chief informant of the *Relación de Michoacán* where he presented himself as the first and chief architect of the settlement between Castilians and the Puréhpecha and there is nothing to doubt his claims or the fact that he played an active and personal role in these events. He was tortured and imprisoned by Nuño de Guzmán and later restored to grace and power by Mendoza. He was the main

informant for the *Relación Michoacán* commissioned by Mendoza.

Pedro Ponce*

Gobernador of Cuiceo. Horse and sword - 28 November 1544 and possibly also 25 Feb 1542. Described as a 'great friend of the Spaniards and treated as one himself: served from beginning to end of Mixtón war. There has always been much trust for him' (H). He could either be Pedro (Cuinierángari) who therefore did not die in 1543 but was rather given the principality of Cuiceo to make way for the restoration of the Cazonci's son Francisco to the government of Michoacán; or this is one of his sons. Cuiceo in northern Michoacán. Purépecha was an outpost on the Chichimeca frontier. The area and servant settlements ruled by a military governor. Gonzalo López (el camarero) held the encomienda. Corregidor sent in 1550s.

Pedro

Of Ucareo. Horse- 22 July. Northern Michoacán on the Chichimec (Pame) frontier south of Acambaro, Hernán Pérez de Bocanegra y Córdoba's encomienda. Half way along province that stretched almost to Mexica frontier too and to Cuiceo on the other side: the frontier alliances sealed. Crown town by 1536 with a corregidor for whole area advantage of lands of Taimeo that both Ucareo and Maravatío on the other side appropriated).

Pedro

Prince of Necotlan (?). Sword- 28 September 1543. Also known as Undameo in Michoacán near Charo, Tiripitio and Michoacán City; between 1536- 1545 it escheated and was made a *cabecera* in its own right. *Corregimiento* no longer tied to Matalcingo-Charo.

Pero García

Nobleman of Cinapécuaro (?). 'To ride his father in law's horse' - 10 February 1546. In Michoacán frontier with Mexica and Chichimeca. 1538 became a *corregimiento*. c. 8 leagues from NW of Taximaroa and about same NE of Valladolid and 8 SW from Acambaro.

Mixteca-Valley of Oaxaca-Tehuantepec

Andrés

Prince of Titicpac. Sword - 21 August 1543. 5 leagues south of Antequera in Oaxaca near Chichicapa in the jurisdiction of that

name and Cimatlan- Zapotecs; had been tributaries to the Mexica. Under crown jurisdiction overseen by a *corregidor*.

- Cristóbal *Gobernador* of Tlacachaguaya. Horse - 28th September 1543. Tlacoachaguaya/Tlacuechahuayan was a Zapotec polity with a Mixtec minority that had governed after invading the area and until they themselves fell to the triple alliance. The region was part of the *marquesado*.
- Francisco Of 'G...melula'. Sword- 2nd August 1542. Guamelula ? near Guatulco (best harbour between Acapulco and Guatemala) and just north of Tehuantepec in Oaxaca, near the Pacific coast – *Corregidores* appointed from c. 1537. A complicated area with archaic Nahuatl speakers, Chontals and Zapotecs in the north- Francisco de Vargas may have been the local *encomendero* at Suchitepec –Xadani in the area but the region escheated to the crown c. 1537. (Guamelula itself had escheated as early as 1531).
- Juan* *Gobernador* of the province of Tehuantepec. Horse and sword - 21 March 1545. Called Cosijipi II and took the name Juan Cortés, his mother was a Mexica princess. His alliance with the Spaniards since the *conquest* helped to strengthen and increase his regional supremacy. (See *El cacicazgo en Nueva España y Filipinas*, M. Menegus Borneman & S. Aguirre eds., (Mexico, 2005), p.168ff.) Mendoza described him as a 'friend of Spaniards helping out any who travel around his land.' (H) See *cacicazgo book*.). Tehuantepec was part of the *marquesado*.
- Juan Prince of Cuyotepeque. Sword - 7 January 1544. Near Antequera and Oaxacan Talistaca.
- Juan *Gobernador* of 'Macinitlan'. Sword - 10 February 1546. Mazatlan near Tehuantepec? *Encomienda* of Alvaro de Zamora interpreter of audiencia though it had been claimed by Cortés before 1540 as part of his Tehuantepec holding. Mainly populated by Chontals. They had been at war amongst themselves at contact, pacified by Juan Cortés prince of Tehuantepec and Pedro de Alvarado when it 'rebelled' in 1520s. It would rebel again after the death of Juan Cortés in 1560s. Near Guamelula (see above).

- Pablo Gobernador of 'Miquitla' Sword - 30 January 1542. Mitla (?) in Oaxaca, near Antequera largest Zapoteca principedom with hereditary rulers. Crown land by the early 1530s.
- Pedro Of 'Xoquiquitlapilco'. Horse 'for war in Jalisco' - 12 September 1541. Xochicuitlapilco was located in the Mixteca, northern Oaxaca, an area that had paid tribute to the triple alliance. It was considered a cabecera in 16th c. and the site of a *corregimiento* joined to that of Huaxuapan by 1555).
- Pedro Of Tuitlapilco Horse - 10 March 1542. Tuchitlapilco or Tuchcuitlapilco or Tuctla. Also in the Mixteca, near Huaxuapan – *encomienda* granted to Indian *gobernador* Juan Sánchez.

Pachuca-Veracruz

- Domingo Prince of Tlatiquipa. Sword - 28th September 1543. Probably Tlaquilpa 5 leagues S. of Pachuca near Cempoala: Pame-Speaking Chichimecs and Otomis mixed with Nahuatl speakers all paying tribute to Texcoco who appointed the Calpixque. – connected to Cuauhquilpan. May have been part of the *encomienda* of Francisco Ramírez before it escheated to the crown. The other half of the *encomienda* rights may have been held by Juan Pérez de la Gama (de la Riva) resident of Puebla and then Mexico City c. 1537. He renounced it to lic. Rodrigo de Sandoval who in c. 1550 transferred it to lic. Fernando Sanchez de Sandoval. Epazoyuca area to the north of the province was under Lope de Mendoza from the later 1530s and he left it to his widow Francisca del Rincón and on her death it went to the future viceroy Luis de Velasco jnr. It is near Talisteta where don Diego and don Hernando were also rewarded.

Soconusco-Approaches to Guatemala

- Baltasar *Gobernador* of Soconusco. Sword - 9 October 1538.
- Juan* *Gobernador* of Soconusco. Horse and sword - 28 April 1536. 'He was honoured and a great friend of the Spaniards. He helped Spaniards in need and even put them up in his house.(H)' Had died by 1546.

Pedro Prince of Verapaz. Horse - 2nd May 1542. In Chiapas-Guatemala an area where Bartolome de las Casas apparently achieved a peaceful conversion and alliance of the Indians who had previously resisted military conquest.

Taxco

Diego *Gobernador* of Taxco. (Horse- 12 November).

Pedro Nobleman of Taxco: *Gobernador* of the 'pueblo de los Aminegos(?) (mineros?)'. Horse- 24 July 1543.

Tlaxcala-Puebla valley

Alonso Nobleman of Tlaxcala. Sword – 24 April 1542.

Buenaventura Of Tlaxcala. Carriage - 22 December 1545.

Diego* Nobleman 'licence was given to three noblemen of Tlaxcala who came from Spain with his lordship (Mendoza)' Sword - 31 December 1537 (I think they mean 1536 from position in list). Diego Tlilquiyahuatzin who styled himself Diego Maxixcatzin: Confirmed as *gobernador* by king in 1535. Went to Spain to see the king with lic. Juan de Salmerón and returned with Mendoza to Mexico. He and his two companions were described as 'good Christians and friends to the Spaniards' (H). He had died by 1546.

Francisco Of Tlaxcala. Sword 'for war in Jalisco' - 12 September 1541. Possibly Francisco Maxixcatzin though Gibson claimed his licence to carry a sword was given in 1538. His heir Juan Maxixcatzin received a similar licence in 1555.

Gonzalo *Gobernador* of Tlaxcala. Horse – November 12 1545.

Hernando Prince of 'Tlatlacotepeque' Sword - 24 July 1542. Tlatlahuquitepec? In northern Puebla, a centre of tribute collection conquered by Motecuhzoma. Nearby there had been a garrison hill-top town set up to ward off Tlaxcala at Iztaquimaxtitlan (this latter had remained loyal to Tenochtitlan longer than most until Sandoval took it by storm. Half shared between Pedro de Vargas and Bartolome Hernandez de Nava).

It became part of the *encomienda* of Hernando de Salazar and Pedro Cindos de Portillo but the latter became a Franciscan and the former lost it to crown in June 1535 when it became a *corregimiento*.

- Josepe Prince of 'Çacotlan'. Horse – 12 November 1544.(Zacotla or Tzaoctlan? In Puebla state. Encomienda of Francisco de Oliveiros did not escheat till 1696. (Or is it nearby Zacatlan? : c. 5 leagues west from Tetela in northern Puebla. Traditionally hostile to nearby Tlaxcalans. Revolted c. 1525 when Antonio de Carvajal *encomendero*.)
- Juan *Gobernador* of 'Atecalmachalco'. Horse - 5 April 1542.Probably Tecamachalco 10 leagues east of Puebla, province of Tepeaca, old frontier with Tlaxcala: there was a Mexica fort nearby. *Encomienda* of Fernando and Pedro Villanueva and then Gonzalo Rodríguez de la Magdalena. An important *encomienda* that had been fought over by Chirinos and Estrada. – Tecamachalco itself had been given by Cortés to his secretary Alonso Valiente which by 1550 he shared with Diego de Ocampo. Later became the *encomienda* of the Viveros.
- Juan Nobleman of Guaquechula. Horse - 6th December 1545. Atrisco part of the valley of Atlixco or Atrixco that was so praised by Spanish pastoralists. Border disputes of Huexotzinco (which was only 10 miles north) who achieved dominance over the area only at the end of the 16th century. Until then Guaquechula remained proudly independent. The governing dynasty of Guaquechula, had been closely tied to that of Izúcar and had been an autonomous ally of Huexotzingo before the conquest. It was given to Jorge de Alvarado who held it until his death in 1540. It remained an *encomienda* at least until 1696.
- Juan Nobleman of Tlaxcala. Horse - 25 February 1542.
- Julián Nobleman of Tlaxcala. Horse - 24 April 1542.
- Lucas Nobleman of Tlaxcala. Sword 'for going to the war in Jalisco' - 25 February 1542.
- Martín* Prince of Guaquechula. Sword for 'services in Guatemala as well as notable Christianity': 31 Jan 1538. (see above) 'was very useful in the conquest of Guatemala, He is treated like a

Spaniard and is a great friend to them' (H). Motolinia prased him and hispiety. (See Motolinia p.92-3).

- Martín* Nobleman of Tlaxcala. Sword - 31 Dec 1537. Maxixcatzin clan. Second of the three noblemen of Tlaxcala who accompanied Mendoza back from Spain. (I think they mean 1536 from position in list).
- Miguel Prince of Tlacomulco. Horse - 9 June 1546. Around Tepeaca area East of Puebla and a relatively small town.
- Pedro Elias Nobleman of Tecamachalco. Horse - 5 April 1542. (see above).
- Sebastián* Nobleman of Tlaxcala. Sword - 31 December 1537 (though probably meant 1536) and another for a horse - 29 March 1542. Maxixcatzin clan. Third of the three noblemen of Tlaxcala who accompanied Mendoza back from Spain. (I think they mean 1536 from position in list).
- Valenciano de Castañeda Nobleman of Tlaxcala. Sword - 31 June 1542

Toluca-Otomi frontier

- Diego Of 'Chala chila(?)' (Chalchitlan or Chalchiguautl?) Horse – 21 March 1545. N.E. of Querétaro. Otomi-Nahua area bordering Huasteca Pame and other Chichimeca groups. *Encomendero* was Francisco de Torres (1530s and 40s) in an area with many *encomiendas*. Whole area had been a great support to Guzman in his administration and ambitions.
- Francisco Nobleman of Toluca. Sword – 27 January 1544.
- Joachin Nobleman of Amanalco Horse explicitly 'to go to war in Jalisco' - 12 September 1541. 10 leagues west of Toluca and 7 from the border with Michoacán.
- Juan Of Malinalco Sword - 20 March 1545. About eight leagues west of Cuernavaca. Had been an important pre-conquest religious and political centre. By 1531 half *corregimiento* and half in

hands of *conquistador* Cristóbal Rodríguez de Avalos whose widow married Cristóbal Hidalgo).

- Juan Of 'Ysquinquyteapilco' Carriage - 22 Dec 1545.
Iscuincuitlapilco? In Central South Hidalgo state towards Xilotepec area and sometimes tied administratively to it. Conquered by Tlacopan- some Pame lived there but majority were Otomí. – crown corregimiento since c. 1531 but the other part of the province including Actopan were Rodrigo Gómez de Avila's *encomienda* who in 1538 turned over his rights to Juan Martínez Guerrero who married his *mestiza* daughter and was the nephew of Mendoza's *mayordomo* Agustín Guerrero. Agustín Guerrero de Luna, their son, succeeded to the *encomienda* which escheated after 1643 but part went to heirs of Motecuhzoma.
- Juan *Gobernador* and prince of 'Gipacoya'. Horse - 28th November 1544. Xipacoya? 72 leagues S. of Tula, in southern Hidalgo. Otomi speakers inhabited the area at contact. Had delivered their tribute to Tenochtitlan in Atotonilco, but Tepexi and Xipacoya were Nahuatl-speaking states with their own *tlatoni*. Tula in 1530s paid tribute to *contador* Rodrigo de Albornoz and after 1544 to Pedro Moctezuma the emperor's son and it remained in his family.
- Juan Of Zapotlán Horse – 27 January 1544. Near Pachuca in Hidalgo: had been semi-autonomous border country- Pame, Otomi and Nahuatl spoken in the area. Crown possession by 1531.
- Pedro Of Toluca. Sword 'for having gone to war' - 27 January 1544.

Uncertain

- Antonio Prince of 'Matelango'. Sword- 21 November 1543. Probably Matalcingo: the Nahuatl version of Tarascan Charo and most common name used for the area in the 16th century. An area east of Michoacán city (later Valladolid, now Morelia), inhabited by Otomi settlers originally from Toluca who had arrived there in the 15th century and served the *Cazonci* as

mercenaries who gave them the land in exchange. *Encomienda* of *Contador* Rodrigo de Albornoz but by 1536 it was owned by Jorge Ceron Saavedra. Sometime before 1545 it had escheated to the crown becoming a *corregimiento* appointed by viceroy till 1565 when it was claimed and won by Martín Cortés for the marquessate who appointed the *corregidores* for a while.

It could also refer to the valley of Matalcingo part of the Marquesado holdings in the Toluca region. Matalcingo had been rivals of the Mexica with an Otomi minority that cooperated with Spaniards against the Mexica garrison at the time of the conquest. This area became a crucial focus of the *marquesado* especially for cattle breeding.

Cristobal

Gobernador of Tenango. Sword- 12 November 1544. Could be one of several: Tenango del Valle or Teutenango a polity c.8 leagues south of Toluca in an important region that had been a dependency of Tlacopan. After the conquest it was disputed first by Cortés and then by Isabel Moctezuma and by the crown. Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and the Cervantes family also had encomiendas here. And the towns of S. Pedro y S. Pablo Tultepec for instance were bought c. 1536 by Vasco de Quiroga and became a dependence of his hospital of Sta. Fe. There was another Tenango in Chalco , by 1533 a crown possession; another near Taxco (cabecera – crown possession by 1536 (252-4); Northern central Oaxaca(pp.301-4) and it could refer to a Chinanteca community near Veracruz held in *encomienda* by Francisco de Rosales and *escheated* c.1560 .

Diego

Gobernador de 'Tetela'. Sword- 10th February 1546. Most likely Tetela del Rio in the frontier between the old Mexica and Purépecha empires, near Cuzamala. 1538 change of *encomendero* from Juan de Mancilla to Francisco Rodriguez Guadalcanal. It could also be an eponymous town in Morelos near the Popocatepetl: part of large encomienda Cortés gave to Pedro Sanchez Farfán, 1536 he was succeeded by his widow Maria de Estrada. It could also be a polity of northern Puebla that was a traditional rival of Tlaxcala. If so it was part of the *encomienda* of Pedro de Escobar escheated to crown after his death in 1535.

- Diego Of 'Talisteta' Horse - 3 October 1543. (Talistaca? (Talistaca? in the Mixteca at the heart of the marquesado 3 leagues east of Antequera- 'a most complicated jurisdiction, split into several non-contiguous segments'- it was assigned by Mendoza from c. 1537 to Juan López de Zarate, first bishop of Antequera till it escheated to the crown under the New Laws in 1544. Luis de Leon Romano was active in the area at the time which put him in conflict with the *marquesado*. Could also be Talistaca in South-Eastern Hidalgo – Pame Otomi and Nahuatl country covered in valuable maguey, c.10 leagues S.E. of Pachuca. If so this Talistaca was in the encomienda of Diego de Ocampo and later inherited by his illegitimate daughter María de Ocampo who married Juan Velázquez Rodríguez. Later held by Alonso Velázquez and then Motcuhzoma's heirs- previously subjects of Texcoco.
- Francisco Of Tlacotepec. Horse - 2 January 1544. Cuernavaca area *encomienda* of Gaspar Guernica and shared with Alonso de la Serna. Or N. Mixteca near border with Tlaxcala; *encomienda* granted before 1550 to Gabriel Bosque from the previous large encomienda grant belonging to Francisco Maldonado (ie. Tlacotepec was an *estancia* of Tecomastlanguaca). Or Tepeaca about 16 leagues S.E. of Puebla a tributary of Tecamachalco. Or on border with Tarascan kingdom on way to Zacatula near the sea; *encomienda* there was held by first conqueror Francisco Rodriguez Magariño. Or near Veracruz; held by cannon-maker and first conqueror Francisco de Solís as part of a very large grant in the area granted by Cortés.
- Hernando Nobleman of Talistaca. Sword - 28th September 1543.(see above)
- Joaquín: Horse 'to ride in the war of Jalisco' - 27 August 1541.
- Tapia: Sword and dagger - 24 December 1538. Without any further information it is unclear which Tapia this refers to. It could either be Hernando de Tapia the translator or Fernando de Tapia the Otomi captain and founder of Querétaro or another Tapia. It may be more likely to be the latter because the

former had already received a licence, but there was little bureaucratic accuracy with regards to the indigenous population. If it was the Otomi captain then he was married to the *cacica* of Acambaro the encomienda of Hernán Pérez de Bocanegra y Cordoba, and his one-time ally in the expansion towards Querétaro. I have not seen his birthplace mentioned with any certainty in any secondary literature however a document of 1704 in the collection of contains a generally accurate account of the foundation of Querétaro and is emphatic that Fernando de Tapia was originally from Tlaxcala (at one point called Francisco erroneously then Fernando, our man from circumstantial evidence including the name and description of his son Diego). (Fernández de Recas, Guillermo S. *Cacicazgos y nobiliario Indigena de Nueva España* (Mexico 1961), pp.244 306 & 309; Powell P.W. *La Guerra Chichimeca (1550-1600)* pp.167-9 with notes along with Menegus Borneman and Aguirre Salvador... pp.37-8 with notes for further Reading).

Gonzalo: Prince of Tonalá. Horse - 27th January 1544. In Mixteca (?): had belonged to treasurer Juan Alonso de Sosa till 1544 when it escheated according to the new laws. – Martin de Peralta was *encomendero* nearby. Or a smaller non-cabecera in Coatzacoalcos area, only additional support for this latter site is the name Gonzalo like *conquistador* Gonzalo de Sandoval who pacified the area.

Indian witnesses from AGI Justicia 258 testimony.

Diego Full name: don Diego de San Francisco Tehuetzquititzin, son of Tezcatlpopocatzin and grandson of *huey tlatoani* Tizoc; *gobernador* of Indian Mexico from 1542 (when Diego Huantzin (see above) died) until his own death in 1554. Claimed to be about 50 years old, 'Christian and baptised'. Veteran of the Mixtón war, his testimony was ambivalent, stating merely that his polity provided water, fodder wood and coal to the viceroy

every day without pay and that he had not been involved in the expedition to Cíbola. His main complaint was against *oidor* Tejada's appropriation of lands in Chalco, which don Diego had been trying to claim for himself since 1532. (*La nobleza indígena...p.42*)

Juan Tlecanen

Principal (of Mexico City). Participated in the '*conquista*' of Cibola with Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. He provided interesting evidence of the involvement of the lords of Mexico in the seemingly promising expedition to Cíbola. Juan Tlacanen claimed that he and 414 joined the expedition. Only 144 of these made it home again. Only 30 of the Indians that went were porters (and 30 other porters came from Tlatelolco) meaning that most went as *conquistadores*. Asked who ordered them to go he replied: 'that lic. Tejada... spoke with don Diego (Huantzin) *gobernador* of Mexico and with the *principales*, that as [Cíbola] had been discovered and the viceroy was sending people to it, if some Indians, of their own free will, wanted to go there they should see about it because they were not going to be forced to go nor made to go against their will, as Nuño de Guzmán had done... and they said that they wanted to go and of their own free will they went.' Lic. Tejada then gave them 60 *pesos de Tepuzque* to buy equipment and the same amount to the contingent from Tlatelolco. They then 'went to Jalisco where they found the viceroy. The said viceroy asked them again if they were going of their own free will or if they were being forced.' Later they were asked to carry further loads but were not paid to do so except in food (*biscocho*). He knows because he went and was in charge of the Indians that came from Mexico.

Martin Caçol

Principal from Mexico City who participated in the expedition to Cíbola. He claims 204 went and 4 deserted on the way. In the rest of his testimony he broadly agreed with Juan Tlacanen's testimony.

Diego Tepecumecatli

Principal from Mexico City. Witness to the disputes over land between Tejada, the Moctezuma family, the polities of Mexico and Tlatelolco and the Tlalmanalco hegemony over Chalco.

- Don Hernando *Gobernador* of Tlatelolco; 65 years old. 'Said [the viceroy and the *audiencia*] had treated [him and his polity] well and helped and favoured them and that they have enjoyed justice and that they have not been aggrieved or treated badly as far as the witness knows' However he did complain about the Tejada dispute (see above). He claimed that Juan García was in charge of distributing the fuel, water and food that they provided for the viceregal palace (without payment). He was not governor at the time of the Cíbola expedition so could not comment.
- Juan Coabis *Principal* of Tlatelolco 'In charge of the *macehuales* of the district (*barrio*) of Santa Catalina'. He 'knows of no grievance or ill-treatment'. Claims that 80 went from Tlatelolco to Cíbola. Tejada was the point of contact as the viceroy was in New Galicia. 20 were employed as *tamemes* (porters). A certain amount of money was given to don Martin (the *gobernador* back then, now dead) by Tejada and don Martin gave the company food and equipment for the campaign. Apart from the 20 *tamemes* others were employed in herding the cattle. As time went on provisions ran low and 60 made it back from Cíbola.
- Francisco Yautl *Principal*, 35 years old from the *barrio* de los Reyes in Santiago de Tlatelolco, where he is in charge of collecting the tribute.
- Don Ramiro *Principal* of Michoacán. Augustinian Fray Alonso de la Vera Cruz was the interpreter: From Pátzcuaro, had known the viceroy for 10 years. He is not sure about his age but from his looks guesses 50. They only provided *tamemes* for the Cíbola expedition until the next village. This they did by order of Gonzalo Gomez de Betanzos who was *corregidor* and Godoy *alguacil mayor*. They were eventually paid 200 *pesos de oro de tepuzque* for the *tamemes* by don Luis de Castilla. They have been paying some of their tribute from that money since the plague struck (*cocoliste* or *cocohste*).
- Don Alonso *Principal* from Pátzcuaro. Provided interesting information about how the viceroy used 'intimate representatives to deal with indigenous communities: After the army for Cíbola left Pátzcuaro 'the said don Luis de Castilla went to Pátzcuaro and the *principales* to an assembly in the monastery of St. Francis

of the said town and he spoke to them, saying that he wanted to pay them for the food and porters they had provided for the [expedition] ... to this end he ordered a reduction in the tribute of cloth they owed his Majesty.'

Indians named by Spanish witnesses in their testimony to Tello de Sandoval in AGI Justicia 258.

Hernando de Tapia	<p>Jerónimo López claimed that Hernando de Tapia had helped 'rescue' captive Indians during the Mixtón war from the indigenous lords who had captured them, but only in order for Agustín Guerrero to brand them for himself.</p> <p>Pedro de Villegas confirmed that he always saw Hernando de Tapia wearing a 'sword of Castile' but was not sure on what authority he did so.</p>
Tapizuela	<p>Bernaldino de Albornoz claimed that Tapizuela was a 'very principal' Indian and like the several unnamed Indians mentioned by other witnesses he claims that Tapizuela wore his sword only in the presence of the viceroy. Bernal Díaz del Castillo also mentions a Tapizuela who was an important nobleman that participated in Cortés' disastrous expedition to the Hibueras (<i>Conquista de la Nueva España</i>, J. Ramírez Cabañas intro. & notes, (Mexico 1974)p. 458).</p>
Julian	<p>Francisco de Terrazas believed that Mendoza had given weapons to a <i>principal</i> from his town (Tulancingo?) called don Julian.</p>
Pablo	<p>Francisco de Terrazas similarly claimed that Mendoza had given a weapon to a principal of the town of Francisco de Avila (who shared the <i>encomienda</i> of Tulancingo with him).</p>
Luis	<p>Juan Tello de Medina claimed that don Luis an indigenous <i>regidor</i> of Tepeaca had received a sword from the viceroy.</p>
Lords of Soconusco	<p>Juan Tello de Medina also claimed that all the <i>principales</i> of Soconusco rode horses.</p>

Final observations

The testimony given by Spanish witnesses regarding the possession of European weapons and horses by Indians like Tapizuela, who displayed them openly in front of the viceroy, speaks to the danger of seeing the lists provided by Turcios as definitive. From other evidence it is clear that many more Indian lords were either granted weapons by the viceregal regime or allowed to carry them; furthermore the lack of detail in Turcios' lists also suggests that what mattered was formal or informal viceregal approval rather than bureaucratic accuracy.

Apart from the geographical distribution of the favoured indigenous lords, it is interesting to note the correlation between the recipients of formal grants and *encomenderos* associated with the viceroy, crown lands overseen by viceregally appointed *corregidores* in strategic locations and attempts by the viceroy to establish links with lords within the *marquesado* presumably as an attempt to wean them off the influence of Cortés or his agents.

II. Favoured Spaniards

This is an attempt to establish the extent of Mendoza's household and the number of individuals he attracted by his direct patronage (not excluding the distribution of offices like *corregimiento* which have been printed elsewhere from similar sources). The importance of these unofficial networks of patronage is discussed in the main text. It is worth highlighting for example the number of preponderant individuals whose prominence survived into Velasco's reign: Tristán de Luna y Arellano, Fernando de Portugal, the Ibarra Luis de León Romano, Hernan Pérez de Bocanegra are some examples of individuals who began their ascendancy as Mendoza's dependents or allies. As Jerónimo de Valderrama noted in his own investigations into Velasco's regime, it should be noted how many lesser relatives of more important officials in New Spain were patronised by the viceroy, presumably in an effort to foster links with them. It is also interesting how useful many of the members of the viceroy's household were: the various prongs of the expedition to Cíbola were an almost totally household affair.

Individuals registered at the Casa de Contratación in Seville as travelling to New Spain with the viceroy

These individuals registered New Spain as their destination at the *Casa de Contratación*. Their day of departure was on or very near the time of Mendoza's embarkation on 25 June 1535. The names included are those that were specifically noted as travelling with the viceroy around this date except for those with an asterisk (*) who are

likely to have travelled as part of the viceroy's entourage from secondary evidence or inference. It is worth noting how many came from Mendoza areas of influence like Granada, Guadalajara, Santillán or Socuéllamos and their provinces.

Alarcón Hernando de	Son of Antonio de Torres & doña María de Acuña, from Granada.
Aller de Benavides Juan	Son of Alonso Aller & Isabel De Benavides, from Villanueva de Valdejamuz. Almaguer Antonio de, son of Francisco López de Almaguer & Juana López, from Corral de Almaguer.
Arnalte Juan de	Son of Juan de Arnalte & Elvira de Calatayud, from Griman (Griñón?), near Madrid.
Ayala Pedro de*	Son of Rodrigo de Ayala & Mari Sánchez de Zamora, from Alcaraz.
Carvajal Antonio de*	Son of Antonio de Carvajal & Elvira Ramírez from Aguilera.
Cortés Pedro*	Son of Alonso Cortés and Mari López, from Tendilla.
Duque Colinea (?)*	Son of De Juan El Duque Y De Juana De La Viña, from Flanders.
Ecija Bartolome de	Son of Alonso de Ecija and María Hernández, from Granada.
Espino Pedro del	Son of Juan del Espino and María de Muciente, from Medina de Rioseco.
Espinosa Andrés de*	Son of Blas De Madrid and María De Pursia (?), from Madrid.

Garcia de Plasencia Juan	Son of Juan García de Plasencia and Inés Gómez, from Murcia, along with Mencía De Molina, his wife, daughter of Lope De Molina.
Guerra Toribio*	Son of Pedro Guerra and Catalina Gutiérrez, from Santillana.
Guerrero Agustín*	Son of Bachiller Juan Martínez Guerrero and María Ximénez de Orillana, from Alcaraz.
Guzman, don Cristobal*	Son of don Alonso de Calatayza and doña Leonor de Guzmán, from Toledo, and with him came his <i>criado</i> Pedro Serrano, son of Pedro Serrano and Mari Sánchez, from Belmonte.
Guzman Juan de*	Son of Diego se Guzmán and doña Luisa, from Guadalajara.
Hernandez Diego*	Son of Gonzalo Hernández Gallego and Teresa Hernández, from Granada.
Hernandez Gonzalo*	Son of Bachiller Luis Alvarez and María Hernández, from Montilla.
Hoznayo Miguel de	Son of Juan Doznayo [Sic] and doña Leonor Beltrán, Vecinos De Guadalajara.
La Torre Bernaldo de*	Son of Doctor de La Torre, the crown's <i>fiscal general</i> , and doña María De Caravajal, from Granada.
Leal Pedro*	Son of Pedro Leal and María González, from Alcaraz.
Lezcano Julian de*	Son of <i>licenciado</i> Lezcano and Teresa Alvarez Gil, from Socuéllamos.
Medinilla Pedro de*	Son of Francisco de Medinilla and Susana Hernández, from Medina de Pumar.

Mendoza Francisco de*	Son of <i>comendador</i> Diego de Mendoza and Isabel Segura of Sevilla, with Beatriz de Montoya his wife and Pedro de Mendoza, Isabel de Mendoza, Leonor de Montoya and Juana Ruiz his Children.
Merida Bartolome de*	Son of Francisco Rodríguez de Mérida and Gracia Sánchez, from La Pera (?).
Mexia Gaspar	Son of Rodrigo Mexía and Mestesia Rodríguez de Molina, from Alcaraz.
Montero Pedro de	Son of Juan Sánchez Montero and María Alvarez, from Cáceres.
Monzon Baltasar de*	Trumpeter, son of Luis de Monzón and Valentina Hernández, from Granada.
Nuñez Diego*	Son of Juan de Córdoba and Beatriz Hernández, from Granada.
Ortiz Cristobal*	Son of Pedro de Olea and Juana González de Llerma (?), from Guadalajara, A Nueva España.
Palomeque Alonso	Son of Alonso De La Peña, and María de Palomeque.
Parada Juan de	Son of Juan de Parada and Mencía de Villalón, from Huete.
Prado Gaspar de	Son of Alonso de Prado and doña Juana De Loaysa, from Madrid.
Proaño don Rodrigo de*	Son of don Antonio de Proaño and doña María Maldonado, from Guadalajara, A Nueva España.

Quesada don Luis de	Son of Pedro Díaz de Quesada and doña Francisca de Mendoza, from Granada, and Bartolomé García de Jaén, son of Pedro García Colomo and Elvira Jiménez la Limona, from Jaén.
Quiralte Francisco	Son of <i>licenciado</i> Francisco Quiralte and Teresa Juárez, from Socuéllamos.
Rivero Antonio de	<i>Criado</i> of the viceroy, son of García de Espinosa and Francisca del Rincón, from Medina del Campo.
Roa Alonso de	<i>Criado</i> of Hernando de Alarcón, son of Pedro de Ubite and Elvira López Valero, from Villamayor.
Saldaña Gaspar de	Son of Juan se Saldaña and María de Salcedo, from Guadalajara.
Sanchez Amoraga Juan*	Son of Francisco de Santacruz and Isabel López, from Huete).
Soto, Sebastian de	Son of Sebastián de Soto and doña María Barbaz, from Guadalajara.
Tejada Isabel de*	Daughter of Juan de Mendoza and Maria de Tejada, from Granada, along with Gaspar Agueda and Melchor, her sons with Pedro de Toledo.
Temño Pedro de*	Son of Bernardino de Temño and Teresa González de Cortiguera, from Santillana.
Tercero, el <i>licenciado</i> Francisco*	Son of Pero Hernández Tercero and Ana Gasca, from corral de Almaguer.
Torres Sebastian de	Son of Sebastián de Torres and Catalina Ruiz, from La Villa de Almazán.

Venegas don García*

Son of don Alonso Venegas and doña María de Quesada, from Granada, with *criado* Lorenzo de Padilla, son of Juan de Baena and Isabel de Medina, from Granada.

Zarate Diego de

Son of Hernando de Zárate and Elvira Porcel, from Guadalajara.

Ciriaco Pérez de Bustamante in *Los Orígenes Del Gobierno Virreinal En Las Indias Españolas – Don Antonio De Mendoza Primer Virrey De La Nueva España, (1535-1550)* (Santiago, 1928) p.197 Reproduced in full a *cedula* signed by the queen on May 5th 1535, exempting the viceroy from having to pay the *almojarifazgo* or import duties for possessions that he and his household were taking to New Spain, ‘...para proveimiento de *su* [the viceroy’s] *persona y casa* [my italics]...’ (‘to provide for his person and household’). It provides a glimpse of the household’s original scale and the formal acceptance of this patrimonial aspect of *viceregal* government comes from It may not be an exhaustive list of what they took but it suggests the scale and intentions of the household. It includes items like 36 shirts for the viceroy and 144 ‘for his *criados*’, 12 caps for him and 48 for his *criados*; 5 doublets for the viceroy and sixty for his *criados*; 12 pairs of socks for him and 120 for his *criados* and many further items of ceremonial and everyday clothing including slippers for the viceroy; all manner of splendid equestrian equipment, ornaments and refinements and knives for his vassals, along with six choice horses to complement their turnout. The list also includes other courtly refinements to decorate and entertain in the palace in a regal manner with 50 *marcos* of worked silver ornaments, 300 *anas* of tapestries, two *salas* (perhaps furniture to decorate two halls?) 24 pieces of embossed leather furniture, draperies from Segovia; Cooking equipment and rare ingredients (in New Spain) including wine, olive-oil, vinegar, spices and flavourings amongst other products along with up to fifty ducats worth of medicinal elixirs; and as wonderful testimony to the viceroy’s inherited humanist inclinations, a library of 200 books, including almost certainly, Alberti’s *Architettura* (as Guillermo Tovar de Teresa has pointed out this would count as one of only three large library collections known in New Spain at the time).

List of ‘bodyguards’ taken from a copy of the memorial produced by Antonio de Turcios found in AGI Justicia 259.

The lists reflect appointments to the viceregal bodyguard made on twenty three different dates between 4 September 1537 and 4 January 1546. These included thirty individuals: 10 horse and 20 foot. Agustín Guerrero was always named as captain of the guard. The viceroy had the right to ask for 2,000 ducats a year for their upkeep. As all

witnesses insisted, and even the viceroy admitted, the ‘guard’ was essentially composed of household dependents, both those that came with him and others he attached to the palace in New Spain and they hardly ever acted as a formal guard. The almost 200 different individuals named as having been members of the guard provide some of the best (if not extant) evidence for identifying who were Mendoza’s household dependents in these years. I have not included the rank (cavalry or infantry) or the date of appointment to the guard because my aim was to establish who enjoyed the viceroy’s patronage from the 2,000 ducat fund available to him from the treasury to establish links of patronage in this period. To this end I have only included the number of times they were named in brackets. I have added an asterisk (*) to the names of individuals named as the viceroy’s dependents elsewhere in the documentary evidence I have surveyed from the Archivo General de Indias. I have supplied the relevant information from these other sources with the following scheme of reference: Catálogo de Pasajeros a Indias (*CPI*); Justicia 258 (258); Justicia 259 (259); Quitas y vacaciones fund from ‘Relación sacada de los libros de la contaduría... 18 días del mes de Agosto 1546... relación del cargo de las quitas y lo librado en ellas’ from AGI Justicia 258 (QV).

Águila, Cristóbal del (2)

*Alarcón Hernando de (9);

From Granada, came with viceroy had his own *criados* like Alonso de la Roa (*CPI*); *maestresala* in Mendoza’s court and considered his *criado* (258: Alonso Ortiz de Zuñiga; Francisco de Lerma). Most famous for his exploits in exploring Baja California and sailing up the Colorado river and his notoriously good relations with the indigenous groups he encountered. 150 pesos de tepuzque in 1539.

*Almaguer Antonio de (7):

From Corral de Almaguer near Toledo, came with the viceroy (*CPI*); Mendoza’s secretary viceroy arranged for him to marry the ex-wife of Hernando de Turcios (258); viceroy claims he was useful in matters of governance (259); In late 1536 was awarded 250 pesos p/a for

reviewing the treasury accounts which he finished in 1544, receiving 1,900 *pesos* 2 *tomines*. (QV)

Almaguer Pedro de, (1)

Amberes Nicolás de (4)

Antón de (¿)

Arias de Mansilla, Rodrigo (5)

Audelo, Antonio de (1)

*Ávila Gaspar de (3)

Considered a *criado* by eg. Alonso Ortíz de Zuñiga, married daughter of *encomendero* Hernán Sanchez (258).

Ávila Juan de (Dávila), (3)

Avilés Pedro de (7)

*Baeza Alonso de, (4)

His father Rodrigo was one of Mendoza's *criados*, Alonso married the daughter of Gonzalo Gómez de Betanzo (258).

Bañuelos Baltasar de (6)

Barbero Juan, (2)

*Barrionuevo (7):

Could be Rodrigo or Velasco de Barrionuevo who received 120 and 80 *pesos* of *tepuzque* respectively in 1539 (QV).

Bernaldino, (1)

Betanzos Antonio de (3) (possibly related to Gómez de Betanzos, see below).

Betanzos Juan (6) (possibly related to Gómez de Betanzos, see below).

Bolonia Alexandro de (1)

Bracamonte Tomas de (1)

Bracamonte, Andrés de (1)

Calzada Matías de, (1)

Camargo, (1)

Carvajal Rodrigo (Diego?) (3)

Carvajal, (1):

Could be Antonio de Carvajal or related who came with Mendoza from Spain (*CPI*) and considered one of Mendoza's allies in the *cabildo* by Bernaldino Vázquez de Tapia. Could also be Juan de Carvajal who was married to Bernaldino Vázquez de Tapia's niece but was considered a favoured relative and *allegado* of the viceroy who married the widow of Francisco Rodriguez de Magariño.

Castilla Gaspar de (6)

Castilleja, (1)

Castillo Francisco del (7)

Castillo Miguel del, (2)

Caxco Tomas. (1)

Cepeda Antón de, (1)

Cepeda Pedro de, (1)

Cepeda, (1)

Chaves Nicolás de (3)

Coca Francisco de (3)

Contreras Cristóbal de, (1)

*Contreras Juan de (2): Possibly same as individual paid for his services as an interpreter in 1543 (QV).

Córdoba Alonso de, (1)

Corzo, Antonio (1)

Dávalos Gonzalo (2)

Dorantes Esteban de (4)

Duarte Francisco (7)

Durán Gonzalo, (1)

Espino Alonso, (1)

Estévez Jácome (2)

Ferrara Cipio (7)

Figuero Francisco de (5)

Fioz Juan de (Pioz, Ríos) (9)

Flamenco Nicolás, (possibly same as Nicolás de Amberes) (4)

Flores Juan de (2)

*García Juan (el Sordo) (8):

Also Juan García de Plasencia came with wife Mencía de Molina at the same time as the viceroy (*CPI*); according to don Hernando, Indian governor of Tlatelolco, he was an important member of the viceregal household, he organised its supplies and provisions and dealt in this regard with Indian lords (258); may be Juan García de Beas or Juan García de la Madalena mentioned in *QV*.

García Juan Camargo (5, though may be same as Juan García el sordo)

Garcivaca (2)

Gayán Gerónimo (4)

Gayán Juan de, (1)

Giales Gonzalo de (1)

Gómez Alonso (1)

Gómez Francisco (10)

Gómez Gaspar, (4)

Gómez Juan de Leyva (1)

Gómez Ochoa, (1)

Gubrino (Sobrino?) Pedro, (1)

Gudiel Diego (1)

Guernyca (Guernica) Maestre Antonio de, (20)

- *Guerrero (Martínez) Juan (10): Agustín Guerrero's nephew, married *mestiza* daughter of *encomendero* Rodrigo Gómez (258; 259);
- *Guerrero, Agustín (23): From Alcaraz son of *bachiller* Juan Martínez Guerrero and María Ximénez Orillana (*CPI*) Captain of the guard and viceroy's *mayordomo* until 1545 258; 259; rewarded from treasury for organising the production of artillery (927 *pesos* and 10 *gramos de tepuzque*) to arranging material for paving roads (284 *pesos de oro*) and 1,000 *ducats* for auditing the previous administration with Ceynos in 1544 (*QV*).
- *Guevara (2) If this was don Pedro de Guevara, then he received 200 *pesos de tepuzque* for his maintenance in 1544 (*QV*).
- *Gutiérrez, Diego (1) If this was Diego Gutiérrez de la Caballería 200 *pesos* for his maintenance in 1539 (*QV*).
- Hernández Manuel (8)
- Hernández Pero (1)
- Hurtado Juan (5)
- Juan (¿)
- Juarez Diego (Juárez/Suarez) (3)
- Jurado Antón, (Antonio de Jurado) (2)

Laines Diego de (3),

las Casas Gonzalo de (1)

Lerma Sebastián, (1)

*Leyba (Leyva) Juan de (1): 200 pesos de tepuzque in 1546 (QV).

Lezama Martin de, (2)

*Lezcano Julián de (del escaño, (8) from Socuéllamos (CPI)

Lima Sebastián, (1)

Loaysa Garci Jofre de (5)

López Alonso (2)

*López Francisco (2) QV

López Gaspar, (1)

Lozoya Martin de (7)

*Lucena Francisco de (3) Viceroy's secretary (259)

Luz Gerónimo de, (2)

Luz Jerónimo de (2)

Macías (1)

Macías Andrés (3)

Madrid Juan de, (1)

Mallorquín Antón de (5)

Mallorquín Bartolomé (León) (3)

Mallorquín Francisco, (2)

Manorgas Pedro de (r), (3)

Mansilla Luis de, (2)

Manzanas Francisco (1)

Manzanas Francisco de (5)

Manzanas, (1)

Martin, Alonso (2)

*Martin, Alonso (2)

50 *pesos de tepuzque* for his maintenance (QV)

*Medinilla Pedro de (11):

From Medina de Pomar important part of the domain of the Constable of Castile (CPI), considere done of Mendoza's *criados* who was favoured in a legal case over an *encomienda* when he married Guillén de la Loa's widow. He came with Mendoza from Spain (eg. Francisco de Lerma's testimony, 258; 259).

Méndez Gutierre (1)

Mendoza Alonso de, (1)

Mendoza Gaspar de (9)

Mendoza Pedro de (21)

Mendoza, (1)

Mexia Francisco (3)

*Mexía Gaspar (13)	From Alcaraz like the Guerreros probably came with the viceroy (<i>CPI</i>) 120 pesos de tepuzque in 1539 (<i>QV</i>)
Mexia, Alonso (1)	
Molina, (1)	
Molino Juan de, (1)	
Monteagudo Martin de, (4)	
Montemayor (1)	
Montemayor, Francisco de (3)	
Montoya Francisco (2)	
*Monzón Arias de (2)	Likely Baltasar de Monzón, trumpeter from Granada (<i>CPI</i>).
*Moreno, (3) Possibly Anton Moreno	Trumpeter 100 pesos de tepuzque for his maintenance (<i>QV</i>)
Moreno, Alonso (1)	
*Moscoso Juan de (4)	Mendoza's mace bearer, married, (259); also identified as Mendoza's mace bearer by Bernal Vázquez de Tapia who accused him of violent behaviour (258).
Muñoz Benito (2)	
Muñoz de Sotomayor Garci, (1)	
Murcia Juan de, (1)	

Nncibay Pedro de (4)

Oropesa Bartolomé de (3)

Ortega Pedro de, (3)

*Oznayo Antonio de (5)

Described as Mendoza's *maestresala* and *maestrecasa* eg. Francisco de Lerma (258).

Gaspar Mexía (el mozo) (1)

Oznayo Juan de (or Hoznayo) (5)

Palomyno Francisco de, (1)

Pavia Hernando de, (1)

Peralta Alonso de (5)

Peralta Luis de (10)

Pérez (1)

*Pérez Hernán (Páez) (10)
(QV).

1539 100 pesos de tepuzque and 120 in 1541

Pérez Sebastián (5)

Perez, Diego (2)

Ponce Juan (2)

Portugués Manuel (7)

Portugués Pablo, (1)

*Pradano Gaspar de (Prado) (12)	From Madrid (<i>CPI</i>) in 1541 100 pesos de tepuzque for his maintenance and 200 in 1544 (<i>QV</i>).
Rabanal, (1)	
Rabanales Juan de, (1)	
Ramírez Dávalos Gil (14)	
Raoli Pedro de (8)	
Regidor el Mozo Pedro (2)	
Regidor Pedro (4)	
Rendón Juan, (3)	
Ribera Álvaro de, (6)	
Ribero Andrés de (1)	
*Ribero Antonio de (8)	Viceroy's <i>criado</i> from Medina del Campo (<i>CPI</i>); 100 pesos de tepuzque in 1539 and another 150 in 1545 (<i>QV</i>).
Rindero Juan, (1)	
Rodríguez Juan (Carvajal?)(15)	
Rodríguez Pedro, (4)	
*Rodríguez, (1) (Antonio?)	<i>Guarnicionero</i> in charge of supplies to the palace' (258); or Hernando Rodríguez are mentioned who was awarded 130 <i>pesos de tepuzque</i> in 1545 (<i>QV</i>).

Roque Pedro (5)

Ruiz de Medina Juan (6)

Ruiz de Rozas Marcos (4)

Ruiz, (1)

Salas Juan de, (1)

Salazar Cosme de (4)

Salazar Luis de (3)

Salazar Melchor de (1)

Salazar Miguel de (1)

Salazar, (1)

*Salazar, Francisco de (3)

Awarded 150 *pesos de tepuzque* 1545 (QV)

*Salcedo (Sauzedo/Saucedo) Pedro de (8): Appointed *veedor de plata* and compensated with 100 *pesos de tepuzque* in 1543 and again 1544 (QV)

*Saldaña Gaspar de (8):

From Guadalajara, came with the viceroy (CPI); awarded 60 *pesos de tepuzque* in 1539 for his maintenance (QV).

Salinas Pedro de (1)

Sámano (1)

Sámano Julián de, (3)

Sánchez Moreno Pedro (2)

Santabaya Juan de, (1)

*Santacruz Francisco de (2)

Possibly the same as the hostile witness in (258) and whom Mendoza accused of being one of those in 'passion' against him in 259. In which case he had ascended to the *cabildo* of Mexico City and at some point turned against the viceroy.

*Santacruz Juan de (1):

Awarded 50 *pesos de tepuzque* in 1546 (QV).

Sauzedo Miguel de (1)

Segura Martin de (1)

Socuéllamos Francisco de (21)

Tejada Pedro de, (9)

Temiño Carlos de, (6)

*Temiño Pedro de (2)

From Santillana (CPI).

Torre Antonio de la (2)

Torres Pablo, (1)

Vaca Juan, (1)

*Valdivia Andrés de (6):

Viceroy allegedly wanted this *allegado* to marry a girl in the custody of Alonso Ortíz de Zuñiga, though this was disputed (258).

Valdivia Luis de (1)

Varela, Alonso (1)

*Vargas Pedro de (6)	Awarded 60 <i>pesos de tepuzque</i> in 1539 and 100 more in 1545 (QV).
Velasco Barrionuevo? (1)	
Vera, Alonso de (2)	
Villalobos, Antonio de (2)	
Vizcaíno Juan, (4)	
*Zambrana Álvaro de (1)	Awarded 130 <i>pesos de tepuzque</i> 1546 (QV).
*Zarate (5):	If Diego de Zarate he came with the viceroy from Guadalajara (CPI) then become a hostile witness by 1545 (258).
*Zayas Luis de, (1):	Awarded 100 <i>pesos de tepuzque</i> for his maintenance in 1546 (QV).
Zugasti(e) Santorun de (2)	

Individuals described explicitly as Mendoza's household dependent in witness testimonies found in AGI Justicia 258

Alarcón, Hernando de	
Almaguer, Antonio de:	Viceroy's secretary married the widow of <i>encomendero</i> Hernando de Torres.
Avila, Gaspar de	
Carvajal, Juan de:	(Married widow of <i>encomendero</i> Francisco Rodriguez Magariño and according to rumour 'a relative of his sons', so possibly related to his wife's family).
Cerón, Jorge	

García, Juan	In charge of distributing the provisions brought daily to the viceregal palace by the polities of Mexico-Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco to the various inhabitants of the palace.
Gómez de Bentanzos, Gonzalo	
Guerrero, Agustín	
Guerrero, Juan (Martínez)	Married the <i>mestiza</i> daughter of <i>encomendero</i> Rodrigo Gómez.
Lerma Francisco de	
López de Nuncibay Iñigo	Over 35 years old has been here 5 years and was from Vizcaya and then settled in Malaga before going to New Spain with the viceroy.
Manuel, Luis	
Medinilla, Pedro de	(Married Isabel de Alvarado the widow of <i>encomendero</i> Guillen de la Loa).
Merida, Alonso de	
Moscoso, Juan de	'El macero' or viceroy's mace-bearer, married Antonia Hernandez widow of Bartolome de Perales.
Osorio, Pedro	Married the daughter of <i>encomendero</i> Hernando de Torres).
Oznayo(Hoznayo) Antonio de	Mendoza's <i>maestresala</i> .
Peralta, Martin de	
Rodriguez (?) de Baeza	Son of (married the daughter of <i>encomendero</i> Gonzalo Gómez de Betanzos).
Samaniego	
Sotomayor	
Torre Bernal de la	
Vanegas 'el negro'.	
Venegas, don García	

Zapata, Juan

- Additionally Mendoza mentioned in AGI Justicia 277 that Juan de Aguilar and Fernando Arias Mansilla were 'absent' from his household representing the viceroy in at court in Spain.

Treasury disbursements from the Quitas y Vacaciones fund

Acebedo, Baltasar

Aguado Fray Alonso

Aguayo, Pedro (2)

Aguila, Domingo Interpreter

Aguila, Juan del

Alarcón, Hernando

Albor, Miguel Hernandez

*Albornoz, Juan

Alcaraz, Toribio (2) Architect of church in Michoacán and constructing a bridge and buiding in Malinalco.

Aliero, Antonio de

Almaguer, Antonio don

Almyron, Alonso

Alonso, Francisco *Alguacil de Tianguiz* (market).

Alonso, Hernando

Alonso, Rodrigo

Alvarado, Fernando de *Justicia mayor* of Colima.

Alvarado, Hernando (2)

Alvarez Lorenzo de

Angulo, Francisco

Arana, Gaspar	Interpreter in Soconusco
Arias de Sayabedra Hernan	In consideration for various services and because he could not be given a <i>corregimiento</i> at the time.
Arias Sotelo, Juan	<i>Alcalde mayor</i> Veracruz.
Balbuena, Diego	
Barrionuevo Rodrigo	
Barrionuevo Velasco de	
Bartholome	Artillery maker 'of [the viceroy's] household'
Benavides, Juan	
Benavides, Pedro	
Bermudez, Floyan	
Bermudez, Francisco (2)	
Buenaventura, Pascual de	Made the locks for the treasury and providing certain equipment.
Cadena Hernando de la (2)	
Calderon, Francisco	
Calderon, Gaspar	Going to Veracruz by royal instruction.
Camacho Bartholome (4)	
Canelas, Francisco	
Canseco, Alonso de	
Cardenas, Hernando (2)	
Cardenas, Lorenzo de	
Carvajal, Francisco	
Carvajal, Juan (2)	
*Castilla, Pedro	
Castillo Garcia del	

Castillo, Hernando del	
Ceron, Jorge(3)	For residencia of Juan Jaso; <i>visitador</i> of the <i>pastel</i> plant and maintenance of roads around Veracruz.
*Cherinos, Lope (2)	
Cieza, Diego	
Contreras, Juan	Interpreter.
Cortés, Pedro (2)	
Cuevas, Juan de	
Darias Sayavedra, Hernan	
Delgado, Alonso	
Delgado, Bartholome (5)	
Delgado, Francisco	
Delgueta Hernando	
Diez, Francisco	
Duran Juanote (4)	
Ecija, Bartholome	
Entramas, Juan	Built the smelting house.
Escobar, Francisco de	For going to Veracruz.
Escobedo Luis (2)	
Escobedo, Alonso de	For the capture of Alonso Lugo.
Espindola Cristobal de (2)	
Espindola, Tomas de	
Estrada, Salvador	
Figueroa, Sancho de	for his services as <i>visitador</i> of the towns of his province of Tlacotepeque.
Fraille, Juan	Interpreter of the <i>audiencia</i> .

Franco, Pedro (2)	<i>Vecino of Oaxaca commissioned as a <i>visitador</i>.</i>
Frias, Rodrigo (2)	
Fuentes, Luis	
Galeote, Anton (4)	
Galera, Juan	
Gallego, Juan (2)	Interpreter.
Gallinas Cristobal (2)	
Gaona, Jerónimo (3)	
Garcia (¿) de Beas Juan (2)	
García Corona, Hernando	
García de la Madalena, Juan	
Garrido, Juan	
Gaytan Gabriel (2)	
Gomez de Almazan, Juan (2)	
Gonzalez Esquivel, Juan	
Gonzalez, Alonso	
Grijalva, Juan de	
Guardado, Lorenzo	
Guerrero, Agustín (3)	Artillery making services and providing material for paving roads.
Guevara, don Pedro de	
Gutierrez de la Caballeria, Diego	
Guzmán don Pedro de (3)	
Herbas, Gonzalo de	
Hernandez Aferrado, Diego (3)	
Hernandez de Sayabedra, Martin (Heirs of)	

Hernando, Gaspar

Herrera, Francisco

Holguin, Diego (2)

Indian residents of the town of Tepeapulco Brought copper to the viceroy.

Jaramillo, Juan

Jimenez, Luis (2)

Juarez de Avila, Gaspar (4)

Alcalde mayor de Zacatula.

Juarez, Andrés (2)

Alguacil

Juarez, Gomez

Juarez, Pedro (3)

Leon Romano, Luis

For conducting the residencia of officials of Zacatula.

Leyva, Juan de

Alvarado Lic.

Arevalo Lic.,

Regidor of Michoacán.

Benavente Lic.,

Services as prosecutor

Caballero Lic. (¿)

Ceynos Lic.

Santillan Lic.

Tellez Lic.

Loaysa, Alonso

López de Alcantara, Pedro

*Lopez de Cardenas, Garci

López de Nuncibay, Iñigo (2)

Alcalde of the mines de Zultepec; *alcalde mayor* de Zumpango.

López de Zavala, Juan

López Diego

López, Francisco	
López, Juan	
Luna y Arellano, Tristan (3)	Justicia mayor Oaxaca.
Maestre Juan	Surgeon; for his services incuring wounded and poor Indians.
Maestre Miguel	
Malpaso, Gonzalo de	
Manrique, Alonso	
Manuel, Garci	
Marquez, Francisco	<i>Alcalde</i> of the mines of Zumpango.
Martin Aguado, Pedro (2)	
Martín, Alonso	
Martin, Domingo	
Mayorga, Cristobal (2)	
Mederos, Clemente (3)	
Mendez, Benito (2)	
Mendoza, Diego (3)	
Merino, Alonso	
Messa, Antonio de	
Messina, Juan de	
Mexia Gaspar	
Mezquita Diego de (2)	
Molina, Alonso (4)	
Molina, Gil (2)	
Montanches, Juan	
Montero, Diego (executors of)	

Morales, Hernando	
Morcillo Gaspar	
Moreno, Anton (6)	Trumpeter.
Moscoso, Luis de (2)	For services as <i>corregidor</i> of Tlaxcala
Muñoz de Castañeda, Alonso (3)	<i>Alcalde</i> of the mines of Zumpango and <i>alcalde mayor</i> of mines.
Muñoz, Diego (3)	<i>Mayordomo</i> 'of the house of his majesty' and in charge of royal cattle.
Muñoz, Francisco (3)	Interpreter.
Muñoz, Hernando	
Muñoz, Juan (3)	
Nieto, Alvaro	
Nuñez Mercado, Juan (3)	
Oliber, Martin	
Ordoñez, Sancho	
Orejon, Andrés	
Ortega, Francisco	
Ortíz de Zuñiga, Pedro	
Ortíz, Francisco	
Ortiz, Juan	
Osorio Francisco	
Osorio, Antonio de	
Ovando Nicolas de	
Paez Hernando (2)	
Pantigosa, Juan	
Paz, Alonso de	
Paz, Diego (2)	

Perez de Tamayo, Alonso	
Pinelo, Luis	
Pomar, Antonio (2)	<i>Alcalde mayor</i> of the Zumpango mines
Ponce, Bartholome	
Ponce, Pedro	
*Portugal, Fernando de	
Prado, Gaspar (2)	
Puelles, Diego de	
Quesada, Luis de	
Quiroz, Diego de	
Ramírez de Vargas, Luis	<i>Alcalde mayor</i> of the Chautla mines.
Ramirez, Garci	For his mission to the Chontales 'to pacify and reform them'.
Ribero, Antonio (2)	
Rincon, Alonso	Created the design for coined silver.
Rincon, Antonio del	
Rivera, Miguel de	
Roa, Pedro de	
Rodriguez, Hernando	
Romo, Alonso	
Robles Melchor	
Ruiz Lobillo, Juan	
Ruiz Marcos	
Salamanca Juan	
Salazar, Cristobal	Architect and master of works in New Spain) (3)
Salazar, Francisco	

Salcedo, Alonso	
Salcedo, Pedro (2)	<i>Veedor</i> of silversmiths.
Saldaña Gaspar (2)	
Salgado, Payo	
Sallaz, Juan	
Samaniego Lope de	
Samano, Juan	
San Juan, Alonso	
Sanabria, Diego	
Sanchez Naranjo, Diego	
Sanchez, Alonso (2)	
Sanchez, Anton	
Sanchez, Francisco	Blacksmith as compensation for purchase of 3 slaves and a furnace for the royal munitions house.
Santacruz, Juan de	
Santillan, Francisco de	
Sayabedra, Hernando	
Sevilla, Francisco	
Siciliano, Juan	
Silbera Diego de la (2)	
Soltero, Alonso	
Soto Sebastian de	
Sotomayor, Jerónimo	
Suárez de Avila, Gaspar	For his time as <i>alcalde mayor</i> of Cacatula, until the <i>residencia</i> Luis de León Romano conducted of his tenure.

Suárez de Avila, Juan

Tapia, Diego (Camargo?)

Tapia, Hernando de (4) Translator for the *audiencia*.

Temño, Leonis de

Terrazas, Francisco de For his work on the construction of the smelting house.

Tinoco, Diego

Torre, Bartholome de la

Torre, Bernaldo de la

Torres, Juan de

Torres, Luis de

*Tovar, Pedro

Trejo, Pedro

Trujillo, Pedro

Urrea, Lope de

Vaca, Luis

Vaca, Luis

Valverde, Martin

Vanegas, Alonso

Vargas Pedro (2)

Vargas, Juan de

Vargas, Luis

Vargas, Pablo

Vázquez, Diego (3)

Vázquez, Juan

Vázquez, Pero

Vega, Juan
Velasco, Pedro de (executor)
Velázquez, Juan
Velázquez, Juan (heirs of)
Vellerin, Cristobal
Verdejo, Juan Francisco
Villagomez Bernaldino
Villamayor, Diego (3)
Villanueva, Bartholome (2)
Villanueva, Hernando de
Villaseñor, Diego de
Villegas, Juan
Yeberis Pedro
Zagarra, Francisco (heirs of)
Zanbrana, Alvaro de
Zayas, Luis

***Individuals described explicitly as Mendoza's friends or favourites in AGI
Justicia 258***

Cadena, Antonio de la	Beneficiary of <i>corregimientos</i> .
Castilla, Luis de	Beneficiary of all sorts of offices, commands and commissions. He would become one of the wealthiest miners of New Spain.
Chavez, Francisco de	Encouraged to marry Marina Montesdoca who held the strategically important <i>encomiendas</i> of Tinquandín and Tacascaro.

Gomez, Gonzalo	Owner of at least two cloth-making enterprises and Mendoza's business partner in this with Agustín Guerrero as an intermediary.
Juárez (Suárez or Xuaréz), Juan	<i>Encomendero</i> and appointed <i>alcalde mayor de minas</i> in Ayoteco in Chautla
Maldonado, Francisco	<i>Encomendero</i> and an important 'strong-man' in Oaxaca for Mendoza. He was an important lieutenant and trusted as an intermediary with allied and enemy Indians during the Mixtón War.
Medina, Geronimo de	Trusted <i>encomendero</i> but a rival of Alonso Ortíz de Zuñiga (a hostile witness against Mendoza), over tribute of the same town.
Merida, Alonso de	Treasurer of the Mint. In Spain he and his brothers had been clients of Mendoza's brother.
Peralta, Martin de	Receipient of an <i>encomienda</i> and offices from the viceroy.
Pérez de Bocanegra y Córdoba, Hernán	<i>Alcalde ordinario</i> of Mexico City, <i>encomendero</i> of Acámbaro Mendoza's 'strong man' of the northern Chichimeca frontier who mediated with the indigenous lords of the frontier, most notably Fernando de Tapia of Querétaro.
Rosales, Francisco de	Receipient of <i>corregimientos</i> .
Salazar, Gonzalo de	<i>Factor</i> of the treasury, along with his sons and heirs to the office Hernando and Juan Velázquez.
Sámano, Juan de	<i>Alguacil mayor</i> of Mexico City married to <i>oidor</i> Ceynos' wife's sister. <i>Oidor</i> Tejada's wife was considered Sámano's <i>deuda</i> .
Sámano, Lope de	
Sosa, Juan Alonso de	Royal Treasurer.
Tejada, Lorenzo de	<i>Oidor</i> of the <i>audiencia</i> of Mexico City.

Vitoria, Fray Francisco de

Along with his unnamed nephew.

Turcios, Antonio de

Escribano Mayor.

Varela Pedro

Mendoza's agent in Veracruz.

Vázquez de Coronado, Francisco

Elevated to the governorship of New Galicia, granted *encomiendas* and allowed a favourable marriage. His career never recovered from the failure of the Cíbola expedition.

Appendix B: monetary terms and measurements of capacity

All figures in the main text of the thesis will be expressed as ducats (*d*) for ease of comparison in accordance with the following methodology.

Ducat

Traditionally a gold coin containing 3.6 grams (g) of gold:

- In 1497 it was valued at 375 *maravedís* or 11 *reales*.
- After 1537 it was valued at about 350 *maravedís*.

Maravedí

The *maravedí* did not actually exist in coin form by our period but rather as a method of establishing value.

Marco of Silver

One fifth of a ducat.

Real Español

Was c.3.35g of silver or about 34 *maravedís*.

- It was coined in pieces of 2, 4 and 8. The piece of 8, made famous by English speaking pirates and their parrots, was extremely common and it was worth 1 silver *peso*.

Tomin

One eighth of a gold *peso* or 575 milligrams of gold. It seems that at the start of Mendoza's viceroyalty one *tomin* could buy 11 loaves of bread. (see A.S. Aiton, *Antonio de Mendoza: First Viceroy of New Spain* (Duke 1927) p. 114)

Escudo de oro

Contained 3.4g of gold was worth 350 *maravedís* or 16 *reales*

Peso de Oro

- Coined or considered *de ley perfecta* or *de minas* it was valued at 450 *maravedís*.

- When un-coined
 - *de tepuzque* it was valued at 271 *maravedís*
 - *Común* it was valued at 300 *maravedís*
 - *Común con tres quilates* it was valued at 360 *maravedís*

Castellano de Oro

Valued at 485 *maravedís*.

Cacao

Had different values: Guatemalan was the best, Colima less so:

- 80-100 cacao beans were valued at 1 *real*
- They were sold in *cargas* and each *carga* was worth 28-30 silver *pesos* (of 8 *reales* each)
- A Guatemalan load of Cacao could fetch up to 3-4 silver *pesos* more per load.

Alonso de Villaseca became a millionaire with the exchange rate showing its continued use into the viceregal period. (See Suárez de Peralta J. *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias*, ed. S. Tena, (Mexico, 1990), p.157).

Fanega

One *fanega* was a measure of capacity equivalent to c.55.5 litres, c. 215 gallons or 27 bushels.

It could also denote the amount of land needed to produce a *fanega* of grain.

A *fanega* was equivalent to 2 *almudes*, the more usual measurement for maize.